

OurGuide to Redundancy

These are hints and tips based on personal experience and we offer no guarantees about the accuracy of the information or the effectiveness of the points made. This document is designed to help the reader recognise that others have been through the redundancy process before and get them thinking about actions they may choose to take.

Getting ready for redundancy

Worried about your company? Reading some signs? Had a warning or just get an uneasy feeling. Redundancy can hit like a train or creep up like a snail in treacle. Sometimes you get it right while other times you wish for it as a blessed relief.

Whatever happens, redundancy can be a shock. When you are worried about effects on the family, hit on the bank balance or change to status you cannot underestimate the emotional impact. Planning may help you mitigate the effects, putting you in control when or if redundancy hits.

What's the plan?

Given the current climate, just like a good corporation you should have a disaster recovery plan in place. In many ways, just like with some corporates, the need to have this plan in place doesn't occur to many until disaster has hit. Sure, we take out insurance on property and cars. We even insure our travel or mobile phones but we don't put our own career insurances in place. Having plans in place when redundancy strikes means that you are less likely to feel worthless or abused. You are in control because you have a plan to change your career path. You can investigate options in your own time; evaluate the potential without pressure of having to feed the family.

Quick check list

1. **Avoid surprises**

Make sure you keep an update to date cv. Every time you complete something successfully record it so that you can use it when the right time comes.

2. **Research**

Who in your area can provide you with potential employment? Take a look now who might want to take on your skill set – don't wait until you are out of work.

3. **Networking**

I laugh out loud when people have ignored me for years want to add me to their social networks – I know a quick check shows they are a new consultant or they have an end date on their last job posting. Get in touch with people before you are on your bike – people will like it.

4. **Avoid surprises**

Check out your personal and career aspirations. What directions can you take? What is going to satisfy you in the next position. Can you get help with these? You bet! Guess who you 're gonna call?

5. **USPs**

Make yourself aware of your skills and how these match with the employment market. You have lots of talents and ambitions that can be transferred elsewhere.

If you have done these things you will be more ready to approach people if redundancy happens. (Indeed you might be in a position where you have new things lined up if it does happen). You will certainly be more effective at finding the job you want in your job search, and better prepared for the interviews that will come your way.

6. **Redundancy the small print**

Redundancy still comes as a shock but being prepared may mean it is less of a shock. What this means in practice is that you may be less likely to sign away your rights in terms of a redundancy agreement.

As an example, I once knew a month before it happened that my role was going to be made redundant. This was empowering, as I was able to

prepare. I could work out what the value was to the company of me being kept on to complete a contract and I could arrange to take on work that they didn't want when I left.

If you're prepared, you will be less likely to sign redundancy agreements that are not in your interest because you are in a state of shock.

Not taking professional advice could cost more

Remember you should examine any documents carefully. If you can negotiate for your company to pay the legal costs of having these professionally examined, do so. For some types of agreements in the UK companies are obliged to pay for legal support. Ask! If the answer is no, spend the money yourself as sometimes the way the agreements are written can have a huge impact on tax liability that you have.

Negotiate. Make sure you take full advantage of financial entitlements, possible outplacement and support services your employer could offer. What about that old company laptop you have, mobile phone number – all have value to you.

Personal Impact

Apart from the obvious period of unemployment and financial difficulty the main danger of redundancy is the impact of despair and dysfunction. Maintain an active routine, to keep physically fit and mentally active.

Recovery

Like all major difficult life events, it is important to understand the need to go through recovery, often referred to as a 'mourning process'. This involves a range of, initially negative, emotions of varying degrees of intensity – shock, disbelief, anger, fantasy, depression and guilt. It is during this negative phase that people may need support.

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