

It could be you

We all hope it doesn't happen to us, but with the economy tightening, some of us will lose our jobs or be put on shorter hours. Here are some top tips to help you cope with redundancy if you should face it:

Know your rights : If you have two years service or more you will be entitled to a redundancy payment and to notice of redundancy which can either be worked or paid in lieu. There are websites available that can help you calculate what payment you are entitled to by law. If you have at least one year's service you are not eligible for redundancy pay but you are still entitled to a fair dismissal i.e. a formal process should have been followed. Whatever your service, if you don't think you've been treated fairly you have the right to raise a grievance with your employer and you can still do this if you are no longer employed by them. If in doubt speak to the Citizens Advice Bureau for advice.

Money : The first concern is to work out how long we you can survive without a salary coming in. Document your normal spend and see how you can reduce this to the bare essentials, look at your savings to calculate how long they will last you and budget accordingly. Don't forget if you are looking to reduce payments on credit cards etc, make sure you understand what the interest rate is and pay off the highest interest ones first. If things get really tough, you may need to take some harsh decisions – do you really need a car ? Could you sell some things on e-bay ? If you own a home could you rent out a room ? If you are renting could you rent a smaller home or move back in with family ?

Finding another job : Unfortunately, looking for another job during a recession may take up to 3 times longer than you expected so be realistic with yourself. Remind yourself that this is not a reflection of how employable you personally are, it is most likely due to the exceptional market situation we are in at the moment. You may need to be flexible and consider jobs that won't use your whole skill-set – remember it's generally easier to find a job when you are already employed and companies tend to advertise their vacancies internally first.

Keeping perspective : As tempting as it may be to spend every waking hour job searching, this is not entirely healthy. It's generally better to organise daily and weekly routines for carrying out your job hunting and to engage in some other activities that you enjoy. Perhaps take the time to clear out the attic or the garage (and find some stuff for a car boot sale ?), do some longstanding house maintenance or simply take some exercise to improve your general wellbeing. Voluntary work is a good way of occupying your time and can keep your skills up to date too.

Handling the roller coaster : Some people find it devastating to lose their job, others find it a happy release but most people oscillate between feeling bitter and angry at what's happened and then positive that they will find a way forward. Whatever your reaction is, try to focus on what you can influence and how you can manage your future rather than dwelling on the past. If you are struggling, seek the support of a career coach or a counsellor - or at the very least locate a job seeker's support group so you are not alone.

For further information please contact: Michelle Lucas at www.coachU4success.co.uk

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