

After The Downsizing...
Reclaiming Your Organization's Spirit and Soul
By: Lora J Adrianse

As you well know, the scope of a downsizing initiative totally consumes the entire capacity of your management team. When it's over, all of those who are left need time to recover. Chances are that everyone is stressed out, exhausted and minimally productive. It's a time when spirits are low and the soul of the organization has seemingly gone by the wayside.

You might ask, "What does spirit and soul have to do with business?" While we typically don't use the terms "spirit and soul" in business, in fact, spirit and soul *ARE* some of the key elements that have contributed to the success of your business up until now.

Think of it like this:

Spirit = morale, motivation, engagement, enthusiasm
Soul = culture, values, purpose, commitment

There is no quick fix for reclaiming the spirit and soul of your business. But, until you start doing "something" to get things back on track, the spirit and soul of your company will be starving. Here are a few ideas you can use to get started:

"To recapture spirit, we need to relearn how to lead with soul. Leading with soul returns us to ancient spiritual basics – reclaiming the enduring human capacity that gives our lives passion and purpose." (Bohlman and Deal, Leading with Soul)

Keep Swimming – Don't Tread Water

Treading water will get you nowhere! If you can't keep swimming yourself, find someone in your organization that can. If you can't find someone internally, hire a consultant or a coach. Someone needs to immediately jump in and show the "survivors" the importance of swimming versus treading water.

Change The Mindset

In today's workplace, change is the "norm". Every contributor should have the mindset that they are in business for themselves. Tom Peters and many authors have written about the concept of "Brand YOU". Brand YOU is about:

- Each individual identifying what it is that makes their contribution unique and valuable
- Everything they do (or choose not to do) reflects the value and character of their "brand"
- How the success of individual translates into the success of the business.

Encourage the survivors to take hold of their personal power. A new mindset will give them the strength to "keep swimming" and avoid feeling victimized. Consider bringing in a coach or a consultant to do a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis to help them recognize their strengths and opportunities for improvement. It's a great opportunity to acknowledge their strengths and get them focused on taking action.

Build The Structure

Establish systems and processes. Make it requirement that processes are in place for every employee to:

- Understand the state of the business
- Understand how their performance contributes to the business results
- Understand what the business needs from them in order to be successful

Job descriptions may need to be revised to accurately reflect the functions of each position. Involve your team in creating mission, vision and values statements for your/their functions. Once the systems are in place, the key is to communicate, communicate, communicate.

Invest In Development

Ferdinand Fournes once wrote "People don't do dumb things on purpose". If that's true (and in general terms I believe it is), then identify the knowledge, skills and abilities that need to be developed. Embrace in the competencies of Emotional Intelligence. It is often the skill set of Emotional Intelligence that distinguishes the most successful employees from the rest. It's a win/win strategy for individuals, teams as well as the business. It's time to make the investment for individuals, teams, and the business.

Hold Everyone Accountable

Holding everyone accountable is about sharing responsibility. Sharing responsibility implies that individual contributors are an integral part of strategizing, planning, and executing whatever task is at hand. Typically, individuals are more than willing to be held accountable if they've been a part of the process from the beginning. ***Special Note: the concept of "shared responsibility" may require a paradigm shift for managers who are used to "asking" versus "telling". Be sure your managers have access to training in coaching skills. There are several great training programs out there that teach coaching skills. One that I think is especially good is a two-day session called The Coaching Clinic @.*

You may be saying to yourself now, "These aren't new concepts." and you're absolutely right, they aren't new. However, they are *foundational* practices. If your that "employees are your greatest assets", then you'll also embrace the concept that "individual success translates into successful business results". In essence, you have a successful business with spirit and soul.

How long can you afford to tread water?

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