

Showcase your strong qualities

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Q: "I've been employed with the same manufacturing company for 15 years. Lately with the downturn I feel like a high priced commodity. I run a machine but with layoffs and other companies closing, there are several workers who can replace me. I am worried and feel the pressure of unrealistic deadlines. But I can see the bigger picture and I can accomplish what is asked of me. My question is as I turn 50 has my time with this company come to an end, should I be looking for other employment or hold my head high, smile, and hope for next week."

A: Many businesses are experiencing negative fallout from the current economic situation. When employers don't communicate plans, their people can feel left in the dark, with rumours and assumptions being their only connection to what's really happening. Cutbacks and layoffs are a reality, but don't jump to the conclusion you're next.

Do hold you head high and smile, and...focus on what's within your control. Avoid contributing to the gossip and chaos. Know that people your age are highly valued for their knowledge and experience. Your positive attitude and big picture thinking are assets. It's worth noting that management often struggles with poor staff morale during tough times - if you're allowing your positivity to shine, it won't go unnoticed and it could help others. What else can you do to show you're not just a commodity?

Consider voicing your concerns with your supervisor, but first investigate your worth in the marketplace. It will boost your confidence and help you showcase your strengths. Get your resume in shape and research the latest job-seeking trends to ensure you understand the world of web-based job banks and social networking. Your local Service Canada office is a great resource.

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