

Supporting Affected Employees



For most, being laid off from that company has a complex emotional component attached to it.

People may find it difficult to process this information practically. People are very emotional about their jobs and a job represents social standing for many. Therefore, it is very important that as a company dealing with layoff's you act compassionately and approach this process holistically.

There are articles that talk about how you should conduct a layoff with compassion and empathy. How to move swiftly and act respectfully, but there is little information about the tactical things you can do to help people through this transition. We have tried to gather learnings from companies who have botched this process and ones that have handled the process really well. Employers need to go beyond just laying people off with compassion and provide support to the affected employees as they transition to unemployment and prepare to re-enter the job market.

Broadly, the companies going through a retrenchment need to focus on 2 primary things: communication and transition support.

I. COMMUNICATION

- i. **Be direct and human:** For starters, everyone should be explaining the 'why' behind making the decision to furlough or lay anyone off, but be clear, concise and unequivocal. Every employee regardless of their role should hear this information directly from a human ideally on a one-to-one basis.
- ii. **Get the manager involved** - The manager probably has a relationship with them and will have valuable input. Its also the human touch.
- iii. **Over communicate** - If you tell them verbally, put it in writing and vice versa. You cannot go wrong with over communicating in a situation like this because as they may not hear you the first time.
- iv. **Explain support programs:** Communicate the steps that the company is taking to assist the affected employees in this difficult phase, but do not overpromise.
- v. **Follow-ups:** Not everyone will respond to what you say. Some will need to see you follow up on your offers. Let them know you'll be reaching out to them weekly and how they prefer you do that whether it be text, a call, email etc.

II. Support:

With structured layoff and support program in times like these can not only provide exiting employees with means to deal with the retrenchment:

Here are a few simple low-cost measures you should consider:

- i. **Resume Review:** Help update employee resumes to speak to their experience and show future recruiters and hiring managers what they want to do in their next job. Similarly also help them create, update and/or optimize their LinkedIn profile.
- ii. **References:** Don't make employees go around asking for references. Line up the best people to give a reference for future employment and ask them to draft a letter. Provide the updated contact information so this will be available for when they need it.
- iii. **Connect People:** Create a way for employees to stay connected with their work family. Open up a slack channel, start a Facebook group, whatever makes the most sense for your company and allow them to stay connected.
- iv. **Layoff Lists:** Every company should be creating a layoff list or talent directory. This has been undoubtedly one of the most beneficial ways to help employees find their next job as recruiters are constantly monitoring these lists for suitable candidates for their firms.
- v. **Schedule Check-ins:** Some people just want to know that someone has got their back. Sometimes that means proactive outreach. Whether there are tactical things your team can help with or it's just moral support, allowing former employees to schedule check-ins to ask questions can go along way emotionally.

Here are some other measure you can do that can help your employees through this transition:

- Provide career coaches
- Provide a job search stipend
- Provide for skilling up costs
- Provide financial counselling
- Provide mental health support

If you need help with any of the above, on how to implement these programs, or understand them better, connect with one of our specialists. Email us at corporate@bouncebacklist.com.