

Managing service operations



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Most companies prefer not to downsize, however due to the current economy ME had to downsize. The result has left ME with many problems from complaining customers to problems with employees. Employees are being overworked due to cut backs and are not as attentive as they were prior to the layoffs. Now ME must refocus their attention to come up with a plan to boost the morale within the company and determine how to escape the typical " survivor's syndrome" with the remaining employees of the company.

Customer Complaints The posed question identifies that the company is receiving complaints due to " missed pick-ups and deliveries, unfriendly attitudes, and extra charges and mistakes in billing" (CTU Online, n. d., Phase 2). This is most likely the result of the employees feeling anxiety, depression, and/or overworked and spread too thin. The anxiety comes from the person fearing that they may be next to be let go and that they may have to look for another job.

The employee is simply worried about the unknown and how the future will affect them, therefore throwing their usually high concentration level into a tail spin of uncertainty. The employee may also be feeling a little depressive, as a result of their best friends not being there to work with them. They will often act out or not even pay as much attention as normal to what they are doing. Finally the employee has a tendency to feel overworked from all the added workload that would have been carried out by personnel that were laid off. The employee may lash out at a customer because there is an added stress level. This is where ME needs to step in and boost the morale.

Boost Morale So how does a company boost morale? According to Business Week writer Carmine Gallo, there are five magic words that work to boost morale. They are to ask your employees, " I would like your opinion" (Gallo, 2008, para. 2). He is correct. Everyone has an opinion and wants to be heard. If employees are given a voice they have a tendency to feel like they have a vested interest in the company. It is important for leadership at ME to listen after they ask the question.

If they don't listen, then there is no point to begin with. This is a stepping stone for ME to get the employees involved, rather than just making announcements that something will be changing. If that happens, the remaining employees could retaliate against the company's new found ideas. Other ideas to boost morale would be to hold company meetings away from the building that they work in, offer incentives such as contests or awards, offer a little bit of flexibility in schedules where possible, offer ways to relax on breaks, praise the employees for a job well done, and offer a jeans day or some type of dress down day. By implementing some of these ideas, the company is providing something desirable for the employees to work towards.

Survivor's Syndrome Typically one would think that it would be most difficult for the person being laid off, but instead it is the person that was kept on, therefore the person the company chose to keep is the survivor. " Survivor's syndrome refers to a marked decrease in motivation, engagement and productivity of employees that remain at the company as a result of downsizing and workforce reductions" (Tortorici, 2009, para. 2). Employees often times have a difficult time adjusting and blame themselves for

someone else losing their job or talk bad about the company because of the way that they handled the layoffs.

They will also judge the company based on how their friends that were laid off were treated, compensated, or how they were notified about the layoff. A company needs to be forthright with their business decisions to build trust with their employees, which becomes a very important aspect when notifying people that they have been laid off. If the employee didn't trust the company to begin with, they will assume that there were personal reasons for their layoff. The best way for management to handle the layoffs is to communicate the idea that, yes there is a layoff in the works and at the same time, make certain that the employees understand that it is a business decision, not anything personal. The company will obviously keep their best people, but at the same time they need to take care of the ones they have kept.

Downsizing can be a positive thing, as long as it is handled in the proper way. We have seen here that ME will have to combat a few problems and work through a few bumps in the road to get the company running smoothly again after a layoff has occurred. They will have to first, work with their employees to help them adjust to the new workloads, figure out a way to boost morale, and determine the best way to avoid survivors syndrome. First and foremost, they need to be upfront with their customers and employees. They can do this by helping them to understand that they had to make a business decision and that they intend to successfully move through this phase to provide the best product possible in the end.

References

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