



Why "Free Agent Thinking" Is Good For Your Company

By: Lora J. Adrianse ©2004

It's no secret! Day after day the news is riddled with companies who are moving operations to other countries or completely closing their doors. Those who remain must transform themselves to lean, mean, businesses with a constant eye on reducing costs.

For the first time, the baby-boomers are finding themselves in an unpredictable work environment. They are shaken by the instability of what the future holds...and with good reason.

Company messages are mixed. On one hand, they talk about wanting to be "an employer of preference" with a reputation for retaining talent. On the other hand, they need the ability to be fluid...fluid enough to restructure and reorganize to meet the constantly changing needs of the market.

How then, do you walk the fine line between wanting to retain without implying promises for the future?

Encourage "free agent thinking". In other words, release the golden handcuffs.

- At every opportunity tell them you know they have many employers to choose from, and thank them for choosing you.
- When you communicate change, send a message that change is the "norm" in today's economy. Replace "message spins" with truth and hard facts.
- Teach them to embrace the mindset of personal branding and how to approach their work as if they are in business for themselves.
- Make sure every employee at every level understands the state of the business. Be sure they know how their performance contributes to the business results. Tell them what the business needs from them to be more successful.
- Help them be prepared by offering resources and encouragement to keep resumes up to date.

If you were thinking this is a little radical and you would be crazy to take this advice...**THINK AGAIN!**

- People who think like free agents act as if their future depends on every thing they do, or don't do. They have a sense of personal responsibility and personal power.
- Free agent thinkers understand that every person they encounter is a potential customer, or can lead to a customer...so they treat everyone like a valued customer.
- Free agent thinkers anticipate change and understand that the competition is tough. They learn to take the good with the bad, but they rarely consider themselves victims of circumstance.

Do your employees a favor. Encourage free agent thinking. As a company, yes, you'll have to work harder to keep the talent you want to keep. And yes, you'll probably lose some. *Which is better for your business...people who are actively engaged and appreciate the opportunity, or people who are just waiting for their next paycheck?* You decide!

As the owner of Essential Connections, Lora Adrianse is a catalyst for clients who aspire to achieve optimal results. She is accomplished in developing employees at all levels, a seasoned business manager, and is passionate about helping clients build extraordinary business relationships with colleagues and customers. Her natural instincts enrich her ability to get to the heart of the real business issues people face today. She can be reached through her website www.connectionscoach.com