

## Can Workers Recover from Unexpected Layoffs?

**HOUSTON (February 12, 2006)** -- The recent layoff upheaval at Ford is symptomatic of a shift in the US manufacturing sector, where automation, outsourcing and globalization are forcing American workers to reevaluate their skills and search for new niches, using innovative tools such as the Birkman personality assessment to launch a new career.

"When people who are only 10 to 15 years away from traditional retirement are suddenly thrust into the job market, they can quickly become frustrated by what appear to be limited options," said Sharon Birkman-Fink, President and CEO of Birkman International, developers of the Birkman Method®. "But really, a layoff can be an opportunity to reevaluate what is important to them as far as well-being, and may be the catalyst that they need to start a more fulfilling career."

According to Birkman, people may have skills they have never even considered using for at work, skills which may have lain dormant during a lengthy tenure at a job where workers may have lacked the ability to advance in responsibility and leadership.

Additionally, a new work environment that better caters to a person's core interests, may lower stress, and promote a better, more enriching daily life. Reinventing a career can be simply a matter of reorienting, and using the science of self-analysis to take stock before taking risks. The Birkman personality assessment is an effective tool to guide such analysis, especially in the hands of a skilled career counselor or coach.

While Ford recently announced that 30,000 of its hourly employees will be eliminated, receiving "early retirement packages," they are not alone in cutting back their American labor force. 50,000 GM employees have recently taken similar "early out" offers, as have numerous employees in the telecommunications sector.

Dr. Roger Birkman first created the Birkman test in 1951, a result of research conducted at the University of Texas in psychological instruments for pilot selection in the U.S. Air Force. After decades of refinement and improvement, the Birkman continues to be the premier assessment to delve deep into motivations and the underlying drives that relate to work and self-discovery.

The assessment is taken on-line and can be completed in about 45 minutes. The respondents answer 125 True/False questions about self and 125 True/False questions about most people. Additionally, the test contains 48 multiple choice questions that determine interests and job preference.

Through a process of regression and factor analysis, the Birkman Method identifies a person's everyday interpersonal style, underlying motivations, expectations, and signs of stress behavior.

"It is never too late to make life-altering decisions, especially when happiness is at stake," said Birkman-Fink. "A test like the Birkman gives people the right tool to face the future, no matter how murky the horizon may appear."

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### **About Birkman:**

The Birkman Method® has been in use for over 50 years and has been used by over 2 million people and 5,000 organizations worldwide, including corporations, not-for-profit organizations, governmental agencies, and individuals. The assessment accurately measures social behaviors, underlying expectations of interpersonal and task actions, potential stress reactions to unmet expectations, occupational preferences and organizational strengths. For more information: [www.birkman.com](http://www.birkman.com) or 1-800-215-2760.