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## *IBM: The Downsizing of the Cradle-to-Grave Job and the Experiences of Current and Ex-IBMers*

International Business Machines, more commonly known as I.B.M, has been known for decades as one of the most generous and paternalistic companies in the country. For nearly eighty years the company boasted a no-layoff policy even in times of economic downturns. As the U.S. corporate culture shifted, IBM underwent a dramatic restructuring that resulted in the layoffs of over 200,000 employees. The family feeling that had been cultivated for decades was destroyed as the company famous for full and stable employment became just as volatile as the rest of corporate America. Over the course of three months I interviewed thirteen current and ex-IBM employees from the branch office located in Fargo, North Dakota. I wanted to see how these “IBMers,” experienced the downsizing in a smaller Midwestern setting and how their lives were affected by it. Many of the individuals I interviewed had worked with the company for twenty plus years and had been fully schooled in IBM’s corporate culture. Long-term employees tended to report more painful memories of the restructuring than their short-term counterparts. For various reasons IBM was unable to avoid the massive changes taking place in corporate America in the 1980s and 1990s. The current Fargo branch office bears no resemblance to its predecessor and employs only a handful of employees.



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