

## Surviving redundancy

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**So far in this 'recession' I have been made redundant thrice. Here's a tale about surviving redundancy.**



Yes. Thrice. A hat trick of doom as I jovially call it.

As morale-beating as this can be, the crucial thing is not that you were made redundant but how you react and what you bounce back with as a platform to success.

The first time I was made redundant I had only been in the strategy consultancy business four months so was pretty annoyed that I had left another, completely stable job to then get punted from my new one a few months in.

I was 23 at the time and had always assumed redundancy happened to older people - as naive as I know that is now - so I was quite shocked but figured that this was the time to get away from the corporate, client side machine that I had no great love for working in London and take a break.

As luck would have it, on Christmas eve (which is when the official letter was served) I got a call from a the head of HR for one of the London-based strategic design agencies asking if I knew anything about strategy - I did not really, not from a design perspective anyhow - but said I was willing to give it a go. They needed someone for one month's cover and said I could learn it as I went along.

This call had come on the back of a six-month long email conversation with someone I knew was in the field of 'branding'. I had been trying to arrange time to get together and have a chat about my love of brands and branding but having no knowledge of how to effectively apply it to my working life.

He had asked the HR person to call... He turned out to be the chairman of [20.20](#)... I did not know this until I got there on day one.

After two years there I was made redundant (as noted in other posts) and I took this as my cue not to get angry or hateful (although I was upset as I really loved the team there and we had been through some really intense times and built some amazing projects and brands in that time) - instead I got ambitious.

## **Surviving redundancy using it as a platform to success**

Here is where I did one of the best things I could have done at the time - I spent five days designing my personal brand and building a project portfolio as well as a perspective on brands in my own tone of voice and a few ideas for what we may have seen in the following year in the branding world.

It is a rare thing for strategists to do but by putting together project summaries and taking this document to interviews I could prove to interviewees (for full or freelance gigs) that not only could I talk the talk but I could give them a feel for my methodology, how I think and how I approach projects without them having to believe on a wing and a prayer.

I said goodbye to London and headed to New York with the portfolio document in my bag and a friend's apartment to stay at and literally started knocking on agency doors and leaving them with business cards saying '[Gregory .T. Dillon, strategist for hire](#)' on a bold red background.

Eventually I was in Starbucks after a meeting had gone quite badly - the person was barely interested and wish she had just said no room at the inn - and was sending a message to one of my friends back home but weirdly reading it out loud as I said it. A tall guy said 'ah, finally, a fellow Brit - why you annoyed mate?' so I explained, turned out to be head of client services at a packaging design agency round the corner, set up a meeting for the following day and landed a freelance contract in New York for a few months! All because I dared to ask the question and approached every interaction as an opportunity.

I'm going to leave my redundancy stories there but am curious as to whether you have ever been made redundant and what you did about it? Did it inspire you? Would it inspire you or give you that not-so-gentle push needed to get out there and go it alone? What advice do you have to help people in surviving redundancy?