

The Consultant's Corner

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INSIGHTS  SUCCESS
"Building On Strengths"

Leading Through Downsizing

Leading staff through downsizing, resizing, rightsizing, (or whatever the buzz word is today) requires the leader to exercise superior planning, judgment, and decision-making. It's a complicated task that involves the leader in recognizing the natural reactions of those that remain in the organization, and determining the right timing for moving the organization from the emotional reactions to a focus on the present and future. While it is difficult, the consequences of mis-managing or under-managing the situation are severe. Both management and staff will suffer if the timing is wrong, or managers deny or avoid dealing with the fall-out from downsizing.



Here are some tips that will help:

- ◆ Take time to talk with the "survivors" (the remaining staff) and ask them how you can help them during this very emotional time. By showing concern and interest, you will be working towards repairing the sense of broken trust that accompanies downsizing.

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Making the Most of Meetings

Meetings can be very effective for maximizing time, or they can be tremendous time wasters! More than 11 million business meetings take place each day in the U.S. and many, as you know, either goes longer than necessary or are not needed at all. If you are in charge of a meeting, here are some ways to make it more productive for all involved:

1. Always have a written agenda with copies for all attendees.
2. Spend time in preparation.
3. Define and write up topics to be discussed and distribute your notes a day before the meeting, along with a short memo asking others to come along prepared with discussions and solutions. Clearly identify the meeting's purpose and objectives.
4. Set a time limit and stick to it. Also, start promptly.
5. A good follow-up tool is to have someone take notes during the meeting with the details of who is going to do what, by when. A summary of the meeting and future action to be taken should be submitted to all who attended.
6. Make summarizing statements throughout the meeting, (anyone can do it!)



When appropriate, consider alternatives such as memos, written reports, etc.

— Arnie Rintzler, AWR



ONE MINUTE IDEAS

Skills

What skills do you already possess and which new ones will you need to learn and develop? The following exercise is designed to help you identify your present skills and the new ones you need to develop:

1. If you could buy 10% of the earnings or productivity of another person, what qualities and skills would you look at to make your decisions?
2. Make 2 lists – one of qualities and one for skills.
3. Then look at your two lists and ask yourself which ones you don't already possess or cannot learn.



Department of Labor – Latest Numbers

Consumer Price Index:

-0.1% in Dec 2005

Unemployment Rate:

4.7% in Jan 2006

Payroll Employment:

+193,000 in Jan 2006

Average Hourly Earnings:

+\$.07 in Jan 2006

Producer Price Index:

+0.9% in Dec 2005

Employment Cost Index:

+0.8% in 4th Qtr of 2005

Productivity:

-0.6% in 4th Qtr of 2005

Source: www.bls.gov (4 Feb 2006)

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- ◆ **Be attentive and available.** LISTEN CAREFULLY! Keep your door open for employees to talk, ask questions, or give suggestions about the situation.
- ◆ **Let them know what part they play** in the future of the company.
- ◆ **Have individual and group discussions** to focus on dealing with the operational challenges stemming from the changes. If they are a part of the solution, they will have complete buy-in to make sure it is successful.
- ◆ **Make sure everyone is clear on what they should be doing.**
- ◆ **Don't press too hard** in areas of productivity, goals, or expressing their feelings about the situation. Some will want to talk and others will not.



During this period, you need to make sure your own emotional situation is in check. Your ability to lead people through the tough times will depend on your own physical and emotional health. Take time to talk with others outside of the organization about the issues at hand. If you find yourself plagued by sleeplessness, mood swings, depression, and/or guilt, don't hesitate to take advantage of support services that are available.

By doing these kinds of things, you promote a sense that the future will bring positive, exciting things.

It is the creation and commitment to these things that will work to revitalize an organization that has been downsized.

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Web Site Of The Month!

This Federal Government website is dedicated to helping Americans understand more about their money – how to save it, invest it, and manage it to meet your personal goals.

Check it out at: www.mymoney.gov



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