



## **JOB SECURITY - WHERE DID IT GO?**

---

By Kimo Look

What did happen to our job security? I remember that, until very recently, all the big companies I worked for told me, “We are a special firm; we carefully hire and carefully invest in our employees, bringing them into our culture, building them into our team. We are careful about hiring and even more careful about firing.” Today I hear, “If we have work, you have work. If we don’t have work, well maybe....”

### **What happened?**

It seems that—not too long ago—job security meant finding a position in a good company, showing up on time, performing your job reasonably well, and having fairly predictable advancement up the ranks.

### **What happened?**

This is but one of several important questions:

- What is happening?
- Why is it happening?
- What can or should we do to get the security we want and need?

After all, we all have house payments and car payments and we must feed, clothe, and educate our kids (if we have kids) and think about the winter season of our own lives.

We must explore and thoroughly understand these very important questions to protect ourselves and strategically guide our careers. This issue outlines predictions about our careers and steps we should be taking.

As mentioned in previous articles, we are involved in BIG change. Our society is caught up in what many call the Information Revolution. A major outcome of this revolution is intense competitiveness in business and in the economy. The results play out in our newspapers every day. Have you noticed that, for the last decade, an unusually large number of companies have undergone drastic change—either mega-merger and massive buyouts or unbelievable bankruptcy and enormous downsizing? This is how the U.S. economy and the companies within it are adjusting to the Revolution!

Along with these changes and intense competition came (or more accurately, “went”) the notion of job security.

The accuracy of this viewpoint may be irrelevant. The fact is: Our job security has changed. You probably know more people now who have changed jobs in the few last years than you knew 10 years ago. You probably feel less secure than you did 10 years ago.



## So what does this lack of job security really mean?

Essentially, there was once an unwritten social contract between the employer and the employee. It was a deal: The employee traded loyalty; the employer traded security. Today, the contract is gone and the employer admits to no longer providing security, at the same time clearly tossing career responsibility onto the shoulders of the employee.

To be fair to the employer and to companies, this change came about—not because upper management is greedy or cruel—but because it has no choice. Top management could no longer run things the old way, even if it desperately wanted to. The new economy, the new competitiveness, is very unforgiving. It punishes those who fail to catch on to what is happening and change their ways. Evidence is in the fact that all companies, rather than only a few, are behaving this way. It is a society-wide movement.

But, there is a silver lining to this cloud: The new economy rewards those who understand what is going on and adjust to it well.

## So the real questions are:

- What can you do?  
and
- What should you do?

The good news: There is a lot you can and should do. Read through this series of articles and have a **Career by Choice** and not by **Chance**.

“Because it’s your career.”