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problems. They know everyone and they know how to get things done. Strive to be that one shining employee by following these steps.

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The economy is booming—great! But wait—organizations continue to focus on cutting labor costs. Why? Labor costs comprise 80 percent or more of an organization's operating costs. This fact clearly creates another problem among the workforce—protecting your job.

How then can you remain indispensable at work? By bringing attention to the value

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or labor that is forcing companies to cut back within your department, get together with your boss and figure out ways to merge systems, cut costs, negotiate spending, or merge tasks between departments. Often in companies where there are several departments duplicating efforts, redundancies can be eliminated.

2. Talk in Sound Bites

Concentrate on improving communication with your employer. Think about how your listener will receive the message. Put yourself in the listener's shoes and anticipate how he or she might react. Learn to talk in sound bites—quick and fast. Bosses want the summary, not all the details.

3. Find a Mentor

To be the most indispensable employee you can be, get a coach. Surround yourself with mentors and coaches from inside and outside your industry. How do you get a coach? Look around your informal and formal networks and figure out who you would like to emulate. Whose skills and career path do you admire? Then just ask if he or she will mentor you. Most of the time, people are flattered that they have been asked. It does not take much time, perhaps just a 45-minute phone call once every three months. You tell them what is going on and they give you simple advice to get back on track.

4. Recruit Brand Champions

You are a brand! Who supports you? Who are the people that are always spreading the good news about you? These are your brand champions. It is critical that you update your friends, family, colleagues, parents at PTA meetings, and anyone else you know about what you are doing or what you want to do. Why? Because your networks are filled with the power and credibility to spread the word about you. To begin with you need to understand the difference between formal networks

(professional organizations that you pay dues to, with regulations, meetings and

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A brand creates an image of trust and loyalty over time. It takes years to build a name, reputation, and networks—and takes a minute to lose it all. Always protect your name. See what others are saying about you. The key to leadership is listening to criticism and self-correcting. When a mentor gives you criticism about something you are perhaps not thinking about, it takes courage to change. You must earn credibility, not expect it. Be prepared to spend years on earning credibility.

A Final Thought

Every workplace has that one employee that everyone goes to for answers to their problems. They know everyone and they know how to get things done. Strive to be that one shining employee by following these steps. Remember, being a key member of a team has the biggest benefit—job security.

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*Michele Wierzgac is a leadership expert, keynote speaker, and author of the forthcoming book, **Ass Kicking Women: How They Leverage Their Informal Networks For Success**. With her high energy presentations, Michele conveys sound leadership solutions and promotes audience engagement and on-your-feet participation. She promises her audience that they will leave her solution-driven keynotes and workshops with at least one passionate, life transforming leadership tool. For more information on bringing in Michele Wierzgac for your next event, please visit: <https://micheleandco.com>.*

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