

When Skills are No Longer in Demand

Today's world is changing so fast. Advances in technology, changes in laws and cultural norms, and fluctuations in labor market trends are having an effect on the future of peoples' jobs. Consequently, many people may see that their skills are, or will in the foreseeable future, no longer be in demand. Thus, getting a new job can be a serious problem if employers are not hiring for what a person is skilled to do. So, what should people do about that?

How should you respond to the possibility that you will not be able to get a new job with your current skill set?

Anticipating a lack of demand for one's skills can be very scary, and cause people to be concerned about their future. So, what should you do?

1. Understand and accept that this will likely invoke several emotions in people who see the potential. Common responses to this type of situation include: stress, anxiety, fear of the unknown and loss of livelihood, feelings of loss of control, betrayal, and grief (denial, anger, bargaining, sadness, and acceptance) over the possibility of losing your job, friends and/or identity. In addition, some people may resent the possibility of having to start over; and some may experience regret over prior education, career and life choices. If and when you find yourself experiencing any of these emotions, realize they are normal responses to the situation. Engage in 'self-care' activities to help you manage these emotional affects. Denying or not dealing with such emotions will only cause them to build up and come out in inappropriate ways later. Instead, people who deal with these reactions while they occur have an easier transition, if and when necessary, than those who do not. If necessary, seek counseling for dealing with your reactions.
2. Individuals who can anticipate these changes but are still employed can improve their chances of maintaining their current employment by: 1) Not taking these changes personally or getting defensive. 2) Not resisting change, even if those changes are unwanted. 3) Cooperating and/or embracing leadership's efforts to restructure the organization to respond to the situation. Whereas, individuals who fight or resist the change tend to be the first ones to get laid off.
3. Research shows that individuals who are older (over 40), long-term job and without a college education typically have a harder time than their younger, college-educated counterparts transitioning in to new employment after a layoff. Therefore, anyone who fits any of these demographics would be well-served by taking this time to consider what they would do if their job were to end.
4. When you are ready to think about how to respond to the potential of losing your job, now is a good time to consider your options and research them to consider all the implications. Knowing your options and the facts gives people a sense of control over situations that are otherwise beyond their control. In addition, if and when individuals do need to find new employment later, will find that transition easier. The good news is there is a lot of help available, but you need to be able to identify what you need and where to get that help. The following is some information to help you to consider your options.

Following are several options to consider:

1. Update your current skill set to meet current labor market demands.

When Skills are No Longer in Demand

2. Stay with your current employer
 - a. Hope that these changes do not affect your job
 - b. Find job opportunities in other departments for which you are qualified
 - c. Get a position in another classification or management position on within the company
 - d. Identify where the trends are and how they are going to drive business, then look for opportunities with those trends
3. Look for opportunities in other organizations within your industry that are not affected by the changes that affect your job
4. Look for opportunities outside of your industry.
 - a. Utilize the skills your education has provided to work in industries related to which you were trained
 - b. Identify your transferable skills that would prepare you for other employment elsewhere
 - c. Pursue self-employment
 - d. Utilize your network to identify potential opportunities
 - e. Identify trends to look for potential new opportunities
5. Less conventional options
 - a. Retire
 - b. Become a stay-at-home parent or other caregiver
 - c. Go back to school to pursue additional degrees/training
 - d. Go back to school to retrain for a new career

How should you decide which direction to go?

1. This is a personal decision which only you can make. It is often a process – not an instant answer. Research your options, and listen to your inner voice. Seek professional consultation as appropriate.
2. What skills and experiences are employers currently looking for? (i.e. Labor Market Trends)
3. Consider the traditional factors used in the career exploration and decision-making process: Personality, Interests, Values, Skills, Abilities, and Labor Market Trends.
4. Other factors to consider: Life experience (drives interests and values), personal circumstances, how your decisions affect significant others, financial situation and reserves, and your personal priorities.
5. Do you like your profession and are willing to tolerate the challenges that go with it?
6. Do you have a personal or other commitment/investment in your current employer?
7. What are the Labor Market Trends (what is hot and what is not) in your industry and job as well as other professions you are considering?
8. Are you willing and able to consider going back to school?
9. Do you meet the minimum qualifications for other careers? If not, are you close? Can you apply, hoping they will consider your background equivalent? Do they accept equivalencies? Would you be willing to pursue additional training/schooling to meet those minimum qualification requirements?
10. If you decide to pursue retraining, how much will it cost? Who will pay for it? (*You, current/former employer, future employer, unemployment retraining programs, disability*)

retraining programs, etc.) How will you support yourself and family during retraining time?

Are there resources to help me consider my options?

- **Within your current employer:**
 - Human Resources – for list of openings and regulations regarding changing positions and retirement
 - PD - Professional Development department – training options
 - Supervisors and colleagues
 - Your union – if you belong to one – rules regarding how assignments are prioritized, how layoffs are determined, retraining benefits, department transfer options, your rights and benefits available.
- **Author's resources:**
 - **Workshops on career development and job search issues:**
<http://www.dreams-goals.com/Workshops.html>
Of particular interest to this population:
 - **Unemployed and Looking for Answers** (*What they need: Information, Resources & Support*)
 - **Planning for an Unpredictable Future** (*Why skills are no longer in demand*)
 - **Identifying Transferable Skills** (*What kind of jobs to get based on current skills*)
 - **Job Search Tips for Unique Populations** (*Unemployed, Over 40, Over Qualified, Disabled, Veterans, and Flawed Past*)
 - **How to Get Your Dream Job**
 - **Educational Choices You Won't Regret Later**
 - **Meeting Financial Responsibilities** (*How to survive and/or pay for training*)
 - **Managing Life's Transitions** – (*When life changes*)
 - **Help: Asking, Giving and Receiving:** (*Solving Problems without Ruining Relationships*)
 - **Lifelong Learning Options**
http://www.dreams-goals.com/Assignments/Education/Lifelong_Learning_Options.pdf
 - **Job Search Websites:**
http://www.dreams-goals.com/Assignments/JobSearch/Job_Search_Websites.pdf
 - **How to Research New Career Options** (what questions you should be asking)
 - (Part 1 - based on career assessment results) http://www.dreams-goals.com/Assignments/ResearchSkills/Basic_Career_Research_-_Options_Exploration.pdf
 - (Part 2 - In-depth questions to ask) http://www.dreams-goals.com/Assignments/ResearchSkills/Career_Research_Assignment_-_In_Depth.pdf
 - **So How Do You Find and Get Your Dream Job?** – *A step-by-step process*
 - **Different Types of Counselors** – *Get the right help, from the right person, at the right time*

When Skills are No Longer in Demand

- **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**
- **Hertzberg's Theory of Motivation**
- **Opportunity vs. Security**
- **Job Search:**
 - Help with job search - American Job Centers/Career One-Stops
<https://www.careeronestop.org/site/american-job-center.aspx>
 - Document listing good job search websites
http://www.dreams-goals.com/Assignments/JobSearch/Job_Search_Websites.pdf
 - Job Listings in California K-12 Education:
<https://www.edjoin.org/>
- **American Job Centers/Career One-Stops – job search help**
http://www.dreams-goals.com/Assignments/JobSearch/Job_Search_Websites.pdf
- **Career Counselor Search – Find a career counselor to help you explore your career options**
https://www.ncda.org/aws/NCDA/pt/sp/consumer_find
- **Find professional associations (give current information on trends in that industry)**
<http://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/training/find-professional-associations.aspx>
- **Research Labor Market Trends**
https://www.careerinfonet.org/select_state.asp?from=&next=lmi1&id=11&nodeid=13&occode=
- **Small Business Agency – help starting a business**
<https://www.sba.gov/>
- **Center for Non-profit Management – help starting a non-profit business**
<https://cnmsocal.org/>
- **Researching Retirement Options**
 - Social Security
<https://www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/>
 - Check your personal retirement plans for your financial status
- **Information and support for becoming a caregiver**
<http://caregiveraction.org/>

About the Author:

Kathleen E. High is an adjunct professor in the Learning Assistance Center at Mt. San Antonio College. In addition, she also worked for nine years as an adjunct academic and career counselor at Cypress College where she taught all of their core classes, including Career & Life Planning. She also taught a career class at Golden West College. She has an independent consulting business where she works with adults facing education and career transition issues, and has been volunteering for two years as a guest speaker at the Orange County One-Stop Center (American Jobs Center) where she presents special topics of interest to the unemployed. She created and led a faith-based support group for the long-term unemployed during the economic recession.

She holds a Master's in Education: College Student Affairs from Azusa Pacific University, and a BS in Communication: Public Relations from Cal Poly Pomona, and an AA from Rio Hondo

When Skills are No Longer in Demand

College. She holds additional credentials in the career development field: Certified Career Services Provider (CCSP), Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) and is a certified instructor for the Facilitating Career Development (FCD) program offered through the National Career Development Association. She is a certified administrator of the Myers-Briggs (MBTI) personality assessment.

She has been studying the topic of the ‘future of work’ (i.e. how automation and globalization affect the economy, the skills gap, labor market trends, innovation, workforce development, and career development) since 1997. After being laid off from a long-term clerical position in the corporate world, she became a full-time university undergraduate student while she transitioned into a career in higher education. Through her almost forty years of work experience, she has experienced several organizational restructurings that eliminated hundreds of jobs. She also has extensive understanding about the personal, emotional, financial, and professional toll that poor responses to these transitions take on individuals and their families. This document is based on her collective experience, academic research, and professional knowledge; and is intended to help individuals deal with these transitions and that result from an unexpected need to reskill.

When Skills are No Longer in Demand

References:

Blustein, D. (2012, February 16). *NCDA Webinar Series: Unemployment and Mental Health*.

Retrieved October 21, 2015, from NCDA:

<https://www.ncda.org/aws/NCDA/pt/sp/webinars>

Bridges, W. (1980). *Transitions*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.

Del Corso, J. (2016, March 2). *Jennifer Del Corso: Counseling Clients through Work Traumas and Unexpected Career Transitions*. Retrieved from www.ceuonestop.org:

<https://ceuonestop.com/wp/product/5788/>

Doing What Matters (2018, April 18). California Community College Chancellors Office.

<http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/>

Goulston, M. (2017, July 3): <https://workingnation.com/someone-love-work-stuck-really-stuck/>

High, K. (2000). *Interview Evaluation: Community College – Community Education Center*.

Unpublished

Kubler-Ross, E. (1997). *On death and dying*. New York: Touchstone.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s_hierarchy_of_needs

Maslow, A. (2007). *Motivation and personality (3 ed. ed.)* (R. Frager, Ed.). New Delhi: Pearson Education.

National Career Development Association. (2017). *Facilitating Career Development Student Manual*. Broken Arrow, OK: NCDA.

Online Community College (2018 April 29). California Community College Chancellors Office.

<http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/fullyonlinecommunitycollege.aspx>

Schlossberg, N. K. (2011). The challenge of change: The transition model and its applications.

Journal of Employment Counseling, 159-166.

When Skills are No Longer in Demand

Workforce GPS Resource Library (2018, April 18). U.S. Department of Labor.

<https://www.workforcegps.org/resources>