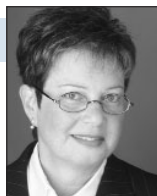


The New Survivors

Earn their discretionary effort.



by Beverly Kaye and Marilyn Greist

HERE'S THE CURIOUS IRONY: WHILE downsizing, restructuring, and merging are directed at improving performance, they are causing companies to unwittingly lose many loyal, talented, and hard-working employees.

Those who manage to retain their jobs often feel worse about their work lives than those who are forced out.

The people who are retained by an organization in transition are often called *survivors*. Common belief is that they're glad they still have a job—no matter what it is—and that they'll stay, regardless of what we ask of them or how they're treated. Well, the new survivors are looking, and willing to leave if they spot something better. They keep their eyes on other options!

There's always a market for talent. It may take a bit longer to find new employment in this economy, but good talent will always be marketable. And it takes talent to build talent. A commitment to growing talent requires training and development to ensure the talent pipeline is always full and ready.

The Dissident Survivor: A Fighter

Workers want more than survival. They want to feel valued, respected, developed, and engaged. They may think or say, "If my company doesn't grow me...If my manager doesn't respect me...If my company doesn't share information...If there's no opportunity here, I'll leave."

Surviving employees know they have value. They also have learned valuable lessons about the realities of contemporary employee-employer relationships, and they're working hard and fast at re-tooling their careers and development plans. They are valuable contributors who actively seek a match between the contributions they make and the future

they carve out for themselves.

And, they're the future of the organization. The skills and experience they bring to the workplace can make the difference between meeting your forecasted earnings or not. They are going to take care of themselves in the process. And YOU need to take care of them.

Discretionary Effort: Not For Sale

If an employee is disengaged, dissatisfied, disinterested, distrustful, disaffected and disconnected, they will withhold *their discretionary effort*. Discretionary effort is not for sale. Managers can motivate employees in the short-term to increase productivity, but generally there's a cost—some kind of reward must be attached. Results of this form of motivation are short-lived.

We've all worked for managers who have inspired us—those for whom we gave 150 percent. They didn't have to ask us for it. We worked late, raised the bar, got creative around solutions, and didn't quit at 5 p.m. We can also point to managers for whom we performed minimally. What's the difference? It's the manager's relationship with each contributor.

Each staff member has a contribution to make, and each manager impacts that contribution. The manager contributes to the decision-making process by how they coach their people through the changes, the increased workload,



and decreased opportunities.

When managers are unresponsive to the career and development needs of the people they work with, they lose competitive advantage.

The new survivors want to see a return on their investment. They want to not only improve existing skills but also develop new skills that can make them more marketable. They want to build portfolios that reflect a broad perspective with an eye toward long-term employability. While they network, learn, take on new assignments, and absorb an increased workload, they also contribute by approaching their work with energy and enthusiasm.

Maximize Contributions

You can maximize the contributions of all employees by providing them with skills, opportunities for growth, plus the resources to increase their opportunities. Here are some ideas:

- **Be candid about the market.** Don't ignore what has occurred with the "business-as-usual" frame of reference. Confront retained employees candidly about their situation and future.

- **Co-create an investment plan.** Engage them by involving them fully in goal-setting and plans for restructuring and reorganizing. Co-create the plans so they don't design their own in isolation.

- **Re-establish value.** Each laid-off employee creates an attitude shift in each retained employee. Values may change and need realignment. Train managers to coach and facilitate the survivors in ways that can re-establish their sense of value to the company.

- **Help surviving employees network with others to find support and development.** They need help seeking mentors, coaches, and advisors. They need help from others in similar positions.

- **Keep an open door and an open mind.** Managers should collaborate with employees to reengage, reconnect, reinvent and revive trust, loyalty and purpose. A new perspective on surviving employees and a new sense of reciprocity will result in a more loyal, committed, and productive workforce poised to thrive!

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ACTION: Connect with your survivors.