

Is Your Job at Risk...? Learn How to Evaluate Whether Your Position is Secure

Whether or not your company is on shaky ground or about to go through a merger, acquisition, or other restructuring, it pays to periodically put a finger on the pulse of your job. This is a good exercise in that it will uncover where and how you might be vulnerable. Certainly, if you know a work force reduction is looming, it's essential that you evaluate your position - and determine what you can do to put yourself in the most favorable situation.

Following are a few things to consider:

Perceived Value

Nobody is indispensable however; some employees are more difficult than others to replace. For example, the person with a highly unique skill set is more apt to hang onto his job; it's much harder to replicate certain proficiencies. Likewise, the employee heading up a critical initiative is considered essential; it would be difficult to retain momentum and meet crucial benchmarks if she were removed from her position tomorrow. The person who has consistently contributed a sizeable percentage of revenue to the bottom line would be tougher to replace than someone who hasn't made much of an impact.

- Who could step in and do the job if you weren't there? Would management consider you more expendable than the person sitting in the office next to you, or less?
- Take a look at the value you add to the company - you'd better be making a contribution. Translate that value to measurable figures. Have you closed deals? Cut costs? Brought projects in on time and on budget? If you can't articulate specifically how you add value to the organization, it's unrealistic to expect management to make your case for you.
- If you know the company is struggling financially, give some thought to how you and your team/division can contribute positively. Present those ideas to your boss. Instead of hiding and hoping the "grim reaper" bearing pink slips will pass you by, be proactive and let the powers that be know that you're trying to help. Keep working. Work harder.

Rumors can fly like wildfires....people get pessimistic when they think their jobs might be in jeopardy, and then they stop contributing. Buck the trend. It will be noticed.

Whether or not your company is on shaky ground or about to go through a merger, acquisition, or other restructuring, it pays to periodically put a finger on the pulse of your job. Assess your position and determine how vulnerable you might be.

How Expensive Are You?

- Are you one of the highest paid at your grade level? If you're at the midpoint or higher on the scale, you could be vulnerable...particularly if your job skills are not unique.

Are You A Team Player?

- How are you perceived in this regard? Of course, this is something you should have been tuned in to from your first day on the job; if you've been negligent, you're not going to be able to perform damage control overnight.

You can't just keep your head down, do your job, ignore the "people" aspect and figure your career will take care of itself. If you haven't made an effort to engage with others, support your co-workers, and be a friendly person others like to be around, you'll be more vulnerable when it comes to head count reduction.

Remember the person who routinely skips office events like employee picnics and birthday gatherings? Of course you do. So does everyone else. Even if you're up to your eyeballs with work, take a break and go join your co-workers for a piece of cake. It's important.

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Rebecca Metschke is the author of *The Interview Edge*, a comprehensive career guide for those who are serious about their careers. Gain a professional advantage using proven tips, tools and strategies that will help ensure you're as marketable as you can be. <http://www.TheInterviewEdge.com>.

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