

SUPPLEMENTAL CASE SOLUTIONS

Where Do You Find the Bodies? - This case identifies problems associated with HR planning and recruiting in a tight labor market. (For the case, go to www.cengage.com/management/mathis).

Questions

1. How does this case illustrate the lack of HR planning?
2. What approaches could be used to recruit mechanics?

Comments

The situation described in Boomtown is very typical in several parts of the western United States. Unfortunately there are no easy solutions that Milt can adopt. He might try recruiting mechanics from economically depressed areas elsewhere and Milt might design an incentive system for use with shop personnel. Another alternative is to start renting space in the center for individuals to work on their own vehicles. Also, Milt and his boss must convince headquarters that there must be greater flexibility available to the managers in Boomtown. In summary, the case emphasizes the need for planning, flexibility, and creativity in dealing with personnel problems, and the fact that organizations are truly affected by environmental forces.

Xerox - This case highlights the challenges of employee retention during stressful and unpredictable times when Xerox was undergoing a significant shift in its strategic focus. (For the case, go to www.cengage.com/management/mathis).

1. Discuss the challenges faced by HR management when significant staff cutbacks occur and how they should be addressed.

When companies cannibalize the human resources needed to grow and innovate, disruption follows for some time. Downsizing can hurt productivity by leaving “surviving” employees overburdened and demoralized. Survivors need information about why the actions had to be taken and what the future holds for them personally. The more employees are involved in the restructuring, the more likely the transition is to be smoother. HR professionals and managers, too, find downsizing stressful and may react negatively to having to be the bearers of bad news. The most common methods used when downsizing must occur include attrition and hiring freezes, early retirement buyouts, and layoffs. Voluntary separation programs appeal to employers because they can reduce payroll costs significantly over time. Using such programs is also viewed as a more humane way to reduce staff than terminating long-service, loyal employees. One drawback is that some employees the company wishes would stay, as well as those it wishes would leave, can take advantage of a buyout. Employers must also comply with WARN and other laws. It is often recommended that employers should provide outplacement services to give displaced employees support and assistance.

2. Use of technology, employee retention, and HR development have been at the core of HR becoming more strategic at Xerox. Why have those areas been so key?

These areas have been key because they illustrate to employees that Xerox is committed to

professional development and continuous learning for its employees. These efforts should also help Xerox employees perform at a higher level to continue its rebound. Focusing on employee retention and HR development helps Xerox reduce its turnover which is an expensive cost. Using the results of the employee surveys will also assure that Xerox is actually providing the types of programs that lead to employee retention. It is very important when downsizing has occurred that the organization emphasize keeping its high-potential employees and managers.