

## How to be prepared if you lose your job

Kevin Rudd warned in a recent radio interview that people will lose their jobs as the economy slows, not just for months but for years.

This sobering confirmation highlights fears already expressed through hushed whispers at work and nervous conversations down at the pub.

So what if it is you who is told: "I'm sorry, but there is no longer enough work to keep you on"? And what if you are not feeling that confident about getting another job?

And then, to make it worse, when you do start looking for work, you find that the competition pool has grown significantly.

This is not the time to practise denial or shrink away. Do not sabotage your job-seeking efforts by not preparing.

Put your best foot forward and re-invent yourself as best you can. Here are my tips for success when in career crisis:

- Identify your skills, strengths, achievements and competencies. This will help your confidence. Learn to express these to others with ease.
- Investigate training opportunities that may offer a job in less-threatened industries.
- Ensure your CV and letter are your best marketing documents. They need to be competency/skill-based, well formatted with no spelling errors and targeted directly to what an employer wants to hear, but no lying. Do not short-change yourself with an average CV or it will go in the bin. This is usually the first point of assessment. If you struggle with this, enlist the services of a professional career-development practitioner.
- Develop your interview skills. Identify the questions you are likely to be asked and practice answering the. Behavioural and example-based questions are used extensively these days. Without preparing in advance, you can come unstuck.
- Think outside the square for new jobs outside your comfort zone. "Meaningful employment" is the term that career development practitioners use these days to define career pursuits that suit one's values, skills, personality type and interests.

And while I am not all for endorsing a career path that fits in with these, you may need to consider a B or C option if option A is not available. If the economic downturn means that your industry is slowed and your skills are not needed, find your pay elsewhere. This does not mean you will be stuck forever in a job you hate. This simply ensures you will get that wage and can pay those bills until you can pursue your preferred job choice again.

- Network. Do not wait for jobs to be advertised. Get out there, meet and talk to others. You need to be seen and known. You do not have to go through tough employment times alone. SA Works in the Region is a state-funded government employment service that oversees all South Australia. Its website [www.saworks.gov.sa.au](http://www.saworks.gov.sa.au)

This initiative brings together employment-related services to ensure South Australian have the opportunity to develop work skills and get a job. Contact it to be referred to the correct employment-service provider. The Career Development Association of Australia website ([www.cdaa.org.au](http://www.cdaa.org.au)) will also put you in touché with professional career advisers.

If you are feeling the pinch, get help. We are all in this together.