

# OVERCOME CAREER ROADBLOCKS

The following ideas were contributed by recently successful job seekers:

## **Roadblock: Lack of Practical Experience / Out-of-Date Skills**

### **Tip: Build your subject knowledge and hands-on experience**

- Take continuing ed classes, e-seminars.
- Attend conferences, professional association events on relevant topics
- Volunteer your services (i.e. “practice”) for friends, non-profits, professional associations, your target company, etc. Put this on your resume!
- Increase your subject knowledge on-the-cheap by browsing through books in your field of interest at bookstores/ libraries. Keep your eyes open for others in the same aisle; they may be good contacts!

## **Roadblock: An Untapped Career Network**

### **Tip: Make networking as easy and non-threatening as possible**

- Inform those around you of your job search: friends, past clients/employers, others whom you already know. Then branch out to university alumni, professional groups, etc.
- Let people in groups you’re already a part of know what you’re up to, job-wise: religious, social, professional associations, online communities
- If asking for “help” is hard for you, look at your request in a way that occurs as an opportunity for the other person: now they know you and can call on you if they would like some info, assistance, etc.! Also, be sure others remember you as courteous; regularly follow up with thank you notes
- Remember that networking assistance can come in the form of advice, suggestions, referrals to other people; it includes more than just direct job leads!

## **Roadblock: Feeling Stuck/Unmotivated**

### **Tip: Make a plan to keep positive and develop momentum**

- Stay involved with others
  - Meet regularly with friends to prevent isolation
  - Network with alumni, attend Chamber of Commerce Job Forum, EDD Job Club, other supportive events for job seekers
  - Avoid lots of TV – it isolates you!
- Create and commit to job search goals – choose a partner to help you stay on-task
- Stay healthy- eat well, exercise, participate in activities that increase your well-being
- Plan to have fun! Low-cost activities: explore a new part of the city with a picnic lunch, enjoy a walk in the park, read a great fiction book from the library, go to a matinee movie with a friend, volunteer for your favorite organization...the list goes on...

## **Roadblock: Financial Stressors**

### **Tip: Create and follow a budget**

- Try viewing your situation as a challenge to realign your values – much of what you might have once thought of as essential expenditures may really be a relief to let go of. Get budgeting ideas from publications such as *Your Money* or *Your Life* or *Tightwad Gazette*
- Track what you spend to be aware of your spending reality! Try money management software such as Quicken, QuickBooks, etc.
- See friends around free/low-cost activities: walk on the beach, have coffee instead of dinner out, throw a potluck party, go to museum on free day, etc. Be creative! It’s no joke that the best things in life are free.
- Shop at discount stores (share account fees with a friend), comparison shop: try [lowermybills.com](http://lowermybills.com)
- Create a less expensive living situation- whether taking on roommates or moving to new area.