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You Can Land a Job – Even Now

By [RUTH MANTELL](#)

With job losses piling up, the prospect of finding a spot may be daunting for college graduates, laid-off workers and employees looking to make a move.

Despite the depressing headlines, companies are still hiring, and you don't have to be a Ph.D. to nab a job. Instead, experts say workers should focus on areas that are adding jobs, as well as turnover within their own industries.

"There's always hiring going on," says Harry Holzer, a professor at Georgetown University and former chief economist at the Labor Department.

"The American labor market is characterized by a lot of churning," says Mr. Holzer. "Beneath the net [job loss] numbers, there are always people quitting, so there's always replacement demand. There's less new demand, but there's still hiring, and that's true in a lot of sectors."

There's a job opportunity out there "for nearly everyone," says Eric Winegardner, vice president of client adoption with job site Monster.com. "If you are in an area with negative growth, don't think there is not an opening, there is just more competition."

More than 410,000 new U.S. job postings were on Monster.com over the 90 days ending April 18. Some of the occupations that were most in demand during that period were computer systems analysts, accountants, registered nurses and sales managers.

Here are four key routes for job seekers:

1 Stay in your field

Even if your field is losing jobs, you don't need to rush into a field such as health care that is adding jobs, Mr. Winegardner says.

"It's not a necessity that you leave accounting and become a nurse," Mr. Winegardner says. "You have a choice."

Workers who are willing to take contract or part-time work may have an edge within their field, says Allison O'Kelly, chief executive of Mom Corps, a staffing firm based in Atlanta that specializes in flexible employment. To get their foot in the door at the right company, some may have to take lower-level jobs, she says.

"It's certainly an employer's market at this point, and in order to get the job, you need to be somebody who is going to be available, flexible and easy to deal with," Ms. O'Kelly says. "[Employers] want to get

exactly what they are looking for, and if you are not giving it to them, someone else will."

She adds that contract work can turn into a full-time position once a company sees you in action.

2 Go for growth

Looking for a job in the resilient health-care industry could be a good tactic for the right workers, experts say.

"Everyone knows that health care and elder care are almost completely impervious to the business cycle," Mr. Holzer says. "That means you are going to face more new demand, net growth and gross hiring in that sector."

Health-care workers are among the lucky few who can take advantage of relatively high demand for their services, and move fairly easily from job to job, Mr. Winegardner says.

"If there's a nurse looking to make a change in employer, that's relatively easy to do," Mr. Winegardner says. "In high-growth areas, if you have those skills you are in high demand."

However, workers shouldn't cut themselves off from other possibilities.

Even if you have mostly worked for large companies, consider opportunities in smaller businesses as well. "Small and midsize companies are coming back before large companies because they are more nimble," Ms. O'Kelly says.

3 Stand out

Especially in occupations that are on net losing jobs, competition is fierce, and you have to appear exceptional to receive an offer, experts say. Now is not the time to arrive disheveled to an interview.

"It's about competition, it's about standing out, it's about putting your best foot forward," Mr. Winegardner says.

Emphasizing high skill levels, rather than a general knowledge, can also work to your advantage.

"Where the job requires a certain level of skill or training or education, that's where there's anecdotal evidence for tightness in the labor market," says Conrad DeQuadros, an economist at New York research firm RDQ Economics.

4 Be prepared

In these Internet days, job seekers can get an edge by researching a potential employer. Be prepared to tell an employer what you can do for the company, rather than asking what it can do for you.

"A big part of the job search is not just applying but gathering information," Mr. Winegardner says. "When I get a chance to interview, I need to convey what I know about [the company]. It's not acceptable to come in not prepared."

Mr. Winegardner also recommends that job seekers figure out who the recruiter is at a company.

"The person needs to make a personal connection with you -- that's every bit as important as your qualifications," Mr. Winegardner says.

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