

Career First Aid for Surviving Redundancy



By Carole Brown

Job cuts and losses are a new normal in today's workplace. Sometimes these are on a massive scale, causing large-scale dislocation to whole industries and communities. In other cases they are not so cataclysmic, except of course to the individuals and families affected. Sometimes redundancies are welcomed by people as an opportunity to start a new career, fund a course of study or simply scale down and transition to retirement. Most times however they cause uncertainty and anxiety, especially if there is little warning given.

Here are five Career First Aid steps for those who aren't as prepared for redundancy as they want to be. They are designed to be a starting point to help you to survive and, even thrive through, a redundancy on your way to your next job.

Step 1 – Adopt a positive attitude

Adopt a positive and future-focused mindset. As difficult as this can be, it is essential to act quickly and confidently. You won't be able to do this if you dwell on the injustice and discomfort of your situation. And please, don't take it personally or let embarrassment get the better of you – redundancies are so commonplace these days that most of us experience at least one through our working lives.

It is far more productive to act constructively and be around positive people that help you to be resilient and support your job search. It may take a while to secure your next job – this is normal, so be prepared for that. But be open and alert to possibilities and remain confident about what you have to offer.

Step 2 – Boost your confidence with a skills audit

Identify what it is you want to do and can do. What is your skills set? Think deeply and fully about this as most people chronically under-estimate their skills. Complete a quick “stocktake” or audit and, really importantly, understand the transferability of these skills to other jobs. Try not to be limited in your thinking about what you have always done. Think about what you want to do and what skills you have right now to help you achieve that – I can almost guarantee that there are jobs out there you have never even thought about and yet are a good fit for your skills, values and interests.

There could be gaps in your knowledge and skills – how can you fill them? Will your employer provide support or funding for re-training, further training or outplacement services? Make the most of them and/or consider engaging a career coach to plan your next steps.

Step 3 – Check for opportunities: knowing where to look

Most jobs are found through your contacts and networks. Think about who is in your network and in a position to guide you, and provide advice, ideas, information and encouragement about potential work opportunities. Brainstorm the possibilities – typically you will know many people who can assist. They in turn can suggest others to connect to.

In addition, there is a lot of information out there about the current labour market - try government websites such as the Labour Market Information Portal, sign up on job vacancy boards like Seek and CareerOne, and connect with local employment services and agencies. Gather as much information as you can through these sources, newspapers and industry and professional associations. The more information you have, the better! Think laterally about opportunities and be open to offers for part-time and short term work as well as those that come from left field. For more tips on job search, go to [fast track your job search](#).

Step 4 – Update your resume and brush up your interview skills

Your résumé is your essential “calling card” that needs to be ready and up-to-date as soon as you start to canvas opportunities. The best résumés are targeted to each position, show a decent amount of research and thought, are positive in tone and professionally presented. Keep them brief – 3-4 pages is more than enough for most jobs, although check what is requested. There are many good examples of résumé and CVs available through reputable job search sites. Remember to tailor each application to individual jobs. Of course these days, lots of recruitment occurs through social media, so make sure your profile/s is up to date and presents you in the way you want an employer to notice you!

It is almost too obvious to mention, but whether it is through applications or interviews be the best you can be. For most of us who find interviews nerve-wracking and to be endured rather than enjoyed, then preparation and practise is the key. For more advice about preparing for interviews, take a look at [best tips for succeeding at job interviews](#).

Step 5 – Focus, flexibility and resilience

Typically, job hunting takes time. Be prepared for that and remain focussed on the type of work you want to do. Give it the time and focus it deserves – treat it like a job. At the same time think flexibly about opportunities and be open to what comes your way. And what you learn along the way this time will help you to [future-proof your career](#).

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Carole Brown, [Individual Career Solutions](#), 2014