



Take Action And Take Control

For job-seekers, times are tough, but there's no reason to panic. Good jobs are available for those who are prepared.

» The current economic crisis has created an air of uncertainty for all. While the OTC industry is well-positioned to weather the storm and most companies remain fundamentally healthy and strong, all are assessing how they can improve operations and do more with less in order to preserve margins and deliver on financial commitments. Continued consolidation in the OTC and pharma sectors are also a factor.

Many marketers who were secure in their roles just six months ago are now unemployed. Those still employed can't help but question how secure their job really is – few people are immune these days. So what should you do? In short, take action and take control.

The worst thing anyone can do is pretend there is nothing going on. Whether you are out of work and looking or happily employed, there are some basic things you need to do.

First and foremost you need to build your contact base and network. Network with business associates (functional colleagues, agencies, JV/alliance partners and suppliers). Network with industry and social contacts. And network with recruiters. You never know where job opportunities will come from and it is a fact that people with strong networks are more likely to tap into a broader array of opportunities. So invest the time and effort to build and maintain relationships on all fronts. In the end it boils down to reciprocity – people appreciate being helped and they will be more inclined to help you in

times of need if you've helped them. So return phone calls and take the time and make the effort to help when you can.

Make sure your resume is up to date – you never know when you're going to need it so be prepared. If you don't have an updated resume, commit to updating it now. If you have recently updated it, keep it current by updating job titles and accomplishments every six months.

If you're in between jobs and actively looking, keep your head up, think positively and have confidence and clarity both in what you have to offer and what you're looking for. Understand your strengths and core competencies and be prepared to articulate your career goals and your differentiated value proposition in 60 seconds or less. If it takes any longer, people will turn off.

If you're unsure what you want to do, take the time to assess what's important to you. Consider work-life balance, work environment, size of company and industry. Assuming you have a classic consumer OTC background you can leverage your experience in different ways... look at DTC marketing in pharma or medical devices; start-up or private equity opportunities; more mainstream CPG opportunities or perhaps leverage your "classic marketing training" in a B2B or less consumer-centric business where you can bring discipline and build competency.

When you decide to make a move, make sure you are making the

right one for the right reasons. If you're employed and simply switching companies, make sure you are running to a great opportunity vs. running away from a problem. If you are currently unemployed and looking to step into something new, don't jump at the first thing that comes your way (unless you are forced to for economic reasons). Take the time to ensure the move will offer you (most of) what you're looking for. Make sure the business model and products / services are viable and strong; there is a clear commitment to marketing and the role in question; and last but not most importantly, make sure there is a strong cultural fit – cultural issues tend to be the single-largest derailer.

Yes, times are tough, but this is not a time to panic. There are jobs out there, and good ones at that. Companies are filling vacancies and many others are capitalizing on this opportunity to strategically bring in talent from the outside. Think about your career goals, your own personal brand and value proposition and make sure you manage your career. Rest assured, no one else will. <<

Andrew Hayes is the executive director of Russell Reynolds Associates. He is a member of the Consumer Sector and Marketing Officers Practice, and conducts senior-level searches for consumer products companies. He can be reached by e-mail at AndrewHayes@RussellReynolds.com.