

7 Ways to Convince Your Company That You're a Keeper

With news of layoffs becoming an almost daily event, payroll and AP professionals may be inclined to just hunker down at their desks and hope they won't be targeted next. Although this is one way to respond to growing business uncertainty, it's probably not the best stance to take. Consider these more proactive strategies you can employ to enhance your job security:

1. **Look busy.** Many accounting and finance professionals are working at companies that have reduced staff levels, so chances are you don't have to *try* to look busy – you have plenty to do. But even if you're fortunate enough to have some down periods, be careful not to look as though you have time on your hands. Keep your in-office socializing and recreational web surfing to a minimum. Now is not the time to relax your work ethic.
2. **Support the boss.** Even if you don't always see eye-to-eye with your manager, don't let your words or actions undermine him or her. Your fate is intertwined, after all. If your boss is viewed favorably by upper management, his or her staff will probably be highly regarded as well, which should improve everyone's job security.
3. **Demonstrate your versatility.** Employers seek payroll and AP professionals who have strengths in more than one accounting or finance area. Rather than hiring someone who is an accounts receivable specialist, for instance, a company might prefer a candidate who is also proficient in accounts payable and reconciliations. As a result, professionals with multifaceted skills are in growing demand. Consider whether you have skills that you've set aside and have yet to reveal to your current employer. If so, let your boss know how multidimensional you are.
4. **Add more value.** Just coasting along may not be enough to keep your job in the current environment. Consider what you can do to contribute more. Can you suggest new money-saving strategies, a process improvement idea that increases efficiency or volunteer for a challenging project that everyone else has been trying to dodge? Also, make sure that higher-ups know of your efforts to find solutions to business problems. If you have an intriguing proposal, consider putting it in writing so that you'll be given credit for your initiative even if your idea isn't implemented. Also, be even more vigilant in looking for opportunities to acquire new skills. Having specialized knowledge that others don't is a good way to make yourself more recession-proof.
5. **Be a team player.** While contributing new ideas is important, don't overdo it by constantly playing devil's advocate and questioning the rationale of every suggested approach. During difficult periods, your colleagues and supervisor will have greater appreciation for staff members who roll up their sleeves and get to work without undue second-guessing.

6. **Rein in high-maintenance tendencies.** Making unreasonable demands will turn you into an easy target if cutbacks are needed. In the current environment, most companies are expecting their employees to make some sacrifices. Therefore, it's probably not a good time to push for that pricey ergonomic chair you've been wanting or to try to scale back your office hours so you can step up your fitness regimen.
7. **Stay focused.** It's not easy to keep your mind on work when you're surrounded by negative news and nervous colleagues, but don't let anxiety over business conditions paralyze you. Keep your focus on producing high-quality work and try not to become distracted by gossip and speculation about things that may or may not happen. While it's natural to want to know what's really going on within a business, approach your manager with questions and concerns rather than stoking the rumor mill.

Although much of what's happening within your company and the economy at large is beyond your control, you may be able to exert some degree of influence over your individual work situation. By going beyond just hoping for the best when it comes to your job and taking assertive steps to bring about a more positive outlook, you can lessen your chances of becoming an employment statistic.

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