

7 Ways to Layoff Employees

Laying off employees can be a very difficult HR role to carry out. It usually occurs when the management decides to stop the employment of certain people due to budget cuts or other circumstances within the company. Despite it being an undesirable situation, you will have to think about how to carry this out during [HR planning](#).

What Does Layoff Mean?

The layoff in work terms means the suspension or [termination of an employee](#) from the company. What makes it different from firing an employee is that it is usually not due to the actions or negative reports of the employee. It is usually about why they are getting laid off. Common reasons include the company going through downsizing or have gone out of business. Sometimes a layoff is a temporary situation and when a company improves, they can rehire the employee back. But if that doesn't happen, then the employee will remain unemployed.

If your company has to let go of employees, someone has to break the news to those employees. Here are seven ways you can make this situation less difficult.

Plan the Layoffs

After you have decided which employees to let go of, you now need to make an outline on how to deliver the news. Decide whether you are going to give them a notice through email or in person. Will you deliver the news to one employee at a time or through a group meeting? Have a procedure when it comes to the act itself so that it becomes less stressful to do.

Gather Layoff Details

Before you break the bad news, you need to gather your reasons about why the employees are being laid off. Don't just gather your words; gather the facts as well. That means collecting every [survey](#) and evaluations about the company's finances so that the employees can see why they are getting laid off.

Warn the Employees

To maintain good [employee relations](#), it is a good idea to give them a notice that they might get laid off. That way, the employees can have time to prepare themselves for that possibility. Take note that you shouldn't give them a heads up, but give them the reasons why that could happen so that they'll understand the situation.

Communicate Layoffs to Employees

When we say to communicate the news to the employees that doesn't mean you come up to them and tell them. Some ways you can break the news is by email, keep the message short and to the point. You may also have one on one meetings with an employee so that it can remain private and have a more thorough conversation about it. It is your choice on how to communicate it as long as it works with how things go in the company.

Be Honest About the Reason

When you layoff your employees, tell them the reason why. Tell them that they didn't do anything wrong but that the company couldn't afford to employ them at the moment. Inform them of what is going on with the company, whether it ran out of business or if the employee's job has become redundant. That way you can make them understand and make the separation process more amicable.

Give Your Employees Notice or Severance Pay

As a part of [employee management](#), it is still your responsibility to take care of the employees before you lay them off. Take time to organize the severance pay of the employee so that they have some safety net during their unemployment. To set their expectations, notify them as well whether they will receive the severance pay in the final payout or if they need to wait for a period of time to claim it.

Offer Support Options You Can Give

Before you let go of your employees take a look at all the options you have to support them before they are out of your employment. Offer some [employee engagement](#) activities to help them cope with their last days in the office. Giving them support can also be a good method of [performance management](#) to motivate the employees to still be productive up to their last day of work.

The Dos and Don'ts of Laying Off

Dos

Tell the Employee Personally Face to Face

When you break the news to your employee, try to avoid communicating to them purely through emails and online messages. It is a lot better to face them and speak to them personally about it. This allows you to give your employees some closure when both of you have an actual conversation about it.

Offer Guidance

When you notify your employees of their layoff, try to soften the blow of this news by offering them advice and guidance on what to do. Keep a [checklist](#) on ways you can help them. Perhaps you can give them options on where else to look for work if you have the knowledge, or give them some tips on what to do right away now that they are informed of their layoff. Offer some guidance to show that you still care for the employees despite having to let them go.

Be Quick

When you are laying off employees, try to be efficient about it without making it come off as transactional at the same time. Do not take time to tell the employees about it, just get right on it and inform them about it as soon as you can. Informing them about this is still a part of your job and will affect your employee productivity if you draw this out even longer.

Try to Manage Departing Employee Emotional Responses

Suppose your company is high in terms of [employee commitment](#), then it is going to be emotional when you break the news to them. Manage these emotional responses by explaining to them why it has come to this. Tell them that the company can no longer compensate their employees' work and that it is a part of the policies to let go of them if they can't afford to pay them.

Don'ts

Don't Show Anger and Disappointment

Remain calm and collected the whole time. Sometimes relaying the news to employees results in strong emotional responses. Do not let that get to you as well. If breaking the news leads to a heated conversation, do not show anger and disappointment as it will only make the situation more difficult.

Don't Tell Them They Will be Hired Back Later

You cannot be so sure that the state of the company is going to improve so do not tell your employees that they will be hired back later. The chances may be slim so do not give them false hope.

Don't Blame Others for Decision

When you are going to inform your employees about getting laid off, don't think to point the finger at management or anyone else is going to make the situation less difficult. Just state the reasons as to why it is happening and avoid playing the blame game.

Laying off employees is always a difficult thing to do. The sad thing about companies going out of business is that no matter how impressive an employee has been, they are still getting laid off. If the company is downsizing, then the best way to handle it is to go through the company's [candidate database](#) and see who is worth keeping as well as who is getting laid off. At the end of the day, it is not personal, it is just a really tough call.