the SUNDAY TIMES
EMPLOYMENT TIMES
MAKING OPPORTUNITIES KNOCK ON YOUR DOOR

WE NEED
BUSINESS JOURNALISTS..!

Wijeya Newspapers Ltd, the leading newspaper group in the country and publisher of The Sunday Times and Daily Mirror is looking for English writers for it's publications.

This is an "Free lance" basis and terms are negotiable.
If you are interested, please post or e-mail your profile to us

The Advertising Manager,
Wijeya Newspapers Ltd.,
No. 46, Park Street, Colombo 02.
Fax: 011-2440323 or email to: amanager@wijeya.lk

Times | DailyMirror | DailyFT | ebizlanka | ebizlanka

Managing Lay offs with dignity

By Liz Weber

With the potential for layoffs looming ever and more companies, the realities of having a frightened workforce is continuing to pose a challenge to owners and managers. Owners and managers who have never before faced this hard act. To help ease the pain for the employees being laid off, the owners and managers making the hard decisions, as well as those employees staying behind, I thought I'd share a 5 Step approach that may help you, your employees, and your business. It will not work for many of your business expenses (rent, contracts, etc.) but it'll helps some of them - a great start.

Everyone knows the economy is uncertain and most employees are rightfully concerned about job stability. When people become nervous, the rumor mill kicks into high gear. We all know the rumor mill can destroy individuals quicker than many things. So if you haven't yet, start communicating now. Layout clearly how your company is and will address future business slow-downs.

Step 1 - Holds a "State of the Business" meeting with all employees and let them know the current state of your business. Let your employees know what your plans for lay-offs and how you'll handle a shift if your company needs to scale back. Share with your employees the following - or your complain - for dealing with scaled-down. The important things to communicate clearly the state of your business now and what will cause you to move to the next step.

Step 2 - Reduce management salaries. Should business start to slow down and you need to make your workforce more nach and control costs, don't immediately lay-off the lowest paid, it will be a mistake. That's the people who do what your business is known for. Do what you can to retain them. Instead, consider doing what is few of my clients are doing:

Cut management salaries. Tell your employees this during your State of the Business Meeting. Let them know, as the working top contact the front-line workers' jobs, as the first areas of cost reductions will be borne by the management team. (One client: overall executive salary is 1.5M, all mid-level management is 18K)

If you, like one of my clients, has a manager who "jokingly" asks, "But I'll still get my bonus, right?" consider his response. Tolerability. But first I want to hit in the meeting on the going to have with the employees just who will need to be laid off in order to pay your year bonus. I want to hear how you explain to them that you will still get your bonus while they lose their jobs. Once they give you the O.K., you'll get your bonus. "I think I know the answer, but - deal.

No bonuses.] Step 3 - Reduce or completely eliminate any overtime (within the law). Again, this needs to be clarified during your initial Meeting but let all employees know the ability for your company to pay - and their ability to continue to earn and live on - overtime is a big one. Give your employees time to carefully think and realize they may need to dramatically cut their living expenses and not count on overtime pay or consider it their "normal" income any more.

Step 4 - Reduce worker hours and cross-train. Again, where possible, instead of completely eliminating positions, reduce worker hours to preserve cash while allowing employees to maintain an income stream. If you haven't yet, this is a critical time for cross-training and to provide additional training to the staff. When things turn around, they'll have solid skills. During slow times, they'll continue to provide value to your business by working - maybe on things they've never done before - but they'll be working and continuing to develop their skills.

Step 5 - When you can't hold off a lay-off any further. Lay off staff. Hold one meeting with them to let her know that they're next step on map. Provide them with information on continuing benefits, unemployment, etc. Don't treat them as if they've committed a crime by standing great next to them as they pack up their personal items and then escorting them out of the building.

Allow them to say goodbyes to colleagues and leave with dignity. The above approach is not easy for your business. But it is another one strategy in place for how your company will face business downturns and then create an explicit communicate that plan to your staff. Most importantly, keep your employees informed of your business' preparation to the next Step. Let them plan with you on how to deal with the changes in business and their employment situation. It'll help you and them face a difficult time together with mutual respect and dignity.

- smartbiz.com

Practical PR Skills

PR involves a range of corporate activities such as,

- Publicity
- Press/media relation
- Lobbying or representation to government and trade bodies
- Community projects/ community Relation
- Corporate affairs
- Public information
- Charitable work

PUBLIC RELATIONS & MANAGING IMAGE

The organisation's image is an important factor as positive image is invaluable a distinct plus by any organisation. Since an organisation will inevitably project an image in its dealing with the outside world, and the cost of a negative image can be high, it makes all sense an organisation to manage the message being created.

Organisations engage in 'PR' when sending press releases or constructive editorial articles, greeting and assisting visitors and dealing with suppliers / distributors, designing and promotional messages, organising and participating in marketing activities.

AWARENESS

Employees should be aware that they project an image whenever they interact with outsiders or any stakeholder groups. This includes employee's ability to convey,

a)A positive attitude towards your work and the organisation you work for

b)A positive attitude towards the products/services of the organisation.

c)A positive attitude towards the stakeholding groups and their relationship.

d)A positive attitude towards yourself, your rights and responsibilities.

Employees need to be aware of their outward image, the environment and output present so the first impression is powerful and remembered. Image is however highly subjective, individuals need to consider what impression is created by non-verbal communication.

- wrinkled uniform or improper dress
- A limp handshake or shifty eye movements
- A slouching posture

Keep in mind that the concept accepts the wide differences of company cultures, contents thus always room for individuality. It is therefore vital marketers work out what the formal rules are across a range of circumstances.

PROFESSIONALISM

What is understood by the term professionalism will depend on the market and organisation culture. In terms of practical PR, there are three dimensions of professionalism that create a positive image.

Courtesy

This is the minimum level of requirement of all business communication. However, adversarial, competitive, tense or hurried the interpersonal situation, courtesy is simply unprofessional.

Expertise

Level of competence often justifies financial remuneration and incompetence is bad PR. Work out what range and standard of performance expected of you and ensure you can achieve it. Avoid giving out inaccurate information and be willing and honest if you to look up or ask for information.

Efficiency

Professionals place a value on their time, energy, money and other resources and recognise that others do the same. Be recognized, prompt to appointments, deadlines and budget constraints.

DISCRETION

When you represent the organisation, even informally, need to be aware of the need for discretion, which demonstrate good PR. This involves your judgment as to what information that is covered by laws or agreements of confidentiality and should not be disclosed. The bottom line is, employees need to be aware what information they can share and what they cannot.

DEDICATION

The purpose of all communication is, essentially to spread a positive message about the organisation, its products and services. Formal PR activities create a range of opportunities for good news spreading. Organisation needs to take all its stakeholders and keep them informed of their contribution to the society.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES
MUSCAT, SULTANATE OF OMAN

Wanted for a Major Construction Company the following personnel:

SENIOR QUANTITY SURVEYORS – 05 NOS.
COST ENGINEERS – 03 NOS.
COST MANAGERS – 03 NOS.
(OIL & GAS Projects)

Candidates should be Degree / Diploma holder with a membership of recognised Cost Engineering Institute and have knowledge in Mechanical, Electrical and Instrumentation, plus a minimum of 7-10 years experience in on-shore Oil and Gas facility construction. Should have at least 2 years Middle East experience.

SENIOR QUANTITY SURVEYORS – 03 NOS.
ASSISTANT COMMERCIAL MANAGERS – 02 NOS

Experienced Senior Quantity Surveyors with the ability to manage large-scale Commercial / Residential / Hotels and mixed development projects. Ideal candidate will have a professional qualification (Bsc (QS), MRICS, MCIOB, AACIOB) plus a minimum of 7-10 years experience.

SENIOR QUANTITY SURVEYORS (MEP) – 03 NOS.

Candidates should be Bsc Degree holder (Candidates with Chartered status will have an added advantage) and should have knowledge in Mechanical, Electrical and Instrumentation, plus a minimum of 7-10 years relevant experience in on-shore Oil and Gas facility construction.

Attractive salary (not be less than the minimum stipulated by the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment) and other benefits (viz: Free up/down air tickets for self and family, furnished family accommodation, medical, company maintained vehicle) will be offered to suitable candidates. Food included in the salary. 8 hours working per day.

Please mail typo-written application (with 4 recent passport size photographs, full curriculum vitae indicating career history with qualification and experience certificate and contact phone number to Sarathi Limited, No.50, Hyde Park Corner, Colombo, Sri Lanka, Telephone No. 2325294/2435596, E-mail: sara@sl@eureka.lk with a copy to the Commercial Manager, P.O. Box 3803, Ruwi, Post Code 112, Sultanate of Oman, by E-mail (E-mail ID: gulfs@sarthi.com)

SARATHI LIMITED
50, Hyde Park Corner,
Colombo 02.

Licence No. 01 Approval No. AL/01/ADVT/09/10

Human Resources Planning - It's more than filling vacancies for the next few months

By Paul Phillips

Constant planning is what most business people do as they are ready the changing circumstances.

Internal resource planning or workthrough planning up front with the budget? Possible not. Quite often, with workforce planning it will be treated as another budget line item and not taken much further.

The reality is it has to be done properly, it requires long lead times and it should be a regular feature of any manager's role.

Workforce planning for many people is just about looking at new jobs coming up and how they might fill the vacancies. For those lucky enough, it may be about how they focus people on staff.

However, to do it effectively requires a little more than ad hoc approaches with a rigorous approach to ensure you have captured all the interesting possibilities - and that will never be enough!

A few of the steps you may wish to include are listed below.

Strategic Plans

Revisit your plans for the business and look at each objective and strategy from a workforce perspective. Do you have the people to carry out the plans? Do you have enough of them? Do they have the experience, are their conditions appropriate? Do they have the right competencies? This combination of knowledge, skills, aptitude and motivation).

Are they going to stay with you to see the plans through? When do you need to start recruiting? Do they enough in their budget? Have people to carry out new.

Succession Plans

Have you reviewed your succession plans - not just the immediate replacements but looking ahead of future needs and creating accordingly?

Maybe when you revisit your next Accounts Clerk you should be looking for your future Financial Controller. Immediate replacements are smart so anyone resigns you business for a number reasons and some of them may cause a sudden departure. What happens if several people leave at the same time?

Building some depth in your talent pool is good business. Often it is better to have a surplus of talent and lose people due to lack of opportunity rather than have people suffer because of overwork, stress and some talents may be forced to flee to pastures. Do you have development plans to bring people up to the level your business needs?

Employment Conditions

Are employment contracts and general conditions appropriate for anyone people being sought? Do you need full time or part time people? Will you be able to attract full time people?

Flexible work arrangements or flexi-work will for all parties - make sure you have policies and procedures that allow you to do this.

Rewards

Can you attract new people with new skills? Has the market moved since you last took on new people? Will they integrate into existing salary structures? Do you need a blend of fixed and variable pay? Do you offer the right benefits? Young people are not particularly enthusiastic about paperwork so the older people may be disposed to it.

Practical PR Skills

PR involves a range of corporate activities such as,

- Publicity
- Press/media relation
- Lobbying or representation to government and trade bodies
- Community projects/ community Relation
- Corporate affairs
- Public information
- Charitable work

PUBLIC RELATIONS & MANAGING IMAGE

The organisation's image is an important factor as positive image is invaluable a distinct plus by any organisation. Since an organisation will inevitably project an image in its dealing with the outside world, and the cost of a negative image can be high, it makes all sense an organisation to manage the message being created.

Organisations engage in 'PR' when sending press releases or constructive editorial articles, greeting and assisting visitors and dealing with suppliers / distributors, designing and promotional messages, organising and participating in marketing activities.

AWARENESS

Employees should be aware that they project an image whenever they interact with outsiders or any stakeholder groups. This includes employee's ability to convey,

a)A positive attitude towards your work and the organisation you work for

b)A positive attitude towards the products/services of the organisation.

c)A positive attitude towards the stakeholding groups and their relationship.

d)A positive attitude towards yourself, your rights and responsibilities.

Employees need to be aware of their outward image, the environment and output present so the first impression is powerful and remembered. Image is however highly subjective, individuals need to consider what impression is created by non-verbal communication.

- wrinkled uniform or improper dress
- A limp handshake or shifty eye movements
- A slouching posture

Keep in mind that the concept accepts the wide differences of company cultures, contents thus always room for individuality. It is therefore vital marketers work out what the formal rules are across a range of circumstances.

PROFESSIONALISM

What is understood by the term professionalism will depend on the market and organisation culture. In terms of practical PR, there are three dimensions of professionalism that create a positive image.

Courtesy

This is the minimum level of requirement of all business communication. However, adversarial, competitive, tense or hurried the interpersonal situation, courtesy is simply unprofessional.

Expertise

Level of competence often justifies financial remuneration and incompetence is bad PR. Work out what range and standard of performance expected of you and ensure you can achieve it. Avoid giving out inaccurate information and be willing and honest if you to look up or ask for information.

Efficiency

Professionals place a value on their time, energy, money and other resources and recognise that others do the same. Be recognized, prompt to appointments, deadlines and budget constraints.

DISCRETION

When you represent the organisation, even informally, need to be aware of the need for discretion, which demonstrate good PR. This involves your judgment as to what information that is covered by laws or agreements of confidentiality and should not be disclosed. The bottom line is, employees need to be aware what information they can share and what they cannot.

DEDICATION

The purpose of all communication is, essentially to spread a positive message about the organisation, its products and services. Formal PR activities create a range of opportunities for good news spreading. Organisation needs to take all its stakeholders and keep them informed of their contribution to the society.