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Jobhunting in the recession jungle

by CYNTHIA DE CASTRO
AJPress

When Myrna was hired last year as a paralegal assistant in a medium-sized law firm in LA, she immediately resigned from her clerical job in San Fernando Valley. "The pay was almost double, so naturally I left my job of five years," said Myrna. Eight weeks ago, Myrna was laid off due to the recession. "It's been so hard getting another job. As my savings are nearly gone, I am now in panic mode," admitted Myrna.

How does one become a successful job hunter in the midst of the current economic crisis? Here are some helpful advice.

1. Be positive.

First of all, don't be like Myrna who has described herself as in "panic mode". You need to appear cool and calm, collected and patient. Prospective employers can easily spot a highly-stressed individual a mile away. So, stay positive. Statistics say there is an average of over 3 million jobs available in the US every month. Even in a job market that has 10 percent unemployment, there's still 90 percent employment. Just believe there's a job there that's just waiting for you and you will get it.

2. Target your focus.

If your industry or line of work has little promise of employment amidst the current crisis, take a look at other industries. Identify the projected top performing industries and jobs. Good prospects are the health care industry, the food industry, and computer-related companies. Surf the internet for recession-proof jobs and target those companies. Just focus on growth industries and forget about those that are heavily affected by the recession.

Choose your target companies well. It is important that you don't waste time and energy applying for jobs that have little chance of success. Pick a few companies that are going strong and then actively pursue them, whether they have openings or not.

3. Sell yourself in relation to the bottomline.

Most job hunters ask the question, "What's in it for me?" Change your way of thinking. In these hard times, employers are looking for ways to save money and increase profits. Forget the old mindset that your job-related skills or length of service are selling factors. Sell yourself as a profit center rather than just an employee. Think about how you can help the company save money and make money. If your skills are not enough to help employers improve the bottomline, then improve your skills.

4. Work your network

The cliché, "it's not just what you know, but who you know" still holds true most of the time. So network, network, network. Don't be embarrassed to let your friends and relatives know that you are looking for a job. Take out all those calling cards you've just dropped inside drawers and bags. Prospective employers would still prefer to hire people referred by people they know rather

than work with total strangers.

5. Look at available part-time or freelance work

Many job hunters pass up the chance to work part time because the salary is too small to pay bills. But if a full-time job is unavailable, consider freelancing to keep some money coming in. One graphic artist in LA kept saying no to an offer to do freelance work for a company because it was simply a "per project" basis. "I needed a full-time, permanent job to pay my rent," Jun said. "But when nothing was coming in, I accepted the freelance work. Unexpectedly, that gave way to referrals to more freelance work. So, now I am earning enough to pay the rent," he added.

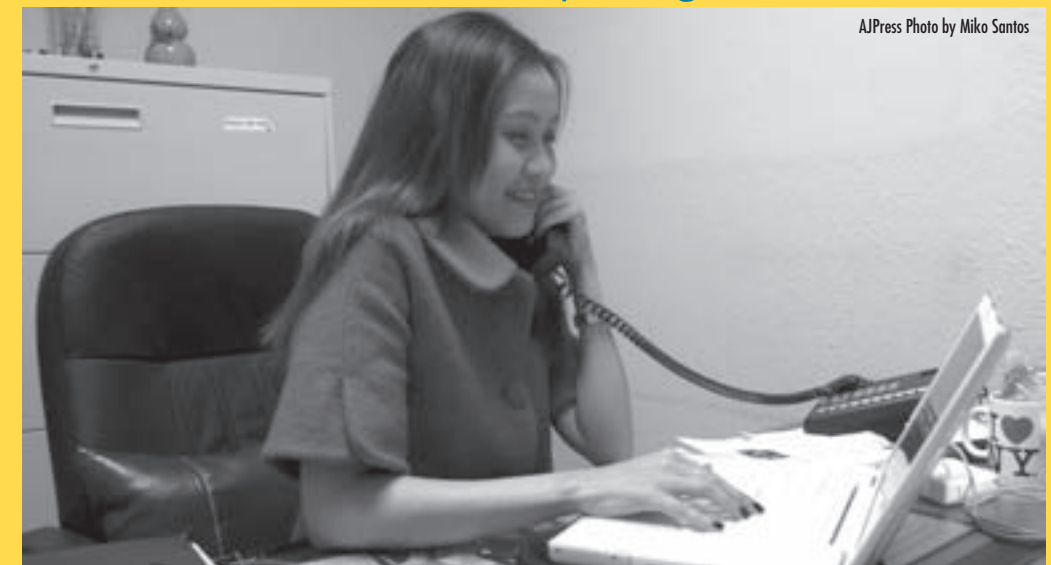
Sometimes taking over someone who went on leave can open up new doors for you to work full-time in the company in the future. Not only that, trying on a job for size can also improve your skills, impress potential employers and build a network of connections.

6. Expand your horizon

When Pia still didn't have a job after almost a year of job-hunting in LA, she decided to expand her horizon. "I called up my cousin in New York and asked if I can stay with her while I scan the employment horizon in the East Coast," the La Salle management graduate said. Within 3 months, Pia landed a job. "I love my new job. Thank God, I decided to look elsewhere other than California," she said.

So, keep your chin up. believe in yourself and trust God to help you as you make your way thru the recession jungle. Your next job could just be right around the corner! ☺

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AJPress Photo by Miko Santos

Publisher's Note:

Career Boost

With a considerable jobless population, America is going through difficult times and it seems neverending. But with continuing vigilance, hardwork and the constant drive to educate and improve one's self, everyone is capable of getting through this rough spot and finding the job and salary that they deserve. The Asian Journal SF Magazine brings you the Career Guide issue—our way of bringing hope and renewing the faith and confidence of our kababayans here. ☺