

Action Steps to Making the Most of Downsizing

Unfortunately lay offs are often unavoidable. And as hard as they are for those who lose their jobs, it is often forgotten that it is hard for those left behind as well. It is vital that leaders recognize this so that they can ensure that a layoff will be beneficial to their organization rather than simply continuing the downward spiral.

The following are steps that you can take to help ensure that your lay off will leave your organization leaner and stronger. The first four steps should be taken well in advance to any layoff, but the following seven can be successfully applied even in the midst of a layoff.

1. **Cultivate a Healthy Culture.**

Having a culture of discipline, support and trust in place before a layoff takes place will provide a foundation of strength to better weather the storm. Take time to develop these qualities in your organization today.

2. **Develop a Plan According to Your Vision.**

Having a strategic plan to attain the vision which is integrated into the operations of the organization and is clearly communicated and understood by all employees will let your remaining staff have peace that that layoff really is a good thing for the mission. It also helps them see that leadership is in control of the situation, rather than flying by the seat of their pants.

3. **Foster Mentoring Relationships.**

Having mentoring relationships for employees will help them prepare for the difficulties of a layoff. These mentoring relationships help them know how to step up to greater responsibility as well as having a relationship that can provide strength during the transition of a layoff.

4. **Emphasize reliance on Christ.**

Having a Christian culture where people rely on God as opposed to their talents, money or the organization will help them feel secure even in the midst of a layoff. If this isn't the case, even those who keep their jobs will often feel shaken and disengage from their work.

5. **Take Others into Consideration.**

Ensure leadership is tuned in to the needs and desires of all the stakeholders and that the effect of downsizing is understood for each of them. Feelings can easily be hurt during this time and so it is vital that leadership communicate their concern for the well-being of everyone at hand.

6. **Develop a Just Process.**

It helps maintain trust if the selection of those who stay versus those who are laid off is done according to a set of judicial criterion rather than personal prejudice. This

process should be attuned to the mission of the organization and therefore a thoughtful means of pruning that inspires hope rather than fear for those who remain.

7. **Communicate the Process.**

As much as possible, communicate the process of the layoff with your staff. Tell them how decisions are made. Let them see into the inner workings of how the overall plan is impartially guiding the decisions being made by the leadership.

8. **Communicate the Plan.**

In communication, there should be emphasis on the bigger picture beyond just the dishevel and pain of the current layoff. This is a source of hope and gives the remaining staff a purpose to press on towards .

9. **Involve Staff in Job Redesign.**

If job redesign is needed, involve employees in the process. This will help them feel like they have some control in a situation that otherwise might leave them feeling like pawns. Further, it will allow them to step into roles of greater responsibility more willingly, something that is vital as the remaining staff will have to pick up the slack of those who have left.

10. **Recognize and Reward.**

Those who remain after a lay off

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are often less engaged since they have less trust in the organization. One important way to help your remaining staff see that you do indeed appreciate their efforts and need them in order to accomplish the vision is to intentionally recognize and reward top performers.

- 11. Emphasize Christian Core Values.** Christian core values will provide a foundation from which to rebuild. For example, honesty will reestablish trust, grace will cover over any unintentional wrongs, and a Christ-centered vision will help everyone endure trials along the way without losing hope.