

update

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Enthum Newsletter

Issue No 2 - October 2008

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dear friends & colleagues,

Welcome to **update**, our regular newsletter. We value our connection with you and hope you find this edition interesting. [Feedback](#) or comments are welcomed.

in an economic downturn, you can't afford NOT to invest in people development - *Grahame Pitts and Hussein Dickie*

This headline was a quote from one of our clients recently. For many industries it is tough right now, budgets are not being achieved, the good times seem to have gone - at least for a while.

Now is the time to get more from less, and reduce overheads. This means reassessing the capability of individuals and the strength of the overall team. All of which is very sensible and necessary, and painful as it may be, it is an opportunity for pulling out those roles which are less vital, or where performance may be under par.

But there is a high risk to consider, the impact on the motivation and morale of your people, and in particular, the high performers. Their thoughts cover the same anxieties as their colleagues - a mortgage to pay, working harder for potentially less, fewer roles to aim for, a reduced development budget, and questions about the future of the company. So watch out, those plans to make the downturn an opportunity to strengthen your workforce may get derailed, as your people lose energy and direction, and the brightest - as usual ahead of the game - may be looking for other opportunities.

In the **Financial Times** recently, **Mike Southon** expressed that "...training is often the first casualty as belts are tightened. This is of course a false economy; the most important assets for any business are your employees, the only people who will be able to get you out of a recession. Increasing the training budget in lean times sends out a powerful message to your best people that 'we are all in this together' and the safest place for them is where they are now."

What you need to get through these lean times is a solid, motivated team. Research clearly shows the impact high performers make to the bottom line and, more importantly, you know these are the people who can, and do, step up in good, and bad, times. It is surprising how dynamic someone can become when given strong, clear messages and practical backing, and how those who feel valued really help to motivate others.

Another CEO recently said to us, "it is time for me to get right back to the basics, close to my people and close to how we make our money". High performing people respect honesty and directness about what is going on. Tell them what is happening and what they can, and need to do. Help them focus their energy, and then let their creativity and ability take over. If you can, spend money on good training and coaching - specifically focused, as budgets are tight - and you can expect, and will get, a good return on your investment. But don't turn off the tap; otherwise your key people might just turn the tap off on you.



an invitation to positive thinking - Lilliana Gibbs

Earlier this year, we had a brief from an international community organisation to help them address change. They recognised the need to encourage more openness, and to respond to dissatisfactions within the membership. Initially, a comprehensive survey was planned.

Surveys and questionnaires can be useful tools, but they are also very limited. The design of the questions will greatly influence the answers, the focus is generally either too broad to be useful, or too narrow to be representative. A survey can also tend to reveal what is wrong, rather than building on what is right.

So Enthum suggested an alternative approach: one of looking at what is working, what binds this community, and from there to build a picture for going forward. It's well researched that starting from what works, rather than from what doesn't, leads to positive change. We used the [Appreciative Inquiry model](#), which is both a philosophy and a process. It is an invitation to positive thinking, listening and talking.

Six months on, we hear this approach has influenced the organisation and begun to change the way things are done, providing a viable, positive forum for tackling problems and designing the future.

There is much to say about the value of appreciation, so look out for more in a future issue, or contact us at info@enthum.com

interesting finds - things we've come across, and wanted to share

Article - [HOW PIXAR FOSTERS COLLECTIVE CREATIVITY](#)
(hbr.org sept 08) Talented people are important, but its also excellent process that is vital to this animation company's ongoing success.

Book - [SYNCHRONICITY: the Inner Path of Leadership](#)
Joseph Jaworski's personal journey illustrates how immense cultural and institutional change is not only possible, but essential for a viable future.
(ISBN 1-57675-031-0)

All best wishes,

the Enthum Team



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