



# **Critical Issues in Human Capital**

## **Motivation and Retention Strategies in an Uncertain Economy**

Kathryn Bolt  
Canadian District President

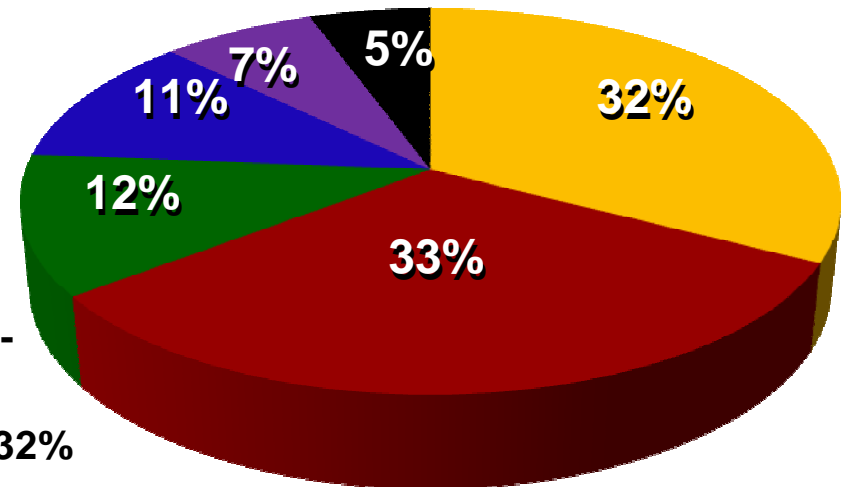


# Human Capital a Primary Concern

*CFOs were asked,*

***“Which one of the following will best protect companies from competitive threats in the next three years?”***

- Having strong company leadership - 33%
- A focus on hiring the best people – 32%
- Having up-to-date technology – 12%
- The ability to develop and implement ideas quickly -- 11%
- Having up-to-date competitive intelligence – 7%
- None of the above - 5%



*Source: Robert Half survey of 270 CFOs, January 20, 2009*



# Canadian Labour Statistics

Month	Jobs Lost/ Gained	General Unemployment Rate	Business, Finance & Administrative	Management
January	- 129,000	7.2	4.3	2.3
February	- 83,000	7.7	4.4	2.5
March	- 61,000	8.0	4.3	3.0
April	+ 36,000	8.0	4.1	2.7

*Source: Statistics Canada Labour Report*





# Build Communication Channels

- Talk openly about the recession
- Foster mutual respect with a “we’re in this together” mentality
- Say as much as you can as soon as you can
- Hold a staff meeting to talk about the downturn
- Solicit input from the group
- Explain how the firm handled the last recession
- Consider regular brown-bag meetings









# Be Available

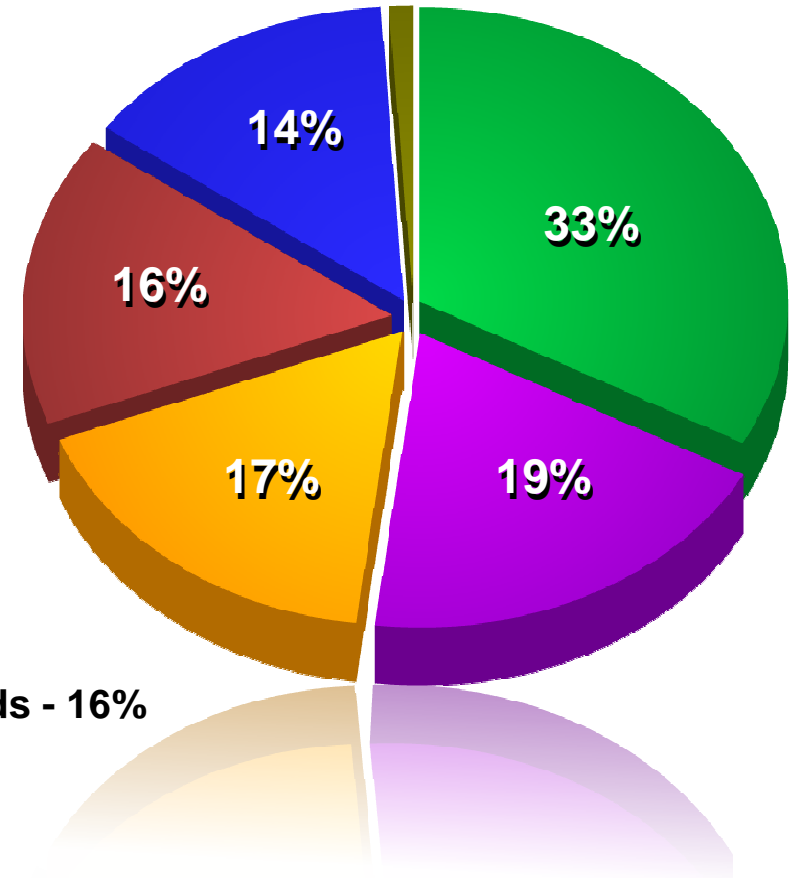
- Avoid:
  - Keeping your office door shut
  - Allowing calls to go straight to voice mail
  - Letting emails pile up without a response
- Let employees know you're available for one-on-one conversations
- Walk around the office to touch base with staff



# Communication Is Key

Senior executives were asked,  
“Which one of the following has  
the most negative impact on  
employee morale?”

-  Lack of open communication - 33%
-  Failure to recognize achievements - 19%
-  Micromanaging employees - 17%
-  Excessive workloads for extended periods - 16%
-  Fear of job loss - 14%
-  None of the above - 1%

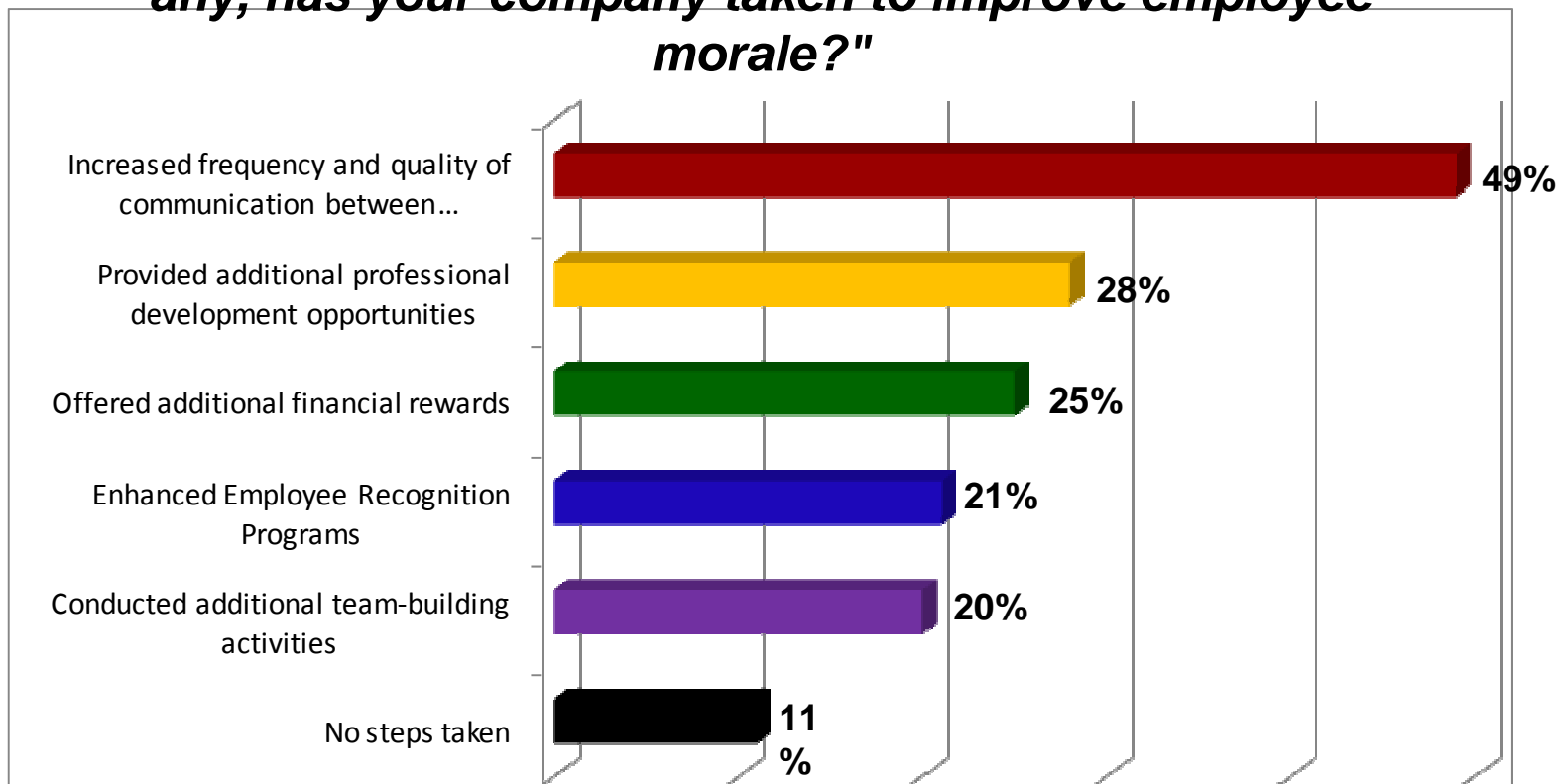


Source: Robert Half survey of 100 senior executives



# Communication and Employee Morale

**CFOs were asked: "In the past 12 months, what steps, if any, has your company taken to improve employee morale?"**





# Continue to Provide Recognition and Career Support

- Top employees have options, and you may not be able to replace your best team members
- Positive reinforcement fuels motivation
- Frequently offer sincere and specific recognition



# Motivating Top Performers

**Provide extra attention**

**Talk frequently about goals & motivations**

**Make their jobs more satisfying**

**Communicate your message**







# Assess Motivations

Different employees are motivated by different things

Ask employees what motivates them

Allow top employees to make changes that have a positive impact on the business





# Manage Workloads and Productivity

Many management mistakes are related to workloads

Effective time management is essential during a recession





# Burnout Red Flags

Has employee output decreased?

Has their quality of work suffered?

Do their ideas seem uninspired?

Are they less patient? Are they more tired?

Are employees late to work or taking more time off?

Are they too serious?

Are staff members thinking about work all the time?





# Promote Critical Thinking



Take calculated risks and break new ground

Reward those who bring up concerns and provide workable solutions

Make sure your staff understand business goals

Don't dismiss suggestions



# Maintain Autonomy and Teamwork

- Cutting back on opportunities for staff to make their own decisions can backfire
- Gen Y workers, in particular, place a high value on autonomy
- Empower your team to make decisions that will improve customer service



# Embrace a Higher Purpose

Think beyond profit

Does your company make life easier, safer or more enjoyable?

Is your company involved in philanthropic efforts?





# Continue Recruiting

Continue building and strengthening your staff

Beware of diminishing returns if reinforcements aren't brought in

Talent is available now

HP hired government engineers after WWII — “How can we afford not to?”



Robert Half Management Resources



# Firms That Do Well During Recessions

- Clearly define business goals
- Communicate those goals throughout the organization
- Streamline activities
- Continue to innovate
- Take a long-term view



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