



Layoff-Proofing Your IT Career

Believe it or not, the country's current economic woes are affecting every industry in some surprising ways. Even the IT industry, an industry that is normally booming and bustling no matter what the economy has to say about it, is feeling some slowing because of the country's current economic woes. If you work in IT in one of the industries that is reeling under the economic woes that are affecting the entire country, then you may be feeling a bit insecure about the status of your job, because suddenly market forces that are well beyond your control are governing whether or not you will have any kind of job security to speak of.



The turmoil in the financial industry, coupled with HP's recent announcement that over the next three years 24,600 employees would be laid off, is supposedly going to "glut" the job market in the IT field according to a management consulting firm

known as Janco Associates. But there is actually quite a lot that you can do right now if you want to calm down your anxieties and really begin to take control of your career in a way that will give peace of mind and allow you to feel a little more secure in your current employment.

According to John Estes, who is a vice president in the staffing firm known as Robert Half International, and according to John Baschab, who is a senior vice president at Technisource, an IT managed staffing services provider, there are several basic tips for people looking to find IT jobs in the current market, or to get a stronger hold of the current IT job market regardless of whether you have a job or not. By firmly rooting yourself in today's IT job market despite the turmoil that many industries are facing, it can become immensely easier to find IT jobs and to keep your IT job even when the market is in a poor shape.

1. The first tip is to ask the right questions. If you are feeling concerned about layoffs or if you are concerned about what effect a potential merger may have, then it is advisable that IT workers approach their managers to ask key questions. Some of these questions that you might want to ask to appraise the effect of the market on the IT job market include:
 - o How is this going to affect your specific job?
 - o Are there other opportunities within the company that can be applied for or transferred to?
 - o If you are laid off, are there outpatient services or severance pay to protect you while you find IT jobs openings for replacement?
2. Remember that you have skills behind your employment. Financial services IT people have skill sets that are in really high demand right now, especially when it comes to skill sets surrounding security and compliance fields of expertise. Combining this with a blue chip name on your resume and you should have little trouble when it comes to learning how to find IT jobs in the IT job market that will weather the financial storm and keep you employed for a good long time. Pay attention to what skills are the most highly sought after, and make sure to list the ones you possess on your resume in order to truly stand out from the crowd.
3. Revitalize your Resume - It is always a pretty good idea for you to be prepared in the face of layoffs by putting together an updated resume. You are never going to know when an opportunity is going to present itself, and you are never going to know when unexpected changes may crop up within the organization where you are currently employed. Because it is the early bird that catches the worm, the sooner you have a prepared resume to post, the better your odds will be when you go to find IT jobs that will weather the turmoil that the IT job economy is experiencing right now.
4. Tap into your network by listing everyone you know that might be able to help you uncover job opportunities in the IT job market, and contacting them. Include family members, friends, clients, associates, vendors, alumni groups, professional networking groups, and members of your church or community.
5. Meet with an IT job market recruiter. Someone who specializes in your industry can help you find IT jobs and can also provide useful feedback on your resume and interview presentation as well.
6. Consider options outside of your industry. Operations and infrastructure experience is portable to nearly all



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industries, so you can conduct a wide job search and find IT jobs in places you normally would not have looked.

7. Do not overlook smaller companies, as they may provide much larger opportunities. Take a chance on a smaller company, especially in today's market. Helping a small company build a bigger IT department can really work wonders for building career security.
8. Broaden your skill set of functional skills. You might be able to conduct a lateral move into another similar field

simply by broadening your job search into other functional areas within a similar company. Whenever possible, grow your skill set to include new possibilities.

9. Consider that it may actually be time to move. If you think your opportunities are truly being limited in your current market, then ask yourself if it is time to make a move into another city or another state. It could be a much needed and much welcomed change that pans out well for you, even if you did not anticipate such a change.

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