

Ask the Career Coach: Retaining Value, Staying Employed

How can you help the business so you can keep your job during the tough economic times?

By [Lisa Chenofsky Singer](#)

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Dear Career Coach Lisa,

I have been working for my company for the past three years. The economy is tough and impacting the business, which is a small, family-owned business. How can I make myself more valuable during this time so they retain me?

ME
Short Hills

This is an excellent question for all employees in this current marketplace. As a human resources professional engaging hiring managers and business owners, the first thing asked when there is a need to reduce staff is "who is the most valuable to the business?"

So, how does an employee make himself valuable? Think of your position and what are the expected deliverables of your job. What else do you do to add to the bottom line? Do you bring value to the business from a cost savings perspective or bring in additional revenue based on your relationships, cross selling or new product development?

Think creatively with the business owners and think through the risk factors involved in the business. If you operate like the business is your own, while being respectful of the owner's perspective and being motivated to make a difference, you will be more likely to sustain and potentially grow the business during these tough economic times.

You need to understand your boss's style in how they receive input and how to present new ideas and suggestions while recognizing that the final business decision is theirs. Think about whether the business has a different customer base that is not being reached or whether there is a synergistic partnership that might be created with another business. This allows expansion and revenue growth that might enable you to be retained, even promoted over time.

The key here is to maintain an open dialogue with the business owners so you can understand their business strategies. Another factor to consider is the chemistry between you and your colleagues. People tend to retain those that they enjoy spending time with assuming they have the proper skills to do the job and the potential to learn as the business grows.

About this column: "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.