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KELLY ECONOMIC SURVIVAL TIPS

What can organisations do in this current climate for their people?

In general, there is a great deal of uncertainty in the market and people see and hear daily what is happening across different sectors of the workforce. In this environment it is critical to:

Communicate: People want to know what is happening within their organisation and how their company is performing. While all details do not need to be revealed (as some decisions may be highly sensitive and confidential) it is important that people are aware of what the strategy is. For example, within Kelly the NZ GM reinforces monthly the strategy of the company in 2009 and what their key actions are for everyone in the operation. For example, the importance of building relationships and add value wherever possible to customers and candidates, talk to customers about improving productivity and reducing costs for their business.

Review Workforce Strength: In these times it is important for companies to have the 'right people on the bus' who can help navigate a company through challenging times. While it is nice to retain all staff, the most important factor is ensuring the business continues to operate in the future. Businesses need to review and determine what the key skills are that are necessary to sustain, and grow, an operation in the current market. For example, a company may determine that sales and marketing is a critical requirement in the current market therefore needs to reduce cost in another part of the operation to fund this need. If the company is very small and does not have the luxury to do this, the principles of the business may need to undertake training in areas they consider are important, i.e. Sales training if they believe this is important to future proof their business.

Training and Development: There is a lot of talk that in this environment training of the workforce is necessary and a good retention tool. There is no point training for the sake of training and whatever training is undertaken needs to be relevant. Organisations need to determine what is mission critical for the business then apply training to individuals, as appropriate, in order to address the critical requirement of the business. Training does not have to be expensive and Kelly can help by making recommendations and pointing companies in the right direction to meet the needs of that business.

Restructuring: It is inevitable that many organisations may need to redeploy staff members during the present economic environment. It is critical that this is undertaken following the correct process. By not doing so a company may not protect the business and not assist the employee correctly, which may end in legal issues. This is not only financially costly but also costly in time. Furthermore, it is essential that people affected by any restructure have a 'positive experience' in that their employer did everything possible to make the outcome as good (as it can be) for the employee and in doing so, protect the brand of the employer. At some point in the future, businesses going through this process will start to re-employ and the ability to draw back ex-employees may depend on how they felt when they left the company.

Please turn over...

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Mood of your Workforce: It is important that you gauge the mood of your workforce. Either ask them yourselves or get someone to do on your behalf. Often this needs to be undertaken in a controlled confidential way allowing people to be open about how they are feeling. By understanding the mood it then allows you to make informed decisions about how to address any issues that may have arisen. This is important regardless of the size of an organisation. In some respects it is even more important for small organisations. If you employee five people and one person leaves that's 20% of your workforce!

Performance Management: This is critical and does not have to be an arduous task. People need to clearly know what is expected of them and then managers need to review and provide feedback and commentary on that performance. This is crucial for many reasons.

1. People want to know how they are performing and are they meeting the expectations of the organization and how can they improve. No-one goes to work to do a "poor" job.
2. People that aren't performing may be assisted through using this tool to address areas of development. It is an essential step in management performance.

Hiring / Not Hiring: Organisations have certainly made the decision to freeze hiring staff at the moment in an effort to control costs and ensure future sustainability of their business. Steve Kennedy, our NZ Country General Manager, recommends that you never stop looking and meeting people who, while you may not need now, you may require someone of their skill set in the future. While you do not need to publicly advertise a role (and you can't if one doesn't exist), you are likely to get attractive CV's across your desk that on any other given day, you would have seriously considered. If you do receive those calls, or CV's, invest some time in meeting the people. Be up front about your current needs but consider allocating some time to meet someone who is prepared to give up some of theirs to meet and discuss possible future opportunities. In this environment people will be willing to talk about opportunities in the future and you may also send that person away with names of your contacts they can call re potential employment. The true leaders know that talent will be required in the future so they are building networks and relationships now so when the tide turns they can pick up the phone and start making offers to the best people available.

Understand what's happening in the Market: You may have a current workforce provider (such as Kelly), it may pay to spend some time with them at predetermined times to gain an insight into the trends and movements in the market. There will also be some information of relevance that you can store away, or use immediately. Also, many Recruitment and HR Vendors will know industry specific information that you may be interested in and useful to your business. Any information is good information!

The Kelly Team

If you do not wish to receive our business tips please email us at nz_southauckland@kellyservices.com to unsubscribe.

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