

IDEAS FOR ASSISTING STAFF DURING THE LAYOFF PERIOD

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A. Managing the layoff process:

Get clear about the values that are central to you and the organization regarding the layoffs. Make decisions in the context of those values.

1. Tell the truth about the situation that led to the decision of having a layoff.
2. Fully explain the reasons for having to layoff staff.
3. Develop a question/answer sheet for questions that can be anticipated and which provides the relevant information. Give sheet out to all staff and especially brief supervisors about the information so they can respond to staff with information.
4. Announce all financial and management actions that are being taken to mitigate the intensity of the lay off.
5. For a reasonable period after the layoff actions have been announced, arrange a place away from the regular work area in which laid-off staff can develop and duplicate their resumes, create job related correspondence using letterhead stationery, use telephones for local calls, and receive incoming mail.
6. Arrange for unemployment officials to set up a place on site at which laid-off staff can register for benefits.
7. Strongly encourage all supervisors to make telephone calls on behalf for their former staff attempting to secure them new employment. Develop a scripted "statement" to assist the opening parts of the telephone conversations.
8. Temporarily assign an administrative assistant to support the re-employment of laid-off staff.
9. Collect and organize in a central place, literature and information that will support the job search efforts and lead to immediate re-employment of laid-off staff. (e.g. job listings, classified advertisements from newspapers, job opening announcements from trade magazines and professional journals, etc.)
10. Arrange for job search counseling for laid-off staff who wish to use it.
11. Arrange for the EAP to provide personal counseling support for any staff, laid-off or staying, who request it.
12. Arrange for the continuation of health and other benefits for laid-off staff as long as possible after the lay off takes effect.

B. Compensating financial actions to minimize the lay off action:

1. Executives take a 10-15% pay cut.
2. Managers and supervisors take a 5-10% pay cut.
3. All line employees take a 5% pay cut.
4. Carefully manage all controllable expenses.

C. Protect the organization's interests throughout the layoff process:

1. Maintain security awareness about the few staff who, while upset at having been laid-off, might take or damage organizational property (e.g. computer passwords, address lists, calculators, etc.).
2. Remind supervisors about what property belongs to the organization in their area and to be aware of the need to maintain security about that property.
3. Provide for supervisors to anticipate how staff scheduled for layoff might react and act so that organizational interests are protected with the minimum level of visibility.
4. Treat everyone with respect and courtesy during the process of their leaving the work site while maintaining a low profile security awareness.

D. Managing performance after layoffs have been made:

1. Pay careful attention to staff who remain after the layoff.
2. Maintain clear focus on the mission, goals, and objectives. Actively support performance in pursuit of those goals.
3. Maintain a business-like attitude toward all staff.
4. Provide information about positive effects of the difficult financial and management actions that were taken.
5. Let employees know when and where laid-off staff are re-employed.
6. Practice non-defensive listening.
7. Be aware of and provide support for employees' need to grieve for their laid-off colleagues.
8. Be careful to manage well their possible anger at management concerning responsibility for the situation leading to the layoff and for actually implementing the layoff.
9. Emphasize team cooperation among remaining staff to compensate for reduced staff and strengthen mutual interpersonal support.