

Keeping Your Job Takes Work

Tough economic times can mean lay-offs for many people. Being handed a pink slip is never an easy thing to deal with, but here's how you can promote yourself in the workplace and make it difficult for your employer to find you expendable.

Negotiate your job description to emphasize your strengths. You don't want to appear replaceable if your new job accentuates your weaknesses rather than your strengths.

Focus on your employer's priorities. Use your time wisely and avoid distractions like responding to unimportant e-mails.

Form and maintain relationships. Employees who are generally liked are often the ones who are kept on, even if they are less competent at their work.

Give your boss what he/she wants. Find out if your boss likes to be informed of what you're working on, or if he/she wants your opinion on a subject or just the facts.

Always ask for feedback. Get ratings from your colleagues including your boss, peers and those who you supervise. Ask for criticism; what do they like and dislike about your work? If they prefer to remain anonymous, tell them to leave suggestions at your desk when you're not around.

Stand up for yourself, but use discretion. Feel free to disagree with those in charge but know when to back off.

Practice damage control. If you make a mistake, apologize immediately and forthrightly and assure those involved that you will right the wrong. Soon it will be old news.

Promote yourself. Don't be stagnant and let others move to the top because you didn't market yourself to higher-ups. Get credit for your ideas by sending drafts to other people besides your boss.

Don't be a clock-watcher. Put in extra time when you can.

Grow and develop in your field. Take any opportunity to read articles, attend workshops and cultivate mentors in your field. If you are let go, you'll have sharpened your skills and shown future employers how valuable you are.

Source: Kiplinger's Personal Finance