

# Back on Track:

## Reignite Your Career Growth

### Do You Feel Like You're Stuck in Coronavirus Career Limbo?

You're not alone. Millions of Americans feel like their careers have ground to a halt, thanks to the pandemic's swirling uncertainty.

However, there are opportunities out there, and with the right approach, you can get your career moving forward again.

#### In this eBook, we will discuss:

- What you can do if your career has stalled.
- The importance of looking inward before making any choices or changes.
- How to create your opportunities.
- Can you or should you ask for a promotion or raise right now?
- Exploring new paths in booming industries.
- Tips for breaking into a new industry.



**Let's get started!**

# As the Pandemic Rages, Career Growth Stalls

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic has turned the lives of millions upside down. Our daily lives will not return to anything we consider “normal” for quite some time. The same holds true for business life.

Entire industries are in danger of collapse, and companies that are surviving have slammed the brakes on hiring and business expansion. No one planned for this catastrophe, and the first instinct for many people is to hold their breath and wait for things to start back up so they can get their careers back on track.

However, this “ostrich” approach won’t help you move forward. There are no guarantees in life, but the one thing you can count on is your ability to control your actions.

Whether you are employed or a new graduate, your company is struggling or you refuse to let the pandemic stop you from achieving your goals; you can take charge of your career and position yourself to continue moving onward and upward.





# But What Can I Really Do Under These Circumstances?

**R**ight about now, you may be thinking, “Take control of my career with tens of millions out of work? You must be joking!”

Of course, it won’t be easy to get your career back on track when the economy has become a roller coaster, and the headlines are all doom and gloom, but you can spend your time on activities that will pay off.

***The key is to be optimistic, yet realistic.***

The odds that you’re going to land your dream job right now might be slim. However, you can continue to boost your profile at work and beef up your resume to increase the chances of finding a good job and eventually landing that ideal job when things get moving again.

Keep these things in mind as you work to maintain the right attitude and perspective:

- **If you are employed, add value to your team and your company.**

If business is slow, make yourself useful. This can help keep you employed if layoffs occur, and it will show your boss that you are proactive and valuable. Take on new projects, step up and do the tasks others avoid. Share ideas for boosting productivity and morale. Be a team player who always hits deadlines and keeps commitments.

- **Work your network.**

Now is a fantastic time to boost relationships with people in your network. Reach out and schedule short virtual check-ins or meet for coffee or lunch in a socially responsible fashion. People are looking for ways to stay busy and interact with others, so there are unique opportunities to meet with people who might not otherwise have the time.





- **Invest in yourself.**

Now is also a fantastic time to take a class online, learn a new skill, participate in webinars and virtual conferences, and boost your professional knowledge.

- **Some industries are booming.**

Your industry might be struggling, but other industries can't hire people fast enough to keep up with demand. Think about your transferable skills and consider making a switch into a new niche.

- **This will end.**

Nothing is permanent, even the pandemic. Even if the virus never goes away, innovators will find ways to mitigate risk, and things will get better.



# Start With Yourself

**R**eigniting your career starts with a single spark. And if you've ever tried to light a fire without the assistance of chemical starters, you know how difficult it can be to find that spark.

If you're ready to get your career moving forward, you have to start by looking inward. This will provide you with direction and can light your passion for work, even when things seem dark.

- **Refine your priorities.**

We've all learned a lot about what really matters thanks to the pandemic. As you think about taking a step forward in your career, think about your priorities moving forward. Is work-life balance essential? Do you want to work in an industry that will be recession-proof in the future? Are you now anxious to leave a city for more wide-open spaces or vice versa?

- **Connect with your passions.**

If you want to stay in the same industry, reacquaint yourself with the things you love about what you do. If you find the industry you are in does not align with your passions, explore industries that do.

- **Define your strengths.**

What do you do better than anyone else? What are you known for at work? What does your boss continually lean on you to do?

- **Define your weaknesses.**

Nobody enjoys thinking about their weaknesses, but we all have them. Have those weaknesses held you back? If so, develop a plan to overcome them.

- **Be prepared to do the work.**

Remember, no one is going to hand you opportunities, especially now. You will have to be prepared to do some work, try new approaches, and make your own luck.





# Create Your Own Opportunities

**P**andemic or no pandemic, successful people rarely wait for someone to open a door for them. Instead, they knock on, attempt to open, or even kick down doors for themselves.

Making your own opportunities is especially important if you work remotely right now because it is easy to get overlooked when you aren't working in the office every day.

Here are some ways you can get noticed, even if you're working off-site.

- **Don't be a video meeting wallflower.**

Try to contribute verbally to every video meeting you attend. Just make sure you are making valuable contributions.

- **Get dressed.**

You don't have to show up to video chats in full business attire, but make it obvious that you showered, did something to your hair, and are wearing something nicer than pajamas or sweats. Show your boss that you are still taking work seriously.

- **Send a weekly email to your boss, key leaders or stakeholders in your department.**

In the email, outline weekly accomplishments, projects you have worked on, or identify an area you think can use more attention.

- **Don't let your boss drop your one-on-one meetings.**

If your boss has gotten away from holding one-on-one meetings, get back on her calendar ASAP.



# Make Your Own Opportunities If You Want or Need a New Job

**M**aking your own opportunities also applies to those looking for a new job outside their current organization or those who have lost their job due to the pandemic.

It is essential to spend time every day applying to job postings, but you'll probably have better "luck" if you don't wait around to find a great opportunity this way.

- **Work your network.**

Tell everyone in your network that you are looking for a job, including your personal network. You never know if someone outside your professional sphere knows a person who can help.

- **Send cold emails.**

Don't see any openings posted at a great company? Don't assume there are none. Send a cold email to the hiring manager. It shows your initiative and willingness to put forth the extra effort to achieve your career goals.

- **Optimize your LinkedIn profile.**

According to a recent survey of recruiters, nearly 90% said they use LinkedIn to find the right candidate. Make sure they can find you when they are searching.

- **Use social media like a pro.**

Make all your personal social media accounts private, then create professional accounts that are public and searchable. Share industry content, make thoughtful observations and follow thought leaders and even hiring managers and recruiters in your niche.





# Should You Ask for a Promotion in a Pandemic?

If you were on track to move up at work before COVID, that potential promotion likely never materialized. So, is it wrong to ask for a promotion right now? The answer depends on the situation.

If your company is laying off or furloughing people, it might not be the best time to ask for a promotion unless your new title and work would lend exceptional value to the company. If, however, your company has remained stable or even grown, it could be appropriate to broach the subject with your boss.

## Be Tactful

If you decide to approach the subject, always be tactful, and acknowledge the severity of the situation around you.

## Ask About Timelines

If you're afraid to ask directly for the promotion you were in line for, ask your boss about revised timelines. This can be a great segue into revisiting talks about your promotion.

## State Your Business Case

You should always have a business case for asking for a promotion, but it is more important than ever to prepare data, numbers, and anecdotes that support your case.

## Prepare for Rejection

Be ready for your boss to tell you no. If your company has a hiring freeze, that freeze may include promotions. Remember, however, that a rejection today isn't necessarily a rejection forever.





# What About Asking for a Raise?

If you've been promoted or you're putting in longer hours, covering for sick employees, taking on new responsibilities or innovated new processes during these times, you deserve a raise.

However, it's not as simple as asking your boss for a pay bump. Asking for a raise when the economy is uncertain is never easy, but it is important to advocate for yourself. And the worst answer you can receive is "no." So if you believe you deserve a raise, ask for one.

## Approach the Subject Gracefully

Make sure to lead with, "I know this might be an awkward conversation to have in a pandemic, but I'd like to talk to you about my (achievements, extra responsibilities, successes, etc.)."

## Don't Expect a Yes

Unless your industry saw a boom during the pandemic, be prepared for your boss to say no. However, remember that no during a pandemic doesn't mean "never."

## Have a Plan B

If a raise is not possible, negotiate for something else. This could be extra vacation time, more flexible hours, attending a conference or some other perk.

## Time It Right

Timing is everything when asking for a raise, especially now. Make your case immediately after a performance review, after you were given new responsibilities, or had a major success.

## Make a Business Case

Don't make an emotional plea; make a business case. Be prepared to show how your work has positively impacted your team, business unit or company. Use hard data whenever possible.





# Explore New Career Paths

If the pandemic has decimated your industry, you're probably considering an entirely new career path. Unfortunately, for every sector that has taken a hit, another one has experienced a boom.

That means there are job opportunities in these fields now and for the foreseeable future.

Keep in mind that entering a new field will take some time and research. For some jobs, like skilled healthcare, you may have to return to school. Jobs in tech may require certification or at least proof of skill. You can break into other industries by focusing on your transferable skills and maybe taking a few online classes.

These are some of the industries where new opportunities are emerging and will continue to emerge post-pandemic.







## Healthcare

The nursing shortage that people have been warning about has impacted the ability to manage COVID treatment. If there are any lessons to be learned, more frontline clinical staff will be hired.

There are also opportunities in other healthcare areas, including healthcare technology, research and development, biotechnology, medical engineering and more.



## Manufacturing

Those cracks in the supply chain also revealed how necessary it is to develop and manufacture products in the U.S. rather than relying solely on companies overseas for essentials like food, drink, and pharmaceuticals.

Companies in the FMCG sector (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) will need talent to support production, sales and marketing, and back-office functions such as finance, human resources, procurement, etc.



## Technology

No one can deny the role technology has played in keeping businesses afloat during the pandemic and keeping us connected during quarantine.

In the future, the collaboration tools, communication, entertainment, information, data and other services made possible by technology will become even more critical to the way society and the economy develops. This means that careers in technology will continue to boom for the foreseeable future.



## Supply Chain

We've all seen the empty shelves in grocery stores. There have been shortages of everything from paper products to cleaning supplies to meat, milk, disinfecting wipes, and even medicine.

Supply chains are often long and complex, with many critical hubs and potential choke



# Position Yourself for New Opportunities

**B**reaking into a new field will require you to rethink and reposition your resume, so you don't end up in the rejection pile.

- **Adjust your resume format.**

Since you are new to the field, you'll want to use a functional resume format that focuses on your skills instead of your experience.

- **Use a summary statement.**

A summary allows you to state your most relevant skills, impact and professional experience. Point out the ways your transferable skills and experience will benefit the organization during this time. For example, you might focus on your exceptional customer service skills, flexibility and adaptability, etc.

- **Customize each resume for the job.**

By customizing your resume, you ensure that you incorporate keywords from the posting, and the specific skills and experience the employer wants in a candidate.

- **Keep it easy to scan.**

Employers take less than 10 seconds to scan resumes to determine whether they deserve a second look. Keep it concise, use 10-, 11- or 12-point font, use half-inch margins, and place your skills section above your professional experience section.





# Open Yourself up To Nontraditional Roles

**O**ne of the best ways to break into a new industry is often overlooked: contract and temporary roles.

Unsure if temporary work is right for you? Consider the benefits:

- **A paycheck.**

First and foremost, temporary work provides you with a paycheck. You may even still be eligible for a portion of your unemployment, but talk to your state unemployment office for more details.

- **Benefits.**

Many staffing and recruiting firms offer benefits to temporary employees who work a specific number of hours.

- **Low barrier to entry.**

It's a lot easier to break into a new field as a temporary employee than a full-time employee. Employers are much more likely to hire someone without industry experience for short-term needs.

- **Connections.**

Do a great job on every assignment and connect with your bosses and co-workers on LinkedIn to build your network.

- **Experience.**

Every company you work for temporarily in your industry is another notch in your experience belt.

- **A door to a full-time job.**

If you rock an assignment and the employer is hiring, you parlay a short-term gig into a full-time role.





# Make Friends in High Places

Jumpstarting your career in the time of COVID-19 can be a challenge whether you are staying in the same industry or branching out into something new.

Often, it's not what you know that can make a difference but who you know.

That's why it's so important to spend time each week reconnecting with people in your network. It is also important to make new connections with recruiters who can help give you a leg up.

There are many benefits to working with a recruiter, including:

- **Breaking into new industries.**

It can be hard to break into a new field when you don't have experience or connections. A recruiter can help you showcase your transferable skills and show hiring managers your value.

- **Finding new ways to get your foot in the door with great employers.**

You probably have a list of a few places you'd love to work. But getting your foot in the door can be difficult. Whether they get you in the door with a short-term assignment or help you reach the top of the pile for a full-time role, a recruiter can help you break in a lot easier than trying to do it alone.

- **Access to unadvertised jobs.**

Many employers are using recruiters to fill positions rather than posting them online. Online posts can yield hundreds of applications, so companies use recruiters to help save time and identify top candidates quickly.

- **Feedback to make you a stronger candidate.**

Recruiters provide feedback after you have an interview. They will be upfront, providing both positive feedback and constructive

criticism so you know what you do well during interviews and areas you may need to work on. This type of information is rarely provided to candidates and can be an invaluable resource for landing a great job.

- **Salary negotiation.**

Typically, when you work with a recruiter, you'll discuss your salary requirements upfront, and they will recommend you for roles that meet your needs. If something breaks down in the offer stage and you get less than expected, the recruiter can handle the negotiation with the employer for you.

## Are you ready to get your career back on track?

Talk to a professional recruiter today and take back control of your career trajectory.

