

Bulletproof Your Job

Many employees go to work each day wondering how long they might have their jobs. The fear of joining the ranks of the unemployed is a very real one. Bankruptcies and layoffs are in the news almost daily, giving testimony to the weakening of the economy and the increasing numbers of the unemployed.

While the economy worldwide is making it necessary for many companies to reduce their employee rosters, there are steps you can take to help ensure that you do not fall victim to corporate downsizing. In fact, it is critical that you do whatever you can to bulletproof your job.

I recommend that you take the following five steps to make yourself so indispensable that your company wouldn't dream of letting you go:

1. Ask to take on more responsibility.

Willingly taking on more responsibility sends a message that you are committed to your job and your organization and that you are a team player. Offer to help with whatever needs to be done—and do it on time and with a smile. When you over-fill your position, you will earn the respect of your coworkers and your boss.

2. Manage your time well and focus on taking care of the customer.

Get to work early and stay late. Do whatever is necessary to get the job done and done right. Identify problems and seek solutions. Make small decisions promptly. Don't procrastinate. Organize and execute around priorities. Do the most important, or most difficult, tasks first. Group related activities and do them at the same time. Go out of your way to provide exceptional service to your organization's customers. The customers will thank you—and your superiors will notice you.

3. Learn everything you can about your industry, your customers, and your organization's products and services.

It's important to know how to handle the technical aspects of your job, but people skills are equally important. Take advantage of any training and tuition reimbursement your organization offers. Look for training outside the company, as well. Even if you have to pay for it yourself, it's a great investment in yourself and your future. Read books on customer service, and read at least one book a month on self-improvement. When you are

knowledgeable, you will be noticed. And, when you are noticed, your job not only will be secure, the probability of a promotion will increase dramatically.

4. Be positive.

No one—not your customers, your co-workers, or your managers—want to associate with someone who is always negative or complaining. On the other hand, a can-do attitude and a smile go a long way toward building solid relationships and earning the respect of others. Don't associate with negative people, on or off the job. Their attitudes will eventually rub off on you and drag you down.

5. See yourself as you want to be tomorrow, not as you are today.

Develop a written game plan for your future.

Believe in yourself and be confident in your abilities. Spend one hour a day on your own time building yourself up. Learn to become better at customer service, better at sales, better at whatever the job entails. Develop a healthy self-image. Remember that the way you see yourself determines the way others see you.

When the economy is bad, under-performers are the first to be let go. Make yourself so valuable to the

company that you outshine those around you with your knowledge, dedication, enthusiasm, and commitment. Do that and you will bulletproof your job. **RO**



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