

Turning Lemons into Lemonade: How to Thrive After a Redundancy

Redundancy can trigger a range of emotions for people, depending on whether it is wanted or expected, how it is handled and the stage of life and career at which it occurs. There is absolutely no doubt that redundancy is a feature of the modern world of work. Most of us have either experienced it first hand or know someone who has. If you are at career crossroad triggered by redundancy, you might find some of the following tips valuable.

1. **Exercise financial restraint.** It can be very tempting to spend a redundancy payment on the assumption that you will quickly and easily find alternative employment. This may be the case but it is important to recognise that the labour market is tight. It may actually take some time to secure your next opportunity or you may want to use this time to reflect on your career and/or retrain before you take your next step. Regard your redundancy payment as your interim income stream. Consider seeing a financial adviser who should be able to help you develop a financial plan.
2. **Stay connected.** There are so many benefits to remaining connected to your network at this time. Job search can be very isolating so reach out to some of your ex-colleagues who may be experiencing the same feelings. Your network can also be a great source of future job opportunities – make sure everyone knows that you are currently in the job market. Continue to engage in your interests and hobbies as it is important for staying positive and fulfilled (and, who knows, these may give you some insight to your next career move).
3. **Take stock.** Use this time to assess where you are at in your career? How did you feel about your last job? Do you want more of the same? Is this an opportunity to do something different? If you are unsure, there are free career exploration websites that can help you learn about different occupations and roles that may align to your interests, personality type, etc. Check out 'Myfuture' (<http://www.myfuture.edu.au/>), 'The Job Guide' (<http://www.jobguide.thegoodguides.com.au/>) and Humanmetrics personality profile (<http://www.humanmetrics.com/>) as a start.

4. **Get your career file in order.** Use this time to collate your career documentation. If you haven't got one, create a master resume, in which you list all of your achievements that have relevance to the workplace. This information will then form the basis of the job applications or selection criteria that you will write as well being a valuable resource for interview preparation.
5. **Consider training.** Doing some training is a great way to upgrade your skills while you are in between positions. Try to be strategic about your investment (time, energy and financial). Consider all levels of training including certificates III and IV and short courses. Open 2 Study (<https://www.open2study.com/>) offers free courses which can allow you to confirm an interest, determine if you have an aptitude for an area and/or convey your interest to a potential employer.
6. **Create your own opportunities.** Identify the companies that you are interested in working for/with and target them. Some people are creating their jobs by taking an idea to a company which will pay their salary and more. You can also consider self-employment for which there are a large number of resources available to support you.
7. **Research the labour market.** The job prospects for different occupations and industries vary so you might find it valuable to research the prospects for your fields of interest. The Job Outlook website (<http://joboutlook.gov.au/>) will give you access to a range of occupational data. Talk to people you know to learn about the wide range of jobs that exist. What is their job? What does a work day look like for them? What is the career path?
8. **Considering volunteering.** This can be a fantastic way to keep up motivation, feel good, gain experience, try different types of work, access referees and cover any gaps in your resume.
9. **Track your job search.** Create a spreadsheet to maximise your productivity and to avoid those embarrassing situations when you can't remember which role it was you applied for or who you spoke to about a potential opportunity. Some possible field to include are: date, contact person and company, form of contact, topic, and follow up date.
10. **Embrace opportunities and make your own luck.** Chance and luck play a part all of our lives. Often we are able to create our own career luck and opportunities by exercising some key characteristics - Curiosity, Optimism, Flexibility, Persistence and Risk Taking. Planned Happenstance career theory assumes that it is perfectly okay to not know exactly what career we want to pursue today as long as we are using these characteristics to move closer to discovering our next career goal.