



Boosting Employee Morale During Tough Economic Times

Research compiled by Run Brain Run, Inc.
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Focusing on Fun and Cooperation, Builds Team Confidence, Alleviates Stress

During difficult economic times, companies naturally become more conservative with budgets, cutting back on things considered non-essential. A manager's instincts may be to re-think sales goals, expansion plans, travel budgets, even employee perks such as holiday parties or incentive bonuses. However, company leaders can become so focused on managing their way through tough times that they may neglect boosting the morale of their employees.

While managers are busy focusing on the bottom line, their employees are focusing inward. As a boss, you may not be aware your employees are fearing about how the badly the economy will affect them personally: possible layoffs, hiring and pay freezes, vastly increased workloads, ability to pay their child's tuition or family medical bills, loss of value in their house and 401K, or their spouse's job loss. Office gossip about the company's financial health can take its toll too, causing stress levels to soar higher.



Worst of all, when people feel upset by events over which they have no control, they sometimes choose to vent their frustration at work, creating an unpleasant and unproductive workplace environment. All these factors can place a terrible burden on employees, greatly affecting their job performance. Productivity dips, sick days increase and morale plummets.

Lighten up, relieve the stress

During any economy, keeping your team working at its best is not a luxury, but rather a necessity for maintaining a competitive edge in the marketplace. However, in turbulent times, a manager may ask how they help boost employee morale without breaking their already strained budget? The answer may seem simple, but it's effective: focus on fun, especially the kind that builds team cooperation.

While glitzy cruise dinners around the harbor or a weekend at a resort may bust the current budget, there are cost-effective ways to thank an overworked staff for their efforts and relieve the stress they are feeling. Team building events that are fun and engaging can help create a work environment that is positive, uplifting, and supportive to everyone in it. There are excellent options available that won't break the bank.

An effective, affordable morale booster

One exciting and affordable trend in team building events is the clue-based hunt. A modern version of the scavenger hunt, teams must work together to solve clues and puzzles, manage obstacles and stay focused in a quest toward a common goal. This type of event encourages cooperation, reliance and respect among employees, while having a great time together outside

the office. Hunts use techniques that can be applied in the workplace, and have been shown to encourage a person's desire to help teammates.

A basic hunt with a facilitator can cost as little as \$25 per person. A more elaborate hunt, with iPhones and an awards ceremony, may cost approximately \$85 per person. The few dollars it



takes to help employees remain happy and engaged are quite minimal compared to the cost of losing or burning out employees at a time when you need them to perform at their best and most creative.

Everyone understands that businesses need to do what they can to remain vital during tough times, and that capable people may lose their jobs or be burdened with increased workloads. But if managers and employees

are focusing too heavily on those facts, it can de-motivate existing staff to the point where their work is negatively impacted. For a few hours of company time, and a few dollars from the budget, a hunt can be a morale booster that pays off for the entire company.

About Run Brain Run

Run Brain Run, a leading provider of morale boosting games and events, creates clue-based hunts that encourage cooperation among colleagues and a feeling of time well spent. Hunts can take place indoors or out, accommodate small or large groups, and be customized to suit your company's brand.

Run Brain Run is a division of Hometown Advantage, a leading provider of private and public events and in-bound tourism programs. For more information on Run Brain Run, visit www.runbrainrun.com, or call (888) 604-3350.