

# What it feels like to be retrenched

By Staff Writer July 3, 2015

<http://businesstech.co.za/news/columns/92128/what-it-feels-like-to-be-retrenched/>



*Retrenchment is not something one understands until it happens to you, according to Okker Greyvenstein, a technical officer.*

I can clearly recall the day when I got this message via social media: “The company intends reducing staff numbers by 7,000.”

My immediate reaction was shock; it might be one of the last times I was working on the site, I thought. A sinking feeling of disappointment and sadness came over me, and I asked myself, “Why should I bother working any further today?”

Employers all over the world tend to cut staff when they face economic challenges. As a trade union representative, I have seen the impact of retrenchment on affected members in the past two years.

Management is usually the first group to be targeted, typically reacting by joining a trade union as fast as possible.

I saw how dedicated employees struggled to deal with the situation after they had been handed Section 189 notices – retrenchment notices. They had been loyal employees for most of their lives, yet, in a moment’s time, their whole world is turned around.

I knew managers who had to issue retrenchment notices – and then getting retrenched themselves out of the blue months later. Some of them just burst out in tears and others immediately contacted the CCMA in an effort to fight back.

The harsh reality of retrenchment can be devastating, especially for employees with an insufficient pension fund or savings, or for single parents who are their families' sole breadwinner.

He or she may experience feelings of disbelief, shock, depression and distrust towards their employer and even their country. Questions of how to deal with the situation flood the mind and may even affect one's health.

These were certainly some of the feelings and emotions that my affected colleagues and I experienced.

*By Okker Greyvenstein*