

Q&A Column
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Email Subject Line: I Think I'm About To Get Downsized: Part Two of Two

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Headline : Your Options Ahead of a Downsizing: Part Two of Two

Summary:

Dear Mark: Last week one of my friends at work was downsized out of the blue. The thing is she was a really good employee but our boss never really liked her. I'm worried because rumour is I might be next. Is it too late to save my job?

Kathy T., Calgary, Alberta

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Headline : Your Options Ahead of a Downsizing: Part One of Two

Dear Mark,

Last week one of my closest friends at work was downsized out of the blue. Then they escorted her out of the building right away like she was some sort of criminal. She's totally devastated. The thing is she was a really good, devoted employee but our boss never really liked her. I'm worried because I'm in pretty much the same boat and rumour is I might be next. Is it too late to save my job?

Kathy T., Calgary, Alberta

Dear Kathy,

Corporate callousness is not a pretty sight, like when you witness a friend being terminated badly. From what you've written it seems like you may be justified in being concerned about your own situation.

That being the case, there are two basic courses of action you can consider: trying to fix your situation quickly, and/or preparing for the worst.

If you go the route of repairing things, the trick will be to convince your boss that you're much too valuable to let go. Hopefully you've already proven your worth by completing assignments on time, being a constructive part of the team, demonstrating competence consistently and helping out where needed.

How can you go the extra mile at this point? To start with, a conversation with the boss might be in order. The goal is to present yourself as their ally and find out what their burning priorities are – then be single minded about getting these solved. Putting in longer hours and volunteering to do extra tasks might work in your favour. So could coming up with new ideas to make your department more productive. Being more friendly and complimentary probably won't hurt either.

Mind you, at the end of the day your boss' decision may already have been made. The time and effort you devote to changing their mind could be for naught. What you might do instead is lay the groundwork for a successful departure.

There are many ways to ensure you don't get caught flat-footed if they appear unannounced to dismiss you one day soon. Like gathering examples of your work and any recognition you've received to show when on future interviews (note: make sure what you take home with you is neither confidential nor company property). Wiping any computers you use clean of personal files and messages. Making sure your list of achievements at work is up to date.

Other ways to make hay while still employed? How about networking internally with people you'd like to know but haven't had much chance to meet before? And you can always apply for that training allowance, or take company-sponsored courses, right up to your last week there. Beyond that there's updating your resume, checking out the online job boards and putting out feelers to a few recruiters.

Whichever route (or routes) you choose, the last thing you want is to be immobilized by worry. Taking steps everyday to move your situation forward will help prepare you for whatever comes your way.