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FIVE TIPS FOR COMPANIES STRUGGLING WITH POST-LAYOFF ANGST

Renowned Author and CEO of InitiativeOne Divulges the Five C's

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (2009) – Following layoffs, company leaders often struggle with how to move past the emotional disorder and begin steering employees in the right direction again. Dr. Fred Johnson is author of the book “Is Everyone on the Bus?” and Founder & CEO of InitiativeOne, a company whose programs provide intensive counsel and direction for businesses experiencing turmoil or are in need of growth, human development or accelerated change.

“How a leader addresses the inevitable emotional consequences after a layoff is critical in limiting the damage to morale and shortening the adjustment period that team members will need to move forward or fully re-engage,” Dr. Johnson said.

According to Dr. Johnson, the top five tips for leading after a layoff include:

1. **Compassion.** People within the company will experience a range of emotions from anger to disillusionment. A leader who can genuinely express sympathy and demonstrate empathy for their pain in both collective settings and in one-on-one conversations is more likely to maintain credibility. People may not agree with who was laid off, how it happened or why it occurred. However, they are more likely to give you the benefit of the doubt if they know you genuinely care about their pain.
2. **Communication.** In a time of immense change, people are seeking stability – they want to know what is real. They need honest, direct information with no spin. They don't want to be protected or coddled with half-truths designed to spare them discomfort. Show your people respect by “shooting straight”. Even if all you have to share is bad news, they will respect you for having the courage to be honest. Encourage them to be honest with their concerns and questions, and don't get defensive when they oblige.
3. **Connection.** A leader's heightened visibility is important following a lay-off. Avoid the trap of sequestering in your office. People need to see their leaders. Strong leaders will deliberately heighten their presence and availability so they can answer people's questions and concerns. People are looking for hope. They will pay attention to your demeanor and gauge your attitudes as a means of information.
4. **Consensus.** Layoffs feel dehumanizing. Often people will feel insignificant and that they are just a means for corporate profitability. A strong leader will pay close attention to this by actively seeking input and suggestions before decisions are finalized. Involving the team in the input process is a powerful way of communicating that the remaining team members are important and trusted.
5. **Clarity.** Most people are likely to interpret a layoff as a crisis. A strong leader will help people to see beyond the crisis as a means of enduring through it and moving beyond it. It is essential to recast vision and values. Reaffirming critical goals and developing new ways to meet them in a challenged economy is a must. Excellent leaders will find an appropriate balance between staying on top of the crisis and helping people to see beyond the current situation.

For more information on Dr. Fred Johnson or InitiativeOne, please visit www.initiative-one.com or call 602-374-8990.

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