

## Avoid the Pink Slip

Everyone knows someone looking for a job. Today's market is an employers' market. Everyone wants to keep their job, but doing your job (maybe even doing your job well) may not be enough to avoid termination when or if your company faces layoffs. Employees find it increasingly important to do more than simply completing job duties in order to stay on the payroll.

Here are five areas in which you can improve to position yourself as invaluable to your organization:

**Contribute directly to the bottom line.** Contribute to sales goals or go the extra mile for large clients. Become instrumental to the top sales people on staff. For some employees, this will take a bit of creativity. Not everyone works as close to revenue as the sales team. Get to know your bigger clients and what issues they are facing. Let's say you work in accounting and have recently found software that increases your department's productivity by 50%; share that information with *your* clients. Remember to keep your boss and client management team aware of your communications to the clients.

If you cannot find ways to increase revenue, find ways to save the company money. This also directly improves the bottom line.

**Help your supervisor achieve his or her goals.** Most employees are so wrapped up in their own goals that they forget to consider the bigger picture. What are the goals of the company and specifically your boss? Contribute to your boss' success. What skills do you possess that will prove helpful to him or her? If you're staring blankly right now because you don't even know what your boss' goals may be, start there! Strengthen your relationship with your boss so you are comfortable asking about his or her goals and how you can contribute to them. Your performance appraisal will show how useful your supervisor deems you to the company. Making them look good goes a long way.

**Position yourself as an employee who likes to resolve problems.** Many employees try to avoid "broken" aspects of the workplace. Whether it's a process, communication, strategy or any other component of the business, positioning yourself as the one interested in finding a solution gives you a competitive edge. It demonstrates your proactive participation as an integral part of the team, expresses your willingness to continue learning new things and gives you a chance to broaden your scope of expertise.

**Don't be afraid to share ideas and give opinions.** Without constantly hogging the spotlight or becoming the office know-it-all, voice your opinions during meetings. Be respectful and educated in your remarks. Recognize that not all of your ideas will be adopted, but your willingness to think through company issues and offer intelligent feedback and solutions will be appreciated.

**Learn how your company is planning to grow and become a part of the plan.** Are there plans to infiltrate a new market or launch a unique product or service? Learn all you can about the market, intended end user, or new product or service in order to intelligently contribute to discussions about the potential challenges, opportunities and successes.

The key to making yourself invaluable to the company is to go above and beyond the job responsibilities listed under your title. Start with these five areas and you will find yourself getting there fast.

*For more information, contact Tandem HR at 630.928.0510 or visit [www.tandemhr.com](http://www.tandemhr.com). The staff at Tandem HR contributed to this article. It is intended as information only and is not a substitute for legal advice. Tandem HR is a professional employer organization specializing in strategic HR partnership with small and mid-sized businesses.*