

Facing redundancy is not easy - here are some tips for fellow claims professionals should the worst happen...

It is common wisdom that all political careers end in failure, Theresa May won't be disagreeing. It is also increasingly true that a career as an employed Claims Manager can be bought to a close through changes outside the control of the incumbent - mergers and acquisition, restructuring, technology innovation, volatile market conditions, downsizing, off shoring to name a few.

I meet many colleagues considering a life as a consultant either through choice or forced by circumstances. From my experience, can I suggest a few things you can do today that will be very helpful for you should you ever decide to go freelance.

1. Understand your value - which skills and knowledge would be of most value to the claims market? Knowing the fine details of your current organisations processes may not be of much interest to the rest of the market, but if you used that knowledge to improve, say productivity or the customer experience, then you are likely to be able to do that at other organisations.
2. It's not just about hard skills. Employers expect technical skill and knowledge, but what they want to know is how you go about your work, what your disciplines and values are and very importantly, how you interact with people of all levels. Adaptability is a great attribute to signal here for a freelancer - show you can deliver bad news well, confront when necessary but also persuade and charm. It may be worth deliberately undertaking projects that test your skill in new tasks - it will make a good story too.
3. Collect stories. Some people find it hard to believe they have done things that could be interesting or valuable to others. This is never true. Look at your greatest triumphs or biggest learning experiences. Write them down in three paragraphs for each story.



***Tip - flag your best stories in your CV – then your interviewer is more likely to ask you about them.**

- 4. Love your network.** This is a vital investment both when you are in employment and when freelancing. But it can be easier to open doors when you are employed and have no agenda – so think about companies that you would like to know better and see if you can build relationships with key staff today.
- 5. Think of yourself as a brand.** How are you presenting, in person, in writing, in presentations, in social media? Getting to understand your skill level and aptitude in these channels and finding support for your weaknesses will give you a running start if you go independent.
- 6. Small acts of courage.** Doing small things that make us uncomfortable on a daily basis is the best preparation for greater acts of courage. By way of an example, if every day you push yourself to address small issues of underperformance then the annual appraisal for a failing staff member is easier. Many freelance Claims Consultants find self-promotion very difficult at first – so start with quick calls to your friends, then more remote contacts, then cold calling.

Adrian Gilbert
Managing Director, SX3 Claims Consultants

About the SX3 Redundancy service

SX3 offers a redundancy advice service aimed at fellow senior claims professionals who are considering starting out as a consultant. This tends to happen when they are considering semi-retirement, are facing a potential redundancy situation, or are on a career break.

The aim of the service is to provide a realistic view of what working as a consultant is like. If someone is thinking of setting up as a consultant, they need to go into it with their eyes wide open, and we are happy to support our peers in the market with that insight free of charge.

SX3 have taken on over 40 consultants over the past few years, and before we take on each one, Adrian speaks with them personally to share insights and experiences of what a self-employed consultant's life looks like. This includes the upsides (such as a flexible lifestyle) but also the challenges (such as no guaranteed income). I also discuss with them what skills they have that could be marketable, and therefore what types of consultancy work they should be aiming for.

This service is offered on a 1-1 basis, or by way of a round table discussion with a small group. Adrian Gilbert delivers these sessions, and can do so on site, off site, or remotely by phone or video conference.