Don't Be Like Lumbergh: Avoiding Staff Demoralization in the IT Department [Preview]

A publication of Infusive Solutions Inc.

InfusiveSolutions
Talent Driven, Service Focused

Who is Infusive Solutions?

Infusive Solutions Inc. is a specialized technical staffing firm within the Microsoft Partner Network that's been helping IT pros find the jobs that are right for them for more than a decade.

Located in midtown Manhattan, the Infusive team helps clients in verticals ranging from finance, media, law and entertainment hire IT staff including .NET, SQL Server and SharePoint developers as well as Windows Systems Engineers, DBAs and helpdesk support professionals.

Check out our humorous promotional video right here.

The intention of this resource is to help business leaders understand the key reasons we've seen IT candidates lose morale and engage their job search to help facilitate cultures that foster employee retention.

For any managers or team leads interested in potentially adding some top technical talent to their department: Schedule a casual call with one of our account managers

We'd also love to know what you think! Please send any feedback or inquiries to ben@infusiveny.com or call 646.205.9902. You can also get at us on Twitter @InfusiveInc, if that's your style.

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Staff demoralization is defined as the loss of morale and forward progress for an individual employee or team that results in slouching performance, burn out or permanent migration.

Staff demoralization is not the result of internal laziness or a lack of motivation (that's a different issue) but rather poor practices that trickle down from management.

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Note: Staff demoralization can occur in countless other scenarios, but this piece will focus on its application solely for technical professionals.

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Part 2: What causes staff demoralization?

Staff demoralization occurs based on a number of factors that generally come down from a firm's upper management. For example...

No clear vision

In the military, all personnel are divided into a structured hierarchy in which every soldier knows exactly what needs to be done and why it needs to be done. That way, whenever a soldier or group of soldiers complete a task, they know they're doing what they're supposed to in order to achieve their country's goals. And even though the soldier's work can be grueling, having that purpose is nonetheless good for morale.

Similarly, while the outcomes of a company's IT department are probably less intense than those of the armed services, the principles of working towards a strategic end goal apply the same.

For example, it's no secret that IT professionals are by-and-large in the industry for the love of the work rather than the love of the money.

Naturally, there are outliers, but the take home point is that technical professionals want to feel they are making progress and using their sophisticated skills and/or training to create meaningful impact.

Part 2: What causes staff demoralization?

However, when leadership fails to clearly convey the end goal of an IT employee's work or the role that work plays into the firm's overall mission, technical professionals are liable to lose the drive to do their best … just like a soldier probably wouldn't be as excited to jump in a fox hole if he/she didn't know exactly what was being fought for.

In other words, when IT professionals feel like they are just completing busy work instead of doing what is needed to help their firm grow, that lack of purpose will likely lead to burnout and a search for a new platoon that offers more meaningful work.
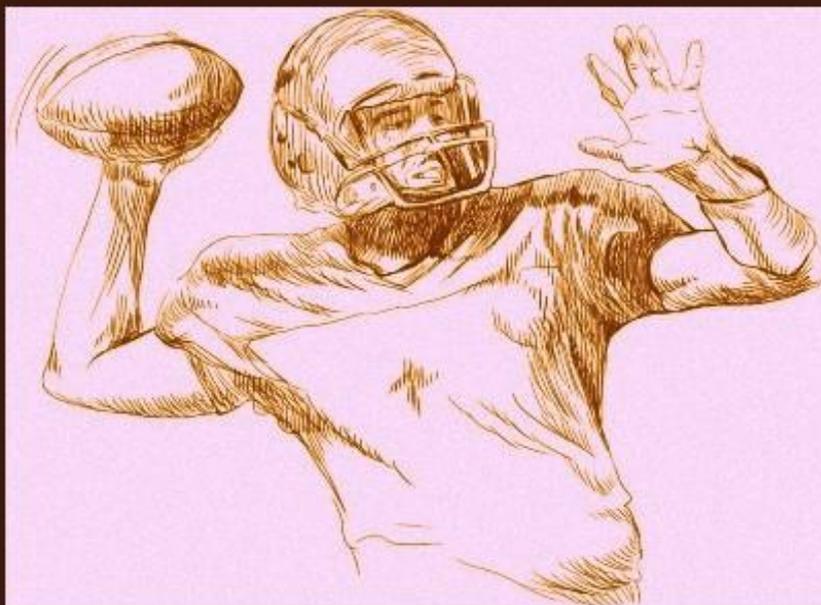
Part 2: What causes staff demoralization?

Repurposing IT staff

In you were an NFL football coach, you would need to know the skills of all the different players on your roster and use that information to determine where they best fit on the football field. As such, no successful coaches would try to repurpose players into a new position in the middle of a game as it would likely have a negative impact on performance and potentially on the team as a whole.

The same holds true in the business IT world. Just as the quarterback is responsible for moving the chains while offensive linemen are responsible for protecting the players in the backfield, developers are responsible for writing code while their counterparts in database administration worry about the installation, security and maintenance of a firm's data.

Part 2: What causes staff demoralization?

And while the best technical teams will understand and appreciate the specific skills being deployed by their colleagues, things can quickly become chaotic if IT members are all of the sudden asked to change responsibilities or work with a new technology (could you imagine if Super Bowl XLVII MVP Joe Flacco was asked to switch from quarterback to middle linebacker after the halftime break?)

With that in mind, it should be no surprise that managers who disregard the existing knowledge of their IT employees and try to repurpose them into foreign projects with new technologies find themselves with failing staff and low morale.

For example, countless firms across the industry spectrum have hired .NET developers to use the flagship Microsoft framework for application development, data access, network communication and more.

With many enterprises flocking to Microsoft's business collaboration tool SharePoint - a piece of software often sold to customers as being built on the .NET framework - some hiring managers attempt to repurpose their .NET staff to develop custom SharePoint applications and manage other projects in the SharePoint space.

But, just as there are few football players that could effectively play every position on the field without any preparation, .NET developers need ramp up time and/or training to successfully work in the SharePoint environment.

Part 2: What causes staff demoralization?

Therefore, when employers try to repurpose their IT employees in this manner without the proper resources, it's a recipe for disaster as their technologists will likely need to work stressful, long and tiresome days to get accustomed with the new technology before they can use it effectively.

Most likely this will not have a positive impact on morale, and often results in a cascading series of unpleasantries for business leaders.

Thank you so much for reading the preview of Infusive Solutions' guide "Don't Be Like Lumbergh: Avoiding Staff Demoralization in the IT Department.' To view the full guide, [follow this link to our website](#)!