

7

Companies and careers

A

Career paths

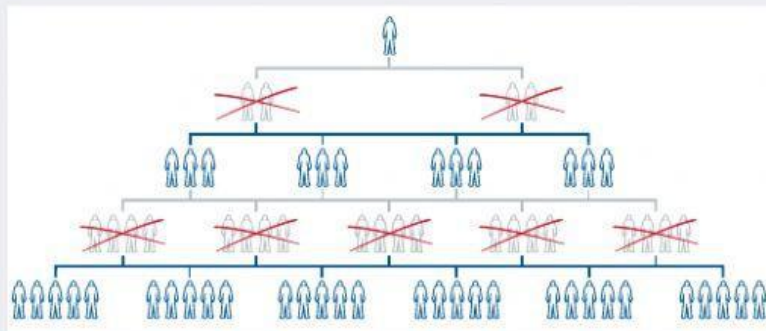
Many people used to work for the same organization until they reached **retirement**, the age at which people **retire** – end their working life. **Career paths** were clear: you could **work your way up the career ladder**, getting **promotion** to jobs that were more **senior** – more important with greater responsibility. You would probably not be **demoted** – moved to a less senior job.

B

Company structure

Like many other companies, Tel Italia has reorganized and **restructured** in order to become **flatter** – with fewer layers of management – and **leaner** – with fewer, more productive employees. The number of management levels in the **company hierarchy** has been reduced, and many managers have lost their jobs.

In other words, to reduce costs and cut the payroll (see Unit 6), Tel Italia has **downsized** and **delayed**. The company said that **downsizing** and **restructuring** were necessary to reduce costs, increasing **efficiency** and **profits**.



Delaying

C

In-house staff or freelancers?

Companies that downsize often **outsource** many jobs previously done by **in-house** personnel: outside companies clean the offices, transport goods, and collect money from customers. This allows the companies to concentrate on their main business activities. **Downsized** companies use more **freelancers** – independent people who work for several different companies – or they may ask **contractors** to work for short periods on **temporary contracts**. They often expect **flexibility**, with people moving to different jobs when necessary: but for many employees, this means **job insecurity** – the feeling that they may not be in their job for long.

The way that an employee is doing their job is discussed at **performance reviews** – regular meetings with their manager.

Note

You can say **freelancers** or **freelances**.



D

Leaving a company

To leave a company, you can **resign** or **hand in your notice**.

If you do something wrong and are forced to leave a company, you are: **dismissed**, **terminated**, **fired** or **sacked / given the sack**.

If you've done nothing wrong, you are: **laid off**, **made redundant** or **offered early retirement**.

Note

You can also say that someone's **contract has been terminated**. **Fired**, **sacked** and **given the sack** are informal expressions. **Sacked** and **given the sack** = BrE only.



Employees who are made redundant may get **outplacement** – advice about how to find another job, retraining, etc.

Exercises

7.1 Complete the tables with words from A, B and C opposite. The first one has been done as an example.

Noun	Verb
retirement	retire
demotion	
lay-off	
dismissal	
termination	

Noun	Adjective
seniority	
	freelance
redundancy	
	insecure
	flexible

7.2 Match the sentence beginnings (1–5) with the correct endings (a–e). The sentences all contain words from A and B opposite.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| 1 Career paths aren't what they used to be. Companies won't | <input type="checkbox"/> | a and that they will be replaced by temporary workers, or made redundant by technology. |
| 2 He worked his way up from | <input type="checkbox"/> | b take care of us for life any more. We have to take care of ourselves. |
| 3 The new management have restructured and delayered the company, | <input type="checkbox"/> | c but now we outsource it. |
| 4 We used to do printing in-house, | <input type="checkbox"/> | d factory worker to factory manager. |
| 5 Employees are afraid their organizations will be downsized | <input type="checkbox"/> | e reducing the number of management levels in the company hierarchy from five to three. |

7.3 Carla used to work for an Italian magazine publishing company. She talks about how she lost her job. Choose the correct form of the word in each case.

Edizione Fenice is a big magazine publishing company. I was director of a monthly magazine called *Casa e Giardino*.

Then Fenice was bought by an international publishing group. We had to have regular performance (1) (review / reviews / reviewer) with one of the new managers. After a few months they started laying staff (2) (off / on / out). Our own journalists were put on temporary (3) (contracts / contractual / contracting) or replaced by (4) (freelancer / freelancers / freelanced).

Then they started (5) (laid / lying / laying) off more senior people like me. The new owners said they wanted to make the company

(6) (flat / flatter / flatten) and (7) (lean / leant / leaner). So I was made (8) (redundant / redundancies / redundancy). They offered to help me to find another job with (9) (outplacement / outplaced / outplacing) services, but I refused.



Over to you

If you work, answer these questions.

- Do you think you will work for the same company until you retire? Why? / Why not?
- What kind of structure does your company have?
- What kind of work does your company outsource?

If you study, answer these questions.

- Do you think you will look for a job in a company where you can work your way up the career ladder until you retire, or do you think you will work for a lot of different companies?
- Do you know any companies which have restructured or downsized?