

How to Recession-Proof Your Job

Welcome to *The Workforce Link Podcast*, where we're offering forward-thinking conversations for the workforce, linking employers and job seekers to a brighter tomorrow. I'm your host Sundi Jo Graham and I'm glad to be back with you for another episode today.

Unless you're living under a rock, it's no secret that the global economy has been in turmoil since COVID hit in 2020. While some companies are desperate for employees, others have been forced in the last couple of years to cut costs, which has resulted in hiring freezes or layoffs.

In today's episode, we're going to talk about what you can offer as a team member to stay ahead of the curve on becoming an indispensable team member if a recession comes.

Before we dive into today's episode, I have a favor to ask. Word of mouth is the biggest way to spread the word and we need your help doing just that. Would you mind sharing this podcast with your friends and co-workers? Hey... maybe even share it with your dentist. He can listen while doing a root canal because anything is better than a root canal. Seriously though, we are grateful for you sharing and spreading the word as we continue to help link employers and job seekers to a brighter tomorrow. Thank you in advance.

Whether facing a recession or not, as an employee, you want to ask yourself, "Am I making the company money? Am I saving them money?" Asking those questions could truly make it or break it for you when it comes to a recession.

Let's dive into some specific steps you can take to help recession-proof your job.

1) HAVE CLEAR EXPECTATIONS FROM YOUR BOSS

Make sure you're on the same page with your boss about what your job entails. That way you're not missing anything and the boss also knows you're serious about making sure you do everything you're supposed to do and desire to do it well.

There may be changes that come that require you to do something else or additional duties. Don't be surprised. Let your boss know you're willing to do them, but you just want an idea of what that looks like.

And if your boss needs some help, don't be afraid to offer to take tasks off their plate that you know you're capable of doing. This shows that you're willing to go the extra mile to help and get the job done. This shows you're truly an asset to the company.

And I'm talking about all levels of jobs here. Whether you're doing maintenance, working the drive-thru, managing a small team, or running the marketing department. Recessions don't just look at the high performers and say, "Oh ya, you're fine." They affect everyone.

Our small team here in the Central Region has had to do this. We experienced our own set of layoffs in recent years, and we've all come together to help one another succeed. Our Executive Director doesn't hesitate to jump in and deliver flyers to businesses for an event we're having. I may be in charge of communications, but if I need to clean a bathroom because someone else needs it done, I won't hesitate. We're a team, which means we've all committed to making the company run successfully.

2) SHOW THEM YOU'RE A MONEY SAVER

Showing them you're a moneymaker doesn't hurt either. The first thing an employer is probably going to do is figure out where to cut costs. And if a company isn't making money, well, they're losing money.

This is where you have to take the extra initiative as a team member to show them why the cost of keeping you employed is worth the investment. Do your homework and figure out what kind of return on investment your boss can expect.

This is a great opportunity for you to step back for a second and not just see yourself as an employee, but think like an owner. If this were your business, what would you do?

Ask yourself, "Am I bringing in money in some way? Am I saving money somewhere?" The company is probably already aware of what they need from you or they wouldn't have hired you, but that doesn't mean you can't show them or remind them. Why is your role valuable? How do you impact the bottom line?

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And don't forget about our Registered Apprenticeship opportunities, which is an alternative "earn while you learn" combination of training and employment. Apprentice workers gradually earn more as they reach higher levels of productivity. In addition to rewarding performance, a Registered Apprenticeship combines employer-driven, job-related

instruction with extensive on-the-job learning under the supervision of a trade professional. After completing a Registered Apprenticeship, the apprentice receives a nationally-recognized occupational credential that communicates the standards and high level of training that their employer provides.

To learn more about our work-based learning programs, visit cwdregion.com/learning today and find the Central Region Job Center near you! Again, that's cwdregion.com/learning.

3) LEARN NEW SKILLS

We touched on this a little bit in #1, having clear expectations from your boss, but it's worth diving a little bit deeper into. Let your boss know you're willing to learn new skills **and** take it upon yourself to start learning what you can, even before you ask. This shows your boss you're taking the initiative to be a valuable player.

And you might have skills already that your boss doesn't yet know about, but now is the proper time to share. You may just find yourself in a different position. This happened to me.

Before becoming the Communications Coordinator for the Central Region, I worked in ReEntry, teaching personal and professional development to justice-involved individuals. But I also had a background in social media marketing, website development, design, and journalism. My boss was aware of it because I had built a website for the re-entry department, created promotional materials, and put together a mockup for a new company website.

When COVID hit, the opportunity to go into the prisons stopped immediately. A good thing for me, I had some backup skills that worked in my favor **and** the favor of the Central Region. One of my bosses remembered projects I had worked on and brought that up to our new Executive Director.

At a time when I should have lost my job due to the fault of no one else, I received a promotion and a chance to use my skills to help grow the Central Region, and doing this podcast is part of that. I was able to show that I was an asset to the company, not a burden, but I have to do some shifting to get there.

4) PRIORITIZE YOUR ACTIVITIES

Again, you need to be prepared to add more to your plate if a recession comes and there are hiring freezes and layoffs. And let's be honest, it's probably going to be a little overwhelming at first. That's okay. Plan ahead, prepare yourself for it, and learn how to become efficient to get things done and secure your place in the company.

Focus on the things that are going to move you forward and get rid of the distractions that are going to keep you from getting the job done. Maybe make a list of what you do daily, and even weekly or monthly. Having it laid out in front of you might show you if there are some things that you don't need to be doing or something you could be doing better.

This can help you stay ahead in prioritizing the right things and show your boss you are invested in doing what's best for the company.

5) BE RELIABLE

If you're not reliable, none of these other steps matter. You'll probably be the first on the list to go when or if they start making cuts. If you offer bulletproof reliability to the company, it's going to be hard to let you go because they'll know you're an asset.

And don't just show up when you're supposed to show up. Show up early. Stay late. Put in the initiative to show you're invested. That doesn't mean you have to let the company take advantage of you. That doesn't mean you have to be a "slave" to the job, but make sure you're present when you're there.

If someone asks you to do something, do it, unless it's illegal of course. If they're asking you, it's probably because they already see you as reliable and trust that you can do it.

Times are not like they used to be and we all know that. And while the future is certainly uncertain, there are still some things you can do to bring certainty to your team and your boss to let them know you're worth keeping when times get hard.

Let's do a quick recap of what we've gone over today:

1. Have clear expectations from your boss.
2. Show them you're a money saver and a money maker.
3. Learn new skills.
4. Prioritize your activities.
5. Be reliable.

I would also add that even if a recession doesn't come, these steps could also earn you a raise. People want to invest in those who are willing to invest back.

And if you need some help expanding your job skills, we have 8 different Job Center locations throughout the Central Region, we have an excited staff ready to help.

Columbia, Rolla, Jefferson City, Lebanon, Lake of the Ozarks, and more!

Find your closest Job Center location today at cwdregion.com/jobcenters. That's cwdregion.com/jobcenters.

If you've enjoyed today's episode, would you mind sharing it with someone else you think could benefit? Maybe a friend you know who's dreading heading to work? And if you haven't already, would you mind heading over and leaving a review on iTunes for *The Workforce Link*? Let us know what you enjoy about the show. It means a lot to us, and it helps us stay visible so that others can easily find us.

Have a great week, my friend, and we'll meet again in the next episode. Until then. Remember this... There's always a brighter tomorrow if you're willing to find it.