



IS EVERYTHING READY FOR YOUR EXIT?

The last few weeks were characterized by huge pressure and chaotic activities. The CFO of the group's management raised one question after another in connection with the latest income statement, although the situation seemed to be absolutely clear to the manager of the local subsidiary: the loss that was created last month was caused by some guys in the accounting department. They transferred funds from the company to their own accounts and at the same time debited fictive customers. In his opinion it was a fraud case and really nobody expected that something like this could happen in "his" company.

Auditors and analysts were continually coming and going to see whether there were additional losses to be expected or something hidden, meaning not expressed in the income statement. Thank god, journalists raised this story just in the first week, but since the manager's "crisis communication" worked very well they have already concentrated on other news.

"So, that's it! I think the most difficult time is over and those auditors from our head office will finish their job next week. Then they will confirm what I said from the very beginning, namely that it was simply an unhappy operational accident", the manager said to his associates in a meeting, as suddenly the assistant entered the office. "Sir, Mister John, the president of our supervisory board is on the phone. Can I put him through?" "Ugh, what now? During the last five days we talked every day at least 2 times a day on the phone" the manager said to himself and "of course" he told his assistant after a few seconds.

"Good afternoon Marko, it's me, John. Marko, I just talked to all the other colleagues in our supervisory board and – let's make it short – we came to the conclusion that it's best for our group to terminate your contract. This case destroyed our confidence in your capability to lead our subsidiary. Our HR manager will call you immediately to agree on all the formalities and your deputy will take over responsibility in the meantime..."

I believe that not so many managers experience something like this in their career – thank god – but just when reading these lines I assume that your blood runs cold. One of the managers who already had "the opportunity to experience such a challenge" told me: "My first thought was 'why me?' and as soon as I started to realize what really happened I said to myself 'Sh...! What now?'"

Are you prepared for such a situation and especially in a case where your career in your company comes to an end like in the short story above?

Here are some short considerations that will maybe help you to 'survive' the first critical moments:



How to tell my family?

On this special day Marko came home a bit earlier than usual. He sat down with his wife and while explaining what happened she tried to calm him down.

The next morning, when the whole family had breakfast, the younger son asked: “Mommy, why isn’t Daddy going to the office today? Are we already going on holiday?” “No, my dear, Daddy just got fired...” would be for sure the honest answer, but without a concrete explanation for the future not the proper one, especially not for kids.

...and how to react towards curious neighbors?

“Good morning Marko, it’s nice to see you at home already on Tuesday. Didn’t you tell me last weekend about the huge project in your company that is challenging you so much?” Statements like this one can really confuse you, especially if you are not prepared for the right feedback. “What’s wrong with me? Why do other people care about the way I’m spending my time?” are some of the questions a top manager told me once after he got fired and his neighbors watched him working in the garden on weekdays already early in the morning.

What to do now?

Marko’s wife left home at around 8 a.m. together with the kids. On her way to the office she always brings them to school. After Marko finished with the newspaper he started looking around: “Okay, no problem, let’s see what’s on television” and he zapped through the channels. “What a feeling. When did I last have time for things like this? I think I was 18 years old or so” were his excuses to himself, but already on the next morning he realized that this was not really productive. So, the less hobbies or ideas you have in your drawer the longer and the more boring the days at home are.

Oh my god, all my knowledge remained in the office!

“Of course Marko, your experience and knowledge could contribute a lot to our company.” “Does this mean that I’ll get the job?” “Yes, but we would expect you to implement the new production processes that helped your previous company to become number one on that market!”

So, what to do now, because you just saved the general items in your brain and all the details remained on your computer in the office. I know that this is a very hot topic and there is a very fine line between legality and white-collar criminality, but find a way to provide for your own future.



“Dear ..., do you remember me? We had a conversation some 5 years ago...”

Once you have to start a conversation like the above one then it's a clear signal that your networking program didn't work very well in the past. In my opinion this sounds more like you neglected contact with people, but since you need them now you come back to them in a very friendly way...

I didn't raise questions like “How much money did you save for such a case?”, I didn't touch other monetary issues like severance payments, I didn't talk about legal things like the possibility to keep your company car, but I think I touched the soft facts that are in such situations on a higher level of priority than everything else.

I don't know any manager who has a job guarantee or job security, at least not in the private sector, but if you are ready for your exit, which can happen to you any day, then you will maybe treat such a situation more as an opportunity for a new business challenge than as a disaster.