

# The 'Top Ten' Mistakes Employed People Make Today

by

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of the Hiring Game Have Changed . . . Forever!*

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Chances are, if you are currently employed, you probably think there is little, if any, reason you should even be *thinking* about finding another job. Actually, nothing could be further from the truth. With companies shedding jobs virtually every day, no one is “safe” in today's BRUTAL job market, and that certainly includes those who are currently employed.

Based upon years of experience, as well as what I see in the job market each and every day, here are the “**Top Ten**” mistakes *employed* people are making today:

**Mistake #1 — Not realizing that the best time to find your next job is while you still have a job.** In today's economic environment, many employed people are overworked, haven't had a decent pay raise recently, have not been able to take vacation, are “furloughed,” (or soon to be), etc. Understandably, there is a huge pent up level of dissatisfaction in the work place and it's growing worse by the day. A recent survey by Robert Half, for example, indicates that 58% of the work force plans on making a career change as soon as the economy gets better. (That number goes to 79% in the 18- to 35-year old category).

What does all of this mean? It means that as soon as the economy does in fact get better—and it will, eventually—the number of people competing for openings will *double* and, whether it is fair or not and whether one likes it or not, currently employed people will have an edge over unemployed people.

So, if you are dissatisfied at work, NOW is the time to begin to ramp up your job search activities *before* everyone else does.

**Mistake #2 — Believing that a company will be loyal to you.** Loyalty is gone, if it ever did honestly exist. If a company has a choice to keep you or cut you, they will do what is in the *company's* best interest, not yours. If you can bring a return to them that is worth more than your cost, they may keep you. If they believe you cost them more than you are worth, they likely will let you go. They don't care if you are on the unemployment line. They don't care if you and your family will have health insurance. They don't care if you can feed, clothe and house your family. So, your keeping an eye open for better opportunity is no different from the company keeping an eye on its bottom line and determining every month whether you are worth it to them to keep you on the payroll.

**Mistake #3 — Not keeping an updated resume handy.** When I was in graduate school, one of my professors said that there are at least *four* things you always need to have readily

available: (1) A certified copy of your birth certificate; (2) a certified copy of your grade transcripts; (3) a copy of your marriage license (if applicable); AND (4) a copy of your updated resume. When you get that call from a recruiter or the perfect opportunity avails itself, you don't want to be delayed by having to craft your resume from scratch. Here, 20 years later, I know from experience that he was right.

**Mistake #4 — Not creating (and updating) your LinkedIn profile.** This is a must for any professional. (And, by the way, make sure your LinkedIn profile and a resume profile are the same.)

**Mistake #5 — Failing to align yourself with an excellent recruiter within your niche.** Good recruiters become career coaches and finding one is a lot like finding a good doctor, lawyer or accountant. You may have to work with several before you find one that gels with your needs and personality. Once you do, stay in touch. You don't use recruiters everyday, just as you don't go to a lawyer everyday (at least I hope not!), but develop a relationship with one so that when you do need them, they are there to help you.

**Mistake #6 — Failing to stay involved within your industry or professional specialty.** The more contacts you have within your industry or profession, the better. These contacts can literally spell the difference between quickly "landing on your feet" following a job loss or not.

**Mistake #7 — Failing to develop (and keep updated) your personal marketing portfolio.** This portfolio should contain the "highlights" of your professional accomplishments, e.g., promotions, contributions to current or past employers, awards received, professional organizations that your associated with or have made contributions to and so forth.

**Mistake #8 — Failing to ensure that you can be easily found, i.e., making sure that your personal and professional contact information** (home and business telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, email addresses) **are current and constantly monitored.**

**Mistake #9 — Failing to learn how to network properly and then participating in appropriate networks on a continual basis.** Remember, the time to begin networking is *not* right after losing a job. It should be an *ongoing* process—whether or not you are satisfied with your current position.

**Mistake #10 — If offered a new position with another company, you even think about entertaining any "counter offer" your current employer may offer you.** To do so usually is tantamount to "career suicide." Why? From the moment you submit your resignation you will forever be considered to be "disloyal" to your current employer, a "traitor." While the company may appear to be "buying" your continued services with their counter offer, in fact, all they really are doing is buying "time" until they ultimately can replace you with someone who is more "loyal" to the company.

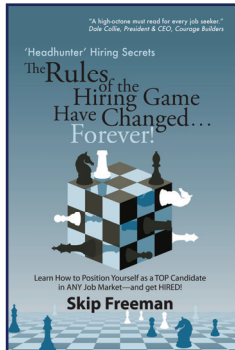
If you are currently employed, how many of these "mistakes" are *you* making? Remember, the Boy Scouts have a great motto: Be Prepared! Certainly, if you want to survive in today's "challenging" (to put it mildly!) job market, that's what you should be.

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**Skip Freeman**, author of "**Headhunter" Hiring Secrets: The Rules of the Hiring Game Have Changed . . . Forever!**", has successfully completed more than 300 executive search assignments in just seven years. Specializing in the placement of sales, engineering,

manufacturing and R&D professionals in industry, he has developed powerful techniques that help companies hire the best and help the best get hired.

A distinguished graduate of the United States Military Academy, West Point, he is a lifelong student of leadership, people and the principles of success. While serving in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Chemical Corps, he also earned a Master of Science degree in Organic Chemistry from The Georgia Institute of Technology and a Master of Business Administration degree in Marketing from Long Island University.



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