

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (00:00.878)

Hey there, I hope you're doing well. Welcome to Snowpal software development and architecture podcast.

In this podcast we are going to talk about the impact of layoffs. I just had a really interesting conversation with Serkan Durusoy about this very same topic. So if you haven't checked out that podcast, I highly recommend you do so before you watch or listen to this one. What I am going to do here is sort of summarize some part of my conversation with Serkan and also perhaps add a couple of more points that I may have probably thought of after we entered the podcast. So without further ado, let me get started. I am going to share my screen.

and we're going to talk about these items. Again, if you haven't checked out the previous podcast with my guest, Serkan, definitely do so. So you get better context to this summary, if you will. Let me share my screen.

Okay, we're gonna talk about, I just, you know, it's probably a little bit easier to look at it in the form of a diagram. So this is just a very simple mind map. We're gonna talk about different items here. Let's start with, you know, the idea here is to, the topic is the impact of layoffs and how we can sort of better prepare yourself.

in the event that you end up being in the position of getting laid off. I mean, we all live in a capitalistic society. We work hard. Companies do what they can to make profits. And when things change, macro or micro economic conditions are perhaps just specific to the organization. Maybe they couldn't sell whatever it is that they're hoping to sell or as much of, at least as much of it as they had originally hoped to.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:42.254)

for a variety of reasons, this is just the nature of life, professional life. If you never get laid off in your entire career, then good for you, but that's not true for most of the people. So I think hopefully this helps give some perspective. And if you're just starting your career, perhaps it's some things that you, a few things you may already know of and few you might not know. And if you have any learnings from this, I would be happy.

The first item, how do you prepare for it? Continuous learning.

Essentially, you know, when people ask, talk about job security, is it the industry? Is it the type of work you do? Yep, sure, a lot of them play a role. You know, the barrier to entry, it's at least one of those things. You know, when you learn barrier to entry, who can become your competition? You know, if you have to practice law in a state in the US, you have to, I presume you have to pass, you have to be a lawyer, pass the bar, I reckon, in that state. So there is a certain barrier to entry. But when you're building software, the barrier to entry,

There isn't one to be honest. It's good to have a degree or diploma, but I don't know if all companies require it. I'm not even sure if they should.

Your experience certainly will help. We learn as we do more of some things, but that's common to just about anything we do. But there's no real, quote unquote, barrier to entry because from at least a legal standpoint, if a company is willing to give you a job for you to write code, or be a product manager, or be a project manager, or be a platform engineer, or a devout person, or whatever it is, any stakeholder in the company, in the business of building software,

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (03:19.15)

you actually could be, I presume, out of high school, right? So there is no barrier to entry, which means there is gonna be more competition that you're gonna obviously face during the

course of your career. Because anybody, quote unquote, who has an interest in building software can choose to build software. Whether they are able to do it, how well they do it, how much can they do, all of that depends and varies depending on the person's skill sets and their background and experience.

But they can, quote unquote, become your competition, which means continuous learning is important across the board in all industries, I would imagine. But it's even more so when it comes to software development and architecture. Because that is going to be competition. It's just going to.

keep increasing either in the form of other humans or AI and generated AI and everything that we are experiencing and enjoying as we get into 2024. So job security is not so much what the companies can promise you because nobody can really promise anything. How much you know, how much value you're adding, all of them and all of that is gonna make a difference. So the only way you're gonna become useful or continue to be useful if you learn and improve continually.

Thanks for watching.

because sometimes you might be sailing on a boat where you're probably on the wrong boat and you're sailing, you still have a job, but it depends to each our own. What is your comfort level? Are you all right? If things go south and this company ends up letting you go and your skills were so specific and oriented to that organization, now you're actually not necessarily quote unquote needed by other companies in that industry or some other industry. That's a precarious position to be in. Personally, I would never recommend that, but again, this is just my experience, my...

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (05:00.98)

opinions take them with a grain of salt you obviously should do what works best for you. The second point here is limited attachment. What I mean by limited attachment is how attached you are to the company.

Sure, you have to be committed and passionate so you can do better than, more than what you promised and bring more value to the table than you had originally promised or the company even expects off of you. But that is a fine line. There's a difference between that and being attached to the organization or the teams. You gotta find what that line is and tread that quite carefully, because the more attached you are, the more disappointed you're gonna be in the event that you actually do get laid off. So manage your, you know,

I'm used to what attachment is, is you being attached to the organization. Find what is that point, what that line is, where you are, again, this is nothing to do commitment, your passion. You give your best to your employer. But doing that, you still have to find a way to separate yourself from the organization. That's important.

The third point is lifestyle built around lowest and around not around the highest pay and I think I mentioned that in my conversation with Serkan in the podcast. Let's say you're building software and you're getting paid top dollars and on those fang or magnificent seven companies or are they calling it the top eight or something right now. You could be paying getting paid a lot of money but if things change you know Meta had layoffs last year, Google had and I heard Google my alphabet could have more layoffs this year. It's just the nature of the beast.

So if you build your lifestyle around the highest, there's a range of scale, and there's a scale which determines what you get paid for. What I mean by that, let me rephrase what I'm trying

to say. There's a range of pay for whatever it is that you're doing. So you're writing code, you're an architect, you're an engineer, you're a developer, you're a product manager, you're a salesperson in the company, whatever it is.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (07:03.894)

in a given country, in a given state or city, there is a range. And let's go with the country because you can move between states a little bit easier than between countries. So in a given country, there is a pay scale. Now I'm not saying you get paid the same in San Francisco as compared to like Kansas City or Virginia. There is going to be quite a bit of a difference, but regardless, the difference between the US and some other country is going to be a lot more profound than between the states and the country. So if you get paid top dollars and you build a

your lifestyle around it you know you have a beautiful house big house nice cars mini cars and you know you have all those the opposite of minimalism if you will then it's good as long as you have that job or you know the position stays good but if things were to change then you would probably not react in the best possible manner because you have perhaps you have payments to make so

building a lifestyle around the lowest is the other end of the spectrum where you take the lowest you could potentially get paid for whatever it is that you're doing and you build your lifestyle around it so if you

you know, get laid off till you find something else you should hopefully be mostly okay and when you do find that other job since you went to the lowest lifestyle around the lowest you're going to be in good shape and you get the next one probably pays the same or pays higher because you played it safe or you find the middle ground but if you pick the highest one and build your lifestyle that is going to be a certain element of risk associated with that and you're going to have to deal with it because then the premise of this entire conversation is

I've always felt truly believed that it is on the employee to manage proceedings. Companies can let go because they are in that situation. Whether they brought themselves onto that situation or whether they found themselves in that situation is good to perhaps know, but it shouldn't make any difference to you because you should have planned for this regardless.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (09:01.696)

Item number four, company is not your family. You know, you sometimes see that a company is a family, not really. Families don't expect, hopefully, anything from you because you know, you're still related by blood. You don't have to prove yourself. You don't necessarily need to add value to be part of the family, but a company is different. It's for profit for the most part, so it needs to find value in you and you need to find value in spending time there. So a company is not family, understand that and make that separation in your minds. And recognize...

that separation if that's what I meant. Expand your horizons and take time to learn something new. Okay, so it happened, you got laid off, you know, take, you know, it's gonna take a day or two or whatever the timeframe is for you to, you know, collect your thoughts and then be back to normal. But you should take the opportunity to expand your horizons. Maybe you're a developer who's done nothing else but development. Maybe you should learn some architecture or you've done architecture and development but have done no product management or project management or everything else that a software company needs.

to be truly successful because every role is equally important. I don't believe any role is any more important than any other role in any company and certainly not in a software company. So learn other things you know that outside what you've been actually doing. Maybe it's time

for a new career. If you've been doing this a while and you're bored and it's not what your heart beats for, perhaps you should explore that. I mean it is a more difficult transition. I cannot speak for a

I don't have experience and I don't have any other skill to move down the career and neither do I have an interest in doing that but that's certainly an option I've seen people do that Picking a new skill. Absolutely. I do this all the time between projects pick something entirely different something we haven't done before just to just to feel very excited about whatever it is you're doing because maybe a next project is gone not going to be as different as from the previous one as you might want for it to be Some of us look for those profound differences and some others want to do things

things that are quite similar, again, to each our own. But take the time to learn a new skill. Or start a new business. Maybe you've wanted to be an entrepreneur all your life and you never took that step because you went from one job to another, or one team to the other, one company to another. You never found that time to collect your thoughts and solve bigger problems and take those chances in life, starting a new business. That's an option. So whatever it is, try to expand your horizons.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (11:30.574)

Next, and these items are not in any particular order. I just thought about them, some from the memory of the last conversation, some new items maybe. Ask yourself how you can add value. That's very important. The only way to stay relevant is by adding value. And how you're adding value is gonna have to continually change. Just because you did something yesterday and then added value does not mean that doing the same thing today is gonna add value or at least add the same amount of value. And it certainly does not mean that continuing to do the same thing tomorrow is gonna add any value at all.

because perhaps someone else can do that thing better and it could be a human or a machine. So ask yourself almost all the time, how can I be adding value to this organization? And by adding value to the organization, you're going to add value to yourself.

Like I tell my clients, right, I can't promise to please them by what I do, but I can promise that I'll do my best to please myself in terms of the quality of work that I do, a producer bring to the table. And my hope is that is actually not just good enough, but a lot more than my clients could potentially expect. So continuously ask yourself, how can I add value?

The next is there is competition, but there's also a dearth of good slash smart people. Now again, we have like 8 billion people as we speak in this world with like 25 million people give or take in the business of building software.

if the numbers I read are more or less accurate. The population, as again if my memory serves me right, is going to hit like 10 to 11 billion by the end of this century. So there's going to be more of us and there's going to be less to do, at least in the traditional sense, because bots are going to be doing more and more of what we're doing. So we're going to learn and adapt and do things that bots are not yet at any given point of time equipped to do. So the job, whatever.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (13:16.16)

it is if you take the top 10 to 20 jobs today in the market and you go fast forward five to ten years I don't think there's going to be that many over that much overlap between that list at least that's what I think so there is obviously competition there's competition everywhere we go but you learn from that competition they also recognize that there is it there is going to be a dearth of really really really committed passionate smart good people so if you are one of them you're still going to stand out it's just the way it works.

Um.

Enjoying time off. Yeah, I mean, sometimes you don't get the opportunity, you're going, you're continuously working, and maybe this is a God-given way of telling you that, hey, maybe you should take some time off. So enjoy the time off. Enjoy in double-codes because it's gonna take you a few days, maybe a week or two to recover from the fact that, accept the fact that, yep, I'm gonna find that paycheck for a little bit of time. So you gotta find ways to enjoy the time off, because once you find work,

it's gonna be probably the same routine all over again. Maybe it's a different job, different company, but the idea of you spending the 40 hours doing, I think it was Henry Thoreau's famous quote that says, the price of anything is the amount of life you exchange for it. So once you find the next job, unless you're looking for yourself, you are actually, the price is the time you give your employer or your client. So that is gonna be that routine in that sense. So enjoy the time that you have for yourself.

How you do it is obviously left to you. You could travel.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (14:52.014)

Maybe do play if you're an outdoor person or for all I care, you could simply watch paint dry. You know, it's like putty in Seinfeld where you're just looking to the seat in front and Elaine asks, what is he going to do? Is he going to read something or what something he goes? No, I'm just going to look at the seat. It's actually quite a funny episode. And Elaine is capable of making everything funny and putty as well. So, you know, if you're watching paint dry, meaning boredom, I think I read somewhere I shared in a previous podcast that

Sleep is to the body as boredom is to the mind. So being bored probably is a good thing in this age of smartphones and Vision Pros, it's almost like you feel like you don't get the opportunity to be bored. But I think being bored is as I understand is a good thing. So maybe just enjoy the time of by watching paint dry if you don't want to spend any money on travels. Remember

Last but not least, there's one more item, but you know, it's just a job. Yes, we all need a job to pay our bills, it's important. But you know, a lot of us are blessed because we end up getting paid doing what we enjoy doing and we have a variety of skills. If we don't, we have to add to that list of skills that we do have. But ultimately, it is a job. Just understand the whole grand scheme of things to give context to it. What you've lost is a job and that's

Probably the list of things to lose is probably the best thing to lose. So just remember that. Give something back. Take this opportunity to give something back. Share your knowledge with the community. How you do it or mentor somebody. Write.

podcast, collaborate. At Snowpal, we do a number of things, build a number of products, and we do a number of non-producty things as well. We just enjoy doing this because it brings variety to what we do. And it improves our skills, not just in a narrow path, not we don't go down a rabbit hole, but we try to sort of know a little bit about many different things, and a lot about some of those things. So you find how...

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (17:01.984)

how you can give back, share your experience with other people, create public repos, make some contributions to open source, hit people up and then have them get on a call, a video podcast with you like we do, learn from people, share those learnings with other people, with the larger community. So just these are things you probably do not have the time to do when

you are actually actively employed, spending 40, 50 plus hours with your employer. So these are some of the things.

There's more you can add to this list. Let me know what I've missed. What else you might add to this list. And you know, if you want to have a conversation about this, I'm happy to do that as well. With that, I'm going to sort of call it wraps on this podcast. Again, this is the second one I followed up to the conversation I had with my guest. Definitely check that one out. Like I mentioned at the top of this podcast. Thanks and talk to you soon.