How to let go of a team member gracefully

A MANAGER’S GUIDE TO REDUNDANCY
DRAKE INTERNATIONAL

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HANDLE WITH CARE - AN INTRODUCTION

From the employer’s perspective, a decision to terminate an employee’s service has a number of major and serious implications if handled badly.

These involve risks including:
• Legal compliance
• Financial liabilities
• Corporate image
• Public relations
• Client relationships
• Employee productivity and morale
• Organisational vigor - team focus and commitment, emotional optimism and trust

The exiting employee is faced with a major trauma, which comes from losing the financial and emotional security of employment. This dislocation can manifest itself in both physical and mental forms.

The focus of this white paper is on “the telling” and applies primarily to redundancy circumstances, although some of the principles can be applied to performance and misconduct issues. The fairness and transparency of the process for identifying redundant positions is a major issue of concern to employee representative groups. In any event, this white paper should be considered in conjunction with existing Employee Relations policies and procedures as well as applicable Employee Contracts and Agreements and/or the relevant Awards.

It is important to remember that each employee subject to retrenchment is an individual with particular needs, cares, responsibilities, prospects and shortcomings who have an over-riding need to be respected as an individual and not just one more casualty of change.

Of equal importance is the effect on the Manager providing the advice and the message being broadcast to the employees remaining.

• The pressures on the advising manager are usually quite significant and this white paper can help that person prepare and cope.
  Our experience has shown that when higher levels of management provide as much visible support and assistance as possible, results are more positive. In many cases, senior managers, who have made the major and involved business decisions, have already moved on to the next challenge. Organisational communication and individual staff notification are still to occur with all staff becoming familiar with the changes. The consequence of lack of communication and support to staff is that surviving staff may feel abandoned and the ongoing organisational changes, of which retrenchments are only one facet, may be resisted.

• The remaining employees will also be faced with “survivor shock” as they can experience many of the same emotions as the terminated employees (eg; “Will I be next?”). These emotions include:
  • Anger
  • Guilt
  • Anxiety
  • Depression

It is important to ensure that managers take the time to deal with these emotions, reassuring survivors and demonstrating that those who have left have been provided with as much support as possible.

In order to minimise the likelihood of unfavourable repercussions, it is necessary for managers to do six key things:

1. Prepare and Plan - for the total task and for each individual.
2. Rehearse and role play the exit meeting.
3. Co-ordinate the telling with other necessary actions and subsequent support both for those going and for those staying.
4. Provide direction and structure for the next step for the exiting employee and also remaining employees.
5. Tell the Truth.

Above all:

The tasks do not get easier - even after a great number of retrenchments. The bottom line is to prepare and plan the exercise so you can deliver the advice in such a way that would be “acceptable” to you should you be the one on the receiving end. Given the nature of business and change today, the odds for this eventuality are on the increase.
PREPARATION FOR STAFF RETRENCHMENTS

Communication is Key

Who should deliver the message?

As a general rule, the process of effecting retrenchments should be carried out by the manager responsible for the employee concerned. Where this level of management or supervision is seen as being too low in the organisation or too close to the employee involved, the process should be carried out by a manager with both knowledge of the employee and sufficient authority in the organisation to “carry” the task.

There are a number of ways to deliver the message. In the case of individual retrenchments, generally the participants in the meeting may include:

- the immediate manager of the employee being retrenched (or more senior manager if the direct manager does not have sufficient authority for this task)
- a human resources representative
- the employee to be retrenched and
- a representative that the employee has chosen.

Various combinations of these possible attendees may be found.

It is important to remember that the manager’s team present in the meeting does not vastly exceed the numbers of the employee. This could be experienced as intimidation. The direct manager, human resources representative and employee are generally found in these meetings.

When should the message be delivered?

Retrenchment advice needs to be delivered early in the day and early in the week. This is to avoid situations where the employee has the weekend to build up stress with no support or structure at hand. It also allows any follow-on support to be scheduled immediately. This provides the structure and direction to the employee which is critical if adverse reactions are to be controlled and minimised. The timing of the advice should also take into account specific personal and work related issues.

Individual and Job Circumstances?

The individual’s personal circumstances and current tasks must be researched as thoroughly as possible. Timings and stand by support are affected by several factors:

- Avoid employee birthdays if possible.
- Steer clear of the days (or weeks) leading up to major holidays.
- Check medical records - asthma, heart, pregnancy (spouse or employee) etc - should you put your company doctor on stand by?
- Check conduct and work relations - will security be an issue? If so, what additional security measure need to be taken?
- Do not deliver the advice just before or just after the employee’s involvement in a major and/or significant project or task.
- If the employee is involved in key and/or sensitive client negotiations - wait until these are concluded or ease a replacement in carefully.

Put It in Writing

General Principles

All information relating to a person’s severance should be prepared in writing. Just as organisations take particular steps to produce “Welcome Aboard” packages, attention needs to given to developing a “Separation” package which outlines the facts, procedures and responsibilities. Of course, this information should not be too voluminous and should be restricted to the essential requirements to ensure a departure, which is free of additional stress and frustration. The last thing that a terminated employee wants is to be besieged by bureaucracy - this adds to stress and to the sense of disappointment and anger with the organisation.

Severance Letters

A letter of severance should always be made available to the employee at the time of the retrenchment notification. This letter must be clear and concise and provide enough information for the employee to review later and enough direction to take the next step. Although direct and to the point, cold brevity should be avoided to assist with preservation of individual dignity and self-esteem. Without wishing to limit individual style or organisational policy, the following structure and content should be considered for inclusion:

- The opening needs to be direct. The employee must be left in no doubt that the decision is final and is the result of a particular business decision.
- The effective date must be specified.
- A brief paragraph providing recognition of service and contributions made to the business - specific and individual points greatly add to the sincerity of the process.
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• If misconduct or performance is the reason, additional detail must be included with sufficient and proven evidence and process noted.

• Letters should not give the impression of form letters - care should be taken to ensure that they appear personalised despite the fact that they will need to be consistent with all others affected.

• The financial arrangements should be noted in full or summarised depending on the extent and complexity. If necessary, a separate financial package should be prepared and made available at the meeting or as soon as practicable afterwards. Financial information includes:
  o Pay in lieu of Notice
  o Leave and any Long Service Leave Entitlement
  o Superannuation entitlements and arrangements for payout
  o Redundancy Payouts (Statutory and/or company Offer)
  o Payment of outstanding expenses and bonuses
  o Recovery of loans and other liabilities
  o Arrangements for, or availability of, Career Transition support including the name address and contact telephone number of the Drake Career Transition Consultant. If the consultant is on site, the letter should also note availability and location.

Administrative Arrangements

Some administrative arrangements may be included in the Severance Letter if they are particularly important and take up little room. However, it is more likely that these arrangements will be communicated verbally or in supporting documentation. Content should address the following:

• Arrangements for the return of company property - particularly equipment (computers - hardware and software, phones, pagers, technical and trade tools), publications, information, products and promotional material.

• Company vehicle arrangements including return procedures, any entitlement for continued use, purchase options (including pricing, registration transfer and any refurbishment required).

• Security provisions including return of keys, security passes, codes and corporate privileged information.

• Arrangements for travel home if use of a company vehicle has been rescinded (Cab Charge should be considered to ensure that the employee does not have to suffer the indignity of travel on public transport encumbered by personal items from the vehicle and workplace).

• Timings for clearance of personal belongings from office, locker or other locations.

• A check list of who else in the company needs to be seen before departure. The fewer points of call the better and a principal point of contact should be nominated.

• Any arrangements for formal farewells, particularly for employees with long and loyal service records.

Interview Preparation

Common Reactions

Faced with sudden change and involuntary job loss, people react in an individual manner. Part of your preparation will be to review each person's background and situation and plan for the most likely contingency. To guide you, we have evidence that job loss does result in a number of typical behaviour patterns not dissimilar to the break up of a close relationship or experiencing the sudden death of a close relative or friend. These emotions and behaviour patterns include:

• Shock and Denial
• Hostility and Anger
• Bargaining
• Relief and Acceptance

Dealing with the emotions

In some interviews the employee may well run the whole gambit of emotions and behaviour patterns. This can happen - the chances are that these will be experienced at least once and possibly several times over the subsequent period of transition. The Career Transition Consultant will help the employee through this, but you are faced with the initial opening round. It is therefore critical, in terms of how individuals approach any subsequent support program, that you ensure the emotional state is not made worse by inappropriate behaviour on your part.

Your aim is to be the respectful bearer of bad news, and the co-ordinator of services:

• Legal Review
• Counsellor / Psychologist
• Career Transition Coach

These services are better delivered by professionals who can be perceived by the exiting employee as truly objective.
Shock and denial

Manifested in stunned silence or statements such as:

“I don’t believe it” or “You must be joking” or “But I’m the most (insert a variety of descriptive adjectives and nouns) you have - you can’t be serious”.

Often, people will sit in silence after the opening statement. Try not to overload them with subsequent information until they have had time to express some reaction. Ask questions to determine if they have heard and understood the message. Gently repeat and reinforce the news to them. Also, ensure that you pass this sort of reaction on to the Career Transition Consultant or Human Resources department so subsequent behaviour can be monitored.

Anger and Hostility

Raised voices, abuse (both personal and organisational), threats and physical signs such as balling the fists, colouring and controlled breathing are all signs of a sudden or brewing storm. Statements such as:

“If you think I’m going to accept this without a fight etc”

or

“Who made the decision, I’ll bet it was (insert name), he/she has always had it in for me” or “Right – you can stick your job - I’ve never really liked working here anyhow” are often heard.

When subjected to anger and hostility, it is essential not to get drawn into justifying the situation, taking sides, commiserating with the employee against “the powers that be” or launching into a slanging match over past issues. In other words, don’t become defensive or argumentative - this will not defuse the situation and will probably only make it worse. Let the employee express their anger. Acknowledge them but concentrate on retaining your own composure. Remember your script and look for openings to lead them towards learning what support will be made available to them.

Bargaining

Closely associated with denial as the employee grasps at straws. Examples of bargaining are:

“Look, I’m sure that I will be able to be useful in (insert name) section - I’ve always got on with (insert name)”

or

“These decisions are obviously a cost cutting measure, have you considered (insert any conceivable option), rather than let me go” or “Look, I’m just about to (re-mortgage the house/buy a car/send the kids to the orthodontist etc), couldn’t the decision be delayed a bit”.

Assuming that you and the organisation have done your homework, this is not the time to offer a reprieve. To do so would most likely give false hope, raise any number of inconsistencies and leave you wide open to difficulties with other employees later on. This does sound harsh but it merely stresses the need to have considered all the options and circumstances before implementing the decision.

Relief and Acceptance

Normally seen in those who have been expecting a decision or where the process has been going on for a long time and where a lot of uncertainty has been present in the organisation. Even then, there will be hints of other emotions thrown in for good measure characterised by:

“Well, I was expecting this” or “I’m glad the decision has been made - what now” or “This comes as no real surprise, I’m just surprised you took so long”.

To some extent, this sort of “accepting” reaction can be the most dangerous, as individuals may not be allowing themselves to express a whole range of pent up emotions. They become your “ticking bomb”. Subsequent and timely counselling in a Career Transition program is often essential if progress is to be made in transition. At the interview, probe gently and ensure that the message was heard and understood, lay out the necessary and subsequent actions and the availability of support and structure open to them. Again, advise the Career Transition Consultant and/or Human Resource representative of the “controlled” reaction.

Scripts

The Retrenchment Interview is not the time to “fly by the seat of your pants” or practice your impromptu speaking talents. A script is essential and the thrust of the message must be consistent across the organisation. Individual employee circumstances and individual managers’ styles should polish the standard script but not deviate from agreed organisational policy.
Your script must then be prepared for several contingencies. However, at this stage, you must allow time for the employee to react and to understand what you have said.

A common difficulty in retrenchment situations is that the employee hears what you say but does not understand the reality or the finality of the situation. Be prepared to repeat your message - but keep your delivery level and measured. Do not let the emotions of the situation engulf you. Keep your script at hand! The next section of these notes provides some advice on possible reactions and suggested responses.

**Role Plays**

During the preparation phase it is useful to discuss likely reactions and to role play your various contingencies. If possible, role play with someone who knows the employee concerned and has some idea of the likely reactions. Go to the extent of having a third party, such as the Career Transition Consultant, facilitate and critique the session or use a video camera. In situations where very few people are aware of the impending decision, you may have to limit the role-play to individual rehearsal.

**Support**

Depending on individual circumstances you may need to consider having medical and security support on stand-by to handle emergency situations. If you do, the key is to be as discreet as possible. Of more benefit is the immediate availability of Career Transition support.

**Broad-based industry experience has led us to strongly recommend access to a Career Transition Consultant immediately following retrenchment interviews.** There is great benefit to both the employee and the manager conducting the interview.

- The employee has the immediate prospect of structure and direction as well as being able to release a range of emotions in a neutral and empathetic meeting.
- The manager gains many advantages from the support of a Career Transition Consultant.
- Assistance in preparing, reviewing and practicing scripts and arrangements with an objective process expert.
- Assistance with personal stress management strategies and tools.
- The freedom to immediately focus on the core management responsibility - recommitting the remaining team members behind the change efforts.
- The logistics of organising the timely notification of the redundancy situation to remaining team members, is made much easier by the insertion of a counselling time period for the exiting staff member.
CONDUCTING THE SEVERANCE INTERVIEW

Location Timing and Duration

Where?
Book a separate area from the business division and preferably away from your own office. Try to organise a location and process that allows dual access. The privacy and respect of both exiting and surviving employees is an important consideration. The second exit can also provide ready access to any on site Career Transition support.

When?
Deliver the message early in the day and early in the week. This usually means before lunch time and with at least two days left in the week. You should also deliver the message during business hours and not over any sort of refreshments (eg; coffee, drink or lunch - surprisingly, this has been done!) Tea, coffee, water and tissues may be available to be offered after the message has been delivered, most appropriately during the follow up counseling session with the Career Transition consultant.

How Long?
Try and keep the interview to between ten and twenty minutes.
Remember you do not want to enter into debate. The sole purpose of the interview is to deliver the message that the person no longer works for the organisation. If the employee wants to dispute the situation, be prepared to offer the courtesy of further discussion with another manager or at another time. If you spend less than about 10 minutes, you run the risk of being perceived as too cold and callous.

Content and Delivery

Overview
No matter how well prepared you are, expect the unexpected. No situation goes entirely to plan but by preparing for a range of contingencies you will be able to adapt to most reactions during the interview.
The key is to keep to your script and to remember your aim. The following paragraphs are provided as a guide to your content and how a range of objections or reactions could be handled. They are a guide only and should be adapted to fit individual circumstances.

The Opening Statement
A clear concise opening statement which contains the reason, the facts, the effective date and the truth is recommended. A possible example is as follows:

“Barry, I have asked you to see me today because I have to deliver some bad news to you. You are aware of the (insert your particular circumstance eg ‘recent company restructure’, ‘amalgamations’, ‘job cutbacks’ etc). As a result of these decisions your position has been abolished and I am advising you that your employment with (Name of Organisation) is to be terminated with effect (insert date).”

Delivery
Of course, you must select the words - you have to be comfortable with your delivery and you must ensure that the words convey the message - that is the person you are speaking to no longer works with the organisation as at the severance date advised in the letter of retrenchment. This point has now been repeated several times during the course of these notes but is done so to stress its importance and to illustrate the fact that it may also need to be repeated several times during the interview - the “broken record” effect.

Common Severance Questions and Answers
You will be asked a number of questions relating to the selection of positions to be made redundant, and persons chosen for retrenchment, benefits, conditions, financial advice, unemployment benefits, etc.

Ensure any information you give is accurate - stick to what is in the retrenchment letter or what you know is 100% accurate or refer them to the appropriate specialist. The importance of having followed a fair and transparent process of selection, agreed/negotiated with any employee representative bodies will be vital to minimise risks at this stage.

The following examples of generic questions and answers. They are not designed to be a panacea to all situations and you will need to prepare responses which are in line with your organisation’s own policies and procedures.

Q: The “Why Me?” Range. You need to be both truthful and ensure that the employee realises that a business decision led to the situation. This could have been based on a number of factors including organisational changes, financial downturn, relocations, existing work skills, work experience, organisational and team needs, work availability and perhaps performance. For example:
A: “The decision was not taken lightly. It was made after exhaustive review and consideration by management (be prepared to outline this procedure). In your case, the decision was based on (insert reason etc).”

Q: The “What about another opportunity?” Range. As noted earlier, you must stand your ground. Any concession will only create more problems. Try and get the individual to focus on future needs and not cling to the past. For example:

A: “We have already considered the alternatives. The decision was made after these were fully examined. We do not think it is in your interests or ours to hold on in the hope another opportunity will emerge. We really think that your own interest would be better served by exploring other opportunities outside this company/organisation. To that end, we have retained specialist advice and services to assist you through this transition.”

Q: The “You Cannot be Serious - I want to See the Boss” Range. Again, an example of non-acceptance as the person tries to find a medium to dispute the decision through the boss or any other more senior manager. The key is not to exacerbate the situation by blocking the request, but being quite clear that the decision is irrevocable. For example:

A: “It is your right to seek an appointment to see (insert name etc), but I must stress that the decision was made after full consideration and has already been endorsed at this level.”

Q: The “You can’t do this to me because xxxxxxx” Range. This objection could relate to seniority, ethnicity, gender, age or any other perceived reason for prejudice. Firstly, you will need to make sure that there is no hint of this in the decision or if there is, it is not in conflict with any existing unfair dismissal laws or accepted practice. Secondly, the key in the response is to refute the accusation calmly and stress the reasons in the opening statement. For example:

A: “As I said before, the decision was made for business reasons. Your (insert claim of prejudice) did not enter into the process. The factors that were considered were (insert reasons again)”

Q: The Veiled or Direct Threat Range. Usually made as a result of anger and can include threats of legal action, direct revenge, press exposure, claims of large and powerful friends (eg their local MPs) and hints of acts of personal desperation (eg “What have I got left in life” etc). In these instances, you should acknowledge the anger and at the same time try and direct attention to what positive steps can be taken and what arrangements have been set in place. In any event, note all threats and ensure that the appropriate staff or advisers are aware of the position. For example:

A: “I’m very sorry you feel that strongly, but please take time to consider the implications of what you have said. I do want to stress that we are very committed to helping you cope. So, no matter how you feel at this stage, we really want you to take advantage of the range of independent and specialist advice available and talk the issue through.”

Q: The “What about xxxx - I’m better/senior/more useful etc” Range. You should not allow any sort of comparison with other employees into the meeting. Try and steer away from the subject by a direct appeal to individual confidentiality. For example:

A: “I can’t give you an answer to that - I’m sure that you would not want me to discuss your situation with xxxx or any of your other colleagues.”

Summary of How to Deal With Responses From Exiting Employees

Avoid the Following

- Offering apologies or very detailed reasons for the retrenchment.
- Suggesting that you know how the person must feel.
- Offering false hope or making promises you cannot keep.
- Laying the blame on higher echelons in the organisation.
- Discussing other employees.
- Being drawn into arguments or debate over past issues.
- Using humour or engaging in small talk or platitudes.
- Straying from the parameters of your prepared script and response notes.
- Getting involved in any sort of hostile exchange.
**Clarify Departure Conditions**

Where possible, you will have included the conditions of severance in the letter of retrenchment. In any event, you should highlight the main points of these conditions during the interview and ensure that the employee knows who to contact to discuss the details of the package. More often than not, individuals want to discuss this with the Career Transition Consultant. Although the Consultant will be keen to ensure that the terminated employee is well aware of their rights and entitlements, it is not the Consultant’s responsibility to provide this information. In fact, it can be detrimental to the whole process as the Consultant may in fact get the Company position wrong or the Consultant may be seen by the employee as just another Company “stooge”.

It is essential that the severance letter is clear and unambiguous and/or you make the internal specialist available as soon as possible to clarify the situation. For example:

“Would you like to review the conditions of severance now? (pause for agreement) In line with company policy, you will be entitled to receive (lay out parameters of package) which equates to about ($$$$$) in your case. The letter of retrenchment (or attached documents) provides the exact figures.

**Future Direction and Structure**

What is expected of the employee over the rest of the day and/or until the final departure date? Again, some of this may well be laid out in the letter of retrenchment. However, it will enhance your position if you are able to provide this direction even if it is only a broad summary and contains specific referral to the staff member who will administer the departure and to the Career Transition Consultant who will facilitate the transition program. For example:

“I would now like to indicate where we will go from here. (Name of staff member responsible for retrenchment administration) will be responsible to ensure that all your pre-departure administration is completed. Once you have had a discussion with him/her and the representative from (name of Career Management Firm), I want you to go home and think about the information you have been given. If there is anything further you want to raise, please speak to (name) and they will ensure that you are provided with the information you need. Then, tomorrow you can start putting together your next steps which will help you move towards what I hope will be a new and satisfying stage for you.

**Closing the Interview**

There is no easy way to close the interview. To some extent it will depend on the response of the employee and your own interaction. But, at closure, you will need to pass over the letter and any associated documentation and direct the employee to the next appointment. Although you should not apologise for the decision, there is no reason why you should not offer your personal support or express your best wishes for the future. For example:

“Well Barry, I am sorry that it had to be me to break this news to you. Here is your letter of retrenchment (and supporting documents etc) and I want you to know that (organisation name) is very keen to assist you during your transition. As I said earlier, we have put together a range of support in terms of the separation package and transition services and would like you to take advantage of all that is on offer. Now, if you will come with me, I will introduce you to (HR Officer and/or Career Transition Consultant) who will give you more information on where to go from here”.

In addition, you should speak with (Payroll/Super Rep etc) and they will be able to give you the exact breakdown. I’m sure that you will want to consider your financial options and I strongly encourage you to seek independent advice in that area. As part of your transition program, we have arranged for independent financial counselling to be made available through the Career Transition program (or under separate arrangements - whatever the case).
HOW TO LET GO

NURTURING THE SURVIVORS

Recognising the Potential Problem

In instances where one or a number of people lose their positions through redundancies feelings of doubt, suspicion and lack of confidence can spread throughout the organisation. In some cases, remaining employees develop guilt complexes over being kept on when well-respected colleagues have been targeted to leave. The rumour mill starts up and before long morale drops, uncertainty and anxiety increase and a decline in productivity soon follows. As a manager you will need to try and counter these tendencies - all of which are perfectly natural and should be expected even amongst the most loyal and disciplined work force.

Preventing or Minimising the Problem

Full prevention of the total problem can be very difficult. However, there are several steps you can take to minimise the effect of redundancies on the remaining workforce - the survivors. To prevent or minimise “survivor shock” you will need to schedule meetings with them as soon as possible after you have delivered the retrenchment interviews. If this can be concurrent, so much the better.

The essential elements to the delivery of advice to remaining employees are accurate and specific information. For example:

“I called this meeting today to tell you all personally that because of (insert reason), we have had to make a number of members of staff redundant. No one at this meeting is affected. Those who have been affected have already been (or are currently being) advised. This is a difficult situation and I want you to be aware of what this decision means for the future (Outline any future benefits/direction/plans etc). The people who have been made redundant will leave over the next (define time frame). They may let you know their situation or may prefer to keep it to themselves for the moment. Whatever the case I’m sure that you will agree that they need all the support and understanding we can offer them. To assist their transition, the company has implemented a support program which (outline package and internal and external support being offered) we hope that this level of support will help these people through this period of transition.”

Suggested Actions

In addition, you will need to implement some or all of the following measures:

- **Maintain High Visibility.** This is not the time to keep a low profile in the office or get locked away in meetings. Try very hard to get out and about and be on hand to answer questions from remaining employees and deal with both the substance and underlying causes of rumours.

- **Demonstrate Empathy.** Avoid negativity and offhand remarks about those who have left. Limit yourself to the facts and the truth and maintain discretion. Be prepared for emotional outbursts - listen but don’t become defensive or argumentative.

- **Provide neutral forums for emotions and issues to be expressed and positively focused.** Survivor or change workshops for supervisors and staff-members, facilitated by Change Management experts, have proven very effective in fast-tracking teams to a recommitment to the organisation and its goals.

- **Be Consistent and Accurate.** Consistency will help establish trust and enhance your own reputation as an effective manager and leader. Do not make any predictions about what may or may not happen when you have not got accurate information. Undertake to follow up on suggestions and queries when you cannot provide answers on the spot.

- **Provide Specific Guidance.** People can sometimes sense a vacuum after redundancies. Ensure that specific work priorities and directions are laid down to focus the minds of team members on the job at hand. This can help prevent uncertainty and anxiety and establish a sense of purpose.

- **Schedule Follow-up Meetings.** Subsequent meetings dealing with goals, responsibilities and objectives can assist with maintaining productivity.

- **Listen for and Solicit Information.** Now is a good time to exercise “management by walking around” techniques. Listen and look for the undercurrent which may affect performance and productivity. Take the time to action staff follow up. Prevention is better than cure.
CONCLUSION

There is no guarantee that adherence to any particular set of guidelines will prevent all negative reactions from circumstances involving retrenchment of staff. However, the measures presented in this guide will help managers minimise the adverse affects of retrenchment on the employees concerned, on themselves and last but not least on those employees remaining in the organisation.

Essentially, the task becomes one of leadership as you strive to influence people into accepting (or at least coming to terms with) a situation that they would rather not have faced.

People faced with redundancy are at one of their most vulnerable states. It is therefore critical that managers involved with the process ensure, to the best of their ability, that this vulnerability is not allowed to unduly compromise individuals future well-being and development outside the organisation. A willingness to approach each instance of retrenchment as an individual situation, preparing thoroughly, maintaining sensitivity and perspective whilst offering direction, guidance and structure for the future can make a difference to each person’s successful transition.

Throughout this process it is also important for the manager to be aware of the impact on themselves. It is often a difficult meeting for the manager and could be stressful. Managers are therefore encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles to cope with the stress of terminating employees.

When in doubt always refer back to a professional in the particular area of concern. You cannot assume total responsibility for areas you are neither trained in nor prepared for, in any circumstance involving the management of people. However, having said that, you cannot take the opposite tack and absolve yourself of all responsibility - there is much you can do to prevent problems. Drake Career Management Services recommend that you consider the suggestions outlined in these notes to enhance your skills in dealing with the difficult task of staff retrenchments.

CONTACT

If you require more information regarding:
• Career Transition Coaching Services
• Outplacement Programs for Redundant Staff
• Organisational Development Consulting
• Change Management Workshops

Please contact Drake Career Management and Outplacement Services on 13 14 48, from any state within Australia.