

CHAPTER 5: RESTRUCTURING WITHOUT KILLING INNOVATION AND YOUR FUTURE

This exercise is intended to simulate a lay-off in order to explore the “head” and “heart” described in this chapter that accompany a lay-off, by applying the chapter’s concepts in a simulated environment.

SCENARIO

Discussion Leader

1. Divide your discussion group as follows:
 - A. Ask people to indicate their hiring year (or month and year) by raising their hands and keeping them raised as you read off the time periods, starting with the most recent period and going backwards.
 - B. Determine the cut off that will result in about 25% of the most newly hired people being in the “laid-off” group. Everyone else will be the remaining group.
2. Announce: “The leaders of this company have determined that due to the onset of the recent recession, 25% of the people currently employed on this team will need to be laidoff if the company is to survive. They have further made the decision that the most recently hired will be the ones to be let go. So, everyone who was hired after the cut-off will be let go in 3 months time and everyone else will remain.”
3. Ask each group to convene separately to discuss (20 minutes):
 - A. What their concerns are
 - B. What would result in the best possible outcomes for the organization
 - C. What would result in the best outcome for the individuals
 - D. What part they would like to play in decisions that have yet to be announced
 - E. What kinds of communications will they need between now and the time for the layoff
 - F. How they want to interact with the other group for the next 3 months
4. Reconvene the whole group and discuss results. Are results more like the Kraft-Heinz situation or the consumer products company story?

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In the video accompanying this chapter, the executive in charge of the plants' closing in the consumer products company explains what happened.
Show each segment and then use the questions below to initiate discussion

1. Restructuring Justification and Timeline (time is 3:46). [NOTE: Play this segment.]
 - A. Discuss: Were the reasons for the restructuring credible? (appeal to head)
 - B. What reactions do you think the announcement that they were going to “study” the footprint elicited? (survive/thrive reaction)
2. C-Suite Buy-In (time is 1:39)
 - A. Discuss: Why was it necessary to secure C-suite buy-in?
 - B. Some in the C-suite viewed the strategy described as risky. Do you share that view? Was it a risk worth taking?
3. Communicating broadly for buy-in (time is 3:33)
 - A. Imagine if it were your job to stand in front of 50 people multiple times a day to tell them their jobs were going to be eliminated. How would you prepare? What aspects of the speaker's experience or demeanor were advantageous?
 - B. What, if anything about what the speaker offered might have been key to eliciting cooperation from the people who were to be laid off?
4. Outcomes (time is 4:45)
 - A. What was the advantage of announcing objectives for the outcomes for the organization and for individuals? Were there any risks?
 - B. Do you believe better outcomes could have been achieved if the restructuring had been done in a more traditional way? If not, why is the traditional way more prevalent?