

'Multi-task to stay relevant'

Learn new skills, Industrial Relations Dept advises employees

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PETALING JAYA: Get new skills. Be open, retrain yourself.

That's the no-nonsense advice from a Malaysian authority which handles relations between employers and their staff in the wake of growing reports about the challenging job market in the country.

Employees must be open to learn new things to stay relevant, the Industrial Relations Department said in an email to *The Star*.

This would mean being receptive towards learning or being involved in other areas or fields, it said.

"In other words, be open to diversity and take initiatives in learning about areas which are not directly related to what they are currently doing."

That means being able to multi-task to stay relevant.

Malaysians, it said, should continuously keep abreast of the developments around them especially those related to the labour market.

The department, which keeps tabs on cases of unlawfully terminated employees, said it had handled 35,400 cases of unlawfully terminated employees from 2012 to 2016.

Employers who want to retrench their staff must follow the Code of Conduct for Industrial Harmony, said the department.

The Code plays a role in guiding companies that had no choice but to resort to retrenchment.

"They are advised to apply the measures highlighted in the Code, where applicable and relevant, to ensure that the retrenchment process is carried out fairly," it added.

Usually, the retrenchment is due to financial issues faced by the management such as its inability to sustain the business further.

Other reasons include restructuring of the business entity in line with the economic climate, redundancy of posts and designations which did not tally with the present policies of the company, embarking on multi-tasking to reduce costs, transformation towards automation and reducing dependence on labour.

Malaysian Employers Federation executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan also advised employees to equip themselves with certified skills to remain relevant.

"Employees think that it is the employers' duty to train them but they should also take the initiative on their own," he said.

He said employees needed to make sure they had skills required by their bosses so they would have no reason to lay them off.