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About to be Fired? How to Save Your Job

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Just because the writing is on the wall doesn't mean you can't come back from a bad situation at work. Whether you get a poor performance review or fear you may soon be on the unemployment line, knowing the signs and how to react to them can prevent you from being fired.

"If you've been put under performance review or feel like you may potentially lose your job this should be a warning that you take quite seriously," says Joel Garfinkle, author of *Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level*. "However all hope is not lost. Taking the initiative to improve your performance is a great first step."

While the signs are often there, for many people getting hit with a bad performance review or warning they could get fired, they feel blindsided and caught off guard. But according to career experts there are telltale signs that your job could be in trouble that most people knowingly or unknowingly choose to ignore.

According to Garfinkle, the most obvious sign is if you see your responsibilities being handed over to other employees. "If you find your once full plate is becoming increasingly empty, this could be a red flag," he says.

Another sign: you're no longer first to know information or you aren't getting invited to those important meetings. And the most telling one of all: a bad review.

"So few people who get fired for performance reasons even bother trying to do what has been asked of them. Instead they focus on the unfairness factor," says Suzanne Lucas, operator of the *Evil HR Lady* blog.

Be proactive to save your job

Once you are aware your job could be in trouble taking proactive steps to improve your performance is the best way to stay employed. Sure, you may be hurt and in defensive mode, but communication with your boss is imperative at this point. Request a meeting with your supervisor and find out what steps you can take to make improvements.

After the meeting, come up with a plan of action and give your boss a timeline to achieving the goals. Ask for a follow-up review to ensure you are doing what is necessary. Remember to be humble and take what your boss is saying to heart, even if you don't think it makes sense.

"Do what your manager is asking you to do," says Lucas. "It doesn't matter if your manager is dumb or doesn't understand – if you do what she's asking you to do, your chances of saving your job drastically increase."

If having a discussion with your supervisor is out of the question, another strategy is look at the people in your department that you're boss likes or is happy with. Do they come in early and stay late? Do they respond immediately to any request the boss has? "Emulate the successful," says Lucas.

Prevent landing on the layoff list

When a potential firing is due to performance, a lot of what happens is in your control. But when it comes to layoffs, often times you have little say over who will be let go. Still, career experts say there are some steps you can take to hopefully prevent you from landing on that list.

According to Lucas, cross training is one way to make yourself more valuable in a company. You may be the best accountant the company has, but if that entire department is being shutdown, it won't matter. But if you are also good at finance, you may find yourself being moved into that department.

If you hear layoffs could be coming, Lucas says to figure out what areas of the company are profitable and try to get transferred there.



"Laying off employees is one of the hardest things an organization has to do," adds Garfinkle. "When layoffs occur, responsibilities from terminated employees have to be passed on to those that remain. For this reason, the best strategy to employ to make sure you're not one of those that are let go is to demonstrate your effectiveness as an employee."

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