Creating and motivating a superior, loyal staff

by Linda Galindo

It’s not quite clear to me why it took a recession for organizations to rid their staffs of employees who weren’t pulling their weight. Finally, the air is being let out of this balloon—and you probably knew which people your organization needed and which it didn’t, way before the economy turned south.

Maybe you didn’t have the ear of your company’s top execs pre-2008—but you’ve most likely got it now. More than any other time I can remember in my 20 years as a consultant, your CEO needs your guidance on the issue of staffing.

Now that you have a leaner staff, you’ve probably been helping your organization change the way those employees work, striving for more efficiency and productivity without making staff feel overwhelmed. The recession has given you a huge opportunity to make a difference for your organization.

Make yourself accountable for keeping your organization running efficiently without unnecessarily padding the staff—long after the economy stabilizes.

Practical steps you can take to keep motivation high:

• **Identify your “dead” incentives**—the ones that base an employee’s pay on a grade or longevity, and the ones that automatically increase everyone’s salary by the same amount every year.

• **Identify the trendsetters in your industry**—and make your organization one of them.

*Look forward:* What trend do you want to set? Pay for performance? Daily conversations between managers and employees in place of annual evaluations? Peer evaluations of managers—that carry real weight in determining managers’ raises?

• **Identify the new competencies that are required** of a post-recession workforce. How will you teach them? How do they fit in with the values of your organization?

Identify ways to measure those new skill sets and determine how to include them when you calculate an employee’s compensation.

• **Identify your organization’s strengths and weaknesses** when it comes to communicating with employees. During a time of layoffs and pay cuts, you’ve surely heard a lot of rumors. Don’t spread them yourself. Give employees facts. If you don’t have the facts, get them. It’s a good manager’s job to protect the organization’s credibility and employees’ confidence in their employer.

• **Keep employees educated about their pay and benefits**—even when the news is bad—so they can make informed decisions about their spending, their investments and even their loyalty to the company. Don’t
pass the buck or blame the bad news on others. Tell the truth and stick to the facts. And do it continually. Don’t let changes in pay and benefits come as a big surprise to employees.

Of all of management’s priorities, keeping good employees is on top. You can be a hero in the post-recession years ahead. Act like one: Be brave enough to communicate the truth to both employees and to company execs.