



4 Smart Moves When the Economy Slows

Identifying growth industries, positive trends and hot jobs are only part of a strategic career management process that will help you weather a slowdown in the economy. What are some ways to take control of your career when the economic outlook is weakening or uncertain?

1. **Quietly and confidently communicate your value and contributions.**

When individuals demonstrate their capabilities, they signal willingness to take on additional or new responsibilities, or fill in a gap. Doing this quietly is key. The last thing they want to do is instigate ill will and an unhealthy competitive climate among co-workers, causing more problems for the manager. If employees are not already working to capacity, they better get moving.

2. **Expand your network.**

Like the other suggestions in this article, marketing oneself is one of the basic Career Literacy skills needed to successfully navigate today's work environment. The more individuals are connected to a broader community beyond their departments or companies, the more resilient they will be in their careers. Smart moves include being strategic in seeking connections with others, where they give thought to whom they should get to know based on their career goals. These people will be the first to hear about new opportunities through their network as the business slowdown begins to reverse. Social networking websites for professionals such as LinkedIn.com provide an easy infrastructure for individuals to find each other, keep in touch, and share information, job opportunities, and prospects for new business that benefit their current employment situation.

3. **Lay the foundation for a move to a new career that offers more growth and opportunity.**

Making great career choices always begins with in-depth self-knowledge. Before individuals decide to pursue a new occupation, they are wise to minimize the risk by gauging how well that job and work environment aligns with their natural talents, interests, personality and values. They conduct informational interviews with individuals who are doing the kind of work in which they are interested. These planful career managers set up a job shadowing day with these same individuals, spending a day with them on the job observing what they do and "trying on" the work



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environment. This is a good time to find out educational or training requirements, and begin taking classes. Career changes take time.

4. **Maintain a positive, optimistic attitude in the face of adversity.**

Most people call this “personal character” and it sets individuals apart from the crowd. In work environments where budgets are tight, business is declining, and employees are concerned about their jobs, savvy career managers learn to see the silver linings in a stormy situation. They see their role as part of the solution rather than part of the problem. They know that business is cyclical, and “this too shall pass.” When it does, they are ready.