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successfully navigate the mortgage world....*

Achieving Layoff Immunity – Five Steps to Take

In the past few years, many corporations have had the unfortunate situation of implementing layoffs, leaving hundreds of thousands of individuals out of work. When a company is experiencing layoffs, is determining who goes and remains just the luck of the draw? Not usually. Personnel decisions are made by humans, and humans almost always take subjective factors into account. How you perform at work and your attitude usually will have something to do with whether or not your name ends up on the “dispensable” list.

Of course, not every layoff can be avoided. There are certainly situations where top performers have found themselves with a pink slip, much to the dismay of the individual and the company. However, there are a few things you can do to try to push your name farther down the list and stay on board as long as possible.

1. Be visible. Some employees believe that the best way to do a job is work hard, keep their head down, and not rock the boat. While there are countless employees who are extremely valuable and simply not “in your face,” sometimes it helps to get a little attention. Do your job and excel, but also make sure others are aware of your talents. Schedule regular meetings with your manager to assess your achievements and progress, and be sure you are prepared to show off a little bit. Network internally so others get to know you and your accomplishments. You can tout your value without being seen as a “brown noser,” if you do it sincerely and respectfully.

2. Be valuable outside your department. Businesses sometimes hold on to employees whose talents and skills can be used in more than one capacity. You will be more valuable if you bring a wide range of qualities and expertise to the table, rather than just one skill. Branch out at work. Learn about other departments and volunteer to lend a hand, even if the task is not within your typical job description. Join a company committee or offer to take on extra projects. Being proactive will ensure that your positive reputation spreads beyond your department.

3. Keep busy. In many cases, business slows down prior to a layoff. The last thing you want, however, is appear to be bored at work, or look like you're getting paid for doing nothing. Even if your projects have slowed down, take initiative and find new things to tackle. Take on projects that often fall to the bottom of the “to do” list. Does your department have computer files that needs to be updated or a supply closet that needs to be organized? Can you look for new business? Develop new ideas and projects.

4. Be vocal. Many employees hope and pray that they will keep their jobs come layoff time, but rarely speak up and let the higher ups know about their commitment and desire to stay on board. Take a risk and let your manager or a senior officer know that you are committed to the business, regardless of the current situation. If nothing else, scheduling this meeting will position you as someone who is not afraid to take initiative.

5. Be open to change. Many things change at a company when layoffs are looming. Job descriptions get altered, departments move around, and employees find themselves with new responsibilities. This often causes low morale and a fair amount of complaining. Be open to the change that comes your way and approach each new change as an opportunity. Keep a positive attitude. Can you learn a new skill that will help you in the future? Is your changing job description putting you in touch with new contacts within the company? Accept these changes and make the most of them.

Remember, although it is not always possible to avoid a layoff, what you do during your time with the company can impact your future. It is your decision whether you leave the company with good contacts, a strong recommendation and a positive outlook. Keep in mind, too, that many companies lay off employees for the short term, and rehire individuals when the business is back in order. If you do get laid off and were positive, motivated and an all-around team player, you might just get called back to the game.

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