

**LORI DERNAVICH, LLC
MEDIA KIT**

CONTENTS

Press Release: Workplace Performance Issues Affect the Bottom Line.....2

Tactical Take-Away Tips.....4

About Lori Dervavich LLC: Q&A.....7

Biography, Lori Dervavich.....10

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WORKPLACE PERFORMANCE ISSUES AFFECT THE BOTTOM LINE

Business Advisor, Lori Dernavich Offers Insight & Solutions for Culture Clashes & Common Workplace Issues - Helping Businesses Profit

New York, NY (July 2009) — In today's mercurial business environment, as companies merge or restructure, conflicts and employee issues can greatly affect a business's bottom line. Trusted business advisor, **Lori Dernavich** of Lori Dernavich LLC, works with C-level executives, HR directors and boards to provide essential workplace performance solutions, resulting in accountability, improved communications and increased profitability.

"The workplace is filled with employee performance issues. Most are minor distractions, but some, if left unchecked, can escalate into full-blown conflicts. These situations sap corporate resources and profoundly affect culture, morale and productivity, negatively impacting the success of the company," said Dernavich.

Many executives are unaware of such simmering issues until they intensify into a crisis, far too complicated to easily resolve. Most conflicts can be avoided by learning the skills to implement strategies for on-going employee performance success, but companies need to have a game plan intact.

Dernavich offers **solutions to common issues** affecting businesses today:

Management Issues:

With rampant reductions in force, managers are faced with new challenges such as handling the morale of those left behind and coping with increased workloads.

Solutions:

This is not the time for managers to bury their heads in numbers or hide in their offices. Ignoring the circumstances only generates more fear and stress. Managers must walk around and talk to their employees. Transparency is key, as is honest communication. Managers may think they are protecting their employees from bad news, but if they are not hearing the truth directly, there will make up their own – never a good outcome. Also, managers should be aware of how they are treating all employees, but especially their top performers. How they treat their employees today will determine how they will entertain calls from competitors and recruiters tomorrow.

Mergers and Acquisitions Resulting in Culture Clashes:

Due to abundant M&A activity, such as the recent acquisition of Merrill Lynch by Bank of America, and countless others, many companies experience a culture clash and struggle to adapt to the new paradigm, resulting in inertia, resentment or employee turnover.

Solutions:

The CEO and C-suite should be the role models in leading the implementation of the new corporate culture. Change has to be believable and come from the top. Constant communication and transparency is essential. Companies should have regular town hall meetings in which the CEO and C-suite bring everyone together, physically or electronically, to discuss what is going on and to answer questions.

In addition, executives should assess employees before wielding the axe, otherwise, overall morale dissolves. At the same time, balance it out; when there is a decision to be made—do it fast. Address unvoiced concerns, because they may never make it to the table otherwise—don't assume because someone hasn't brought up an issue that it isn't there.

[more]

Underperforming Employees:

Unmet expectations often result in micro-management, acceptance of sub-par performance or termination—none of which identify and combat the root cause.

Solutions:

95% of employee issues can be resolved through improved communication and accountability. Typically, someone is not communicating effectively or is not recognizing their culpability in a situation. How the manager handles the employee is crucial. They should determine what an employee is great at and where his/her strengths lay, then delegate. Managers should communicate their work style and identify the work style of their staff—this will set expectations.

Many employees who underperform are disengaged because they are fearful they will lose their job, or they don't feel they have any ownership of their work. Managers can help employees become engaged by allowing them to make their own decisions. Praise them when they do well and help them when they can be doing better. Ask questions and listen to them.

About Lori Dernavich, LLC

A highly sought after and trusted business advisor, Lori Dernavich helps businesses and their employees become more successful by equipping them with the skills needed to improve communication and accountability. Her unique expertise and objective voice make companies more profitable by delivering customized solutions and the tools to implement strategies for ongoing employee performance success. Lori Dernavich, LLC was founded in 2002.

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Tactical Take-Away Tips

Per Expert Workplace Performance Advisor, Lori Dervavich

Tips for Getting the Best Performance from Your Staff

1. First, hire the right people. People are hired for their skills, but leave because they don't "fit" with the manager, job and/or culture.
2. Properly train employees and provide them with the information and equipment needed for them to do their jobs.
3. Communicate goals, expectations and timelines for projects, and make sure everyone is on the same page. Confirm that your message has been heard.
4. Seek employees' input and opinions. Give them ownership of their work. Do not micro-manage, but be available.
5. Praise employees frequently and sincerely. If you need to deliver negative feedback, keep it about the facts and discuss how to do things differently in the future.

Tips for Being a Better Boss

1. Stop constantly telling your employees what to do, or be prepared to have employees who can't make a decision without you.
2. Make the sincere effort to find something to praise an employee about daily. You'll increase their motivation and will build a loyal team.
3. Communicate the big company picture frequently and continue to show employees how important their jobs are in that picture. Give them a sense of purpose.
4. Listen more and speak less. If you're talking too much, you won't know what is really happening around you.
5. Admit your own mistakes and be transparent. When you do this, you increase the chances of your employees telling you when something is going wrong, long before real damage/loss occurs.

Tips for CEOs in an Uncertain Economic Climate

1. Be transparent. Be truthful with employees about how the economy is affecting the company. When you communicate the full picture, they will understand where changes (i.e. layoffs, reorganization, budget cuts, etc.) are coming from and why.
2. Be present. This is not the time to bury your head in numbers or hide in your office. Ignoring the circumstances only generates more fear and stress.
3. Ask open-ended questions and listen more than you speak. Involve your employees. You will learn more about what's going on in your business.
4. Encourage and reward an environment of candor. This could prevent bad news from turning into major catastrophes.
5. Share the vision, short and long term. Give employees a roadmap.

Tips for Managing a Team from a Distance

1. Be available. As a manager, you can't be awake and available 24/7. You can, however, make sure you have appointed others who can be available to addresses questions and issues. Have a schedule and make sure everyone on the team knows who they can contact ASAP.
2. Discuss individual work-styles. Define how you like to work (i.e. prefers phone calls, emailing, group calls, written reports, etc.)
3. Have a quick daily team huddle. Discuss who is in and out of the office for the day, what is on each person's plate, what the priorities are and establish accountability (i.e. who will do what and by when).
4. Don't ask vague questions, like "Are we good? Everything fine?" You'll get a vague answer. Ask specific questions, such as, "What do you need from me to get the project done by Friday?"
5. Bring team together at least once or twice a year. Connecting a face with a name goes a long way in building a strong team.

Tips for Managing a Department Merger

1. First, decide whether a merger is the best option. Are the management styles in each department similar? Are the cultures similar? Is it best to merge the departments or to keep them running as separate, but connected entities?
2. Create a vision for the new department. Forcing one department to conform to the ways of another often ends unsuccessfully. Determine what you would like the new department to look like and work towards that.
3. Do your due diligence before merging: Conduct interviews with select employees to determine departmental and individual strengths and weaknesses, who the heroes are, who gets things done, who inspires employees, etc. Use this data to make decisions on how to structure the new merger.
4. In building the new department, make educated decisions and act quickly. Waiting only creates more fear and stress for employees.
5. Engage employees who are seen as inspiring to get employees on board with the merger.

Recognizing Signs that Your Employees Are Not Engaged

1. They become more task-focused. They come in to work, find out what they need to do, do it, and then leave for the day.
2. They stop sharing their opinions and solutions. You may think you have a great team because no one argues, but the opposite is usually happen. Your employees begin saying yes to all of your suggestions, which is a red flag.
3. They spend less time in the office. It may start out as arriving later to start the day, leaving earlier, taking longer breaks and lunches, or calling in sick more.
4. They focus less on "team." They tend to do the task assigned to them and no more.
5. They tend to be pessimistic and often blame others for problems. They will complain about an issue but rarely give possible solutions.

Tips for Transitioning an Employee Out of the Company

1. Determine first if terminating the employee is the best decision. Can you move the employee to a different role in the company where s/he would be successful?
2. Document performance problems when they arise, not just when you want to let the person go. You need to protect yourself from a potential lawsuit by showing proof that an employee was warned and/or disciplined for their actions.
3. Have a thorough HR employee and employment attorney on hand to handle the termination process to make sure you are minimizing your liability.
4. Develop a formal process on how to assess and document employee performance and train all managers on how to carry this out legally and effectively.
5. Don't wait to act. If an employee isn't performing well and you've completed the previous steps, then terminate them. Keeping a problem employee on board will lower morale throughout the business and create even more problems.

Tips for Structuring/Prioritizing Your Work Day

1. Keep your calendar updated and synched up with your family and employees.
2. Block out time for yourself to catch up on email, focus on a specific project, go to the gym, etc. Put it on your calendar well in advance and hold to the schedule.
3. Only answer emails (unless urgent) 2-3 times/day. Create an outgoing message for the other times in the day that announces this schedule. Stick to this method and others will fall into your routine.
4. Have a quick daily team huddle. Discuss who is in and out of the office for the day, what is on each person's plate, what the priorities are, and establish accountability (i.e. who will do what and by when).
5. Delegate! Hire an amazing assistant if possible.
6. Before leaving the office at day's end, get yourself ready for tomorrow, so you can arrive at the office ready to go.

Q&A with Lori Dernavich

Question:

Lori, what is it you do exactly?

Lori Dernavich:

I work with companies to resolve their immediate employee crises and am often retained by them on an ongoing basis. It's analogous to hiring outside legal counsel. "Employee crisis" mode is not the time you should begin interviewing advisors. You need me on your speed dial.

Q:

How do you solve an employee crisis?

LD:

It all depends on the nature of the crisis and the desired outcome. I'm an advisor, so I partner with the company, and most often with a number of individuals in the organization, to diagnose and resolve the issues. I often use techniques like 360 assessments, executive coaching, leadership workshops, conflict mediation, behavioral assessments, team assessments, etc.

Q:

What type of companies and industries do you work with?

LD:

Bad behavior doesn't discriminate based on industry. A bad boss is a bad boss regardless of size of company, location or industry. But the companies I work with usually have a small HR department and very little infrastructure for organizational development. One aspect they all have in common is that they all value their employees.

Q:

And who do you work with? Whose speed dial are you on?

LD:

Speed dial for me is the CEO, CFO, COO, or the board. Sometimes the head of HR. Anyone whose initiative is "change."

Q:

What types of crises are companies experiencing when they call you?

LD:

Basically, if there is an issue involving an employee, I'll be able to help you resolve it. For example, individual performers getting promoted to managing others and not having the same level of success they had managing themselves. Or, with the current economy, I'm seeing more managers suddenly faced with layoffs: managing more people, more work, and more offices as well as the sinking morale of people left behind. Lots of new challenges, and those responsibilities don't all come with a playbook.

Q:
What about a commonality in terms of your solutions?

LD:
95% of the employee crises I deal with can be resolved through improved communication and accountability. Someone is not communicating effectively or is not recognizing their culpability in a situation.

Q: What has been the most challenging situation you've encountered?

LD:
The most challenging situation is when an employee I'm asked to work with doesn't want to change. I can recognize that shortly after meeting the employee and frankly, if the company won't entertain a broader range of outcomes, I won't take the assignment. I can't make people change if they don't want to, and I won't continue in an assignment where I can't agree with management on a successful outcome.

Q:
What's the first thing you do when someone contacts you?

LD:
I usually get a call and then go in and meet with the company, usually senior management. My process is simple: ask a lot of questions and listen. And the essential question to ask is, "what does success look like in your eyes?"

Q:
How fast do you ramp up?

LD:
Very fast. Large consultancies have processes that they put clients through. I don't need to do that. My clients have a sense of urgency and require action.

Q:
How does a company position you internally to the staff?

LD:
I recommend confidentiality, not anonymity. If you really want to implement change, you need to be as upfront as possible with the team. Oftentimes, just knowing I have been brought on helps alleviate some anxiety because people know that some action is being taken.

Q:
How do you measure success?

LD:
First, we need to establish what success looks like. Sometimes that will involve my suggesting alternative outcomes. For instance, everyone wants a problem child to become an angel. And that is the ideal. But sometimes what you uncover is just as important. If it becomes evident that the problem employee is not open to change, success can mean acknowledging that unwillingness and moving or removing that employee.

Q: You have a very unique background. How has that diversity impacted your clients?

LD:
I've been told I possess the perfect combination of street smarts and book smarts for the career I have chosen! At one point in my life I was in recruiting so I understand sales, during another I was a psychotherapist so I understand people. I'm an entrepreneur so I understand the bottom line. I bring all of my experiences to the table, which can lead to very different solutions depending on the complexity of the situation.

Q: Any "extra-curricular" activities should know about?

LD:
I sit on the national board of Step Up Women's Network (www.suwn.org) and am Chair of the New York governing board. We serve teens and young women in the NY area through after-school programming, professional mentorship, health education, and social networking. We support women and show them how to give back to the community.

Q: Thank you for your time, Lori.

LD: Thank you!

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BIOGRAPHY, LORI DERNAVICH

A highly sought after and trusted business advisor, Lori Dervavich helps businesses and their employees become more successful, providing the skills to improve communication and accountability. Her unique expertise and objective voice make companies more profitable by delivering customized solutions and the tools to implement strategies for ongoing employee performance success.

Lori Dervavich, LLC was founded in 2002 and has since helped clients such as Absolut Spirits Company, Legal Sea Foods, Sean John and Credit Suisse revitalize their culture and workplace efficiency. Prior to forming her own company, Lori earned a Master's in Counseling Psychology and worked as an executive coach, leadership development trainer, and high-tech recruiter.

Lori is Chair of Step Up Women's Network NY and also sits on the national board. Step Up's mission is to develop the next generation of female philanthropists by developing and mentoring young professional women and underserved teen girls. She currently resides in the New York Metro area with her husband Drew, a professional cartoonist.