



2009 WORKPLACE SURVIVAL GUIDE

40 WAYS TO **WORK SMART** WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH

- Pages 1-2 **MANAGE YOUR STATE OF MIND**
Employee morale is an inside-out proposition, so start with yourself.
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You're in charge of your own employment security, so leave nothing to chance.
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- 11-12 **TURN ADVERSITY INTO OPPORTUNITY**
Big challenges can inspire great performance, so empower people in new ways.

TOM TEREZ WORKPLACE SOLUTIONS, inc.

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IF THERE IS NO WIND, ROW.



If you are worried about the dismal economic situation, join the club. People everywhere are stressed out and worried sick—about the economy in general and their job security in particular. Workplaces worldwide are struggling with high anxiety, low confidence, and even lower employee morale.

Yet now more than ever, employees need to be fully engaged and doing their best work. There's no room for error. Not in this environment. These times call for greater efficiency, effectiveness, innovation, and teamwork—and a new spirit of shared responsibility and determination.

The *2009 Workplace Survival Guide* can help you move forward. It's filled with ideas for working smart during these difficult times. If you're a manager, you'll find ready-to-use guidance in all six sections. If your work doesn't involve managing people, you'll get the most out of the first three sections.

The action ideas are wide-ranging. Some are specific tips that can benefit you personally. Other ideas are for small groups. Still other recommendations are broader in scope, for implementation throughout an organization.

This guide is meant to be used, so find a few things you can do right away. Share copies with your colleagues—then talk about the possibilities for action, and select two or so actions you can implement as a group. If you're a senior leader, consider circulating copies to your managers.

This promises to be a year full of challenge and change. We will be well served by living that old proverb: *If there is no wind, row.*

Tom

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PLEASE NOTE:

The first three sections (pages 1-6) are intended for everyone. You'll find useful ideas whatever your role in the workplace.

The remaining sections (pages 7-12) are tailored for managers.

1. MANAGE YOUR STATE OF MIND FOR EVERYONE

The best place to start is with your own morale. Here are seven ways to stay steady and strong no matter what comes your way:

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2009 CATALOG

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Stay informed. It's tempting to ignore all the bad economic news, but blissful ignorance can turn into nagging anxiety as the weeks tick by. So follow the news, but be smart about it. Select and stick with several well-researched and balanced media outlets—like a few reputable Web sites that can give you up-to-date information. Spend about 15 minutes per day on this, 30 minutes at the most. Remember, you want to stay informed on issues that matter. You don't want to get lost in an informational sinkhole.

Get clear on your financial situation. If you're stressed because you don't have a full grasp of your financial situation, take matters into your own hands. Start by putting together a comprehensive list of all your savings and investments. (You might need to call a banker, broker, or advisor for current figures.) Next, write down all the questions that come to mind as you review your situation and think about your short- and long-term future. Then start reaching out to people who can provide answers. Your questions are likely to be wide-ranging, so you'll probably have to contact a number of people: perhaps a rep at your bank, an HR person at work, your investment advisor, your insurance agent, and so on. As you turn your worries into questions and your questions into answers, you'll gain a new sense of confidence.

Work out your stress. According to a recent survey by the American Psychological Association, 53 percent of respondents said they're feeling more fatigued due to worries over the economy in general and their financial situation in particular. Half of people are having trouble sleeping, and 47 percent are reporting headaches. All that stress is building up with nowhere to go. The solution is to create a positive outlet in the form of physical exercise. There's much you can do regardless of your current fitness level. Take regular walks, ride your bike, join an aerobics class, lift weights, join the ranks of joggers, get a pass to the local indoor



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DISCOVERING WHAT TO DO:

Meditation is not to escape from society, but to come back to ourselves and see what is going on. Once there is seeing, there must be acting. With mindfulness, we know what to do and what not to do to help.

— Thich Nhat Hanh

YES, YOU CAN PRINT EXCERPTS

If you have a newsletter, intranet site, or something similar that you use to communicate with employees, you are permitted to reprint excerpts of any length from the Survival Guide, as long as you include the following attribution word for word:

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pool. If you're a couch potato, buy a stationary bike and get active in your living room. No excuses, please.

Clear your head with conscious relaxation. If you've meditated in the past, or if it's part of your current routine in the morning or evening, you know its benefits. Meditation can quiet those thoughts and worries that keep you on edge. When practiced on a regular basis, it can bring newfound clarity and tranquility. Meditation puts the *being* back into human being. It gives us time simply to be, which is just what most of us need in this excessively busy and increasingly worrisome world. If you're unfamiliar with meditation, you can learn the basics in fifteen minutes—though mastery can take a lifetime. It's best to learn from someone who knows what they're doing, but you can do it yourself with help from an instructional Web site or book.

Watch what you eat. If your energy level tends to swing up and down, taking your mood with it, evaluate your diet. Are you constantly trekking from your workspace to the coffeemaker? Are you wearing out your welcome with the candy dish? Are you going for long stretches without eating, then making up for lost time by consuming big meals? Common sense should prevail. Instead of ditching all the chocolate and spending the rest of your life eating nuts and twigs, opt for smart moderation. Limit the sugar, cut back on the caffeine, eat smaller meals more frequently, load up on natural stuff that comes from ground, minimize the other stuff, and combine smart eating with plenty of exercise. You'll maintain high energy throughout the day.

Pay attention to what's going right. When things look bad, they're never all bad. We can always find glimmers of success, promise, and possibility—as long as we take the time to look. Perhaps you've noticed that tougher times at work have brought people closer together. Or you've seen how colleagues are doing a better job of listening to customers. Or you've surprised yourself with your own ability to improvise and get more done with less. As you focus on these positives and talk about them, they'll become more prominent. You'll end up creating more of what's going right.

Stay connected to a meaningful mission. A paycheck is essential, but it's not the only form of income. Once you understand how your work contributes to a greater good, you also receive *emotional* compensation. It doesn't pay the bills, of course, but it's guaranteed to bring greater enjoyment and fulfillment to your workdays. If you're already in touch with your overarching mission, great. If not, take time to find it. Reflect on the service or product you provide and the people who count on you to deliver. Think about how they take your contribution and use it to serve other people. As you contemplate these connections, your tasks and projects will take on deeper meaning.



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2. STRENGTHEN YOUR POSITION FOR EVERYONE

When it comes to managing your career, it's up to you. Are you going to sit back and hope for the best—or lean forward and be your own best advocate? Tough times call for a proactive approach. Here are seven strategies:

MAKING CHOICES:

In the long run, we shape our lives, and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility.

— Eleanor Roosevelt

Develop your own strategic plan. Very few individuals have their own strategic plans. They go about life (in general) and work (in particular) by the seat of their pants, taking things a day at a time and hoping for the best. This requires less effort in the short term, but it puts people in a reactive stance—and it often leads to disappointing outcomes they never expected. So invest the time to make a plan. First, develop a clear vision of your ideal situation at some point in the future—say, three years from now. Next, craft several specific goals that flow from this vision. Third, analyze the current situation by taking stock of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis). Fourth, determine in detail the actions you need to take to move from the current situation to your vision. Finally, create your own method for tracking progress, and make a point of checking in with your plan at least once every two days. Remember that every strategic plan is a living document. As you move forward, you'll need to ramp up your goals and action steps.

Seek opportunity amid the crisis. Bad times are often the best times to shine. Now might be a golden opportunity to exert your financial skills to find savings for your organization. Or perhaps you're a skillful facilitator with systems know-how, and you can guide a group in streamlining a costly process. Maybe you have untapped market intelligence, and you can use it to find new accounts. Actions like these will increase your value in the workplace, but don't wait for opportunity to fall into your lap. You'll have to take the initiative.

LEARNING:

Problems cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created them.

— Albert Einstein

Stock up on new knowledge. When the going gets tough, the tough get smarter. They look for new ideas, insights, tools, and techniques. If you're not already on the informational lookout, get started immediately. Read books that can advance your work-related knowledge. Attend internal trainings whenever they're available. Take a college class or trade-school offering, or sign up for an online seminar. (Perhaps your organization has a workforce development fund that can defray the cost.) Learn from colleagues who can help you understand different areas and functions of the workplace. Stay curious, ask questions, and dial up your observational powers. You can and should learn something new every day.

GET THE E-LETTER

The *Better Workplace Now e-letter* has subscribers from 126 countries. Sign up for your free subscription at:

TomTerez.com/eletter

Become your own industry expert. Can you name three other organizations that do similar work? Do you know where these organizations are based, what they're like in terms of workplace culture, what they do extremely well, how they do it, and what shape they're in financially? If you want an edge, you should know all about what's happening in your field. Why? First, it will broaden your knowledge and give you ideas you can implement for the



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good of your workplace. Second, it will strengthen your career position. If the economy ends up jeopardizing your organization and your employment, you'll be able to leverage your industry intelligence and get a faster start in finding a new job.

Update and upgrade your resume. No groans, please. This is an essential step during these uncertain times. Think about it: If a position opens up in another department and you need to move quickly, you'll be the first in line with your resume. If you're trying to land a promotion or the lead role in an upcoming project, again, your resume will be good to go. If you feel like your job might be cut, and you hear about new opportunities at another organization, yet again, you'll be ready. Regarding the resume itself, don't just update it with a few added lines. Spend extra time to do a full upgrade. Check out the latest recommendations in books (make sure they're current!) and online. Then rebuild your resume from the bottom up.

MAKING CONNECTIONS:

More business decisions occur over lunch and dinner than at any other time, yet no MBA courses are given on the subject.

— Peter Drucker

Expand your network. During tough economic times, having a network of contacts can be the ultimate safety net, leading to new customers, new ideas, new partnerships, new job opportunities, and much more. Your contacts can even provide advice and moral support. So reach out to old friends, former colleagues, and people you've met at conferences and association meetings. Look for new contacts, exchange business cards, and follow up on those first meetings with friendly e-mails. Within your organization, get together with people from other work areas. Mingle at gatherings that mix different departments. It's hard to tell who among your growing list of contacts might help you some day. But you'll know when it happens—and you'll be grateful for having grown your network.

Learn about the Internet all over again. If you use the Internet only for e-mail, news sites, and occasional online shopping, you need to set aside a few hours to see what's really available. It's not your daddy's Web, that's for sure. Social networking sites like LinkedIn and Facebook can put you within a keyboard's reach of millions of people. The constellation of job-search sites is its own marvel—surf around and see for yourself. You can unearth a wealth of information about companies, industries, jobs, and more. Knowledge is power, and the Internet gives you the keys to the knowledge kingdom.



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3. TEAM UP AND HELP EACH OTHER FOR EVERYONE

We all know that there's strength in numbers, but we also know that community doesn't happen automatically. Here are seven suggestions for tightening those workplace bonds:

CHOOSING YOUR ATTITUDE:

You just have to decide if you're a Tigger or an Eeyore.

— Randy Pausch

Dr. Pausch was a professor at Carnegie Mellon University. He gave his wisdom-filled "last lecture" after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Respond to your emotional radar. Times like these call for added empathy, so if you see a co-worker who seems worried or despondent, consider approaching them as a friend. You don't have to be a one-person rescue team who rushes in with advice. Simply open a line of conversation, and spend most of your time listening. Be there to provide moral support not once or twice but on an ongoing basis. If the person asks for your advice and you have an idea or two that can add value, by all means share it.

Show your appreciation. Sometimes the simple stuff is also the most powerful. Case in point: *thank you*. When said with sincerity, those two words can work wonders in lifting people up. So say them often, say them loudly—and don't be surprised when you get your own share of gratitude in return.

Gravitate to a group. In times of great challenge, it helps to have a group of friends who share your situation and can serve as an informal support network. If you have such a group at work, make the most of it. Go out for lunch, take walks around the building, arrange some workplace parties, get together for dinner, start a book group, whatever. A little bit of social contact can go a long way, and who knows, someone might have a piece of information or advice that can help you in a very direct way. If you're cubed off from people and haven't developed any friendships at work, now's the time. Start some new conversations and see where they lead.

Share your knowledge. Perhaps you have expertise in some of the challenges that are facing people nowadays—for example, you know the ins and outs of tax issues related to retirement funds, or you're one of the few people around who can clearly explain what's happening with the economy. Maybe you have a different kind of knowledge—you've heard about a job-training opportunity, or an upcoming financial-planning forum, or an inspirational speaker who's coming to town. Some of your colleagues might benefit from this information, so don't hold back. Let them know what you know.

Form a carpool. If some of your colleagues live near your home, team up with them for the drive to and from work. Each of you can take turns driving once a week. It's an easy way to reduce fuel costs while being kinder to the environment. Plus, the twice-a-day chat with colleagues might turn into its own informal support group, giving you extra strength during these tough economic times.

SHARE THIS SURVIVAL GUIDE WITH COLLEAGUES

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Take time to celebrate. Did your department exceed its quarterly goals? Did your organization receive special recognition from the local chamber of commerce? Did your company sign on a new account? Did you and your team finish that big project? When you're looking for success, you'll find that it comes in many different forms—and you can use it to highlight what's going right at work while building unity among colleagues. You don't need a big party that strains the budget. Opt for something economical like a potluck lunch or a group outing to the local pizza shop.

WINNING TOGETHER:

Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.

— Michael Jordan

Organize a guild. The dictionary defines a guild as *an association of people for mutual aid or the pursuit of a common goal*. Perhaps you can assemble one in your workplace around a topic that's important to people. Your guild can relate directly to matters of the economy and personal finance—or it can deal with another topic. A career guild focuses on issues related to jobs, job seeking, career navigation, and related challenges. A money-management guild deals with matters of personal finance. A leadership guild delves into big ideas and practical tools for engaging the leader in everyone. You can even have a “green guild” that tackles environmental issues. The group can get together monthly, with hour-long lunch sessions open to everyone. Each session can focus on a specific topic, with two or three people taking the lead to organize the agenda, bring in a speaker (often free when they're local), arrange for an informative DVD, share their own expertise, and facilitate a group conversation in which people share their good ideas.



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4. ENGAGE THROUGH INFORMATION

The ideas on pages 7-12 are tailored for managers

When people lack information during tough times, they often fill in the blanks with their own worst assumptions. So make it your top priority to keep employees well-informed at all times. Here are six essential steps:

VALUING PEOPLE:

The basic building block of good communication is the feeling that every human being is unique and of value.

ABOUT TOM TEREZ WORKPLACE SOLUTIONS, INC.

Our mission is to help workplaces work smarter during these tough economic times.

Through talks, workshops, and conference keynotes, we deliver ideas and tools on crucial topics like change, trust, innovation, and employee morale.

With our Rapid Response Solutions, we help organizations cut costs, rebuild employee morale, and speed up key projects.

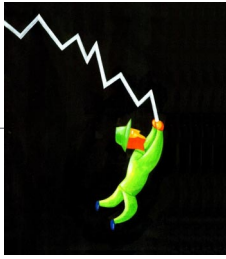
Visit us at TomTerez.com, contact us by e-mail at contact@TomTerez.com, or call 614-488-9721.

Be a constant communicator. Don't wait for those scheduled meetings. As soon as you have information, share it. Keep people up to date on the state of the organization. Let them know about any changes, big or small, that might affect their work areas and jobs. Explain in detail why those changes are necessary. Answer questions, offer your perspective, and encourage people to weigh in with their own thoughts and observations. Keep these conversations casual so people will open up, and be candid at all times.

Decode those internal memos. When senior leaders want to communicate with everyone at once, they rely on memos and e-mail. This usually works fine, but when a message from the top deals with big issues like budget cuts or potential staff reductions, it can raise more questions than answers as people interpret the words in their own way. So step in and serve as a translator. Take time to explain what the written words really mean. For example, if a memo describes in vague terms that employees need to do more with less, add clarity by giving some realistic examples. If another message warns about an upcoming budget shortfall, share specific figures and give people a sense of the big picture. Try to localize the information to the degree you can, describing the likely implications for your work area.

Neutralize rumors with facts. One big rumor ("Job cuts are starting next week!" "They're closing our office!" "Our biggest customer is about to go bankrupt!") can spread like wildfire and burn through employee morale. Ideally, you want to prevent misinformation before it flares up, so stay proactive and provide an ongoing flow of accurate information, as described above. Pay closer attention to what people are talking about in your work area. At the first hint of a rumor, respond to everyone with the real story. If the rumor includes a kernel of truth, clarify what's fact and what's fiction.

Track and translate the news. Your organization might be big enough that it's the occasional focus of newspaper or magazine articles, TV reports, and blogs. If so, you need to become a newshound, staying up to date on what's being written and said about your workplace. Why? Because anything in print or on the air can take on a life of its own. If the morning newspaper includes an article on page B3 predicting job cuts at your organization, you can be sure that by lunchtime that day, people will be talking about...you guessed it, that article on B3. For managers in these situations, the key is to be proactive. As soon as possible (preferably that very morning), meet with people and round out the information. Acknowledge the article, provide some big-picture context, distinguish fact from fiction and reality from conjecture,



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admit uncertainty when you don't know the full story, and facilitate an on-the-spot conversation so people can ask questions and share their own observations. If the article raises questions in your own mind, do some fact-finding and get back to your colleagues with additional information.

Broadcast those big (and little) success stories. Workplace success is all around us, as long we look for it. It can show up in great performance, in a best practice, in stellar results, in compliments from a customer, in the completion of a big project, and in so many other ways. Every manager should look for and leverage these success stories. It's easy. Begin every meeting by citing recent accomplishments. Have colleagues chime in with their own positive observations. Sprinkle several success stories into each issue of your internal newsletter. In one-on-one conversations, become a positive gossip, sharing a story or two that illustrates what's going right in the workplace. Over time, people will follow your lead, and the positive buzz will give the workplace added inner strength.

TOM TEREZ
WORKPLACE SOLUTIONS inc.

THE WORK-SMART WORKSHOP

In these difficult economic times, *every* organization needs to cut costs, reduce expenses, and find new ways to strengthen the bottom line. This session accomplishes all of that, but with a twist. It involves employees in the process, making the most of their experience, know-how, and good ideas. For details, go to: TomTerez.com/worksmart

Fill in the big picture. In the typical workplace, employees know a lot about their jobs but comparatively little about their organization as a whole. This suits most people just fine when things are going well, but when the organization is feeling the strain of a bad economy, this knowledge gap can cause serious anxiety. People begin to wonder and worry—about the organization's financial strength, its market strength, its leadership, its future. These worries are rarely spoken, but they're very real. Now for the good news: This gives you a unique opportunity to bring people up to speed on important organizational issues that go far beyond their individual jobs. What we're talking about is building people's organizational literacy. At meetings and in informal conversations, take time to explain the budgeting process. Describe how senior leaders set priorities. If the people in your work area feel isolated, show how their work connects with other departments. Bring in people from other areas to explain their roles in the bigger system. In other words, take the mystery out of things. Give people a fuller understanding of what their organization is all about.



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5. EXERT YOUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR MANAGERS

It's easy (and efficient) to think of people as jobs, functions, resources, and cost centers, especially when a tough economy is forcing difficult decisions. But it's better (and more effective) to think of them as full-fledged human beings. Here are seven ways to turn this ideal into an everyday reality:

SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND:

Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply. They're either speaking or preparing to speak. They're filtering everything through their own paradigms, reading their autobiography into other people's lives.

— Stephen Covey

TOM TEREZ
WORKPLACE SOLUTIONS inc.

WORKPLACE RENEWAL PROCESS

If your organization has been forced to reduce staff, or to make other tough decisions because of the harsh economy, you've probably seen the impact on employee morale. The Workplace Renewal Process gives you a clear plan for rebuilding morale and restoring a sense of teamwork and mission. Learn more at:

TomTerez.com/wrp

Turn up your empathy. People arrive at work each day with hopes, aspirations, worries, fears, and much more. As a manager, part of your job is to acknowledge this fact of life—and work it into how you engage with people on a moment-to-moment basis. Do you really know your employees? When they talk, do you listen? When you listen, do you respect what they have to say? Are you reading their nonverbal signals? Do you know enough about their lives beyond work to appreciate what they bring to work? Can you imagine how the world looks from their perspective? There's no metric or scorecard that tracks empathy, but nothing is more important in building a bond with employees.

Try a little kindness. When it comes to human relations, the small stuff is the big stuff: a smile, a hello, a genuine compliment, an invitation, an offer of help. These gestures cost nothing and mean everything. They're also reciprocal; the moment we show kindness, we start a chain reaction that ultimately comes back to us.

Be a realistic optimist. One person can set the tone for a work area, so be aware of what you're projecting to employees. If you come across as a chronic pessimist who's sure that the economy spells doom for your organization, you'll drag everyone down. If you convey a lack of confidence in senior leadership, your colleagues will do the same. If you start looking out just for yourself, the people around you will become self-centered as well. Strike a tone of "realistic optimism." Avoid coming across as an overzealous cheerleader who's completely out of touch, but do show determination and confidence. Let people know that you have faith in them. Draw attention to opportunities, possibilities, and what's going right in the workplace. Make clear that the organization will weather this economic storm—and even end up stronger because of it.

Lead by example. Gandhi conveyed a wealth of wisdom when he said, "We must be the change we wish to see in the world." It's a message that has special relevance in today's workplace. Instead of exhorting employees to do more with less, inspire them by your example. If you want colleagues to develop a new mindset that has them always looking for new customers, start walking the talk immediately, and set aside time in your meetings to talk about new sales opportunities. If you want people to be more cost conscious, do the little things—shut off the lights when you leave the conference room, or opt for an electronic copy



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instead of a bulky printout. If you want people to be more trusting and flexible and open to possibilities, be the first one in your work area to demonstrate these qualities.

Show greater flexibility. Organizations everywhere are looking to save money, so what about a four-day work week? What about telecommuting? What about three days with employees on-site and two days working from home, or some other combination? If you've done things the traditional way for years, these will sound like radical options. But millions of people are already telecommuting just fine, thanks to commonplace technology that makes it easy. It's not for everyone; not all people have the discipline to focus exclusively on work while at home. And it doesn't work for all those jobs that require people to be in the workplace in person. But most people who do it love it. It lifts their job satisfaction, and their productivity is often higher than that of on-site employees.

CREATING CONFIDENCE:

A boss creates fear, a leader creates confidence. A boss fixes blame, a leader corrects mistakes. A boss knows all, a leader asks questions. A boss makes work drudgery, a leader makes it interesting.

— Russell H. Ewing

Steer clear of the blame game. In a shrinking economy and strained workplace, it's tempting to go negative and place blame. The urge is greatest in conversations with colleagues, when people begin railing against their latest targets of choice. Feel free to listen, but don't join the noisy chorus. Whatever you do, avoid casting blame on the senior leaders of your organization. You can think privately whatever you want, but there's nothing to be gained by going public with your critique. You'll only shake the confidence of your employees, and your words will likely travel up the grapevine straight to the powers that be.

Have those difficult conversations. If your organization has laid people off, don't leave the topic unaddressed and let it become the elephant in the room. Get together with employees in your work area and talk about it. Let people express themselves. Don't challenge their feelings, and don't feel like you need to be some healer who makes everyone instantly happy. Just listen, share your own thoughts if you feel comfortable doing so, and leave it at that. If you're the one who had to approve or implement the layoffs, the conversation will be a tougher proposition—but even more important. Again, don't get into a defensive discourse on the top three reasons you had to hand out pink slips. Simply let people know how difficult it was, reassure your remaining co-workers to the degree you can, hear what they have to say, and leave it at that.



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6. TURN ADVERSITY INTO OPPORTUNITY FOR MANAGERS

People often do their best work when facing their biggest challenges. Here are six ways to bring out the best in people and lift your workplace to a higher level of performance:

LEVERAGING OUR POTENTIAL:

The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problems.

— Mahatma Gandhi

Engage all that brainpower. Most workplaces fail to tap all the intelligence that people bring to work each day. People go about the same tasks with the same colleagues in the same ways. It's a shame when times are good—and a potential disaster when times are bad. So do something different to get people thinking in new ways. For instance, if there's wide agreement that a process is bogged down with unnecessary steps, charter a group of people who do the work to analyze the situation and find improvements. Or set aside a day for people to question their old work routines and generate new approaches. These kinds of proactive efforts will benefit the bottom line while boosting engagement and employee morale.

Blitz your way to improvement. Speaking of engaging all that brainpower, one approach is to have a team devote itself 100 percent to an improvement project for five or so fast-paced, work-packed days. Blitz teams can attack a long-standing problem, a troubled process, or an untapped opportunity. Unlike teams of old, which pecked away at problems for months, blitz teams generate fast results, which is just what you need in these challenging times. They've been used to great effect at many organizations, and we know the keys to success. The first is to scope the project properly; it should be small enough to be doable with a blitz process, yet big enough to generate substantial results. When building the team, staff it with the people who do the work. Build just-in-time training into the process, so team members work smart. And view this as a comprehensive effort that includes implementation.

TOM TEREZ
WORKPLACE SOLUTIONS inc.

THE BLITZ IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

If you have important projects that need to get done now—projects that can save your organization money and strengthen its position during this critical time—we can help. Our facilitator can guide your work group through a fast process that accomplishes in a week what often takes months. Information is at:

TomTerez.com/blitz

Turn everyone into a cost-cutter. Every organization needs to cut costs and reduce expenses, so get everyone to shoulder this responsibility. Put out a call for cost-cutting ideas. Make it a topic at staff meetings, and encourage people to unload their suggestions. You can even schedule a half-day or full-day session where people put their heads together and develop substantial cost-cutting recommendations. Sure, you'll get some wild ideas that simply won't work. But you'll get a few gems that save real money, and just as important, you'll be nurturing a new cost consciousness that benefits the organization over the long term.

Make revenue generation everyone's business. In dismal economic times, revenue should be a workplace obsession, with people throughout the organization constantly looking for ways to safeguard and expand existing revenue streams while finding new ones. So make it a priority, positioning it as a complement to your ongoing efforts to cut costs. Encourage people to share their revenue-generating ideas at meetings and special brainstorming sessions. Bring it up in impromptu conversations. People might be slow to respond at first, but over time, they'll develop a revenue mindset that pays off. (In public-sector agencies, the



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notion of revenue has a different connotation. Perhaps your agency draws funds from the federal government or another entity. Or maybe you rely on a shrinking pool of grant money. Even in these lean times, there may be ways to safeguard those funds while securing additional dollars from other sources. There's nothing to lose—and much to be gained—by asking employees for their ideas.)

BEING BOLD:

Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all. Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature.

— Helen Keller

Open the books. If you're a senior leader in your organization, consider taking the concept of organizational and financial literacy to the next level. Give employees access to key information, including financial statements, as part of an ongoing effort that develops them into knowledgeable business people. Put an emphasis on education. Encourage people to ask questions and share suggestions. Give them added authority to make more decisions now that they have more information. It takes time, and it requires a small investment of money (for training) and a big investment of trust. But when done right, an open-book approach engages people in a profound way—making the most of their brainpower, giving them more control over their work-related destiny, and creating genuine unity.

Seek new partnerships. Many organizations acquire a bunker mentality when times get tough. They turn inward and try to work harder at their old way of doing things. This go-it-alone approach is all wrong for today's challenging environment. Now is the time to reach out and build partnerships with other organizations—in the informal sense of beginning a dialogue, working together, and helping each other. Say you want to bring in an outside trainer, but you can't swing the fee. If you have a network of contacts at other organizations, perhaps they can team up with you and share the cost. Maybe you're working to simplify your inventory system to save money, but you need some new ideas. Again, if you have connections to non-competing organizations in the area, one of them might give you a breakthrough suggestion. If there's a nearby chamber of commerce, consider joining for the networking possibilities. If you have friends or friends-of-friends at nearby organizations, get people together for lunch.

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Tom Terez (TomTerez.com) has worked with hundreds of private-sector companies, public-sector agencies, and conferences. His talks, workshops, and consulting services are all about organizational performance (BetterWorkplaceNow.com) and personal excellence (InnerBest.com). Tom's work has taken him to Canada, Jamaica, Mongolia, South Africa, and across the United States—with clients that include Boeing, Providence Health System, Fidelity Investments, Jacobs Technology, Head Start, Duke University, LensCrafters, the Social Security Administration, the American Red Cross, Brookdale Living Communities, agencies in 15 state governments, SHRM, CESSE, ASQ, ASTD, and many others.