

At Work: Laid-off employee now willing to take another position at company

by *Lindsey_Novak*

Q: I was told that I was laid off because of economic conditions and that I could return during the busy season. The company has two busy seasons, each lasting six weeks. I had been with the company for eight years as a full-time employee and five years before that as a temporary. I had excellent evaluations and attendance. I am receiving unemployment compensation for being laid off. Two months after I was let go, the company split my job among three other employees and then hired a new employee (one who never had worked before) to work in a position I could have done. Years before, I worked in that position, so I know it. The company also hired a temp to do a job I also could have done. This means the state is paying me unemployment while the company is paying two new people to work in jobs that I could have taken. I don't know whether I should point this out to the human resources person or whether that would just make her angry. I need a job, and it bothers me that I am collecting unemployment while two new employees are doing what I already knew how to do.

A: First, thank you for being so conscientious. If everyone were like you, this country would not be in this poor economic condition. Call your company's HR department and politely point out that you are familiar with the tasks the company has given to these two new employees and that you gladly would have switched positions or taken on other tasks in your job. The unemployment you are receiving is applied to the company, which HR should know. It's possible that because you were a long-standing employee, the company could not afford your salary and benefits but can afford paying a temp, who does not receive benefits, and an inexperienced employee. Tell HR that you are willing to take a drastic pay cut to return to the company, if that is the case. Keep in mind that you then would lose your chance to receive compensation for the time it would have taken you to find another equal job.

Parent Blends Personal and Business Lives, and Daughter Rebels

Q: I brought my daughter into my business to help revamp it. With her new perspective, she has helped me enormously in turning around the company. I have two problems, however. Working together has made our personal relationship very difficult. She seems to want to avoid me when we are not at work and says that work always comes up in our conversations. She also gets angry with me when I don't follow her advice or include her in decisions. I don't think I could have saved the business without her help (new eyes on how to reorganize the company, fire overpaid employees, lower unnecessary expenses, and implement new marketing ideas), but when I disagree with her, she gets upset. My plan is to make her a partner when she is ready. In the meantime, how can I maintain a good business relationship with my daughter and be her parent at the same time?

A: It sounds as if you didn't set up the rules when you brought your daughter aboard. Personal relationships often interfere in business relationships, and nothing can be more intertwined than a parent-child one. Meet to discuss business, and keep your personal lives out of it. State short-term and long-term expectations and goals for your child and for the business; outline communication and decision-making rules; and save your personal conversations for personal times.

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