



Bobby Hellard

Getting back to business after redundancy

Being laid off will never be nice, but it could be just the ticket to new career opportunities...

There is no shame in being made redundant. It's just an economic business decision that's out of your control.

Of course, it's natural to take it personally, but it is important to remember the real reasons behind redundancy decisions, particularly during times of recession. We've already seen several big UK brands announce job losses: 6,000 at British Airways and 2,500 at high street giant Debenhams - with many of those reportedly at executive level.

Jobs are even being lost in some rapidly growing markets, such as the fintech sector. In February, online bank Monzo announced plans to hire 500 new workers. However, those growth ambitions have now gone in the other direction during the course of the pandemic with the startup sadly

cutting eight percent of its workforce in July.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported 220,000 job losses between May and June 2020.

That's the largest UK employment drop since the middle of 2009, which was the lowest point of the financial crash. Many experts are suggesting that this is just the lull before the coming storm and are predicting a recession that is likely to drag well into 2021 and beyond.

Economic crises usually result in an increased amount of people out of work while the number of available jobs tragically decreases.

As such, getting back into the job market after you've been made redundant requires quite a bit of planning and, most importantly, taking a step back.

Pause, plan, prep...

It is easier said than done, but the first thing to do when you've been laid off is to not panic. Going through a redundancy process is a stressful thing and the urge to start applying for anything and everything is completely understandable. However, now you're unemployed, you have the precious gift of time and it's something you should make full use of.

"It's perfectly acceptable - and advisable - to take a few days to process your job loss before diving into your next job search," says Amanda Augustine, careers expert at TopCV.

"Being made redundant can evoke many feelings, including anger, frustration and self-doubt. It's best to confront these emotions head-on at the start of your job search so they don't hold you back later on in the process.

"Reflect on what you've learned from the experience and how this will shape your job goals moving forward.

Specifically, consider what you enjoyed most about your recent position and what you wished had been different about it. Then, take a deep breath and start plotting your next career move.”

The way we work has fundamentally changed in lockdown, particularly if you’re an office-based manager or leader. As a result, your redundancy should now give you a perspective of what types of business and job roles are suited to the so-called new normal.

So, whether you’re looking to find the same line of work or something new you should be aware that working life is likely going to be vastly different from what you are used to.

Your CV, your LinkedIn page or your portfolio will obviously need to be flawless and include everything an employer wants to know about you, but it also needs to show that you are fit for the future. Can you manage people remotely? Can you handle a meeting over video conferencing? Can you communicate clearly via email and instant messaging services? These are but some of the many new considerations hiring managers will have front of mind as many organisations transition from the physical office to the new normal of largely remote working.

Whether you should take a break or not will depend on two things; if you have the money to do so or whether the right job is available. You may have some money saved or a redundancy package to see you through a month or so of unemployment, which means you can take time to find the right role for you.

If not, you might need to find a stop-gap until that right role comes about. Agencies are usually good for finding either temporary work or jobs that can act as a stepping stone to something better or longer term.

What next?

Sometimes, it really is a case of who rather than what you know to help get that first foot in the door. The perfect job might not be on the web and no matter how good your CV is it might not interest a potential employer. Despite years of technological advancement, word of mouth is



still an exceedingly useful tool.

Networking can be very time consuming, uncomfortable, and for some, incredibly draining. However, there’s no denying the power a strong professional network can have over your career success – especially when you’re looking for work in a crowded market.

“Networking is not everyone’s cup of tea,” Augustine adds. “It can help you uncover vacancies you won’t find online, gain valuable insight into potential employers and land a coveted employee referral.

“Studies have shown your chances of getting the job increase tenfold when you have the right referral, so make the time to invest in your network now and when you’re once again employed.”

Finding employment is a full-time job in itself. It requires long hours of dedicated planning, researching and self-reflection. It takes up a lot of time and effort and can all seem like a waste if you don’t nail the final hurdle: the interview.

“Be conscious of your body language to ensure congruence between your words and your non-verbal communication,” says Paul Russel, managing director of private training company Luxury Academy.

“This is particularly important if you have been recently made redundant because you may be feeling less confident than usual. Do be honest about your situation, interviewers are human and can spot insincerity a mile off. Get used to talking about your redundancy before your interview so

you can talk about it openly, honestly and calmly.”

Rejection is normal

It’s very unlikely that you’ll send just one application and sit just one interview before landing a job. You should expect to repeat both those processes multiple times.

After all, most recruiters interview people two or three times before a decision is made.

Sadly, rejections are inevitable and job hunting can seem like a war of attrition at times. Most employers will have too many applicants to be able to get back to each one and if they do it might not involve much feedback.

“If you don’t hear back from a potential employer, take it for what it is, an opportunity that wasn’t quite right for you,” Russell suggests.

“You can email the recruiter and thank them for their time, asking for advice on where you went wrong but don’t stalk them as this makes it awkward for everyone. If you are getting multiple rejections ask yourself if you are applying for the correct positions.”

It may seem impossible to regard your redundancy as an opportunity, at the moment, but it could turn out to be just that, according to Augustine.

“This may be your chance to reevaluate your career and lifestyle and make the changes that you previously had felt too comfortable to make,” she suggests. “Do you want to move out of the city and work remotely from the countryside? Maybe this is your golden opportunity to do so.”