

Ask the Career Coach: Dodging the Axe

Get tips for job retention strategies.

By [Lisa Chenofsky Singer](#)

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Dear Career Coach Lisa,

My company is preparing for another round of layoffs and my department does not have much work. I think I may be in danger of losing my job. What do I do?

S.T.
Short Hills

Think about what you do and what value you deliver for your company. How are you perceived by co-workers, your boss and management? Are you a "go to" player that can provide answers when needed, understands how to manipulate data to identify trends, able to generate new potential revenue stream or contain cost? Can you suggest some work projects that your organization will benefit from? For example, create templates for commonly requested documents or presentations; write a user's guide or checklist for repetitive projects to ensure constancy and compliance; or generate a new use of a product or a product from the fall out of another product.

To keep your position in this economy you should consider presenting a solid business case as to why you are a *good return on investment* (ROI). You need to show value, in terms of ROI, that you bring. This ROI may be a direct monetary value such as revenues generated from sales. Alternatively, the ROI may be a cost containment value, such as the cost of fees associated with using external resources relative to the use of internal experts.

To keep your position, you should also think about the relationships you have with your boss, co-workers, the management team, vendors and clients. Think about your presence, both internally and externally. What are you known for? How are you perceived? It plays an important role in whether your position is maintained or modified. Sometimes a company has no choice but to let staff go due to dire financial situations. Typically, those who remain are individuals with unique skills that are needed and are well-liked by the organization.

It takes time to establish your presence to become a known value. The time to work on your ROI is not at the time of potential layoffs but throughout the year. To build your reputation and influence, you will need to raise your self awareness and observe the social networks around you and ensure you understand what the organization values in those they hire and retain.

"Ask the Career Coach" is a column dedicated to those who may be in transition or wrestling with a career dilemma by providing a forum for advice. We welcome your questions. Please send them to CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com.

Lisa Chenofsky Singer is a Millburn-Short Hills resident and the founder of Chenofsky Singer & Associates LLC. She offers Executive and Career Management Coaching and Human Resources Consulting, writes and speaks on job search and career-related topics. Her web site is www.ChenofskySinger.com.