

## How to Get Going Again After Downsizing

By Liz Reyer | Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009

**Q.** Our company has done some downsizing, which we hope is behind us. However, morale is low right when we need to get going. How can I help the survivors adjust to our "new normal"?

**A.** Use honesty and inspiration to help your company move forward.

### **The Inner Game**

To start, know how you'd like the mood at your company to feel. Picture the ideal employee-customer relationship, dynamics among people and management style of your leadership team. Focus less on what you'd like people to be doing and more on how you'd like them to be thinking and feeling. Recall times when you've seen deeply engaged groups and analyze the elements that created that flow.

You'll also have to confront your own doubts. As head of the company, you have a profound impact on your employees' attitudes. If you don't really believe that you can create an engaged and energized workforce, it won't happen. If you're fearful about the future, that will carry over as well. You may need some help with this by seeking out a friend, family member, business mentor or coach. It's a learning process, so be ready to stay the course.

### **The Outer Game**

Big changes, such as downsizing and workforce restructuring, create a new beginning for a company -- but it can be a traumatic start. To get a good start, bring your employees into the loop. If you've made decisions behind closed doors, open up a bit. Don't hide mistakes and share your insights. Help employees understand the decisions you've made and why you've made them and let them know how you and other management have shared in the sacrifices. Share your strategies for the future so they are more invested in your subsequent decisions. And recognize that anger and grief are part of the aftermath, providing safe ways to express it.