

Avoid redundancy: Make yourself indispensable



Managing director of Creating Synergy, Ron McLean. Picture: Supplied

By: Ron McLean

Employee stress levels are increasing as they feel the pressure of low job security. With the major strategy employed in business cost cutting being staff redundancies, employees are learning to envisage life without a regular income. Mortgage payments, school fees, medical costs and general living expenses all add pressure. Most employees feel helpless and just cross their fingers and hope they fly under the “to be let go” radar.

If you are an employee here are five essential tips to make yourself indispensable:

1. Chose your game face

You can choose your attitude in any given moment. Many employees are caught up in the doom and gloom and arrive at work with glum expressions and whine and complain around the coffee room. Managers and business owners are also suffering stress about business survival, cuts to budgets and pressure to meet targets. They are looking for employees who are prepared to do what it takes to help steady the ship and who are looking for opportunities rather than problems. If you choose to be positive and optimistic, not only will you stand out as a star performer, you will be far less likely to be made redundant. It’s hard to be positive all day, every day so choose a specific moment each day where you are going to turn on the sparkle. It might be when you walk in the front door, answer the first phone call, or when you clock on. Just make sure you have a regular trigger to help you remember your positive attitude.

2. Knowledge is power

Power goes to those people who have the most information and knowledge. Search for opportunities to learn more and understand the business inside out. If someone is away, offer to do their job so that you gain more skills. Having a set of skills that applies to many roles makes it less likely that you will be chosen for the redundancy list. You might be surprised at just how much you don’t know about your organisation or just how much there is to learn. Offer to learn a skill on your own time or find a job that requires you to learn a unique skill. Become the backup person for a key role or the leader of new ideas or initiatives. The more knowledge you acquire the less dispensable you become.

3. Put your hand up

Rather than trying to survive by staying below the radar, be the person who puts up their hand to take on more responsibility. It's important that you are seen to take the initiative, rather than wait to be asked, this way you will be identified as someone who sees opportunities and thrives under pressure. Lead a team or project, look for cost saving initiatives, suggest process improvements and efficiencies. Look for those little extras that make a difference and take responsibility for them. A great strategy is to take responsibility for improving the customer experience. Businesses are all under pressure to acquire and maintain their customer base. If customers make comments about how fantastic you are, then your boss is going to be happy and you go one rung up the survival ladder.

4. Team Player

Look for opportunities to help your team and make them work as a united group. Be the catalyst for improving communication and maintaining productivity and focus. In any organisation, when the going gets tough, leaders look to offload the people who do not align with the team.

5. Take the lead

By taking responsibility for training and coaching colleagues you become a very useful cog in the operation of a business. You mentor people by communicating ideas, extending knowledge, sharing information, and by becoming the go to person for solving problems or sorting out differences. By building trust and respect with your co-workers, you become a leader of choice even if your job description or title does not reflect this. If people look to you for advice and direction, when someone on your level is targeted for removal, your co-workers might just be the key to missing the axe.

The other great payoff for applying these strategies and becoming more engaged in your work, and building better relationships with your customers and colleagues, is not only do you become more employable but you will also enjoy your job more and the benefits will flow into the rest of your life.

Ron McLean MBA, FAIM, CSP is an international speaker, author, people and performance strategist and consultant to leading businesses. As the founder and managing director of Creating Synergy, he develops programs for organisations to motivate, inspire and engage individuals and teams and create organisations with high morale, and high productivity that are also highly successful.

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