

Organisations continually adapt to keep up with local and national market forces, which means that employers will regularly review their staffing structures, and positions will fall under threat of redundancy.

Facing redundancy or job loss can be a very stressful thing. Issues like finances, status and self-esteem take a knock. To some people it can feel like a bereavement in terms of loss, others are less affected.

So what can you do if you find yourself being made redundant? We have put together some helpful steps for you.

Manage your mindset

Redundancy indicates that the role you occupy is no longer required by your employer, it is not a personal attack on you, so it is important that you try and keep your emotions in check. If the redundancy is unexpected it is natural that you will feel shocked, and possibly angry, however it's vitally important that you learn to develop a positive mindset. A positive outlook will provide you with the energy to push ahead with the following steps.

Discuss your redundancy package

It is essential that you discuss with your employer what redundancy package, including alternative employment, is on offer. Always take your time to discuss things fully, thinking through all the options, avoid making a rush decision or accepting another role that may not be suitable for you. Make notes of any meetings and keep copies of any correspondence.

For advice on your packages, entitlements and other positions it may be helpful to seek advice from your local Citizens Advice Bureau, see www.citizensadvice.org.uk. If you have any queries, or believe that your selection for redundancy is unreasonable then contact an employment solicitor or ACAS www.acas.org.uk. It will be beneficial for you to have any agreement given to you checked by your local employment solicitor, before signing.

Plan for the future

It is important to give due consideration to what to do with any money received through your redundancy package. It may be enough to see you through for a period of time, or give you options for the future e.g. starting your own business, undertaking retraining, travel. If a large sum it may be best to consult a financial advisor.

Leave on excellent terms

It isn't unheard of for companies to re-hire redundant staff when they have weathered financial problems, so don't burn any bridges. Maintain your dignity and professionalism right to the end.

In addition you can look to your network of contacts for help and support. Your previous employers, your ex-colleagues, and even any former clients may be able to help you identify what you're capable of doing, and will be the best people to recommend you to their contacts. So it is critical that you leave a favourable impression when you leave.

Regardless of the circumstances of your departure, handle yourself with total professionalism. Avoid any scenes or the temptation to complain and play the victim.

Plan and execute your Job Hunting Campaign

Planning and preparation is essential for your job hunting campaign to succeed.

Be clear about what you want. Do you want to continue in the same industry or change sectors? Losing your job may be the golden opportunity to make big changes, so take time to figure out what it is you really want to do.

Be clear about what you have to offer. Take time to think through and identify your talents, skills and strengths, and how they differentiate you from others in the market place – you need to stand out.

Jobseeker Guide

Getting Back on Track - A Guide to Redundancy

Develop a marketing message. Once you know what you want to do and what you have to offer, get really good at communicating a clear message that draws in the right kind of opportunities whilst differentiating you from the rest of the crowd. The message will include an effective CV, a covering letter and your answer to the "so what do you do?" question at social functions. For guidance on how to write an effective and interview winning CV, see our guides on www.wh-employment.co.uk, or seek professional advice.

Get out into the market in a big way. Once you have developed your clear message, devote your time and energy to searching through multiple search channels: recruitment firms, HR recruiters, job boards, specialist magazines, direct applications and of course your network. Networking should be a primary focus - personal contacts and referrals can often be very effective.

Be flexible. Whilst it's important to be clear about what you want, it's also healthy to remain open-minded about what you'll consider. There may be all manner of roles which can use your skills. Similarly there may be self-employment opportunities that could be appropriate. You can never tell where an initial conversation can take you, so keep an open mind and say "yes" to new opportunities.

Keep up to date. Unless you plan on taking a sabbatical, it's important to keep up to date with trends. This will often help you find new opportunities whilst also helping you impress when you go to interviews.

Rebuild your confidence. Your skills are not redundant. The job you were doing is redundant. This is the single most important thing to realise. Someone else may be crying out for your skills set even as your current company doesn't need them any more.

For a detailed guide on how to go about preparing for and starting your job hunting campaign, see the guides on our website www.wh-employment.co.uk.

Create accountability

It's important to have people around you, not only for support but also to ensure that you stay focused, step outside your comfort zone and find your next role.

So get friends, ex-colleagues, a coach or mentor to hold you accountable for following through on the above steps.

Set time aside time each day for job hunting, but also take time to do activities not associated with finding a job, so that you have the right balance.

Explaining redundancy to your next employer

Redundancy is not something to be ashamed of; as such honesty is always the best policy. Be honest, direct, but always positive regarding the situation. It is not good practise to criticise your previous employers.

Approaching redundancy in the right way, can help turn what seems like a major set-back into an opportunity to start building the career and lifestyle you have always wanted.

Useful Contacts

ACAS (The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service): www.acas.org.uk

ACAS has a number of helpful sections providing advice on employment rights and redundancy situations

Business Link: www.businesslink.org

If you are considering starting your own business and are unsure of how to start Business Link is a free business advice and support service, available online and through local advisers, who will be able to assist you.

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB):
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

The CAB website provides a range of advice including financial matters, employment and redundancy matters, and can be used to locate your nearest office.

Directgov: www.direct.gov.uk

Directgov gives advice on a range of employment & benefits issues, including redundancy pay, your rights as a worker and locate your local Jobcentre. To seek advice on benefits claims that you may be entitled to contact Jobcentre Plus on 0800 055 6688.

workSMART: www.worksmart.org.uk

A website from the TUC providing advice for workers to get the most out of their work.