

COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR ASSISTING SURVIVING EMPLOYEES

- Set up employee meetings to address:
 - ▶ Why the reduction in force was necessary
 - ▶ How the company has changed organizationally
 - ▶ The company's next steps
 - ▶ How the downsizing will affect the surviving employees' workload
- Pay attention to the tension, gossip and signs of stress in remaining employees. It is unrealistic to expect people to quickly adjust to the layoffs and move on.
- Spend time with the survivors, allay their fears, meet with them and talk through the issues. Honest communication is the key. Be empathetic not sympathetic. It is certainly OK to share that what just occurred in the organization was very difficult for you too.
- Listen actively to surviving employees and bring all negative discussions around to focus on the positive steps management is taking to move the organization forward.
- Observe each surviving employee's behavior and talk individually to anyone showing signs of stress or exhibiting unusual behavior.
- Discuss work load issues with the group and gain consensus on how specific situations will be handled. Use your leadership skills to direct the conversation towards the positive aspects of learning a new skill, emphasizing teamwork and "we (include yourself as manager) are all in this together"
- Utilize the proven management tools of Visibility, Approachability and Candor. Be highly visible to your staff, but most importantly; be approachable and candid about the organization to build surviving employees' trust and your credibility.

Surviving Employee Reactions

Stages of Grief (Kubler-Ross)

Denial

Anger

Bargaining

Depression

Acceptance

Can be in any order and are emotions each person must experience before the final stage
Acceptance-Letting Go-Moving On

Variety of Ways Survivors View Change

negative

Hard to accept

Can't adjust to changes

Prefer status quo

Feel Guilty - still have a job

positive

Relish change

Change is opportunity (less competition)

Welcome change

Dedicate self to being valued

Variety of Ways Change is Handled:

Talk it out

Silent suffering

Complaining

Supportive --- yet talk it to death

Sabotage / undermine efforts

DOWNSIZING SUCCESS IS EQUAL TO

MANAGEMENT'S LEVEL OF COMMITMENT TO SURVIVING EMPLOYEES

Re-Building Trust: Address Questions & Concerns Openly

- Hold frank one to one discussions with each surviving employee regarding job expectations and workload.
- Reassure survivors regarding their job security.
- Explain to all why the downsizing was necessary and how people were chosen to be let go.
- What Happens Next? Explain the companies short-term plans

Valuing Survivors

- Reassure your direct reports of their value to you and the organization.
 - Talk to each individually
 - Tell them what you feel they contribute to the company
- Enlist employees' advice in streamlining work and ways to improve
 - By empowering the surviving employees they see their value to the company.
- Enable surviving employees to grow and master changed work environment by asking them what help, further training or resources do they need.

Engaging Surviving Employees

- Open up new avenues of communication: Blogs, Staff Meetings, Brown Bag Lunches, Transition Newsletters
- Provide opportunities for additional training to facilitate job changes and career path transitions due to downsizing.
- Re-emphasize the need for downsizing and enlist surviving employees in "re-inventing" the company by defining the culture & work environment they would like to see.
- Identify what has to be done and enlist the surviving employees help in getting it done.
- Leaders must be visible and involved in day to day management during and immediately following layoffs.
- Interaction with all layers of management vital to company's success.