

Redundancy: Opening the door to new opportunities

Unfortunately, redundancies are increasingly common in today's unpredictable economic climate. They usually have little to do with inadequate job performance and more to do with financial decisions made by the board of an organisation. As difficult as it may seem, the best thing to do is to treat the situation as an opportunity and maintain a positive outlook as best you can.

It's important to remain motivated and use your free time wisely while you're unemployed or working out your notice. Training or new skills courses are a constructive way to use your time and can be relatively inexpensive. Contact your council and request the details of a local adult education provider offering courses which could augment your work experience and skills. Employers and recruiters will never judge you because you've been made redundant but are likely to be impressed if you can demonstrate constructive use of your time since you left your last role.

Your Employer's Responsibilities

If your employer makes your job role redundant, they have certain responsibilities to you as an employee and it's important that you're aware of these. If you're working out your notice, they should grant you time off (within reason) for job interviews and should be flexible if you're lucky enough to land a new job before the end of your notice period. They should also perform all the expected duties of a previous employer such as supplying employment references as requested.

If you experience problems during the redundancy process, try to resolve these with your employer in the first instance. It's good practice to keep a paper trail of issues so submit requests in writing & ask for a written response. If you feel your employer is treating you unfairly or isn't carrying out their responsibilities then speak to your trade union representative or contact the Citizen's Advice Bureau on 08444 111 444.

Changing career direction

It's only natural to become bored or disillusioned if you've been in a particular role or industry for a long time. What you need to ask yourself is: is it the sector you dislike or are there simply things you're not happy with in your current role or company?

If you feel you're getting to a point where you're considering a change of career, sit down and make a list of all the things you like and dislike about your current role. Work out which of these are specific to the company you currently work for and which could be improved by a change of sector. You will probably find that the former list will be longer – in this instance it's worth looking for new jobs within the same discipline and sector. If you find the latter list is longer, it might be time to explore new opportunities in a broader sense.

Many skills and disciplines are transferable between sectors but ask yourself why you want to make the switch before you do so. If you're looking to change job discipline i.e. from Sales to Marketing,

be prepared that in order to make the move you might have to take a step down either in terms of responsibility or salary.

If you do make the decision to switch sectors, try not to fixate on any one in particular. You stand a better chance of finding a new role if you keep your search quite broad in the first stages. Talk to a recruitment agency to discuss options for a career move, as they will give you honest and impartial advice on what types of roles would suit your experience.