



Development at Work Australia

positive progress for people & organisations

Contact

Bridget Hogg

Telephone / Fax

0477 016966

Email

bridget@developmentatwork.com.au

Web Sites

www.outplacementadelaide.com.au

www.developmentatwork.com.au

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working as
Outplacement Adelaide

Tips for Employers to Manage Redundancies

Please note: nothing in this document constitutes legal advice, please seek legal advice from a qualified lawyer specialising in HR Law.

1. Consider your options.

In tough economic times – there are always opportunities. Could your organisation take advantage of the opportunities? (e.g. move into growing areas, profitable niche areas or areas where government or private spending is increasing?)

Some believe that companies who downsize don't find themselves in any better position financially (Cascio). Consider the alternatives carefully. Is this a time to capitalise on your people assets and build market share instead?

Flexible working

Do your staff want more flexible working hours? Could you reduce your full-time headcount by letting staff take phased retirement, job share, more flexible/reduced working hours during a downturn?

Re-location or re-deployment

When your organisation has determined that some positions are no longer required to be performed, you will need to consider the individuals currently in those positions. Do you want to offer them other opportunities within your organisation (re-deployment)? Will there be an opportunity to relocate or re-train within your organisation, or within your parent company or associated entities?

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Voluntary Redundancies

Maybe you wish to offer voluntary redundancies – if so, you need to consider how this process will be managed and what to do if more people volunteer than you had anticipated/desire. If you are a large organisation making big changes you could consider a re-deployment centre – this is like a development centre where the purpose is to identify who has suitable transferable skills for another role in the organisation. The purpose of this process must be clear to individuals at the start (no hidden agendas).

Training and Support for Managers

Prior to making any announcements - consider the support and information your managers will need as they communicate the news to staff and manage staff during the transition. Training for managers means they are better prepared to handle the emotional reactions that are likely to result. If you don't have an Employee Assistance Program you may want to source one now to help you support your staff.

Outplacement Support

If you are asking people to leave the organisation, will you provide outplacement support (which encompasses emotional support and job search skills) to assist your ex-employee to find the new career path of their choice?

Prepare Information

Consider what information you need to provide to whom and when - when you are making announcements about redundancies. At the stage that you let individual staff know their positions are to be made redundant, prepare more information (such as their redundancy pay amounts and other assistance you will give them) prior to meeting them.

Decide on Your Notice Period Policy

You will also want to know what your policy will be re serving a notice period. Some companies let the individual choose their final date, others ask individuals to leave the workplace the day they are informed about their redundancy. If you are using outplacement consultants, they will be able to facilitate your thinking around this process and the impact on your Employer Brand.

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2. Communication of Redundancies

A Consultation and Communications Plan

Once you know there will be redundancies you need to decide what consultation and communication is most appropriate. Be guided by your employment lawyer, the Fair Work Act and your awards and agreements. Decide how and when you will consult with and inform everyone. Have a plan to tell those directly affected. Consider how you will tell everyone affected at the same time so they hear the news from you / a manager rather than on the grapevine. Consider who will speak to the media and what will be said publically. Ensure everyone knows the media policy.

Management Briefing

Think about providing a briefing for the managers who will tell staff the news. They may need to know: what to say and what not to say and how to phrase the news – e.g. they will want to emphasise that positions are being made redundant rather than referring to “some people will be redundant”. Managers will need to be prepared for the types of emotional reactions and questions that staff will have – and know how to respond. Managers will need support to manage this process.

3. On- site Support on the Day You Break the News

On the day you tell people that redundancies are happening, it can be very helpful to have your outplacement consultant present. If you are not using outplacement consultants, your HR staff can provide some of the same “on the day” support. (They may need a briefing session to prepare them for this role).

Typically, organisations involve outplacement consultants in their preparation and in the process “on the day”. They especially value three aspects of their contribution:

- a) Support the manager and help them choose their words as they tell individuals that their position is redundant.
- b) Meet with the individuals affected to help them manage the initial shock, to offer their ongoing support to those offered an outplacement program and to assess what such individuals need immediately (such as a taxi home so they can go and talk it over with a partner).
- c) Make personal contact with each individual who is offered an outplacement program, outline the program, support them and swap contact details. Agree a first meeting date or support phone call as soon as possible (usually within 24 hours).

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If you have any questions about these notes, please contact Bridget Hogg, based in the Adelaide area, bridget@developmentatwork.com.au or 0477 016 966

What does Outplacement Involve?

The Next Step Outplacement Services of Development at Work Australia are tailored for each individual and can include:

- Emotional support
- Resume writing advice
- Job search strategies
- Networking advice – to find the “hidden jobs” that are not advertised
- Contacts and resources
- Consideration of a full range of “what’s next” options including self-employment
- Targeting organisations
- Advice on how to use the internet to find suitable vacancies with the least effort
- Interview skills advice, preparation and practice
- Transition to retirement or self-employment

We help organisations plan for, and manage, the people aspects of change.

If you would like more information about ways to plan and manage change or if you want briefing and training sessions to help your organisation prepare for, and manage, redundancy or change - call us for advice.

We have helped organisations with mergers, change of ownership, downsizing, re-location, redundancies, introduction of new technology and new ways of working and re-structuring. We provide a tailored range of group and individual support services including one on one programs and support, consulting services, and group workshops for change agents, managers and employees. We also design re-deployment development centres for large organisations.

For assistance to manage your redundancy programs call Bridget Hogg at Development at Work Australia on 0477 016 966.

We can provide outplacement services for your people to help them decide what is next for them and to support them through the job search process, we can also provide advice and support to your managers to help you manage this process effectively and avoid the effects of voluntary resignations, lack of motivation and survivor syndrome.

"Thanks again for this service – I contacted Peter just to congratulate him and get some feedback on the entire process. He was really happy with the service he was given and felt you were a fantastic help for him."

Nicola Hentschke. HR Manager. Churches of Christ Lifecare.

See some of our client testimonials here:

<https://outplacementadelaide.com.au/about-us/>