

Transcription: Case Study - Redundancy and Loss of Confidence

Welcome back, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec. Today we have a case study for you and I will read it the notes so you get a sense of the case study before we start to discuss it.

"I have worked for a company for many years with a good track record, received bonuses, I'm respected and appreciated within the company. This company was taken over and I started reporting to the new management team. A few months later, I was made redundant. The hardest thing to accept is the way it was handled that there was no respect, sensitivity or professionalism in the way it was done and there was no communication which left a lot of unanswered questions on my part. Now I've been looking for a job for 6 months and I've lost my confidence. What am I really like? Was I seen by the new management team as not good enough? Is that why I was made redundant? I want to be realistic and I want to pull myself out of this but I just don't know how."

First of all, I can say that I have in my career been made redundant. I saw it coming and I didn't allow myself to take it personally. That didn't mean that it was any easier afterwards to find work, to get a job, to move forward. So I don't think that whether you know or you don't know makes a whole lot of difference to how you feel afterwards because you're left with this void where you felt you were good, you knew you were good but for all sorts of reasons, which might or might not have been given to you, you are not in that place any longer, you are starting from outside the square basically. And if it's been a while since you've been in the marketplace, it is very difficult to know your place, to know what skills you've got that are still worthwhile, what level of an organization you need to go in to because every organisation is different.

In my case it was training and development that it was in and it was a time where we had always called it training and development but it was moving more into the HR and human resources development; new words, new phraseology was coming in to being in that environment. It was at a time where there started to be people coming out of university with degrees and I wondered whether my work experience was going to be considered in comparison to someone who could come through university process without any practical experience. We can argue the toss about which way is better because we've had real-life experience or we've been exposed to a broader range of newer thinking. There is no right or wrong answer.

In terms of you as an individual, trying to find your place in a new work

environment, it is confusing. And it's confronting, it's overwhelming in the end, and so you step back and you think I don't know where to start, I don't know where I fit, they didn't tell me at the last place that I was as good as I think I was regardless of how many years you've been there and so it's all too hard. I don't know. I can't think and you do just get overwhelmed basically and can't think yourself out of that process. And I will say, by my last little bit on that point, is that no one is going to "give" you a job and this is about the phrasology. No employer has to "give" jobs. You have to go and "get" one and it's up to you to be proactive. I know that these words are easy to say when you're not in that environment.

That mindset that you can't get yourself out, you're tired of rejection, in today's work environment you might apply for 50 jobs a week and not hear back from 95%, even that they've got your application let alone that they are considering you. It has always been the case at the end of the process, there might be 5 people with very little between them and it is very hard from an employer's perspective to distinguish between them. So you have to start thinking about what it is that you've got to offer for every individual job not just put it out there and hope for the best and hope that they will read between the lines and see how good you are but to think about what you individually have to offer that organization.

Now we've had a lot of guests over the years that have talked about how to reinvent yourself, how to present yourself in the best way possible. I will suggest that you go back and you listen to Nick Plummer, one of the very early guests, from Directioneering, he talked about people in very senior positions who were being retrenched, replaced or made redundant and the decisions that they made and the time that they took to make the decisions when they left or were asked to leave an organization, had a mindset of what they wanted to do and what they could offer, took six months off to think about it (obviously they were in a financial situation to be able to do that). Then they came back and said they had decided to go a completely different way. So there is a lot of information in those podcasts and there's transcriptions as well, if you'd rather read them, that will help you to get your mind ready, to think about not what did I do wrong but rather what have I got to offer?

I had better let Fulyana speak, she's nodding her head a lot more often than usual.

That's just because I'm agreeing and I'm exactly on the same line of thinking.

Firstly, I am sorry that you are going through this because it is a horrible situation to be in. When you're made redundant, it's got its own things but when you're feeling that poorly and you feel that it has been mishandled, wasn't professional, wasn't sensitive, that would add another layer. Now how to get out of it, is really what you are asking us to contribute to and I think that a lot of the things that you just said Kim are fantastic. And I think yes, definitely agree to do that.

I'm just here thinking, maybe we should have just reflect on the facts forget emotions. Yes, I'm not underestimating that, I'm just saying, yes absolutely, I'm feeling that way but you are already strong, you've proven you're strong because you reached out to Inside Exec even though you don't really know us. And you saying here's a forum that maybe I can get some help from, which is fantastic. That to me, shows independent thought or willingness and acknowledging where you're at. So congratulations on that. That's a fact. So please look at that as a plus.

You did say that you have been with the organization for some time and you are well regarded, that you have received proper remuneration and bonuses for a number of years. That is a fact. I think, if you look at that and say it's not just because they like me, I like them and we work well together. If you look back, I want you to go to the detail of how, salary and bonuses and all of that, how was your career? And look at your achievements and quantify them. You need that for your CV anyway, so they're probably there. If not, you might need to look at them and say when you did a particular role, what was it like when you went in there? What did you achieve while you were there? Can you quantify that? Do that just for you at the moment but obviously it's going to help you for preparing to that bit that Kim just said when you can go in there and show them what you can offer them. So you're going to need that information.

Once you've done that throughout your career, you can read it. The other thing is, I don't know what processes you had in your organization, but for you to be getting bonuses, that must be a process and a process, where it says, how did you perform. So a performance review of a sort, what was the bottom line in that? The people that were responsible for you as in you reported to them? What did they say about you? Read those words again and listen to it. And remember why they said it because that's a fact. That's not anything we are coming up with, it's about you and it's something you already achieved. That's important.

And again, you need that information so when you're answering questions at an interview, you're using that knowledge and experience. You're bringing it to this meeting and how then you can turn that into applying it to the organization you're

being interviewed for.

So you might still be thinking okay I'll look at that, but these people didn't like me, these people made me redundant. I don't know what the situation is, so I might be making it up but just for a moment think about it. To make someone redundant is because the position itself is redundant not the person. What does happen and from what you're saying is your organization is under new management and people were made redundant right up front but you were not by the sound of it. I reckon it's because you were good and they needed you for the transition. And if that's the case, you can look back and you'll see that, for example, if you doing the role then there is another person doing a similar role in the new organization. They only want one of you in the role. So, in this case, they kept you for your deep knowledge or ability. You're very highly regarded etcetera, help them with the transition. For a minute, you might get a bit angry about that, that they are using me. What I focus on is, that's a plus for you and that's how you can use that by saying even though a lot of people were made redundant at that point I went there for another while to help with the transition. Stick to the facts and give examples.

The other thing is what is glaringly obvious from what you are saying is that they didn't handle it properly. They should have communicated that. If my assumption is anywhere near what really happened, a good management team would identify that and talk to you up front and say, look, we don't know where we're going to go with this and it might end up in a redundancy and if it does, we will follow the redundancy rules, but for now we need you because... And if they had done that you would be feeling not so am I good enough and why haven't they treated me like I've been used to being treated?

So that's important. Now back to and why I was nodding so much before, is because I was thinking even if they did all of that right and you've done everything right as well and you had your confidence and going for interviews, no fault of your own, back to what Kim said, it's just a numbers game. There is five people for one position. They all equally as good and they had to find the differentiating factor between one person or another. It is a horrible position when you're in for a job and I know that for sure and certain, but what I'm saying is, if you just look back on what you achieved so far and look at the facts to answer your question, I want to be realistic, I want to pull myself out of it, am I good enough. The answer is that you are good enough based on facts, you will answer that you are being realistic because you are looking at yourself then at the hiring environment, then you've pulled yourself out of that and then you have to bring back your inner strength of resilience and patience and keep going till

you get what you want.

I'm going to suggest something that she will be horrified with because she hates doing it herself. I would like to see you treat this whole exercise as an interview and video it, video yourself. So either you ask the question and then you answer it or you get someone else, doesn't matter. Everyone's got a smart phone these days that can do a video, if you're doing videos for Facebook and Tick Tock, you can do it for yourself. I think that a lot of what we talked about, if you had someone say to you in this little video, why were you made redundant then you can say I don't know or you can look for the facts as Fulyana suggested. You can say what you think it was but it wasn't communicated well and say all the things that you are feeling and whether or not you ever look at this video again or whether you use parts of it as an audio and video CV or whatever else, it will give you a chance to vent the things that you are concerned about in a conversational way, not in a "I'll have to write it down" as a structured thing on a piece of paper but it's you talking it out and getting it out of your system. But it's there, it's recorded and you may well find that it's very cathartic in that it has helped you move on from it all spinning around in your head, to actually having it out in the open will help you to look at the situation.

Look at the facts. As we've said, look at the situation and perhaps you can use it to promote yourself. That's a good thing. Looking at today's environment where there are so many people applying for the limited amount of positions that are available, you need something that is cut through. You need to market yourself. So rather than worry about what's happened in the past, you've got to think about here am I, this package, how am I going to market myself? How am I going to rise above everyone else who has been working in all these other organisations and are probably at the same level? How am I going to show myself as well as my potential employers, that I'm the one that they should pick, that they should trust for this particular activity? So whether it's the video or you jump back to writing it down on a piece of paper, do it as an interview. So you have a question and then you answer it, the same as we do in these podcasts.

That's my best advice for you - take yourself out of the cycle that you're in now, thinking about the position and the situation that you've been in. Do something that challenges you, that is different, to address how you're feeling and how you can move on from where you are to what you want to do.

I just like to finish by saying, good luck. I really, really hope you get what you want and maybe when you do, you might want to come back and share your experience with our listeners. You could do that by writing to us as you have already or you can do a video like Kim just said, or an audio or come back as a

guest.

That would be excellent to have someone who has presented a case and then used it to work through a situation. It's another voice, it's another opinion on this particular topic. We know there are lots of people out there who are listening but not confident enough yet to voice their concerns. So, we will keep doing the podcasts in the hope that they will engage with us, in one way or another and that we can continue to bring you valuable and useful and practical information on the topics that you suggest to us.

We will leave it there for today. I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.