

## **Managing Change and Creating a Welcoming Workplace Environment: A Resource Tool for HR representatives and Managers**

The following information is designed as a resource tool to assist Human Resource Representatives and managers as the University of Iowa prepares for possible layoffs, furloughs and displacements of employees during this time of budget challenges. This “tip sheet” specifically addresses those employees that will be transitioning to a new position/department and the workgroups that will be receiving them.

### **Goals:**

1. Provide consistency in how employees are welcomed into new positions and departments.
2. Improve communication for all those affected by displacements and the workgroups that will receive them.
3. Help the organization recover more quickly and with less residual trauma.
4. Infuse more compassion and humanity into the process.

### **The literature tells us that common outcomes following layoffs are:**

1. Declines in productivity for all employees
2. Declines in the quality of services and products
3. Decreased loyalty from those that remain
4. Retention and recruitment problems
5. Increased fears of those that remain that their own positions are less secure.

### **The results of a new study suggest that:**

Employees whose managers who had high scores for

1. Visibility
2. Approachability
3. Candor

were 72% less likely to experience productivity declines and 65% less likely to experience declines in the quality of services or products.\* This is helpful information and gives direction to leaders as to where our efforts are best placed during this critical transition period.

### **Tips on increasing visibility, approachability and candor for managers who will be welcoming employees:**

1. Prepare a communication plan that will be provided to the workgroup regarding “what,” “when” and “how”, the incoming employee transition will occur.
2. Share with the group that the incoming employee is coming to your department (and any departing employees that are leaving) through no fault of their own; and this transition is solely a direct result of the budgetary environment.
3. Hold regular meetings and communicate with the group frequently about the progress of the transition.
4. Discuss fully the impact on workload/workflow.
5. Clearly articulate changes in roles and responsibilities. Repeat often. Be patient.
6. Model good coping and resiliency skills.
7. Ask for suggestions related to improving departmental effectiveness.
8. Assure staff members that no other positions will be affected at the time (if this is true) and that all employees are valued.
9. Maintain an open door policy so employees can come to you for guidance and support.
10. Mention that EAP services are available for any employees having difficulty dealing with the changes.
11. Recognize that employees will differ on how quickly they can adapt to change.
12. Express optimism for the future and articulate clearly your vision.

## Welcoming the incoming employee:

The leadership role in creating an atmosphere that welcomes the incoming employee is a critical one. Focusing on leader behaviors that will increase your viability and accessibility especially during the initial phase will go a long way towards a successful transition.

Make it your goal that at the end of the first day, the incoming employee will:

- Know that they are valued
- Understand expectations for them in achieving the department's goals
- Have met their co-workers and know who to ask for what information
- Connected positively with their supervisor
- Have the resources to begin work and have an assignment.

Regular and frequent communications and a clear orientation plan will assist the employee of feeling a part of the work team. Role ambiguities and shifting work assignment make it imperative that leaders stay connected to the work processes and communicate updates and changes to all that are impacted.

## Resources for Supervisors and Managers:

1. Your Human Resources Representative.
2. Work Redesign, Strategic Staffing and Business Process Improvement (LEAN) and other consultation services available through Organizational Effectiveness at 319-335-2085.
3. Faculty and Staff Services/Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for Supervisory Consultations regarding any concerns for employees, or to assist in a referral call 319-335-2085.
4. EAP Consultation for supervisors and managers at 319-335-2085.
5. UI Orientation information: <http://www.uiowa.edu/learn/orientation/model.htm>.
6. Threat Assessment Team at 319-384-2787 or 319-384-2955.

\* Reference: Leadership IQ Study: *Don't Expect Layoff Survivors to be Grateful*, 2008. (<http://www.leadershipiq.com/>)

