

The day after TOMORROW

What happens after the great layoffs tsunami?

Due to current economic climate, business slowdown and the introduction of AI in the workplace, we have to expect that numerous organizations will take desperate measures to survive by initiating downsizing, layoffs and restructuring that will eventually result in the departure of many people.

Every year, such decisions disrupt the lives of millions of employees. Layoff victims suffer from feelings of abandonment and betrayal. Layoff survivors cope with larger workloads, the loss of their friends and the uncertainty of their own fates.

Recently, Mark Zuckerberg, Chief Executive Officer of Meta Platforms Inc., announced the planning of the second layoffs. Thousands of people will be leaving soon.

With no surprise, we have witnessed similar reactions during the Coronavirus pandemic. So, there's nothing new – people are not the most valuable assets as we claim. Thus, what will we be doing after such a great tsunami of layoffs? How are we going to handle the psychological disturbance of our employees?

NO MORE “JOB FOR LIFE”

Layoffs can have significant psychological effects on individuals who experience them. Some of the common psychological effects of layoffs include:

STRESS AND ANXIETY

Individuals worry about their financial stability and job prospects. The uncertainty of the situation can lead to feelings of helplessness and loss of control.

Depression and feelings of worthlessness
Losing a job can cause individuals to question their self-worth and may lead to feelings of depression and hopelessness.

LOSS OF IDENTITY

Many individuals identify strongly with their jobs,



FROM EGYPT

BY PROF. DR MAMR SADIK

Chairman and CEO of Quodrat Egypt

and losing their jobs can cause a loss of identity and purpose.

DECREASED SELF-ESTEEM

Losing a job can lead to a decrease in self-esteem, particularly if individuals feel that they were not valued by their employer or were not given a fair chance.

SOCIAL ISOLATION

Losing a job can lead to social isolation as individuals may feel embarrassed or ashamed and withdraw from social activities.

FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIP STRESS

Financial and emotional stress caused by a layoff can spill over into family relationships, leading to tension and strain on relationships.

It is important for individuals who have experienced a layoff to take care of their mental health by seeking support from family, friends or a mental health professional. They should also take steps to maintain a routine,

stay active and take care of their physical health.

Employers can also play a role in supporting employees who have been laid off by providing resources and support to help them transition to new employment opportunities.

When an employer lays off an employee, it can be a difficult time for both parties involved. However, there are a few roles that the employer can play to support the laid-off employee during this transition period. Some of these roles include:

1. **Providing severance packages:** An employer can provide severance packages to employees who have been laid off. This can include a lump sum payment or continued health insurance coverage, among other benefits. This can help ease the financial burden on the employee while they search for new employment.
2. **Offering career coaching and job search support:** Employers can provide career coaching and job search support services to help employees navigate the job market. This can include resumé writing, interview preparation, and networking assistance.
3. **Providing outplacement services:** Outplacement services are services that are designed to help employees find new jobs after they have been laid off. These services can include job search resources, networking opportunities, and access to job boards and other job search platforms.
4. **Offering emotional support:** Losing a job can be an emotional experience for an employee, and an employer can offer emotional support during this time. This can include access to an employee assistance program or counseling services.
5. **Maintaining communication:** Employers can maintain communication with laid-off employees to keep them informed about any potential job opportunities within the company or to check in on their job search progress. This can help maintain a positive relationship with the employee and make it easier for them to return to the company if a new job opportunity arises.

We also ought to be concerned with and focused on the surviving employees who were not affected by the decision. How can we rebuild trust and the spirit of collaboration?

THOSE WHO STAY

The employees remaining in the workplace also experience considerable trauma during this time. First of all, their security is seriously shaken. If this can happen to someone else, it can happen to me. Also, there is a major disruption in the status quo; relationships are severed, work is redistributed with a probable increase in everyone's workload.

A great sense of disease sets in; people do not know how to behave. Surviving employees fear their own lay off or non-renewal and are relieved to have a job, which produces confusion as to how to relate to others in the workplace. We don't want to say the wrong things so we shy away from eye contact with those leaving. This confusion can make the person who is leaving feel abandoned and rejected. It is important to acknowledge feelings of sadness, concern, even fear, with everyone in the workplace.

Rebuilding trust with employees can be a challenging process especially after such a hard-time, but here are some steps that could help in cultivating and rebuilding trust:

ACKNOWLEDGE THE ISSUE

The first step in rebuilding trust with employees is acknowledging the issue or issues that led to the loss of trust. It's important to take responsibility for any mistakes or missteps that may have caused the breakdown in trust.

COMMUNICATE OPENLY

Open and honest communication is key in rebuilding trust. Be transparent about what happened, why it happened, and what you're doing to address the issue. Encourage employees to ask questions and share their concerns.

MAKE AMENDS

Take action to make things right. Depending on the situation, this may involve apologizing, offering compensation or restitution, or taking steps to prevent similar issues from happening in the future.

FOLLOW THROUGH ON COMMITMENTS

If you make commitments to your employees, it's important to follow through on them. This demonstrates your commitment to rebuilding trust and can help rebuild confidence in your leadership.

BUILD A POSITIVE CULTURE

Create a positive work culture where employees feel valued, respected and supported. Encourage open communication, recognize and reward good work, and foster a sense of teamwork and collaboration.

BE PATIENT

Rebuilding trust takes time. Be patient and consistent in your efforts to rebuild trust with employees. Keep communication open and continue to demonstrate your commitment to rebuilding trust over time.

People may have lost faith in the company, themselves, or their work. Trust is the basis of great teamwork, and it is the first thing that gets damaged or destroyed in a layoff.

Overall, rebuilding the spirit of collaboration after layoffs requires a concerted effort from both management and employees. By focusing on open communication, acknowledging the impact of the layoffs, re-establishing team goals, fostering open communication, and celebrating successes, you can help rebuild a sense of collaboration and teamwork within the team.

After layoffs, it can be challenging to maintain a spirit of collaboration within a company.

However, it is essential to maintain collaboration among the remaining employees to ensure the organization's success. Here are some steps that can be taken to foster collaboration after layoffs:

- Acknowledge the layoffs: Acknowledge the layoffs and their impact on the organization's employees. Address the concerns and emotions of the remaining employees and provide support to help them cope with the changes;
- Communicate openly: Open and transparent communication is critical to maintaining collaboration after layoffs. Provide updates and be honest about the company's situation, goals, and plans. This can help build trust and foster a sense of shared purpose among the remaining employees;
- Foster teamwork: Encourage teamwork and collaboration among the remaining employees. Set clear goals and objectives

that require employees to work together to achieve them. Foster a sense of collective ownership and responsibility for the company's success;

- Provide opportunities for skill development: Employees may feel uncertain about their future and may need reassurance that they can develop new skills and advance in their careers. Providing opportunities for training and development can help build their confidence and increase their engagement; and
- Celebrate successes: Celebrate small and large successes to boost morale and show appreciation for the remaining employees' hard work. Celebrations can include team lunches, recognition programs, and public announcements of achievements.

SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS

The old school says that managers and supervisors need to be 'above' feelings and to behave in a dispassionate way during layoffs. What they are doing is acknowledging the emotional impact of the experience, but hiding the impact from others. There is an implication that unless they appear professional and somewhat removed from the proceedings; they will lose control over the situation. This is the wrong way to handle the situation.

In conclusion, managers need to acknowledge their concern for the person departing or about to depart as well as for those remaining. In fact, it is important for the manager to acknowledge his/her own pain in losing trusted colleagues, and to become involved in the emotional experience with everyone else. The manager will be able to set appropriate limits, if necessary, and to apply discipline in situations requiring such action, while being a 'real' person with his or her staff.

Survivors need emotional support, extensive communication from management, clear-cut job descriptions and career development assistance in the transition following a layoff. ■

PROF. DR M AMR SADIK is Chairman and CEO of Quodrat Egypt. He is an HBR Advisory Council Member, Adjunct Professor IPE Management School, Paris, and of Middle East Programs for, Victoria University, School of Management, Switzerland.

The Constitution says
 no one may be unfairly discriminated against directly, or indirectly, on the basis of

race	gender	sex	pregnancy
marital status	ethnic origin	social origin	colour
sexual orientation	age	disability	religion
conscience	belief	culture	language and birth



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