

Jobless? What Have You Done Lately?

BY IMAN JEFFERSON

Despite growing unemployment lines, high school teacher Kristian White remains optimistic that she will find employment soon. Jobless since August 2010, White is just one of 2.8 million of Americans that has been out of a job 12 months or more, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in July.

White currently works as a waitress to support her three children.

"I don't have health insurance or retirement, but it's a job that gives me a lot of time flexibility and some pocket change in the meantime," White explains of her decision to secure employment outside her profession.

Many long-term unemployed wonder if significant time out of the workforce will lessen their chances of finding full-time employment.

According to George Medellin, president of Medellin & Associates, that's not necessarily the case. "It depends on what the person has done during that time unemployed; were they at home or were they consulting or volunteering?"

Medellin specializes in executive recruitment for boardroom and senior/mid-level diversity executives. He says, "Employers want to know what led you to leaving your job and what have you done in that time since. The unwritten rule is that companies don't want to hire anyone that is unemployed, so you have to convince them otherwise."

He also recommends networking with contacts, "Leverage all your networking contacts: alumni, professional associations, fraternities and sororities, church, social media, etc... tell the whole world you're looking for a position."

The name of today's game: Don't give up.



Revive Your Résumé

Remove objective section in the résumé. Get straight to the point of your professional experience.

Fill in the gaps. Enroll in a certificate program and learn a foreign language so recruiters will see that your time off was spent wisely. Try offering your services by consulting or volunteering to avoid gaps in your employment history.

Action speaks louder. Use action verbs and highlight your specific results. What did you "lead," "develop" or "accomplish" that would pique an employer's interest?

Know the lingo. Online job sites scan résumés for buzz words that tie to specific positions and industries.

Be honest. Don't lie on your résumé; it will catch up with you.