

NEGLECT

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The BRIGHTON GROUP

oiPartners^{Inc.}

The Brighton Group/OI Partners Inc. is a locally owned and managed consulting firm specializing in career and organizational transition services. In-depth, one-on-one consulting is the core of our distinctive approach.

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How is it that some organizations weather significant layoffs with virtually no legal repercussions, while other organizations seem to attract lawsuits? The common thread we find, with recently laid-off employees considering legal counsel, is a very impersonal and poorly orchestrated termination process. These former employees felt demeaned and devalued by their treatment on the way out.

In our experience, organizations that spend a little more time attending to the human factor during a layoff spend less time in legal entanglements afterwards. What do they do differently? Here are four considerations that reduce the potential of layoff-related lawsuits.

- **Leaving with Dignity.** Layoff logistics are orchestrated in a way that ensures maximum privacy for the termination meeting and choice in how terminated employees clear out of their workspace. Every attempt is made to avoid logistics that set a “dishonorable discharge” tone to the event.
- **Emotional Support.** Provisions are made to have outplacement and EAP professionals available to talk with employees who have a high likelihood of taking this news hard. Efforts are made to identify employees with more recent extenuating circumstances (loss of family member, personal illness, significant financial investment or loss, etc.) that could further intensify their emotional response and cause them to think of legal recourse.
- **Escalation Support.** Executive team members are briefed and available to be responsive to terminated staff who want to express disappointment, frustrations, or perceived inequities regarding this event to a department or divisional leader. These time-sensitive conversations can be very helpful to certain staff in working through the shock or disappointment of this news, as well as alerting leaders to legitimate concerns that may need to be addressed.
- **Immediate Outplacement Access.** Many companies recognize that providing outplacement services to employees before they have signed their severance agreement can facilitate their cooperation with the transition process. The more focused and supported they feel about their work future, the less likely they are to dwell on the loss of their current position.



The financial pressures and management discomfort accompanying layoffs can lead to expedient actions that neglect the importance of demonstrating reasonable care and consideration during and after this traumatic event. The failsafe in keeping the human element alive and visible in this process is simply to remember what it’s like to be the one receiving the message, and then plan and act accordingly.

“A better human experience...for a better business outcome”

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