

"The problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them."

Albert Einstein

Late Spring Early Summer 2005

CONTENTS

Page 5
The Overlooked
Management Tool:
Organizational Charts

Page 3
Surviving in a New World:
**Strategies to Keep the
Workforce Motivated
During and After
Downsizing**



Looking for previous
issues of Solutions?
[click here.](#)

What information can
Solutions provide to you?
If you have a suggestion
for a story or topic you
would like to see in a
future edition, [click here](#) to
send an e-mail telling us
how we can help you.

solutions@oa.mo.gov

In-depth: The Layoff Process in Merit System Agencies

By Gary Fogelbach
Pay, Leave & Reporting
Division of Personnel

Unfortunately, layoffs
Are necessary. When
they occur, state merit
system agencies must
follow a detailed
process designed to
retain the services of
the most senior
employees in a job
class within a
division of a department.



Layoffs are by division of service. The first thing that happens in a layoff is that the appointing authority decides the job classes and positions in which the layoffs will occur within a division of service. The layoff process determines the employees ultimately laid off or who voluntarily demote in lieu of layoff. The identification of the employee or employees to be laid off (or otherwise affected) is not discretionary, but must comply with the rules and procedures. Layoffs are outside of the control of the employee and do not reflect any discredit on the employee. Layoffs are not a substitute means for addressing disciplinary or work performance issues. As such, layoff actions cannot be appealed to the Personnel Advisory Board.

Once the appointing authority determines the classes and number of positions affected, the Director of Personnel must be notified thirty days in advance of the effective date of the layoff that a layoff will occur. The appointing authority can request approval for an area layoff, otherwise the layoff is conducted statewide. Employees must be provided with a minimum of fifteen days notice. The thirty day notice requirement can be waived by the Director of Personnel if a fiscal emergency exists. The fifteen day notice requirement to an employee cannot be waived.

The agency submits to the Division of Personnel a list of all employees in the job class and area affected, as well as any vacant positions that will be retained. This layoff worksheet includes the status of each employee (regular, original probationary, emergency, etc.). The Division of Personnel then receives from MOSERS the service credit of each employee affected, and returns the list to the agency. The employees are then listed in order of service credit, the positions to be abolished are indicated and the employees who are subject to layoff (the "least senior") are identified. Employees on military leave are also identified. Employees on military leave cannot be laid off.

From that point, the appointing authority reassigns the employee

...continued on page 2

The Layoff Process in Merit System Agencies

...continued from the Front Page

whose position is abolished to the position of the least senior employee in the geographic location. The least senior employee in the geographic location is then offered options, which may include:

- Demotions to job classes used by the agency in which the employee held regular status,
- Transfers to vacant positions outside of the geographic location
- Transfers to positions held by probationary employees outside of the geographic location, or all of the above, depending upon the circumstances.

Throughout the process the Division of Personnel staff works closely with agency Human Resource Officers to make sure the process is followed fairly and consistently.

When an employee is ultimately laid off or demoted in lieu of layoff, their name is placed on the reinstatement register for the class in which they held regular status. Any position vacancies that are eventually filled within the division of service from which the employee was laid off or demoted must first be offered to the most senior employee on the reinstatement register according to the areas of availability indicated by the employee.

Persons on reinstatement registers will also be considered for positions in agencies other than the one from which they were laid off.

Reinstatement registers are certified to any agency before promotional registers and open registers for the same class. However, agencies are not required to reinstate persons laid off by other agencies, but they must be considered in the order certified in the same manner as any applicants certified.

Reinstatement registers are in place for three years. If an employee is reinstated, their name is removed from the reinstatement register.

The demands of a changing workforce cannot always be accommodated. In some cases, the layoff process may not retain for the state the services of the employees qualified to carry out the remaining duties or may cause unnecessary disruption to the state service. For example, in some positions, specific licensure or certification may be required to perform the remaining work. The employees with the specific certification may be identified for layoff, while other employees without the certification would be retained. In those circumstances, an agency may approach the Personnel Advisory Board for special layoff considerations that may be applied in a particular layoff. The agency must provide a detailed description of their plan not only to the Personnel Advisory Board, but also to employees, who are given the opportunity to present their case to the Board.

Because of the variables involved in the layoff process it is very difficult to address “hypothetical” layoff situations. Any questions about layoff should be directed to your agency personnel officer.



When an employee is ultimately laid off or demoted in lieu of layoff, their name is placed on the reinstatement register for the class in which they held regular status.

Solutions is written and published by Office of Administration, Division of Personnel staff



Director
Alma G. McKinney

<http://www.oe.mo.gov/pers/>

Employee Services
Doug Smentkowski, Manager

Labor Relations
Paul Buckley, Chief Negotiator

Pay, Leave and Reporting
Gary Fogelbach, Manager

Planning and Development
Edward G. Williams, Ph.D., Manager

Editor and Layout
Allan Forbis



Surviving in a New World:

Strategies to Keep the Workforce Motivated During and After Downsizing

By Allan Forbis,
Planning and Development
Division of Personnel

As a result of economic conditions, organizational downsizing, changing priorities and the continuing need to do more with less, change is all around us. It has touched virtually every public and private organization in recent months and will likely continue to do so well into the future.

Managing the workforce during changing times can be challenging at best. The realization that some employees are anxious about their future, saddened over the “loss” of a co-worker who may have been laid off or reassigned, and apprehensive about their own ability to get the remaining work done with fewer people can make the manager or supervisor’s job a “hard row to hoe.”

Development guru, Price Pritchett once stated, “Change always comes bearing a gift.” However, in the midst of these challenges, some employees and supervisors might prefer to exchange it.

In one of his recent Tuesday Tips, author and professional speaker Dr. Alan Zimmerman stated:

Change is never a neutral experience. Change always triggers some very strong emotional reactions. Change might trigger negative reactions such as anger, bitterness, or resentment. Some of your employees might feel betrayed, thinking, “How dare you change our work schedule! I’ve worked all these years to get ahead, and now you tell me you’re changing the rules.” Many will feel awkward, ill at ease, and self-conscious, not knowing what to do or how to succeed in the new environment.

The key thing to remember is that all these emotional reactions are normal. Don’t short-circuit the change process by getting upset with your employees’ reactions. Don’t tell them to “Suck it up, live with it, and get on with it.” All that does is force employees to stuff their feelings and make them less willing to follow your leadership.

Recognize that you absolutely won’t get more effort from your people and won’t get a high performance

team without dealing with these issues. You must separate what you think should happen from what will happen.

So what can you do if you find yourself in the position of trying to help your team survive organizational changes, while continuing to follow your leadership and moving forward? The answer may be found in some tips from several experts who have weathered the storm.

Provide, open, honest communication.

Communication must not only be timely, it must be honest as well. Patricia Buhler, a professor at Goldey-Beacom College in Wilmington, Delaware and author of Streetwise’s *Human Resources Management*, believes that in any instance of organizational change, “honesty really is the best policy.” Buhler believes that “Trust becomes critical in a period when change is at every door. Management must take responsibility to build this trust – earning it one employee at a time.” This can be accomplished in part by truthfully sharing information with employees. As Buehler believes, “Though sometimes difficult to do, employees respect the forthright approach and it pays off in the long run. If you rely on employees to keep the organization moving forward, a lack of honesty, real or perceived, can result in many more employees jumping ship.” Likewise, Zimmerman believes that:

People tend to change when they trust the motives of their change leaders. So talk to your people face to face. It’s very difficult to build trust through a memo or newsletter. Rather than encourage the exchange of feelings, written announcements are often used to avoid people and their feelings. Make an effort to talk face to face with your team. Change always brings loss. So acknowledge their loss -- rather than pretend it doesn’t exist. And change always threatens people’s security. Don’t deny the threat. Tell them how you see the change affecting individual employees and the organization as a whole.

Continued on the next page...

Invest in the employees who remain. Care must be taken to ensure the organization invests in the development of the employees who remain with the organization. These individuals are now likely doing not only their work, but the work of those who may have been reassigned or asked to leave. Patricia Buehler states that, “Failure to address the development needs of ‘organizational survivors’ places the organization in danger of losing even more staff.” Take a hard look at the work that needs to be done and assess the readiness level of your staff to do it. If additional training, mentoring, or more communication about work processes needs to occur, find ways to make it happen. The need to continually develop staff competencies cannot be overemphasized. People are more likely to change when they have the knowledge or skills required by the change. So train, train, train!

Treat all employees with respect. It is easy in the midst of uncertainty, sweeping change and even our own hectic schedules to forget to treat people with the dignity they deserve. Buehler believes that “In a period of uncertainty, organizations who are struggling to implement the fast-paced changes can easily fall into the trap of letting the ‘niceties’ slide.” Unfortunately, the “niceties” are the visible signs the local community all too often hears about and the employees left behind observe and remember.

Involve employees. Ask employees for their suggestions. When employees are involved, they better understand the complexity of the decisions being made and are more likely to support them. Also remember that employees can have great ideas for cutting costs too. As Buehler contends, “The people performing the work are in the best position to make recommendations for cutting costs and streamlining operations.” So move ahead, challenge your employees – and model the behavior you want.

Re-emphasize Mission, Vision, Values and Goals. Morale and organizational culture can be negatively impacted during layoffs, restructuring and downsizing. Leaders at all levels in the organization must work diligently to recreate the work environment, so that people build their self-esteem, find work satisfying, and achieve at higher levels. The foundation for this progress is to re-emphasize the organizations (and the team’s) mission and values.

In her article, *Survivors can Soar After Downsizing*, published on About.com, Susan Heathford, a management consultant specializing in organizational change management and transformation, states that “The vision for the future may have changed to some degree, or received new life in the change process. Now is your opportunity to talk about the culture and work environment you want to create. Define what you need to do as a group to move in this direction, despite the loss of coworkers.”

This is also a good time to look at the goals of each work unit to assess their connection to the overall strategic plan of the agency. It is important, following a downsizing or job restructuring, for each employee to feel his or her work is integral to the accomplishment of the organization’s mission.

Summary:

W. Edwards Deming is credited with the quote, “It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory.” The statement is a sobering observation. However, within the information contained in this article are four major elements which form the basis for revitalizing survivors and building a new, high-performance culture after downsizing or restructuring. They are (1) open, honest communication, (2) investing in the development of existing employees, (3) seeking employee involvement in efforts to streamline organizational processes and procedures and (4) providing a clear vision of the organization’s future and the role of each employee in it.



- Provide open, honest communication
-
- Equip employees who remain with the skills they need to do their jobs
-
- Treat all employees with respect
-
- Ask employees for their suggestions on how to do things better
-
- Re-emphasize Mission, Vision, Values and goals—define what needs to be done to move the organization forward

Sources:

Dr. Alan R. Zimmerman, 20550 Lake Ridge Drive, Prior Lake, MN 55372. Reprinted with permission from Dr. Zimmerman's "Tuesday Tip," a weekly Internet newsletter. For your own personal subscription, go to <http://www.drzimmerman.com/>

Buhler, Patricia M. (February 2003). Managing in the New Millennium. *Supervision*, p20.

Heathfield, Susan M., *Survivors Can Soar After Downsizing*. Retrieved April 28, 2005, from About.com.

Organizational Charts

Agencies are constantly challenged with managing human resource issues. In order to meet their challenges and missions, agencies need a robust set of visualization tools to maximize their efficiency and leverage the skills, experience and knowledge of their employees. Organizational charts are such a tool.

At first glance, an organizational chart appears to be a web of boxes joined by solid and dotted lines. However, when scrutinized, a wealth of information can be gleaned.

Clear lines of authority are a critical ingredient of successful agencies and should be displayed prominently on organizational charts using solid lines. Also, communication and interaction that occurs extensively between work units should be represented through the use of dotted lines. The graphic representation of the various types of relationships should assist with effective management of staff and promoting employee career development.

If properly developed, the organizational chart links organizational layers together and provides a clear and concise picture of the organization's structure, span of management and supervision, areas of responsibility, lines of authority, and staff interrelationships. It is a vital tool utilized while analyzing a position's scope, complexity and responsibility.

An accurate and visual representation of an organization's structure can assist management with budget planning, personnel issues, reorganizations and numerous other tasks. During periods of downsizing, as positions are eliminated, agencies are required to manage an assortment of human resource situations. Organizational charts can be a useful tool when reassigning responsibilities and improving/realigning processes. The visual picture presented by charts can assist with reviewing the scope of supervisory responsibilities and with maintaining criteria associated with class concepts.

The information portrayed on an organizational chart is dependent upon the intended use and targeted audience. For example, a chart intended for the general public could display only functional areas.



However, a chart developed for the Division of Personnel (DOP) should identify:

- department
- division
- organization
- program names and numbers
- position titles and numbers
- primary and functional lines of authority
- reporting relationships; and
- date of preparation

Typically, the DOP receives updated charts from agencies in conjunction with a request to allocate a new position or review an existing position. When reviewing supervisory positions, DOP staff takes into account the similarity and complexity of functional areas supervised and the amount of time expended on planning and coordinating associated activities and responsibilities. However, the DOP utilizes

charts not only to review new and existing position requests, but also to review atypical structures, gather comparison data and to assist in the evaluation of conflicting data.

Organizational charts are very useful tools and are often overlooked. They represent an agency's structure and can be adapted for a variety of purposes. A functional organizational chart can show relationships between functions, lines of authority and areas of responsibility; while personnel organizational charts epitomize individual or unit responsibilities and interactions. The utilization of organizational charts provides managers a visual snapshot of workforce numbers, structure and reporting relationships.

State agencies are dynamic; continually evolving – and enhancing their missions and processes. In the midst of these changes, it is important to keep their organizational charts properly updated and maintained. Accurate charts provide a basis for clearer understanding of organizational structure and functionality. Ultimately, organizational charts serve to support the mission, vision and goals of every organization.