

## Advice to Employers and Employees: Work for a better employment relationship

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### Introduction

In today's article I want to highlight some of the things that are taken for granted but have a big impact on the employment relationship. **Retrenchment** Employers when retrenching please consider the plight of your employees and how they have served your organisation for all these years. Stop being cruel when carrying out retrenchment. You must engage all employee concerned and reach an amicable solution. Prospective employees and the market in general will remember how you have treated your employees on termination. No matter how aggrieved you are as an employer always find an amicable way to part with your employees. If resources permit, offer counselling services to both survivors and those affected. It helps reduce the negative attitudes normally generated during the retrenchment time. For employees my advice is that you must always be prepared for the possibility of retrenchment. You cannot be certain that you will have a job for as long as you want. Organisations all over the world restructure and you can find yourself with no job. In such instances you cannot blame yourself or blame the company. Companies retrench for various reasons. This happens all over the world. Those who suffer the most are those that are not prepared for the job loss. Remember you can lose your job anytime regardless of how senior or junior you are. Most employees become destitute soon after retrenchment because they were not prepared for the day the job will be gone.

Employment for life is gone and it is the new normal. To avoid being a target for retrenchment – make yourself indispensable by working very hard so that everyone sees your value. If you are a trouble causer and you are generally lazy, which employer would want to employ you? You must remember that as long as the employer is not violating your rights they have the right to restructure their business whichever way they want and you maybe a casualty of that process. My message to all employees is that make yourself indispensable by working hard and being a reliable employee.

### Do not burn bridges

Employers, do not be cruel to your employees even when their services are no longer needed. You damage your employer brand if you end the employment relationship unprofessionally. We have read so many stories of people being fired and paraded in newspapers. What do you think prospective employees will think of you as an employer? Another important note for employers is that when an employee resigns it is not a good practice to make a counter offer or increase their salary. Let them go, it gives others a chance. To avoid being desperate always make sure you have cover in all the critical areas. For employees the same concept applies, when you want to leave your job do it properly. A lot of employees these days run away without giving notice. Do not do that, it damages your reputation. If you cannot give notice for a good reason – discuss the same with your employer; most employers would

understand. Sending resignations from home or abroad will damage your reputation as an employee. Some employees go to the extent of sending resignation letters via text or WhatsApp. Please respect your employer and hand in your resignation properly and have an opportunity to say goodbye to your colleagues. Employees must also note that once you resign and hand over your resignation you cannot withdraw the resignation unless the employer consents. The employer does not necessarily have to accept your resignation, they just need to acknowledge receipt; that is it.

## **Negotiating for a salary offer**

For employees do not start by demanding huge sums of money without proving your worth to the employer. Show them you are prepared to take a moderate salary to prove your worth. Make your employer feel you are a worthy investment and thereafter negotiate for performance based remuneration. Only after that can you demand what you are worth. Remember what you say in interviews are promises not tangible value, therefore employers cannot use that to pay you a premium salary. To employers please never offer a high salary when an employee has not proved their worth. Salaries are easy to give but very difficult to take away. There is no reason why you should tie your company into a high cost structure especially of a fixed nature like basic salaries and other benefits. Always offer a moderate basic salary and the rest must be variable pay based on the value each employee creates for your company.

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