In this uncertain economy, ask yourself, if my job disappears, what value would I take with me?

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When uncertainty rises, it doesn't take long for people to start wondering what it might mean for their jobs.

Revenues tighten. Budgets get scrutinized. Projects are postponed. Vacant positions go unfilled. Teams are reorganized. And even when no one is talking openly about layoffs, the possibility can be difficult to ignore.

It's an uncomfortable position to be in, largely because so much of it is outside your control. You can't control the economy. You can't control your organization's revenues. And you certainly can't control every restructuring decision. But that doesn't mean you're powerless.

There is an important distinction between job security and career resilience. Job security is something an organization gives you. Career resilience is something you build yourself.

And one of the best ways to build it is to deliberately develop value that can travel with you – across roles, organizations and changing circumstances. You may not be able to make your current job completely secure, but you can make yourself better prepared for whatever comes next.

The value you can take with you

One way to think about career resilience is to ask yourself a simple question: If my job disappeared tomorrow, what value would I take with me?

That's not intended as a frightening question. It's an inventory question. Your title might disappear. As may your reporting relationships, your organizational authority and your access to company systems. But your judgement, experience, knowledge, reputation, relationships, problem-solving ability and capacity to learn go with you.

That's your transferable value: the things you know, the things you can do and the qualities you bring that aren't dependent on one particular job or employer. The more of that value you deliberately develop, the less your career is defined by the position you happen to hold today.

Find the value behind what you do

It is easy to describe your value in terms of the tasks you perform, but tasks are often specific to a particular role. Instead, think about the underlying abilities those tasks demonstrate.

Preparing a monthly forecasting report, for example, may be part of your current job. But being able to analyze complex information, identify meaningful trends and explain their implications to decision-makers are valuable in many settings.

Ask yourself: What am I good at that would still matter somewhere else? The answer tells you far more about your professional value than your job title does.

Build knowledge that travels

Institutional knowledge has real value, and becoming someone who understands how your organization works can make you highly effective. But if most of what you know depends on one company's systems, processes, terminology or ways of doing things, much of that expertise stays behind when you leave.

Keep developing knowledge that has currency beyond your current employer. Stay aware of what's changing in your profession, learn tools and approaches used elsewhere, and periodically ask yourself: Would this knowledge still be valuable somewhere else? Not everything has to pass that test, but enough of it should.

Prove you can adapt

No one can predict exactly which skills will be valuable five or 10 years from now, so career resilience cannot simply mean accumulating today's most sought-after skills. Pay attention instead to your ability to learn.

Think about the times you've mastered a new technology, taken on an unfamiliar responsibility, adjusted to a new way of working or solved a problem you hadn't encountered before. Those experiences provide evidence of something highly transferable: I've learned before, I can learn again. In a changing workplace, your ability to adapt may ultimately matter more than any single piece of expertise you possess today.

Build a professional world beyond your workplace

Relationships with former colleagues, clients, professional peers and others outside your workplace expose you to different ideas, challenges and ways of working. They help you understand how your profession is changing beyond the walls of your own organization and prevent your perspective from becoming too inward-looking.

This is not about networking because you might need another job someday. It *is* about maintaining connections that broaden your thinking and expose you to what's happening elsewhere. Your organization may employ you, but it shouldn't contain your entire professional world.

None of this, of course, makes you layoff-proof. Talented, capable people lose their jobs when organizations restructure, strategies change, divisions close or positions simply disappear. Those decisions are sometimes driven by circumstances that have little to do with individual performance.

The purpose of building career resilience isn't to guarantee that you'll keep the job you have. It's to make sure your future isn't entirely dependent on keeping it.

You may not be able to control whether your organization changes. But you can make sure that when it does, you aren't starting from zero.

The organization may own the job. You own the career.

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