



MANAGING THOUGHT®

A WAY OF LIVING TO ACHIEVE PERSONAL AND BUSINESS SUCCESS®

▶ Forward Thinking™ Gentle Reminder - Business Edition



Brought to you by Managing Thought as a gentle reminder about the power of focused thinking to help you achieve long-lasting business success.

Supplement to Volume 7 How to Do an Effective Cost Reduction and Lay-off

Example Agenda for the Day of the Lay-off

If you're facing a lay-off or cost reduction, you are well aware of the pain. No doubt you are struggling with thoughts of fear, failure, self-doubt, hopelessness, and indecision. Most of us can't imagine that we can dramatically improve our organization's chance for survival and long-lasting success by changing the way we think. Yet we can—by powerfully thinking through and planning the process. In the [Forward Thinking™ Gentle Reminder – Business Edition, How to Do an Effective Cost Reduction and Lay-off](#), award-winning author, Mary J. Lore, the Founder and President of Managing Thought, offers some practical guidance on how to do an effective lay-off and cost reduction, move forward powerfully, and achieve long-lasting success. Below you'll find a supplement to the reminder—a sample agenda for the day of the lay-off for small to mid-size organizations.

In the reminder, Lore suggests doing the lay-off on a Monday at 10am before lunch. This gives the laid off employees several hours to be by themselves before they have to go home and face their families. The Monday gives them a full week to grieve, plan, and be proactive before a weekend occurs. Monday at 10am gives you the opportunity to have a lunch meeting with the remaining employees to discuss the strategy and mission and how the lay-off is to be communicated to customers and suppliers. It allows for team meetings in the afternoon to discuss specific roles and action plans, fine tune communications with customers and suppliers, and discover any potential problems to be addressed. It gives you and the management team the remaining days of the week to gauge the morale and act accordingly, and gives you the repeated opportunity to empower your team. (You don't want to do the lay-off on a Friday leaving your remaining people stewing at home over a weekend with no opportunity to communicate with them.) To read the entire reminder, [click here](#).

10:00am Monday Morning

Bring together all the employees who are being let go for a meeting in a conference room. The president or highest ranking person at the location spends just a few minutes telling the group that this is no longer business as usual, that you have carefully looked at all aspects of the business and an overhaul and restructure is necessary. Tell them that several jobs are being eliminated and the jobs that have been eliminated are theirs. Let them know this is not a performance issue. Acknowledge that they are all hardworking, dedicated, and loyal to the company. Let them know that everything they have contributed to the organization, their customers, and fellow employees, is sincerely appreciated, and that you are very sorry that this is happening.

Tell them about what you are doing to assist them in the process, for example, if you are scheduling severance payments over time to help maximize their unemployment benefits or that you're covering their health care benefits for an extended period of time or, if you have counseling available or information about the state's unemployment benefits processes. Introduce your HR/benefits person and explain that he/she is passing out letters explaining everything and is available to answer any questions they may have.

Ask the group if they any questions for you. (They rarely do.)



▶ ForwardThinking™

Gentle Reminder - Business Edition



Brought to you by Managing Thought as a gentle reminder about the power of focused thinking to help you achieve long-lasting business success.

Tell them that the other employees are learning about this restructure while they are in this meeting and they will be grieving their loss as well. Let them know that they'll want to hug and cry with them and wish them well. Say, "We want to respect your wishes. So if you like, you can get your things together and say your goodbyes and go home before noon. Or if you don't want to, you can feel free to leave and make an appointment to come back for your things next week, whichever is most comfortable for you."

On behalf of all of the employees, wish them success and thank them for all their effort in helping the company be the best it could be.

At this point the President leaves to go to the meeting where the remaining employees are gathered. The HR Person and another executive remain with the lay-off group, collect keys and ID cards, hand out the termination letters, and explain when the last day is, the severance formula, how accrued vacation and holiday is being accrued and paid, when health care benefits are paid through, eligibility for COBRA etc. When all this is accomplished, the HR person reminds them that they can choose to say their goodbyes or leave if they want and make an appointment to return to clear out desk etc. after hours over the next week.

10:15am Monday Morning

As soon as the 10am meeting begins, an announcement is made to all the remaining employees to meet in another area in 15 minutes. At this meeting, the president tells the group that this is rough day, tells them what he/she told the other group and names the names of those whose jobs are now eliminated. Explain that they are in a meeting going on right now and are leaving us this morning.

Tell them "this is difficult news to hear and say -- so let's all go and digest it and say our goodbyes." Ask them to wish their co-workers well and thank them for a job well done. Ask them to understand that some want to say their goodbyes today and others want to leave right away, and to respect their wishes.

Do not be afraid to show your sadness or even cry. Give your employees the space to grieve the loss of what once was. It helps everyone to know you're suffering too, that you care about each and every employee, and that you're all in this together.

Announce that you are reconvening this meeting at noon today for lunch.

From 10:30 to noon

Allow the process to take place. Employees hug, cry, and some sit in stunned silence. During this time, take a number of deep breaths, focusing on the exhale, regaining your inner power, and preparing for the afternoon.

From Noon to 2:00pm

Eat first. As people start to eat their dessert, the president begins. Thank everyone for being here and those who took care of ordering the food. Acknowledge the difficulty and sadness of the morning and ask them to spend the afternoon sharing your vision and expectations, answering questions, listening and asking for their commitment.



MANAGING THOUGHT®

A WAY OF LIVING TO ACHIEVE PERSONAL AND BUSINESS SUCCESS®

▶ Forward Thinking™ Gentle Reminder - Business Edition



Brought to you by Managing Thought as a gentle reminder about the power of focused thinking to help you achieve long-lasting business success.

Share with your team what you are thankful for with respect to your customers, suppliers, employees and investors as well as the opportunity to keep the doors open. Share with them the vision, values and strategy for the organization. If your organization is in a position of completely reinventing itself, share the values and the process you are using to create the vision and strategy. Discuss the changes. Explain that while they may think this is the worst of times, there is an opportunity for success, that you are committed to making this organization one that is exciting and proud to be a part of, that you want each of them to help make the organization the best it can be and ask them for their commitment.

Go over a schedule of meetings for the rest of the day and the next day – meetings that firm up job responsibilities, finalize what customers, suppliers, and investors can be told about the restructure, and to identify any holes or problems to be addressed.

Tell your people what you expect – You want them to be change agents, to empower themselves, keep a powerful attitude, raise the bar, be supportive, tell the truth, communicate, protect quality and customer service, keep a sense of humor and be leaders. Ask them to seize the opportunity.

Take questions. Listen. Ask questions to clarify, making sure you understand the question and the purpose of the question. Answer thoughtfully and respectfully. Ask them to restate what they heard you say. If you don't know the answer, tell them you'll get back to them and then make sure you do!

2:00pm to 4:00pm

Departments and teams meet to discuss specific roles and action plans, and to discover any potential problems to be addressed. At the afternoon meetings, teams and departments can take the opportunity to fine tune and plan communications with customers, suppliers, and the press so that they feel prepared when asked about the lay-off.

4:00pm to 5:00pm

Everyone reconvenes. The president asks each team to discuss their plans and initiatives and list any issues/opportunities they have discovered. Applaud each group and thank them. After all groups have presented, ask the entire group for observations of what was presented.

Again, take questions and listen.

Recap the day, acknowledging the profound loss and sadness of the morning, reminding them of the vision and strategy, and thanking them for their efforts this afternoon. Close the day, letting them know what the initiatives are for the week and explain how this ties into the vision.

Ask them to take care this evening, and let them know you look forward to seeing them in the morning. Thank them for their energy and enthusiasm and their effort to help the organization to survive and thrive.



MANAGING THOUGHT®

A WAY OF LIVING TO ACHIEVE PERSONAL AND BUSINESS SUCCESS®

▶ Forward Thinking™ Gentle Reminder - Business Edition



Brought to you by Managing Thought as a gentle reminder about the power of focused thinking to help you achieve long-lasting business success.

In the Days and Weeks Following

After a lay-off, it's critical to get the company together for weekly communication meetings keeping them posted on what's happening and what's not happening, acknowledging and celebrating progress, no matter how small, and affirming goals and commitments. Allow time for your people to acknowledge themselves and each other for a job well done. Even if you have nothing to report, let them know you have nothing to report.

Use every interaction you have with your employees to reiterate the vision and strategy of the company and tie in how what they just said or did accomplishes the mission. Prepare 30 second, 2 minute, 5 minute and 10 minute versions of the vision and strategy of the company that you deliver as these opportunities arise.

The next day and weekly thereafter, get all of the managers of all of the functional areas together to discuss cash flow and make cash outlay decisions as a team. When the managers work together on the cash and understand the inflow and outflow, they decide as group, on what is truly best for the company, even if it means that their department goes without cash. If you do not have the cash, brainstorm to bring in ideas. Remember the Apollo 13 crew? You and your team will be surprised at how creative you can be and how much you can accomplish with little or no resources.

I often say that infinite patience brings immediate results. It could take a week, maybe two, for you and your management team to plan an effective lay-off or cost reduction that takes into account the impact on all parties involved. Trust me, the investment you make in forward thinking brings returns to you and your organization a thousand fold. You have a tremendous opportunity to cement your culture, focus on what truly matters, improve performance and achieve greatness.