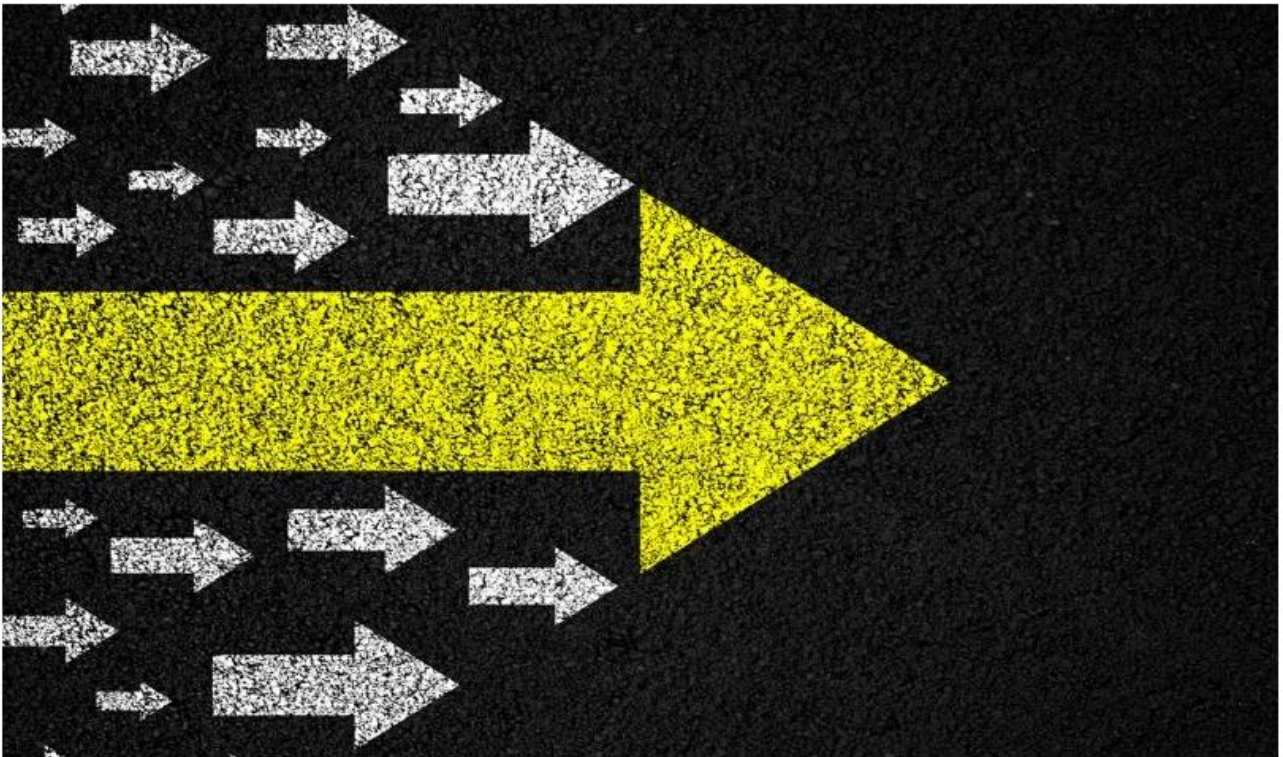


5 ways to keep your career on track in the COVID-19 era

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When business does resume, there will be a lot of competition for jobs but if you can show recruiters how you worked on your skills during this period you will be in a much better position.

The economic impact of COVID-19 has devastated some of the world's steadiest global employers. Now more than ever, workers must strive to be agile.

By Johanna Leggatt

The pandemic has thrown many career plans into disarray, with jobs lost, businesses in hibernation, and workers forced to adapt to [new working-from-home arrangements](#).

However, that doesn't mean your career has to go backwards, according to career and interview coach and founder of Relaunch Me, Leah Lambart, who says there are numerous career management strategies workers can adopt to stay ahead of the competition.

"Now is the time to really work on your skills," Lambart says.

"When business does resume, there will be a lot of competition for jobs but if you can show recruiters how you worked on your skills during this period you will be in a much better position."

Upskill and learn

Lambart recommends using this period to complete free or inexpensive online courses on platforms such as [Coursera](#), [LinkedIn Learning](#), [edX](#), [Udemy](#) or [FutureLearn](#).

"This is a great opportunity to develop new IT or software skills, such as in [Excel](#), or to undertake training that will enhance your future career," Lambart notes.

"Accept that recruitment is going to be slow for the next few months and focus on what you can do to add to your resume in terms of [upskilling](#)."

Network online

It's also a great time to broaden your career network by actively connecting with others on LinkedIn.

"A LinkedIn profile is imperative for people across all industries and you want to have a professional, keyword optimised and complete profile," Lambart says.

But simply extending invites to connect doesn't count.

"Actively connect with others by commenting on posts and actually engaging online," Lambart says.

HR specialist Karen Gately, founder of Corporate Dojo, agrees that now is the time to **build strong relationships**.

"When things do turn around again, that virtual network will be worth a lot to you," Gately says.

Update your resume and online presence

Also ensure that your key documents and information, such as your CV, portfolio or website, are **compelling and keyword-optimised**.

"Consider your audience and try and think of what they would search for and use those keywords [on your site and LinkedIn] to stand out," Lambart says.

If you have lost your job or your hours have been reduced, Gately says you need to be able to show that you have been actively engaged with your career through **upskilling or learning** during the coronavirus period.

If you are still employed you need to be demonstrating that you are part of the solution, Gately says.

"You need to show how you have been an effective team member while working remotely, or how you made your manager's job easier during this period."

Offer your services pro bono

If work has slowed and you are self-employed or run a business, now might be the time to offer your services pro bono as a marketing strategy and as a way of giving back.

You could host a webinar series, for example, featuring crisis management advice, which positions you as an expert in your field and puts your work in front of countless people.

"People always remember how you made them feel," Gately says.

"The fairness you showed and the optimism you displayed during this time will be attached to how you are remembered."

Change your mindset

There is no doubt the next six months will be tough, but Lambart says a positive attitude, in the face of fear, will put you in good stead.

"Being negative is not going to help anyone, so work on your mindset and find things to do that keep you energised and maintain your confidence," she says.

Gately also advises against "downloading your emotions" in ways that could harm your career.

"You need to understand the reputational impact of social media," she says.

"Feel the emotions, of course, but be very mindful at the same time about what other people can see, and what perception that creates."