

DOWNSIZING MOTIVATION THEORY **IS THE KEY TO KEEPING EMPLOYEE MORALE HIGH** **DURING LAYOFFS**

The recession has caused a cycle in which businesses may be booming and then three months later, even well-paid employees are facing layoffs. In an economy like this one, business owners and managers need to apply the theory of downsizing motivation to help [keep the employees who survive the layoffs motivated](#) to perform their best work.

The Bad Guy Boss

Feeling like bad guys, the bosses who have to deliver the bad news just want to get it over with quickly. They want to hide from their exiting employees, but that is not the answer for the boss or the employee. Too often, downsized employees spend their last week's unhappy and ignored or defensive and angry.

Downsizing motivation theory suggests an active approach. Bosses and coworkers who are not facing layoffs need to provide a listening ear and gentle encouragement. Providing as much help as possible is essential to maintaining goodwill. Remember, encouragement during a difficult time is worth more than an hour of praise after a success.

Downsizing Fears

A person facing downsizing is also facing fear. Fear is crippling. The goal should be to help the person move beyond the fear to hope. If you can help them tap into their own strengths, then they can see possibilities. Once they find this hope, they will not succumb to depression. Depression and fear are the biggest enemies people face during a job search.

Creating Hope

The first step to creating hope is to let the person talk about their fears and concerns without passing judgment. At first, just be a sounding board of concern and understanding. Trying to confront a frightened person with false hopefulness will not help. Just be there when they need you. As they get past the initial state of shock, begin to move them past fear to hope.

Future Employment Options

Once you have gained the person's trust, move the conversation toward an action plan. Talk to them about their accomplishments, strengths, and potential. Encourage them to brainstorm with you about what a career change could bring. Perhaps they will be able to find positive aspects in a job change. Help them put together a [daily action plan to find employment quickly](#).

Downsizing Resources

Finally, offer to be a resource to them during this difficult time. Help them [tune up their resumes](#) and encourage them to keep their minds open to new possibilities. Sometimes layoffs are unavoidable, but by trying to help your valued employees [find new positions](#), you can make them a little less difficult to endure.

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Joel Garfinkle provides outplacement services to displaced workers. His proven and structured 9-step program helps you find a new job quickly. Joel has over 15 years of first-hand expertise in the job search and career transition field. Visit Joel online at [Garfinkle Outplacement Services](#).

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