

EMPLOYMENT

Make Any Downsizing a Win-Win

By Peter K. Studner

Let's face it, every company from time-to-time has to slim down its ranks and, in today's litigious world, you better know your facts before acting. Companies faced with reduced sales and/or profits need to cut back on expenses to survive. Oftentimes, this means a reduction in staff. What issues must be considered? Or, if a staff member is not working out, how do you let him/her go with minimum hard feelings?

All California employment relationships are presumed to be "at will." This means that the company and the employee can terminate employment for any reason at any time. That sounds simple, but without professional assistance, significant penalties and legal expenses may result from what can be interpreted as a wrongful discharge. To avoid this pitfall, here are suggestions that you should consider before any termination:

- Select the person or people impacted carefully. If the reason is for cause, make sure that you have sufficient documentation. If the termination is part of a general downsizing, have your plans well organized before you begin. Always pass your plan before a qualified employment attorney. He will tell you where you are vulnerable and what you may need to do before moving forward.
- When downsizing, consider softening the blow by providing outplacement services. Outplacement will help impacted employees focus on their futures, not just on the bad experience of losing a job. Group and individual programs are available that are suitable for your budget and types of employees.

Assistance Can Also Include:

- Holding a job fair so other companies can review your leaving staff for their job openings.
- Working with the Employment Development Department to assist leaving employees with unemployment benefits.
- Creating a Career Center where employees can get ongoing assistance.
- Doing job development, finding actual leads.

Your outplacement firm can arrange all these services for you.

Other Considerations:

- Know who is affected by the layoff and have full details of each person's separation conditions, including dates, severance package, EEO information, and any other relevant data.
- To keep rumors, fear, speculation and gossip to a minimum, organize the announcement so that everyone is notified the same day.
- Provide the company's reasons for the downsizing and criteria for selecting affected people.
- Prepare an interview schedule that will cover all affected people to give them a chance to discuss their feelings with an HR representative.
- Organize in advance any outplacement benefits. Have a notice prepared (dates given verbally will not be remembered). If outplacement will take place after the person has left the *(continues on page 5)*

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Jennifer Beever

New Incite
Phone: 818/347-4248
Fax: 818/475-1613
Email: jenb@newincite.com

Joseph M. Cobert, Esq.

Joseph M. Cobert, a Professional Corp.
Phone: 818/986-4200
Fax: 818/986-5584
Email: jm@sprynet.com

Juan Hovey

JVH Communications And Consulting
Phone: 818/709-6420
Fax: 818/709-6421
Email: jvh@jvhcommunications.net

Pat Kramer

Writer For Hire
Phone: 818/353-5699
Fax: 818/353-1379
Email: Writerpatkramer@aol.com

Paxton Quigley

PAX PR
Phone: 818/986-4502
Fax: 818/986-4542
Email: paxq@aol.com

Deborah Rodney

The Next Level Marketing & Creative LLC
Phone: 310/477-2119
Fax: 310/477-2661
Email: deborah@tnlmarketing.com

Eric Taub

Jet Media
Phone: 818/707-1080
Fax: 818/707-1114
Email: eric@taub.com

Submit all articles to PNG

Newsletter Production
sandicumminsdesign.com

Call Toll-Free: Northern California & Orange County P 888/684-4437 F 888/684-4435

uninterrupted employee productivity and supplier and customer appreciation and loyalty.



Robert P. Green, CPA, CITP [V] and Scott Cooper, CMC [SM2] are managing partners and **Rick Mark, CSE**, is chief infrastructure architect at Los Angeles-based **INSYNC Consulting Group Inc.**, which provides IT advisory services and computer forensics services. You can reach them at 310/446-8600.



Make Any Downsizing a Win-Win...

(continues from page 3)

company, schedule someone to call and remind each person when and where.

- Indicate when and where they will receive their final exit papers (usually with an exit interview).

With adequate preparation, you can maintain good morale and minimize job-loss shock. Consulting with professionals before you act will prevent undue expenses, while keeping the company's "good-guy" image.

For more information about downsizing, including a detailed list of Do's and Don'ts, please contact me at SuperSearch@pobox.com.



Peter K. Studner [UNI] is a career counselor and former chief executive of international companies. He is the author of the award-winning manual, *Super Job Search*, now in its third edition with more than 300,000 copies sold. Studner is president of an outplacement firm, **Peter K. Studner Associates, Inc.** For additional vital job-search resources, consult: www.SuperJobSearch.com. You can reach Peter at 310/470-6688 or studner@pobox.com. Copyright © 2006 Peter K. Studner.

COLLABORATION

Collaborative Divorce Leads to Collaboration for PNG Members

By Rosalinda O'Neill, LMFT, and Ron Supancic, Esq.

"Becoming involved in a lawsuit is like being ground to bits in a slow mill or being roasted in a slow fire." —Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, 1853.

Every man or woman who has been through a traditional, litigated divorce knows that the above quote can be true. Today, a better choice for you, and those you care about, is Collaborative Divorce.

In Collaborative Divorce, the parties and their lawyers sign a participation agreement that precludes any and all contested proceedings. They agree to negotiate face to face, disclose all relevant information, and engage neutral experts needed to assist in resolving issues. Collaborative Divorce encourages collaboration between the divorcing couple and between the professionals they hire. It is designed as a holistic process and so may

involve not only collaborative attorneys, but mediators, psychotherapists, accountants, and others. Collaborative Divorce costs much less than the traditional, hellish court proceedings practiced by most attorneys today. In Canada, where Collaborative Divorce is more common, it costs on average two-thirds less than traditional divorce.

We met through PNG after both of us had been working in the same direction: helping couples through the divorce process in a caring and thoughtful way, or helping them recommit to creating a good marriage. Ron had created a new word in the divorce vocabulary to replace "dissolution." He uses ReSolution™, defined as "the point at which conflict comes to an end in harmony" (*World English Dictionary*). Rosalinda had coined the phrase, Married For Life®, which is a choice couples can make about their

relationship. In the collaborative process, we give practical tools and training on how to have a great Married For Life marriage and end a bad marriage through ReSolution™, not dissolution.

We each have over 25 years experience and wisdom helping our clients through the tragedy of divorce and preventing divorce. We personally know the pain of divorce for the children and Rosalinda knows the pain of marriage ending in divorce. We are both children of divorce. Ron did not see his father for many years after his mother divorced his father and Rosalinda did not see her father for over 20 years when her mother divorced her father. Rosalinda's father was not allowed to see her again. By the time Rosalinda discovered him when she was 23, they could not rekindle the great love they had for each other *(continues on page 10)*