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After a downsizing, how do you align remaining employees with the new goals of the restructured organization?

Engaging Organizational Survivors

“Once change is underway, the excitement associated with the launch is past, and some early wins have been achieved, how do [you] keep the effort moving... sustain people’s enthusiasm, and deal effectively with blocks, hindrances, and...resistance?”

—W. Warner Burke

BY JIM CLARK AND RICHARD KOONCE



A U.S.-based chemical and pharmaceutical firm with \$2 billion in annual sales worldwide is in trouble. Over the last seven years the company has downsized three times, trimming operating costs by 22 percent and shrinking in size from 4,000 to 2,700 employees. All that was done to make the company more competitive and cost-efficient.

In spite of those efforts (which included drastic cuts in the training budget), anticipated gains in productivity and corporate profitability have not been realized. In fact, employee morale and productivity, which sagged after the first round of layoffs and office closings, have never rebounded.

Now several of the company's key senior managers—who had been perceived to be on the fast track to the executive suite—have left the firm to join its competitors. The company had hoped to retain those people in the downsized organization; their departure has fueled talk of a possible corporate buyout.

The top leaders seem uncertain about what to do. In the past, corporate productivity sprang from employee loyalty to the company and a strong focus on sales and customer service. Now, downsizing has emptied the reservoir of employee goodwill the company needs to tap into as it looks to the future.

A leading stationery and office-supply company with headquarters in the Midwest faces plummeting productivity and rapid turnover. Founded in the mid 1950s, the company, under the leadership of several visionary CEOs, grew exponentially in its first 35 years of life. By the late 1980s, annual sales reached more than \$250 million.

Commercial success enabled the firm to expand into several cities in the East. But despite its growth, the company continued to espouse a "family" philosophy of management and employment, taking a benevolent if somewhat paternalistic view toward its 2,000 employees.

In 1990, the firm hit the skids. Profits plunged when a low-cost competitor (a national retail chain) entered the marketplace and gobbled up 17 percent of the firm's market share in a single year. The company was forced

to lay off workers for the first time in its history, breaking what employees had always regarded as the founder's key promise to them: "As long as you do a good job, you will have a good job with our company."

Now the firm is hemorrhaging from within. Many younger employees are leaving the company in droves—taking with them the skills in sales, marketing, customer service, and information technology that the company needs to succeed in the future. They are convinced that the company can no longer offer them career development opportunities.

"This is a sinking ship," notes one departing employee as he packs up his briefcase and heads across town to join the competition.

Meanwhile, many of the firm's longtime workers are holding on to their jobs for dear life. They're hoping to make it safely to retirement, without being forced out in another downsizing. In years past, these workers formed part of the firm's solid employee core. But without substantial re-orientation and training, they lack the skills necessary to help the firm maintain and increase its market share in a competitive environment.

Sound familiar?

As a trainer and human resources professional, do you recognize either of those two scenarios? Perhaps they describe where your firm is at this point in its organizational life.

Across the United States today, thousands of companies are reeling from the effects of repeated waves of downsizing, restructuring, and merger mania. Unfortunately, nearly 68 percent of all downsizings, restructurings, and reengineering efforts are not very successful, according to a recent CSC Index survey.

In many cases, companies that downsized and restructured to become more profitable and efficient have not realized either of those outcomes. Instead, they have experienced tremendous fallout—especially in the areas of plunging employee productivity and morale, and skyrocketing levels of absenteeism, cynicism, and turnover.

And all of those effects are among organizational "survivors"—those who were "lucky" enough to keep

their jobs through waves of layoffs.

Why is that the case? Why are diminished productivity and morale so prevalent in organizations that have downsized and restructured?

Those are hard questions, but organizations must ask them if they want to serve their customers effectively, increase profitability, foster innovation, and otherwise grow as vital business enterprises.

The end of the old corporate machine

Not too many years ago, traditional thinking said that people who hung onto their jobs after a downsizing would be grateful to have jobs, and would therefore be more productive. Or, the survivors would be so worried about losing their jobs the next time around that they would become more productive as a preventive measure. So say Richard Knowdell, Elizabeth Branstead, and Milan Moravec in their book, *From Downsizing to Recovery* (Consulting Psychologists Press, 1994).

Many organizations still subscribe to that belief.

Such ideas fly in the face of human nature and suggest a kind of organizational denial about what really motivates a person to do a job. They suggest a mechanistic view of people as cogs in a large corporate wheel.

But, as Jim Champy notes in *Reengineering Management*, we are now witnessing the wreck of the "old corporate machine." The ascendancy of information as a strategic business tool and the critical importance of knowledge workers as a company's most vital business asset have supplanted physical labor and even capital in some cases as the most critical factors in business success.

The survivors of downsizing can provide an organization with both the core competencies and the essential corporate memory necessary for moving forward into a new era of business prosperity. Such major players as Bell Atlantic and AT&T have discovered it as the telecommunications industry has restructured and reconfigured itself.

Today, getting people aligned behind organizational goals and objectives is a key determinant of business vitality and a leading benchmark of organizational effectiveness. So

demonstrates a recent Coopers & Lybrand survey of 300 improvement-driven organizations (see the box, "The Secrets of Organizational Success," page 28).

So how do you build a new commitment among survivors in a newly restructured organization?

Getting inside their minds

To get the most from people who have lived through the restructuring experience, you first must pay attention to what's on people's minds in the aftermath of a downsizing. That's key to expecting them to assume new roles and commit themselves to new organizational goals.

Most people who remain with an organization after it has downsized are worried about long-term job security, despite assurances from upper management that their jobs are safe. Indeed, credibility of senior management is estimated to drop 35 percent after a restructuring, according to a 1990 study by the American Society for Training and Development.

Most survivors are also concerned about future possibilities for promotion and advancement within the organization—particularly if they saw their bosses or mentors laid off, or if they see traditional career paths within the organization being obliterated by restructuring.

"Am I trapped here for the rest of my career?" a survivor might wonder. "Will I have future options to grow, develop, and take on new responsibilities? Or am I effectively plateaued and pigeonholed for the rest of my working life?"

Survivors are also plagued by anxiety and insecurity about their ability to function in a new environment—even if they are seasoned veterans who are deemed highly valuable to the new organization.

Survivors' jobs may very well have been redesigned as part of restructuring. The new job descriptions may incorporate tasks, technology, and skill requirements that the employees don't possess. It's natural to wonder, on a personal level, whether "old dogs can learn new tricks."

Many organizational survivors wonder where they're supposed to get training for their new roles—especially if the training budget has been

axed. They want to know how much time they'll be given to adjust to their new job requirements and responsibilities. And they're anxious about their ability to adapt successfully.

Some organizational survivors also have a tough time adjusting emotionally, psychologically, and even stylistically to the new organizational environment they find themselves in. Their management style, their skill set, or their approach and philosophy about work may be out of sync with the direction of the new organization.

A typical example is the highly effective senior manager who is prized for his knowledge of marketing, but whose sexist humor now gets him in hot water with customers and coworkers. Another example is the top-down manager who can't seem to shift her perspective from that of the boss who gives orders to that of a coach who collaborates with team members.

Many organizational survivors are shell-shocked by the whole downsizing or restructuring experience.

In many cases, they've weathered significant changes—in organizational status; in their reporting relationships with bosses and subordinates; and in their lines of responsibility, authority, and accountability. For example, many people lose their bosses (and sometimes their subordinates or even their whole departments) as a result of organizational shuffles.

Some people experience intense feelings of loss, grief, depression, and inadequacy as a result of changes in their working environment. But that trauma may go unnoticed or unacknowledged by their managers, coworkers, and even family members. They may have real difficulties adjusting to real or threatened losses in professional stature. That's particularly true when such losses make them question their personal and professional competence or their value to the organization.

Designing survivor programs

As an organization reinvents itself, it needs to keep in mind the survivors' emotional turmoil. That connection is

key to realizing the productivity and profitability gains that downsizing and restructuring were intended to bring about in the first place.

An organization can lessen the pain of restructuring. Efforts need to be systematic, and they should include clear, consistent communication with employees about transition plans. But it's still vital to put programs and services in place to address survivors' emotional needs and to sustain organizational change initiatives over time. Specifically, the organization should address ways to maintain over time the new behaviors and attitudes that it now expects of its employees.

As downsizing and restructuring efforts proceed, it's especially impor-

"AM I
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CAREER?"



tant to introduce programs and training initiatives that address

the following needs:

- ▶ to help managers and employees deal with change
- ▶ to guide individual employees in planning and managing their careers
- ▶ to help managers coach and mentor employees.

Such programs must fill part of the void left by the dissolution of the implied psychological contract between employer and employee—the implied contract that offered continued employment in return for loyalty and hard work.

The best way for new programs to fill that void is by serving as models of a new, explicit contract between the employer and the surviving employees. The new contract emphasizes mutual responsibility for skill development and professional growth. It fosters the employability of an individual, both inside and outside the present organization.

Under the new arrangement, an employer provides the employee with specific learning opportunities and development options (classroom based, experiential, and collaboratively developed with supervisors), as well as career coaching and assessment tools.

In return, the employee who takes responsibility for steering his or her own career performs at a higher level than the company might have expected in the past. At the same time, the employee invests loyalty in the organization for at least several years (not for an entire career)—as long as he or she is learning and growing.

The learning ethic

In designing survivor programs, keep in mind the specific business needs that the organization has right now. Programs should focus on equipping people with new and emerging core competencies and with the ability and orientation to engage in new learning on an ongoing basis.

The benefits are myriad. In today's economy, specific knowledge and know-how can create strategic competitive advantage. So institutionalizing a "learning ethic" in your organization contributes not only to improved levels of employee competence and performance, but also to increased organizational competence and resilience.

The organization that makes learning a core value sets itself up for success. It can rapidly leverage new knowledge and information into new products, new marketing approaches, and new ways of doing business.

The implications of leveraged knowledge are tremendous for a firm's ability to withstand the competition and differentiate itself from others in a constantly changing marketplace. For example, who can imagine Sony without its knowledge of miniaturization, Casio without its expertise in display systems, or Honda without its skill in building engines?

So what kinds of skills will spur your organization to success? Within the organization, is there consensus about the answer to that question?

And what will it take for employees to be strong contributors to the organization's new business and culture?

As a trainer or human resources

professional, you may be charged with developing an initial list of the skills and competencies that you think everyone in the organization will need (executives, managers, and nonmanagerial employees). You might even be responsible for securing organizational buy-in for these priorities.

As you elicit senior managers' support, you can reinforce the importance of the learning ethic in their minds. You can lay the groundwork for the organization to become a learning organization, characterized by periodic reflection and self-analysis about what's necessary for ongoing organizational success.

Eventually, people within the organization will have reached agreement about new and emerging core competencies. Then, it will be important to incorporate those competencies into training programs, employee development plans, performance-evaluation criteria, and reward-and-recognition systems.

Aligning survivor programs

The most successful programs aimed at helping the survivors of restructuring are those that are part of a unified package of developmental offerings. They should be in alignment with critical business goals and future changes, as well as with other HR efforts. Such integration will ensure synergy with other business processes and initiatives in the organization.

According to a recent survey of 1,000 large U.S. corporations, training and HR professionals generally think that their organizations derive the greatest benefit from linking career development initiatives to specific business objectives. (*Training & Development*, November 1993.)

What kinds of programs could your organization offer to organizational survivors in order to foster employee empowerment, build commitment to the organization, and encourage greater employability in workers? Here is a rundown.

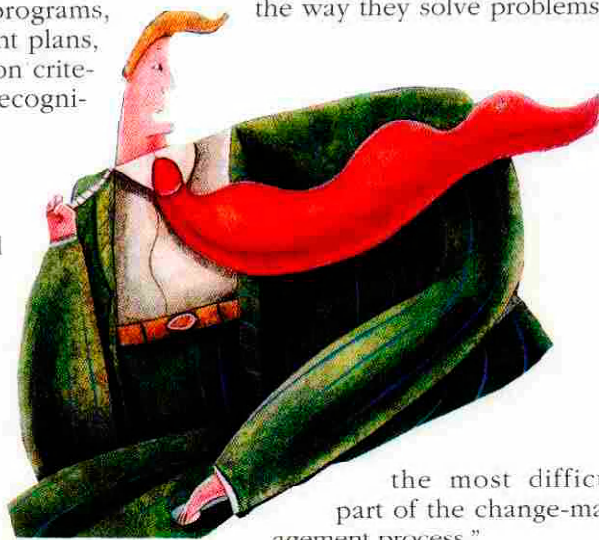
Team building and coping with change

In times of organizational stress and change, employees display different kinds of resistance to change—active and passive, as well as negative and positive.

Such reactions can appear as visible resistance to new organizational goals, or as subtle resistance to new ways of doing work or collaborating with others. Either way, they can destroy an organization's effort to rebuild and restructure itself during and after a reorganization.

As John Gamba, senior vice-president of corporate and human resources at Bell Atlantic, puts it:

"People operate at certain comfort levels. This leads to inertia sometimes, as well as a fear of anything new. Getting people to change the way they regard their work or the way they solve problems is



the most difficult part of the change-management process."

For that reason, some of the most crucial programs are those that focus on aligning surviving employees with their organization's new strategic goals, mission, and objectives.

For example, say that retained employees are accustomed to working in rigidly hierarchical or structurally "stovepiped" settings. Now, the organization is moving to a team-based structure. In such a situation, it's important to incorporate team-building and conflict-resolution training into workshops—particularly if an organization is going through reinvention or business-process reengineering.

Many U.S. federal agencies are grappling with reinventing themselves to become more "customer-re-

sponsive" to taxpayers and to other federal agencies. They're attempting to streamline operations; to downsize; and to create new, cross-functional ways of working among operational units that used to work in isolation from each other.

Some agencies are finding that they cannot undertake those tasks until they develop skills in such areas as collaborative decision-making, team building, and conflict resolution.

One office of the Defense Department found that it needed to develop effective group-process skills—specifically in the area of conflict resolution—before it could work on reengineering its processes.

A coping-with-change workshop was held to help the group develop skills in this area. The workshop included an instrument that helped people better understand their individual styles of dealing with conflict

DEMONSTRATE
TO EMPLOYEES,
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FOR ME?"

and some ways of modifying those styles when appropriate for working together.

Team-building and coping-with-change programs also provide a forum in which the HR specialist can clarify new roles and responsibilities of employees, and can train people to become champions and sponsors of organizational change. Such activities are crucial to sustaining change initiatives and new ways of working in an organization.

Such forums are an excellent venue for initiating "cascading" sponsorship of change in your organization. By involving large numbers of employees from every level and function in your organization in such programs, you can accelerate the pace at which people buy into their new roles and responsibilities.

For purposes of strategic planning, team building, project implementation, and even conflict resolution, you might also want to use some kind of electronic meeting-support tools to assist the human facilitators.

Such tools can help speed group decision making, brainstorming, and consensus building. They are also useful for breaking down barriers to change, by identifying issues for the group to deal with. Those results are possible because groupware typically allows users, through individual computer terminals or input pads, to enter their comments and ideas anonymously.

Coaching and mentoring for managers

Managing and motivating others in today's workplace requires far different skills than managers have needed in the past. Modern managers must rebuild team commitment, cohesion, and loyalty—without the aid of the implicit psychological contract to back them up.

Managers also need to develop skills in consensus building and personal coaching of their employees. They must be able to forge new relationships with people, based on mutual respect, clear expectations, and "win/win" objectives.

That can be a tough job, especially in a newly constituted work group. In such a situation, employees are likely to be anxious about their job security; as a result, they might tend to be competitive in unproductive ways.

For all those reasons, workshops to help managers become better coaches and mentors should be included on the menu of programs you offer to surviving employees in a restructuring organization.

One of the most critical skill areas to cover with managers in these workshops is the use of career development and career-planning discussions with employees as a team-building strategy. In downsized organizations, if you are asking employees to take on new roles and tasks, you must be willing to offer them something tangible in return. You must be able to demonstrate to them, in practical terms, the answer to their all-important question: "What's in it for me?"

For most people, helping them plan and manage their careers hits a responsive chord. Managers can't necessarily guarantee long-term job security, but they can position the organization as a partner to surviving employees. They can help survivors brainstorm job and career goals, they can identify development opportunities (formal, informal, college-based, and professional), and they can help employees put together career action plans.

That kind of career guidance demonstrates a tangible commitment to organizational survivors, even as the organization is communicating its new work expectations.

When managers become effective coaches and mentors to employees, survivors pick up on some powerful organizational "body language."

According to Iris Martin, "Mentoring is the very heart of culture change." Martin is president of Creative Dimensions in Management, a Philadelphia-based consulting firm. She says the most costly error that most organizations make is to attempt to change their culture without having effective mentoring programs in place.

Gordon Silcox, a senior vice-president of the outplacement firm Manchester, agrees. Mentors, he says, play important roles in people's lives, both for career development and career-renewal purposes.

"Mentors provide people with broadened perspectives about the transferability of their skills and interests and with motivation to take reasonable risks," he says. Mentors can also provide people "with advice on dealing with organizational politics, with honest and constructive criticism about behavioral problem areas or 'blind spots,' and with encouragement when confidence and self-esteem have taken a beating."

Many organizations use both formal and informal coaching and mentoring programs—not only to equip managers to be better managers, but also to bring employees into closer alignment with new organizational goals and business priorities, in high-profile ways.

The Federal National Mortgage Association, also known as Fannie Mae, has inaugurated an active mentoring

program that supplements more traditional training and development initiatives.

Fannie Mae's program pairs high-level mentors with proteges, one-on-one. The relationship is geared toward helping proteges achieve their career development goals and improve their opportunities for advancement. It also aims to transfer knowledge from senior-management levels to a broader spectrum of the workforce. The program establishes mentoring as a core organizational value.

Providing new tools to managers

In addition to providing coaching and mentoring training to managers in your organization, you will probably want to develop (or seek out) programs that provide managers with specific skills they may not have had a chance to develop elsewhere.

For example, managers who must forge new working relationships with employees need an array of tools if they are to achieve that goal. Those tools include advanced interpersonal, negotiating, and conflict-resolution skills.

Of those skills, conflict resolution, in particular, may be new to many managers. In today's reengineered organizations, teams are being pulled together from across various functional areas. And conflict is an obstacle that most working groups will have to deal with. The most successful managers will be those who become comfortable with managing and mediating conflicts. In some cases, they'll need to know how to prevent conflicts; at other times, they'll want to capitalize on them.

Coaching and mentoring programs also need to focus on helping managers assess and plan their own careers. Managers should go through a career self-assessment and appraisal process. In many cases, they'll do so with the guidance of a professional career coach or trainer, and they'll use such assessment instruments as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator instrument.

As they assess their own careers, managers can acquire a substantive knowledge of the career-planning process—knowledge that will benefit

The Secrets of Organizational Success: Aligning Employees Behind

How important is it to align employees behind the goals and objectives established by a newly restructured or reengineered organization?

In a word, critical! It is, in fact a key differentiating factor between high-performing, improvement-driven organizations and "also-rans" in the field of managing change.

Predictors of success. Findings from a recent survey of 300 improvement-driven organizations show that one of the most critical predictors of organizational success is the alignment of employees with the mission, values, and goals of the organization. Employee alignment basically boils down to awareness of business objectives and empowerment of employees to do their jobs.

The survey—conducted by the consulting firm Coopers & Lybrand—polled people in a wide variety of blue-chip corporations, government agencies, and other organizations. The questions looked at seven key dimensions of organizational effectiveness.

The results showed that in top-performing organizations, "employees understand the link between their tasks and the organization's

strategic plans and goals."

In addition, employees in those organizations "recognize and act on their responsibility to continuously improve their work processes and are held accountable for ensuring that products and services are designed and produced at the level of quality that customers expect."

Finally, "quality-improvement accomplishments are included in employee performance evaluations" in top-performing organizations.

No accident. So how do employees become closely aligned with the goals and objectives of their organizations? Not by accident, says Ted Wills, a managing associate with Coopers & Lybrand's office in Rosslyn, Virginia.

"Improvement-driven organizations," says Wills, "have committed themselves to thinking of human resources programs and services not as a support function but as one of their core business processes—just like operations, engineering, manufacturing, or research and development. As such, there is a close linkage of human resources with other core processes in the organization."

The survey reveals that in top-

not only themselves, but also the people whom they mentor in the workplace.

Managing careers

In the past, organizations tended to dictate career paths to employees and to stipulate requirements for promotions and advancement. Many organizations put employees into boxes on organization charts, ascribing attributes and requirements for jobs at different levels.

Now, organizations are flattened by downsizing and restructuring. And more and more of them are looking for employees who can operate easily and flexibly across functional lines and organizational levels. Indeed, the concept of self-directed work teams is predicated on the idea of individual employees being able to operate effectively in multiple roles: as leaders as well as followers, and as team players as well as individual contributors.

For all those reasons, the best career-planning and career development workshops for organizational survivors will communicate to employees about the organizational competencies they will most need to develop in the new workplace. The most effective programs will stress a strong partnership between employee and supervisor.

The goal: to help employees identify current professional competencies; potential skill gaps; and short, medium, and long-term professional goals.

A strong career self-assessment component needs to be incorporated into these programs, using such tools as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment and the Strong Campbell Interest Inventory instrument. Such tools help reinforce the importance of the employees' development of certain core skills and competencies, as well as the importance of their per-

New Corporate Goals and Objectives

performing organizations, high levels of employee involvement, commitment, and job ownership don't flourish in a vacuum. Instead, they are nourished by and closely linked with activities, processes, and initiatives that are underway elsewhere in the organization—in such areas as change management, customer satisfaction, leadership, innovation, and work-process improvement.

For example, the survey found that in high-performing organizations, employees are given the skills needed to accomplish change objectives.

In addition, says Wills, "they understand the compelling need for change in advance of it occurring," and affected employees "are aware of how that change will impact them personally."

Survivor programs. The role of supervisors is critically important in aligning employees with organizational goals. According to Wills, supervisors in high-performing organizations "typically help employees improve their performance on the job. Employees are kept informed, kept en-

gaged, held accountable, and rewarded for the jobs they do."

Wills says that in organizations going through change, that is precisely the function that organizational survivor programs and services must play to help accelerate employee alignment with new goals and business priorities.

"Survivor programs have a critical role to play," he says, "in cases where traditional career paths have been disrupted, job descriptions may be fluid, roles and reporting relationships may be in flux, and supervisor expectations of employees may have yet to be clearly communicated to members of new work groups or departments."

He calls survivor programs "a means that a company can use to institutionalize new organizational core values, educate people, and—most important—engage people to do their jobs effectively in the midst of organizational upheaval and change."

For more information on the survey, contact Coopers & Lybrand, 703/918-3763.

COMMITMENT DOESN'T FLOURISH IN A VACUUM

sonal assessments of how well they "fit" (in terms of skills and temperament) into the organization's emerging culture and values.

Other factors to stress in career development and career-planning workshops are the importance of employees' taking personal responsibility for managing their careers, for defining their own personal and professional success, for committing themselves to continuous workplace learning, and for creating workable career action plans in partnership with their bosses.

Employees should understand the importance of reinventing themselves—and reengineering their careers—to meet changing workplace needs. They should know how to pursue professional development opportunities outside the organization. And they should know how to make a current job into a "learning ground" that combines work and learning in creative and synergistic ways.

Many organizations are implementing programs to equip employees for emerging organizational cultures and to make employees "career resilient." They include such companies as Apple Computer, Sun Microsystems, Raychem Corporation (a builder of specialized industrial products), and 3Com Corporation (a maker of computer-network products).

Meeting the challenge of change

Implementing and sustaining organizational change today requires a different brand of leadership than businesspeople have needed in the past. The most successful leaders are both visionary and hands-on at the same time. They have the ability to affect their organizations at both the transformational level (through corporate culture) and the transactional level (through processes, systems, and day-to-day business).

To accomplish those things, leaders must engage employees in the process of organizational change and continuous improvement on an ongoing basis.

In some cases, the organization may call on the training or HR department to provide or identify sources of training and group-facilitation programs for senior management.

Many people assume that a company's senior managers know exactly what to do during times of transition. But in many cases, senior-management teams in the midst of reengineering their operations and core work processes are in the dark about the best approaches to take.

That's particularly true when the task is to communicate change plans and specific change initiatives, to build employee recommitment to new organizational goals, to foster teamwork, to create career development and career-planning programs, or to institute reward-and-recognition programs to support new goals and objectives.

Executive coaching for derailed top performers

The other important brand of development intervention to consider in times of turmoil is executive coaching. This kind of intervention targets highly valued managers whom the firm wants to retain because of their past track records of success—but who are exhibiting dysfunctional behaviors or management approaches.

More and more, companies are using executive coaching to help key organizational performers address specific behaviors or interpersonal blind spots that are damaging their relationships with co-workers, subordinates, or customers. In executive coaching, a personal leadership coach works intensively with an individual manager for a short period of time (usually 3 to 6 months) to address counterproductive behaviors.

The goal of the coaching is to increase performance within the context of the new organization as quickly as possible. Depending on the circumstances, executive coaching may be positioned as a remedial service for the manager being counseled, or as an executive-development opportunity.

A "win/win" for employer and employee

If implemented systematically, survivor programs such as those described above can speed workers' commitment to new organizational priorities. They can help energize employees to become fully engaged in the new mission and vision of the restructured organization. And they can build in employees a sense of enhanced professional competence and self-confidence, as well as making workers more employable.

Why is this last point so important as a cornerstone of programs for survivors?

First, it's unlikely that any of us will have a single employer for the duration of our working lives. We foster more self-confidence in employees when we encourage them to take responsibility for their own professional development—by keeping their skills current, by remaining flexible about future job goals and career paths, and by cultivating a portable "suitcase" of skills that they can take from one job or employer to another.

Such employees are exactly what companies need in the highly interactive, team-based workplace of the 1990s.

A second reason for stressing workers' employability is that such a focus tends to create employees who are more multifaceted and well-rounded than when companies developed people strictly for their own internal uses.

Many employers are now looking for what leadership expert Warren Bennis calls "deep generalists." They want people versatile enough to respond nimbly to shifting work demands, to changing customer needs, to evolving job and organizational circumstances, and to volatile market conditions.

But they also want those people to be grounded enough in some specialty that they bring unique and value-added skill and experience to their organizations.

Another reason for an organization to stress employability of workers beyond its own walls is to provide the means for workers to make easier and less stressful transitions if the company at some point no longer needs their services and skills. This

can relieve organizations of some of the heavy psychological and financial responsibilities of laying off or firing workers.

But isn't it risky to help workers become more employable? Will employees simply walk away from an organization? Perhaps, but that possibility is slight—in an organization that uses people to the top of their abilities.

Studies show, for example, that employees who feel moderately challenged at work tend to perform at their best. If your organization is truly challenging employees in their work and is being demanding of their energies and skills, then it's unlikely that they will become restless and want to go elsewhere. You run a far greater

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risk of losing people if you underutilize them or try to force them into inappropriate job roles.

When employability is a core component of the new business contract between employers and employees, both parties win.

Employers get better trained and more effective employees than in the past, principally by encouraging ongoing skills development and training. And they are not obligated to provide lifelong or long-term employment.

At the same time, employees get the opportunity to expand and deepen their portfolios of skills and maintain their employability in ways that were not always possible in the past.

A systems approach to survivor services

Why follow a systems approach to planning and implementing programs for organizational survivors? Because

isolated programs or training courses, in and of themselves, seldom support sustained organizational change or work-process improvements. Programs for organizational survivors need to be embedded into an organization's human resources priorities. And, in turn, such programs should support the larger business goals of the organization.

If you can give people a sense of control over their current circumstances and foster emotional and professional resilience in them at the same time, you will have hurdled two of the biggest obstacles that tend to thwart change efforts in organizations today.

"Fear, ambiguity, and loss of control during change is so powerful that it immobilizes many people and prevents their movement to even highly desired new circumstances," says consultant and psychologist Daryl Conner in his book, *Managing at the Speed of Change*.

Having an approach in place to deal with all the variables that come into play during organizational change can help spur your organization to success in its downsizing, restructuring, or reengineering efforts. By instituting programs that address the needs of organizational survivors and gain their renewed commitment, you ensure that your organization can sustain growth while tapping into the maximum potential of its people. ■

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