

For Immediate Release

Formula for Tough Times: Four Ideas to Maintain Morale and Productivity

(New York, NY) It's tough out there and companies are looking for ways to maintain employee morale and productivity. "We were looking for practical suggestions that work in the real world, particularly in today's environment" says Rick Lepsinger, President of OnPoint Consulting (www.onpointconsultingllc.com). "So we went directly to managers and HR professionals to find out what they were doing to keep people engaged and focused on results and we found four best practices that were consistent across our interviews."

- **Increase disclosure.** Employees are always interested in the company's financial health and leadership's view of industry and competitive conditions but tough times heighten the need for timely information. "The majority of companies we spoke with are increasing the frequency, detail, and amount of information they are providing," observed Lepsinger.
- **Dust off recognition programs.** Although many companies have recognition programs in place they are often not being used effectively. "A quick win for many companies is to ensure managers use available recognition programs," says Lepsinger. "These range from an e-card/thank you note to more substantial monetary rewards."
- **Find alternatives to lay-offs.** Despite how bad things are, this will turn around and companies want to be prepared when they do. "In addition to the pain lay-offs cause individuals, many companies also suffer when the inevitable turn around comes and they discover they don't have the right people in place," says Lepsinger. To reduce costs yet avoid this problem organizations are experimenting with unpaid furloughs, salary freezes or cuts, four-day work weeks, and reducing contributions to retirement and health plans. "These actions are still painful," says Lepsinger, "but they are seen as the lesser evil and better in the long-term for both employees and the company."
- **Involve employees.** Encouraging employees to contribute ideas for cost savings and process improvement accomplishes two important objectives. Not only do some of the best ideas come from the employee population but involving people in decisions that affect them decreases the feeling of uncertainty.

It's easier to keep employees motivated when times are good. Exceptional leaders and organizations use a combination of traditional and innovative ideas to maintain high levels of morale and productivity in a challenging business environment.

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