



## **SUPPORTING YOUR ORGANISATION THROUGH CHANGE AND REDUNDANCY**

Managing career transition. The right way.



This document provides an advisory overview and is not a step-by-step guide to the process of redundancy. Appropriate Employment Law advice should always be sought.

# Managing career transition. The right way.

Here at INTOO, we believe that developing the careers of your employees is what ultimately drives business success. We partner with companies to enhance the potential of their people, transform individual performance and transition careers effectively through our outplacement programmes as the needs of the business evolve.

In this guide, we outline a best practice approach to supporting employees through times of organisational change and redundancy in a way that focuses on the people of the business.

## Unprecedented change

**The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are creating widespread business challenges across both UK and global industries.**

Not for generations have so many individuals faced greater uncertainty in their professional and personal lives. The need to manage change professionally and compassionately has never been greater.

It is through this unique lens that we must look at the current economic environment. And while circumstances dictate that some redundancies are inevitable, the onus is on leaders to support their people through the process, ensuring their wellbeing is the focus of every decision and every action.

There is also unprecedented support available to businesses at this time and this should be considered as part of any change or redundancy process brought on by COVID-19.



# Assessing the need for redundancies

Fundamental to any change management programme is the planning process. When a business experiences a severe, unexpected shock, with immediate impacts on revenue, redundancy can often appear the only viable route. Yet while in some cases it can be simply unavoidable, it is always prudent to explore any possible alternatives. Assess the skills of your current workforce to see if there are areas in which redundancies could be avoided, such as redeployment, job share, moving to reduced hours or any other alternatives that may be suggested as part of a consultation process.

These additional measures can all potentially reduce the company's outgoings without reducing the size of the workforce.

Planning is fundamental to the success of any change management programme



## Set the background

Senior leaders (typically a business leader or CEO) should bring employees together to set the background to upcoming business change; highlighting what is happening in the marketplace, how the firm is performing against expectation and outlining why changes may be needed. Helping people to understand why change is necessary will make that change easier to implement.

It is not advisable to go into detail at this early stage. However, it is important to set the scene at an organisational level if the changes are significant, or at a departmental or individual level if the changes are on a smaller scale. The purpose is to demonstrate why the change is necessary and should avoid specifics around redundancy – although it may be appropriate to acknowledge that some difficult decisions may lie ahead. Explaining the background in this way is good practice and minimises uncertainty. The opportunity should also be taken to clearly outline the next steps.

# Communication is everything

Once all other avenues have been exhausted, the commercial reality sometimes dictates that change involving redundancy is the only way forward. When this is the case, look to ensure you do it the right way.

Clarity and communication are integral to successful change. Whilst nobody enjoys delivering bad news, how the information is communicated can make all the difference and can reduce the negative impacts on employees. With the right skills and techniques, informing an employee of change can be delivered in a way that minimises the disruption, stress and worry to the individual and rather than being seen as a source of negativity, can actually create positive opportunities for individuals.

As humans, we are programmed to fear the unknown, and the potential perceived threats brought about by organisational change can quickly lead to extreme concern as people begin to expect the worst and fear for the safety of their role and future status within the organisation. It is important to alleviate concerns where possible whilst also being frank and upfront when required.

Before any communication with employees begins, leadership teams must be armed with as much knowledge, reasoning and understanding of the changes facing their teams as possible in order that they can convey this information clearly, concisely and with confidence.

Having an understanding as to why certain decisions have been made allows a leader to deliver the message with authenticity and to front-up effectively when questions are put to them.

Leaders need to be aware that they have a legal (and moral) obligation to manage the redundancy process in a fair, open and transparent way. The desired outcome should be that everyone understands the justifications for the decisions that may be taken and recognises they are appropriate in the circumstances.

Everyone involved must know exactly what is happening and why. Equally significant is that each individual is fully aware of the support they have available to them at each stage in the process.

If applicable, involve Union representation as early in the process as possible.

It is essential to convey that this is a commercial reality and not a personal judgement. It is important to remember that it is a role at the company being made redundant, not the individual. Keep all involved aligned in this narrative so that when it comes to delivery, there is a consistent company message.

To support leaders through this daunting and complex time, organisations may consider the option of bringing in specialist support, helping them to navigate change effectively. The benefits to both your business and your employees are manifold.

# The redundancy process

Now is the time to begin to inform all employees who may be affected by the proposed changes. Find an appropriate time where the whole team can be updated, so that no one is the 'last to know'.

Take time to familiarise yourself with each employee's at-home situation and what the news may mean for them. You may even establish additional ways in which you can support.

Remote teams and virtual home working are becoming ever more commonplace and can bring an additional layer of complexity to such sensitive communication. While video-conferencing, rather than face-to-face conversations may be necessary, this is not a justification for overlooking the importance of one on one communication. Where possible, physical meetings with those affected should be a priority.

## Precise preparation

'Breaking the news' around redundancies can be extremely challenging. This may be the first time HR professionals or business leaders have been in this position and it is often cited as one of the most unpleasant activities leaders and managers have to go through. Support to those individuals alongside precise preparation can overcome these challenges and enhance the delivery of the message itself.

### Preparation advice to consider includes:

- Meetings should take place in a quiet office location, ideally where there will be no disruptions and with phones muted.
- Start meetings with a script agreed in advance. This means you can be as clear as possible, give accurate information, avoid poor phrasing and ensure that all the relevant points are discussed. Practice makes perfect so it's worth familiarising yourself with the messaging in order that it avoids coming across as wooden or unsympathetic. Be confident in the message and be prepared and rehearsed for any difficult questions that may arise.

- Avoid Fridays. People will not be able to ask questions of anyone over the weekend and this creates more anxiety.
- Be aware of sensitivities for each individual by trying to avoid breaking the news on occasions like birthdays, major anniversaries or just ahead of holidays – we understand this is not always possible but it is something to consider.
- Have a clear plan and clear understanding of the next steps in the redundancy process.

### Things to avoid during a first meeting include:

- It's not appropriate to provide 'false optimism' by implying that redundancy 'probably won't happen' or 'it's unlikely to impact you'. This is misleading to the employee.
- Senior members of the team should not shirk responsibility with statements such as "if it were down to me this wouldn't be happening" or "you know it's not me, it's a decision taken out of my hands". This risks further internal resentment.
- Rushing through the meeting because you feel uncomfortable. Give the individual time to process the information they are receiving and ask any questions they may have.
- The meeting getting heated. You should prepare accordingly for all potential responses to the news and know how you will manage difficult conversations and questions.

Emotions may run high, and it can be very upsetting when faced with telling colleagues – some of whom may have become friends - news that may negatively affect them.

Finally, it is important to be empathetic and maintain an open-door policy, listening to any initial feedback after the shock of an announcement. You may wish to seek the support of career transition specialists who can be at hand to support with initial concerns around potential next steps.

### Evaluation criteria

Now is the time to establish the criteria on which staff facing redundancy will be evaluated, and they should be easy for all to understand. You may wish to gain employee representative feedback on the proposed criteria, where appropriate. This criteria should not include any discriminatory reasons and all protected characteristics – age, disability, gender, marriage, pregnancy, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation - must be respected.

The evaluation criteria may change based upon organisation size and the number of individuals assigned to a particular role. It is important to ensure you adhere to current employment legislation, as some groups of individuals have protected rights and these require a different approach.

### Consultation

Following decisions about which roles are likely to face redundancy. The company must explain the background to the redundancies, such as; which jobs are at risk, whether employees are in a 'pool' alongside other colleagues and what evaluation criteria may be used. Information must include references to the timeframes over which the redundancy process will take place along with relevant financial information around any redundancy pay and notice periods. It is advantageous at this stage to include someone experienced in change activities and who is skilled in handling difficult conversations.

Consultation period start and end dates are determined by the numbers of people being impacted. Consultation allows employees to respond with feedback, make suggestions and ask questions. Employers should be fully engaged with answering all queries or suggestions within the consultation timeframe; consultation should be taken seriously and should avoid any pre-determined outcomes (accepting that in some circumstances, options may be extremely limited).

Depending upon numbers impacted, group consultation can take place whereby individuals at risk of redundancy nominate colleagues (employee representatives) who may attend management meetings and discuss options on behalf of colleagues. Where smaller groups are concerned liaise with your employees individually to allow them the chance to talk about how they feel, and to put across any suggestions that they may have.

After carefully considering alternatives, final consultation proceedings will inform the employee of the outcome. Appropriate 'notice' should then be issued. Allow the employee time to raise any points they may have and clearly reiterate why this decision has been taken. Clear written information should be passed across to the employee outlining the redundancy pay calculation; notice periods, outstanding holiday pay and so on.

You should also make it clear at this stage that they do have the right to appeal the decision. Although this phase takes place towards the end of the process, look to establish who will hear the appeal at the beginning of a redundancy plan. Ideally, it should be a different member of staff than those conducting consultation meetings.

While there is no legal requirement for employees to be accompanied at meetings under a redundancy procedure, it is good practice for an employer to allow employees to bring along a colleague or employee representative for support if they wish to.



## A redundancy announcement checklist

**Notify employees of the business situation as soon as possible and in writing.**

### Outline:

- ✓ Why redundancies are being made
- ✓ Which job roles are potentially at risk
- ✓ Number of people involved
- ✓ The procedure the business is planning to follow to select employees for redundancy
- ✓ How they will carry out redundancies
- ✓ How redundancy pay will be calculated
- ✓ Details of any agency staff being used
- ✓ Whether outplacement support is being offered, and how it can be accessed

### For collective consultations only:

- ✓ How representatives are to be selected, ensuring they reflect the composition of the overall population being consulted
- ✓ How representatives will be trained on the role they will be expected to undertake



### Adhering to legislation

With any programme resulting in job losses, employment law and contractual obligations must be adhered to. Legally, there are several parameters to work within to ensure the fair treatment of individuals and to mitigate the potential for litigation.

Key things to consider from the outset of the redundancy process are likely to include the following points. Again, when in doubt professional legal advice should always be sought before proceeding with any programme:

- All employees 'at risk' should be consulted
- Consultation provides an opportunity for the business to state its case and explain further reasons behind decisions as well as for those 'at risk' to provide counter-proposals or to suggest alternative ways of working that may limit the scale or scope of roles lost to redundancy
- With 20 or fewer redundancies, there are no set rules around when the consultation begins. Best practice suggests that employers do this as soon as they are able and as soon as the need to make redundancies is known
- Collective consultations are required when there are 20 or more redundancies to be made
- With 20 – 99 redundancies, consultation must begin at least 30 days before the first redundancy
- With 100+ redundancies, consultation must begin at least 45 days before the first redundancy
- The consultation must be meaningful and genuine, albeit agreement does not have to be reached
- If there is a need for collective consultation you can overlap this with individual consultations to maintain a scheduled timeline
- Specific cases can be seen as unfair dismissal if an employer consults collectively but not individually
- Employees must not be classed as, or made redundant until the consultation process is complete
- There must be a route for employees to appeal if they do not feel as though they have been consulted with fairly
- Any individual absent from the business, including those on maternity leave, paternity leave or sick leave is entitled to the same consultation process
- Employees must not be selected for redundancy based on any protected characteristics
- Employment tribunals may occur if the employer does not consult properly, ends consultation early or does not begin consultation early enough.

## Transition support structures

For many people redundancy remains one of the most stressful situations they will ever face – on par with bereavement, separation from a long-term partner or moving house – so it is important not to underestimate the impact being made redundant can have on an individual.

Change, particularly where job-roles are affected, is deeply personal. Not everyone will react similarly. However well it is communicated, the same message is often interpreted differently by each individual. Some will exhibit positive characteristics, understand the rationale for change and see the opportunities it may bring; others will not understand or agree with the need for change and may become fearful, withdrawn and disengaged. Leaders must be aware of this and must provide appropriate support where necessary.

It is also important to acknowledge that those delivering redundancy notification or leading change projects can be affected, as well as their teams. The role can be a lonely existence, especially when it results in a team being broken up that has taken months or years to build.

No matter how well an organisation treats departing employees, it can be difficult to avoid the shock, anger and sense of despair and rejection which are all recognised emotions during redundancy. Moreover, given that we are all different, the amount of time it takes individuals to overcome these emotions can vary considerably too.

A responsible and compassionate employer that truly cares about their people.

Being left to go it alone doesn't make it any easier. Advice and guidance around job loss is widely available online however it is often outdated and clearly lacks 'context' in many cases. People can struggle at this time and this 'information overload' can often result in paralysis as individuals don't know where to start or what their next move should be.

As such, one potential next step for an employer is to consider supporting those being made redundant to transition into a new career with the help of an external outplacement organisation. Providing these services to those impacted by organisational change shows a responsible and compassionate employer that truly cares about their people.

In short, it is the right thing to do.



# The benefits of outplacement

Any organisation undergoing a change that results in redundancies will see that the impact is felt across the workforce. Here is how outplacement can help you manage that impact:

## Protect corporate reputation

Offering support to those exiting the business shows your organisation genuinely values and supports its employees whilst also protecting your employer brand and supporting attraction and retention efforts.



## Create advocates not adversaries

Individuals who feel that their departure has been handled well are more likely to maintain positive relationships with your business, which reduces the risk of negative commentary online or through word of mouth. With platforms such as Glassdoor now a key source of information for new talent, maintaining relationships is a crucial part of any change programme.



## Minimise future litigation

Individuals that are supported when impacted by redundancy are less likely to consider bringing claims against their former employer – an important consideration that can help reduce the time and resource allocated to further investigation as well as avoiding costly legal bills.



## Re-assure 'survivors'

Providing outplacement support demonstrates to 'surviving' employees that you value your employees and their careers. Following any change programme, this can help to build engagement and organisational commitment at a time when it matters most.



## Do the right thing

Redundant employees may face considerable challenges as they seek new employment. Helping people deal with the emotional aspect of the change can be considerable – outplacement helps people deal with these situations and the subsequent move into new and engaging careers.



## Finding the perfect match

Facing the prospect of redundancy can be an initially daunting and uncertain period for many people but by providing the right type of outplacement support, challenges are turned into opportunities.

However, once they start being considered for new roles, it can be tempting for an individual to go for the first available job or the first position offered. Amongst other things, it removes some of the immediate financial pressures that they may be under and makes them feel wanted again.

However, such knee jerk reactions are unlikely to result in a match made in heaven or lead to long-term career fulfilment.

This is where specialist assessment tools and coaching made available in outplacement programmes play a vital role. They help ensure individuals have a clear understanding of what's important to them; helping them to identify not just a role, but the right role, in the type of organisation in which they can thrive in the longer term.

### Client testimonials:

I just wanted to feedback how valuable my sessions have been. INTOO have helped me to focus on the next steps and prepare my CV. Providing direction and a lot of encouragement.

Having worked with INTOO and my coach I have been able to self-reflect more which has given me greater confidence. I've been able to take noticeable steps forward in my own self-care by reflecting more objectively and now able to make a considered choice about whether to deal with things or let it go.

I have been able to land a fantastic new job as Buyer. The role is much more senior with a higher salary, where I am now managing a larger portfolio and a team. I wouldn't have been able to do it without INTOO's advice and guidance. I received many compliments on my CV and how well it read, and was better prepared for any interview than I had been ever before.

I worked with INTOO and my coach over several months, and found that they had the unique ability to get me asking myself the right questions. In leadership and conflict situations, getting to the root cause of an issue is not straightforward. I found the expertise in getting to the heart of difficult situations invaluable.

## Where INTOO can make a difference

We're experienced at managing all aspects of change. Focusing on the people element, we work in partnership with organisations to design and implement successful change programmes that limit the impact on your people, accelerate results and build stronger, more agile businesses.

We prepare leaders to confidently lead through change, upskill managers to support and engage their teams and build the resilience of your employees, equipping them with the skills to effectively withstand change. For those impacted as a result of redundancy, our 130 outplacement coaches located across the UK & Ireland can provide either face to face or virtual support as required; helping people get to grips with the situation and to make concrete plans around future career decisions, whether that is securing a similar role, moving into self-employment or looking at a varied portfolio or retirement based option.

INTOO can support at every stage of the process – either with guidance or as an intrinsic part of your implementation - ensuring the lived experience for all involved is as painless and beneficial as it can be.

Our practical and effective change management and outplacement programmes comprise the optimum blend of services including but not limited to:

- 1:1 programmes
- On-site 'group' support
- Online support through our unique INTOO4you platform
- Employee representative training
- Change management and resilience support for managers and employees
- 'Breaking the news' support
- Personal coaching
- CV development
- Interview preparation
- Understanding the job market
- Improving your social media presence
- E-learning modules and webinars
- Career review
- Long term career planning

### Client testimonial:

The benefits of bringing INTOO on board were everything we had hoped for, and in fact, went beyond expectations. Not only was the core support delivered empathetically, professionally and with the flexibility demanded of a complex programme such as this, we also experienced hugely positive and unexpected outcomes. As word spread about its value, there was a huge take up in the various aspects of support on offer.

They struck the delicate balance in an emotionally charged period of being visible and readily available to those who wished to have discussions. The partnership with INTOO was undoubtedly worth every penny of the investment we made.

HR Director, Galderma

Our approach to matching individuals with the right coach:



We also know that helping individuals to successfully transition their careers is about people. It's about developing a positive mindset, building confidence and giving people control back over their own choices. It's taking the time to understand individual career aspirations and providing bespoke outplacement support, expert guidance, relevant tools and pragmatic advice that helps individuals quickly reconnect with their chosen career.

That's why we build our outplacement programmes around the unique needs and challenges of each person we support. Whether individuals are looking to find a similar role, change careers, set up their own business or even plan for retirement; we take the time to understand the person and their priorities; designing effective programmes that deliver results.

We have seen countless examples of the tangible benefits it can bring.

Whether it be highly tailored programmes that support the complex and diverse transition needs of business leaders and lessen the business impact of senior-level exits, or personal and effective individual outplacement programmes that help individuals to quickly establish a positive mindset, identify future career objectives and skilfully navigate today's changing job market. These include customised onsite programmes to support through larger change events, improve engagement and minimise the impact on employees and operations.

# INTOO4you

All outplacement programmes benefit from online support via the INTOO4you portal and downloadable app which provides individuals with 24/7 access to powerful information and tools to support them in effectively transitioning their career.

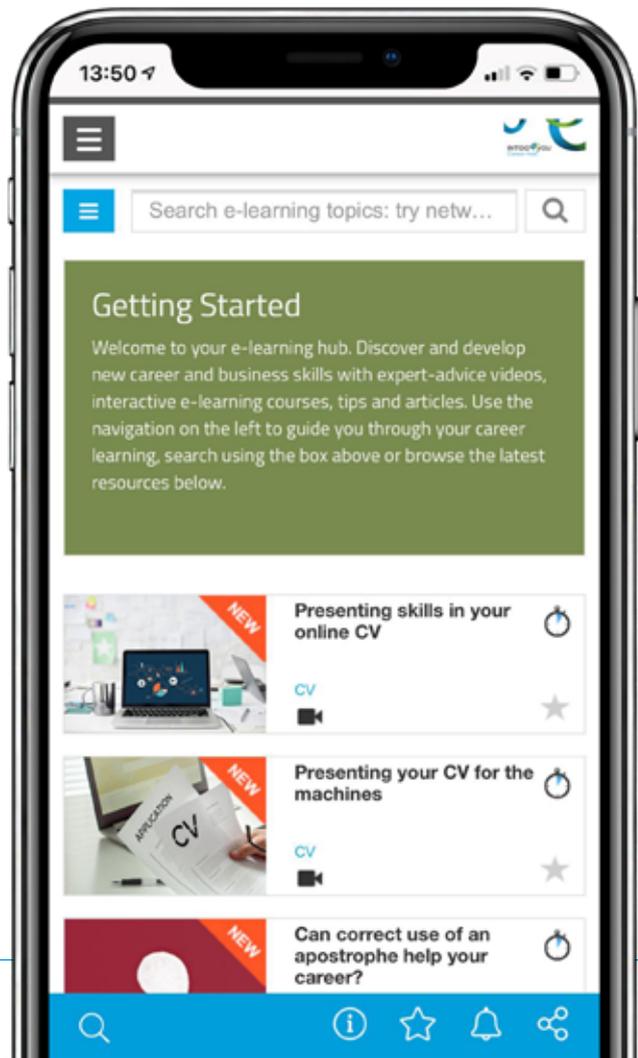
The platform is unique in its depth of content and is proving incredibly powerful when deployed alongside career-coaching.

This game-changing, interactive and intuitive cloud-based career transition tool is designed to support individuals in effectively transitioning their career, covering all aspects of job search and other career paths such as self-employment and contracting as well as personal branding.

INTOO4you provides powerful information, structured in a logical and practical way. Covering a multitude of areas from helping individuals build their career and personal awareness to helping them better understand their strengths, development areas and career preferences, INTOO4you boosts confidence, knowledge and skills enabling individuals to make the right decisions about their careers or next move.

**Key features include:**

- 24/7 access to support
- INTOO4you app allows you to track your progress, complete e-learning modules or apply for roles on the move
- Content delivered through a wide range of media including video, podcasts as well as text-based modules
- Over 500 e-learning courses and webinars
- Job market access
- Research databases to support with your job search and interview preparation



# About INTOO

INTOO is a talent management business committed to helping organisations create environments where talent thrives, true potential is realised and business results are achieved.

We combine our creativity, deep expertise and extensive experience to partner with companies to develop the potential of their people, transform performance and transition skills as business needs evolve.

Working with a broad spectrum of companies across all sectors, including multinationals, government departments, not-for-profit organisations and SMEs, we help businesses enhance the performance and careers of their people through coaching, mentoring, career development, change management and outplacement.

As part of Gi Group – one of the leading global HR service providers – we are backed by a network of over 5000 colleagues operating across more than 50 countries. The group delivers temporary and permanent staffing, search and selection, interim, executive search, recruitment process outsourcing, training and development, change management and outplacement, as well as a variety of complementary HR services. So, whether you are looking to find the right people, develop the right skills or transition the right way, we have the expertise you need.

We're also proud to be a member of Career Star Group, a global partnership of the world's leading outplacement companies. With over 800 locations in 75 countries and over 1500 consultants, our alliance with Career Star Group provides you with access to some of the most innovative brains in the industry, and the reassurance that we can support your business and your employees wherever they are located.



For further information on our change management and outplacement services or for immediate guidance on charting a path through the impacts of COVID-19, contact us now via:

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