

# GET THE JOB

## When It's Time to Start Over

Getting fired may be the end of one job, but it's not the end of your career.

Bouncing back involves taking stock, and then moving forward. If you can do both, you'll join more than 90% of people in a 10-year study by Inc.com who said they actually ended up better off after being let go.

### **DON'T DO ANYTHING RASH**

If you've been fired, it's important to take a deep breath before making any decisions based on emotion. Leaving a job is never easy, but that's particularly so if it wasn't your choice. Don't allow yourself to be pressured into resigning, if you are planning on applying for unemployment. Resigning is only wise in the rarest of circumstances, including a situation when there was misconduct on your part, since it keeps you from receiving federal benefits.

Depart from the office in an orderly manner. Avoid confrontations with former bosses and co-workers or social media outbursts that may put your company, management and, more importantly, yourself in a bad light. Potential employers, hiring managers



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and related decision makers will be less likely to sign someone onto their payroll who risks their own reputation in order to exact some sort of public revenge. Continue acting professionally and you'll smooth the way to your next job.

### **STOP TO REASSESS**

You may, in fact, have

recourse — depending on the circumstances of your termination. There are laws in place to help if your firing is deemed wrongful because of issues like discrimination, or if it was a form of retribution for acting as a whistleblower. In some cases, you may be protected by a contract, employment agreement or various union or professional memberships.

Many people are employed on a so-called at-will basis, however, so they can be let go any time at the discretion of management. Consider contacting an attorney who specializes in employment cases. They may be able to offer options that could extend your employment.

If offered by management, don't immediately sign a sev-

erance agreement. Instead, U.S. News has recommended that these packages be reviewed first by a lawyer. They may be able to help negotiate a more favorable outcome — but remember that this doesn't always relate to cash. Forbes has noted that some severance negotiations may also include extending your retirement or health benefits. They can also include language about how your departure would be described in the future, with many former employees asking that the company agrees to frame it as a mutual separation when contacted by hiring managers.

### **PREPARE TO DISCUSS IT**

As with any separation, you'll need to update your resume, social media profiles and cover letter to reflect that you've left the company. But you'll also have to prepare yourself to talk about what happened. The question of why you left will inevitably come up as part of any future job interview — and it always weighs heavily in decisions made by hiring managers. Avoid speaking in negatives about your time there, and how it ended. Instead, be honest about why it didn't work out and what you've learned. Perhaps the job you're in line for next will be a better fit.