
WEST VIEW

Career news for Financial and IT professionals

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Is the Ship Sinking?

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Your company has avoided layoffs until now, announcing the layoff of a few IT professionals. You are secure in your position but the rumor mill is talking about a second wave. Other companies have announced cutbacks such as Lucent Technologies, Ford, and Nortel Networks. Should I start a job search? Will I be included in the next wave? The answer is simple. Plan for the worst and be prepared. Here are 10 actions to take now to avoid being caught by surprise.

1. **Target** – Decide what type of position and company you'd like to join. You're going to make a change, make it a positive change.
2. **Network** - Start today. Call a professional associate and make plans for lunch. The Wall Street Journal reported that 65-70% of jobs are found through networking.
3. **Resume** – Dust off your resume and add any new accomplishments. Have your resume reviewed by a professional. E-mail the final version to yourself and open. See how it looks when it arrives electronically
4. **Business Cards** –Print up some personal business cards. Design the card as a mini resume. Add a few skills in dot point format. These cards are handy when attending networking sessions. The contact will not have to remember your details. Remember, the lightest print is better than the best memory.
5. **Associations** – Rekindle your relationships with professional organizations such as the AICPA, PICPA, FEI, ASWA, and IMA. Their events and meetings are good for networking.
6. **Recruiters** – Establish a relationship with a recruiter in your industry. Ask for references before sending your resume. Talk to a few professionals they have placed and some that they did not place. Look for a recruiter that provides timely feedback, resume advice, and is generally helpful in your search.
7. **2 Minutes Drill** – Prepare a script lasting about 2 minutes that gives someone you meet a concise description of your skills and accomplishments. When they ask “what do you do?” , you'll be ready! “ My name is Mike Kershner, I've been spending the last two years moving my company into the 21st century. I lead large, complex change initiatives and recently led a migration of our financial systems to J.D. Edwards suite etc.”
8. **On-Line Job Boards** – Get acquainted with a national and a regional internet job board. Become familiar with the functionality such as search agents. Post your resume confidentially.
9. **Expenses** – Review your monthly expenses and cut out any waste. Do you really need to spend \$60 per month on premium cable? How about eating at home more than going out? Have you reviewed your insurance policies lately? Conserve cash starting now!
10. **Time** – Give your search time to develop. Things won't happen overnight so be patient and do not get discouraged!