

# PROVIDING SUPPORT THROUGH THE REDUNDANCY TRANSITION

As the unemployment rate continues to rise and with redundancies being anticipated in local authorities, providing a support service to affected employees not only has a considerable effect on those leaving, but can also have a significant impact on the morale of the existing workforce. Gaelle Blake, responsible for Career Transition at Hays Architecture, explains further:

“A recession of the current magnitude means that public sector organisations and managers are faced with having to make tough decisions and these don’t come any harder than people losing their jobs. It is therefore imperative that should job losses be incurred, a support mechanism is in place to assist employees who have been made redundant so that they can be offered comprehensive advice to help them with their career transition.

The initial setback and shock of losing your job is always difficult to digest and can have a long-lasting effect on jobseeker morale. Even though redundancy is usually never an indictment of the individual’s capabilities – “it’s the job that has been made redundant, not the person” as we often hear – the fact remains that it is often difficult to not internalise such an event and therefore the wellbeing of the individual must remain the foremost concern. Providing comprehensive emotional and practical support throughout this difficult period is vital.

Training, development and redeployment are all areas that require attention. There may already be qualified HR staff in-house who are able to provide advice on all aspects of the application process. Alternatively, public sector organisations may wish to bring in an external consultancy, such as a career transition provider, to support these employees. This will come in a variety of forms, from emotional counselling to establishing an action plan to help the affected professionals secure their next role, while offering seminars or one-on-one sessions to arm them with the skills needed to gain a job in the current, challenging market.

The aim is to maximise the individual’s employment chances and to make sure they are comfortable with all aspects of the application process. This includes providing guidance in how to craft a CV that meets all the competencies laid out in the job description and person specification, how to assess the hidden job market to how to tackle competency based interviews and assessment centres. Employees may need to re-assess their job search or networking skills and discuss other career options – transferable skills may open up a range of options or they might want a complete career makeover. The key point is

that the outplacement service needs to be both flexible and tailored to that particular individual's requirements.

By making every effort to ensure that career transition is dealt with in a professional manner, organisations are also protecting their image while not damaging their status as an employer of choice. But the impact on the morale of the remaining workforce is often forgotten: the treatment of redundant staff sends out a clear message and this can impact on staff productivity, engagement and retention.

At a time when all the experience and skills of employees is needed to drive through change and generate cost efficiencies, supporting redundant employees should form a central part of every company's long-term strategy.

Hays' Career Transition service allows organisations to help employees through the redundancy process. Specialist consultants that have extensive sector-specific knowledge and are best placed to help your staff deal with the change in circumstances, equipping them with new skills to find work.

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