

# TRANSITION STRATEGIES, LLC

**SUCCEED** in ways you never thought possible

88 Militia Hill Drive, Wayne PA 19087 610.640.5373 phone 610.640.3736 fax

robin@transition-strategies.com  
Call2robin@aol.com

[www.transition-strategies.com](http://www.transition-strategies.com)  
[www.robinbond.com](http://www.robinbond.com)

**WINTER 2009**

Dear Clients and Friends:

We all know about companies "not making the numbers", reorganizing for the um-teenth time, going out of business — and thousands of people losing their jobs. Each cut touches not only that employee, but his/her spouse, children and other family members. The ripple effect is huge, and the emotional costs can be devastating, depending both on how the company handles the situation AND how the employee is prepared to respond to it.

Since November, I have been appearing regularly on

CNN televised broadcasts, answering viewer questions about jobs, and providing advice on how to navigate today's workplaces. Please follow these appearances via our web site, so friends and colleagues who need this type of help can tune in.

If change is happening to you or someone you care about, let us help:

- ◆ empower you *prior* to an adverse action:
- ◆ develop effective strategies to improve your severance; *and*
- ◆ when you land that new job offer, help you maximize pay and protections.



The "luckiest" people are often the most prepared.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robin Bond".

Robin Bond, Esquire  
Managing Partner

## Words of Wisdom

*No man was ever wise by chance.*

*You will never find time for anything. If you want time, you must make it.*

*Saints are sinners who kept on going.*

*Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible and achieves the impossible.*

## Our Mission:

We are **agents** for executives and other professionals.

~~~

We create negotiating strategies for *your* success.

~~~

**Severance packages**

**New job offers**

**Employment agreements**

**Any career crisis**

~~~

**We make deals happen.**

## New FMLA Regulations Effective January 2009

In November, the Department of Labor released hundreds of pages of new regulations, effective January 16, 2009, governing the Family Medical Leave Act.

The FLMA allows an employee to take up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave due to a serious health condition. The act also permits the employee to take unpaid leave to care for a sick family member, or birth or adoption of a child. Some highlights:

Under the new regulations, the FLMA still requires that employees must work for an employer for at least 12 months before they qualify for FMLA leave, but the 12 months now do not need to be consecutive. The break in service permitted has been increased from five years to seven years. "Serious health condition" has been redefined by imposing a time limit on when the employee visits his or her health care provider. An employee considered to have a serious health condition must now visit a health care provider two times within 30 days, and the first visit generally must occur within 7 days of the first day of incapacity. "Periodic treatment" of a chronic condition is defined as at least twice a year.

Employees may be disqualified from receiving perfect attendances awards under the new regulations. Finally, company officials, but not the direct supervisor of the employee, may now contact the employee's health care provider about medical certification matters without the employee's consent.

## Transition Strategies, LLC

88 Militia Hill Drive  
Wayne, PA 19087  
610-640-5373  
610-640-3736 fax  
robin@transition-strategies.com



### “Jobs 2009: Q&A”

#### **Q) What are some of the warning signs that my job could be in jeopardy?**

A) Ask yourself: Is your role and contribution to the company being minimized? Here are some clues that your job may be eliminated:

- \* You no longer “get the memos”, meeting invitations, etc.
- \* You are given impossible tasks
- \* Your responsibilities are taken away
- \* Your boss is “papering you” about every little thing, and doesn’t want to talk with you any more
- \* Your “champions” have departed
- \* Your job is posted on line!

#### **Q) If I’m laid off, can I negotiate for severance? What should I do?**

A) Learn what company policies say about termination & severance, and then negotiate to maximize your severance benefits. If your departure is part of a group layoff, it may be more difficult, as companies try to button down the details for everyone in the group to be treated the same. You have to show why your circumstances merit a different treatment.

#### Some items to negotiate for:

- More severance pay or benefits in exchange for something the company may want – are you signing a release? A noncompete? Get paid for that!
- What will the company tell potential employers about you?
- Outplacement, payment of professional dues, or conference fees.

## ***FAST FACTS***

### **According to a recent “Holidays 2008” survey by HRHero:**

- ◆ 70% of employers grant between 6-11 paid holidays annually
- ◆ 26% of employers treat 12/24 as a paid holiday; 28% treat 12/26 as one
- ◆ 67% of employers make Jan. 1 a paid holiday, but only 2% plan to make Friday Jan. 2 a paid holiday in 2008.
- ◆ In choosing which employees get priority in choosing their days off, 23% of employers say it is up to the supervisor, 18% go by who asks first, 17% use some type of seniority system, and 9% take turns rotating.

### **According to the Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics:**

- ◆ The national unemployment rate is 6.5%. Pennsylvania’s is 5.8%
- ◆ The federal minimum wage is \$6.55 per hour and is slated to rise to \$7.25 per hour in July 2009.
- ◆ In the third quarter of 2008, national productivity in the nonfarm business sector rose by 1.3%
- ◆ More than 1.2 million jobs were lost in 2008
- ◆ Go to <http://www.dol.gov/dolfaq/dolfaq.asp> for more workplace stats!

*[www.transition-strategies.com](http://www.transition-strategies.com)*

### **The Payoff of Socializing**

Gensler’s 2008 workplace survey showed more time spent socializing in the office can help boost productivity. The survey shows top companies have had their employees spend more time collaborating with and learning from each other than average companies. More time was spent socializing than in “focus mode” - a time when an employee performs his work alone. Top companies spent 43% of their time in collaboration mode, while average companies collaborated only 21% of the time. ([www.Gensler.com](http://www.Gensler.com))

### **Unemployment Benefits Extended**

President Bush signed legislation (HR6867) on November 21, 2008 that will extend unemployment insurance benefits for 7 more weeks. In states where the unemployment rate is above 6%, the benefits will be extended for 13 more weeks.

The combination of rising unemployment rates and shrinking insurance funds could force states to reduce unemployment benefits or raise their unemployment tax. Michigan and Wisconsin are among these states who will be raising their unemployment taxes for the first time in twenty years.

### **Consumer Driven Health Plans**

It’s the time of year for Americans to choose their medical plans for the coming year. Lately, many workers are finding their medical plan options have shrunk.

The *NY Times* reports that high deductible plans have become the sole option for about 100 large companies (including Nissan and Delta Airlines) and hundreds of smaller companies. In these plans, the amount an employee is obliged to spend on medical care before the insurance begins is likely to be \$1,100 or more per individual. Workers pay lower premiums to offset the high deductible.

Nissan is providing a \$1,600 deposit in a family’s health savings account to motivate employees to become actively involved in managing their health care, and to encourage wellness initiatives.

Health care reform will hopefully be a top initiative of the new administration in 2009 so that both employers and employees can find a financially workable way to provide the amount of coverage that people truly need.