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Five strategies that will move you closer to your dream job

By [Ruth Mantell](#), MarketWatch
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WASHINGTON (MarketWatch) -- Mounting job losses continue to take a huge toll on the economy and on household budgets. But they can also have a debilitating effect on those who are employed in less than their full capacity.

In addition to the thousands who receive pink slips every month, there are those who work fewer hours than they'd like, are employed in a position that doesn't suit their skills or forced to take a low-level job just to make ends meet.

[broadband:clip-type=video&file-name=031809perrydonlinjobs&guid={E13BFEEF-799E-4F1F-993F-BEC25CB2C991}](#) While the weak economy makes it difficult to rise out of any of those situations, experts say workers should stay optimistic and avoid desperation. No matter what your work circumstance, you can still get a fulfilling job that uses more of your talent and promotes your career even in these tough times.

Here are five strategies that can move you closer to landing your dream job:

1. Be flexible

To get closer to that dream job, workers might need to take a position with less-than-ideal hours, or that doesn't take advantage of all of their skills, experts said.

"They need to be more flexible," said Allison O'Kelly, chief executive of Mom Corps, a staffing firm that specializes in flexible employment. "You need to think about all the things that the employer is looking for."

As a way to enter the right organization, workers might want to consider taking a job that is a bit beneath their skill level because it can set them on the right career path.

"Take it because you can prove your worth. Right now people need to take what they can get in their field," O'Kelly said.

Cynthia Shapiro, a career and business strategist based in Los Angeles, said workers should take a job that could better position them for their career later on even if the pay is disappointing.

"Sometimes people just take something and it doesn't work with their résumé," Shapiro said. "It's more important to have a title that looks decent on your résumé than the money."

If you can't find work within your industry, Walter Akana, a career strategist based in Decatur, Ga., recommended that workers capitalize on their transferrable skills, and consider other sorts of posts. Employers consider hires based on their accomplishments in prior positions, he said.

"You need to step back and do a serious assessment of your skills, your accomplishments and interests. A lot of times people lose track of what they actually accomplish for a company," Akana said.

2. Continue to network

In addition to making sure your résumé and interview skills are top notch, networking is key to finding the right job. Don't let shyness stop you from contacting colleagues, friends and family members, taking full advantage of in-person events and the Internet.

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"In any economy, perhaps even more so in a weaker economy, networking is the most valuable tool by far," said Randall Hansen, publisher of career development site Quintessential Careers. "The vast majority of jobs are through referrals."

Hansen also recommended building a network by reaching out to organizations and industry groups.

"Then once you have a network ask around if they know anyone who's hiring," Hansen said. "You should tell everybody you know that you are seeking a new job and follow job leads no matter how small they seem."

3. Show your spirit

While it's easy to be dispirited during the downturn, keeping perkier may be more helpful when it comes to finding full-time, fulfilling work, experts said.

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