



Can redundancy be an opportunity?

Neil Williams

When I started my career, as long as you were qualified and “kept your nose clean”, effectively you had a job for life. The insurance industry was a profitable business, even in difficult years, impacted by catastrophes, they used to make money in other classes of insurance.

How times have changed, company margins are under increasing pressure and the accountant can be faced with the difficult decision of having to make redundancies, whether it is the Christmas season or not.

I personally have had to learn to be flexible in later life, whereas my son and daughters will have to be adaptable throughout their careers. As far as grandchildren are concerned, with the global economy being truly in force, how can we guess what the situation will be 5 or 10 years from now.

I know what it is like to have lost a job, when my fast growing insurance employer disappear without trace within a fortnight. And a second occasion when the job was taken away from me and was asked to clear my desk at short notice. Fortunately I was actually on a coaching course at the time, which clearly showed me that my values were very different to the company I was working for! I was not happy with the way things were going and my coach intuitively asked me (the day before it all happened) “how would you feel if you were asked to leave rather than you leaving them?” After much reflection and support from my coach I realised I would be fine as I had found myself under a lot of stress while supporting my staff through this difficult time.

Although in shock from the sudden change in my circumstances I was able to cope quite easily owing to being coached throughout that time. If only I had that

support when my employer, the insurance company had gone into liquidation.

Today many people are made redundant and some people have been made redundant on more than one occasion. **How do people feel when they are made redundant?** Is there any difference when the individual opts for redundancy as against being made redundant? Even where individuals opt for redundancy it can create doubts and worry and most often find it easier to jump into the next job rather than assessing and planning for what they would really like to do.

After my insurance company went, I scrambled my way into a new job, effectively saying I would be flexible and do what ever job they had available. Not surprisingly I was in another job within three months and many of my colleagues had similar experiences. Unfortunately too many of the recruitment agencies place people in positions which are not suitable and some offer little support and advice for these people, who are still in shock.

With redundancy, people normally have a little time to think, but too often look for a similar job to what they have already. Take some time to consider whether you have enjoyed your previous job. **What parts of the job did you enjoy? Would you prefer to do something else? What skills have you acquired and how could you use them in other industries or roles?**

These are all questions that people should ask of themselves but very rarely do. This is an ideal time to speak to a coach to assess what possibilities really lie ahead. By being coached over a few weeks it is likely that you will know exactly what to look for, what suits your personality, lifestyle, family and your financial requirements.

Many of us could be made redundant at any time so it is important how you recover from this that matters. It normally comes back to positive thinking and setting goals. The accountability and responsibility are yours alone but there is no harm in getting impartial, confidential support during this time, rather that struggle through on your own.

So redundancy can be the most miserable time of your life or it could be your biggest opportunity.

If this happened to you, would you make it an opportunity?

Neil Williams is a mentor and business coach who runs NVW Solutions www.nvwsolutions.co.uk

Where next...?

Most of us face times when it's difficult to see where to turn.

Talk to Life-Coach **Bob Harvey** about the next steps in your life. I don't claim to offer a Quick-Fix solution, though some clients do make remarkable progress once they start to explore what's going on in their lives and discover for themselves how they can make progress and move ahead.

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