"Survivor Syndrome" in Redundancies

Human Resources & Work Performance · https://psyasia.com/kb/survivor-syndrome-in-redundancies/

It is well documented that redundancies have been perceived in a negative light, in particular there is a focus on the negative effects that have been associated with employees whose job positions have been made redundant. Even so, many forget about the employees who are still with the organization following a redundancy. It is important to note that these employees who remain with the organization are also subject to potential negative effects known as "Survivor Syndrome" (Baruch & Hind, 1999).

Following a redundancy, employees who "survive" or remain with the organization have to cope with a range of different issues such as a potentially negative climate within the organization or their emotions following the exit of close co-workers and, even increased workload due to the decrease in staffing levels. If not managed properly, "survivors" are likely to display negative reactions such as reduced commitment levels, negative emotional responses, increased stress levels and burnout (Baruch & Hind, 1999). This in turn can lead to decreases in productivity and efficiency. Potentially, this may also lead to "survivors" to make the decision to leave the organization voluntarily.

Whatever the reason the organization has for conducting a redundancy, such as reducing the costs due to downturns in the economy or even when conducting organizational restructuring for improved efficiency, organizations need to be aware of not only the effects on outgoing employees but also be aware of the potential effects on the existing and remaining employees in the organization. This would allow them to develop plans for managing such effects and providing support to the remaining employees.

Reference

Baruch, Y., & Hind, P. (1999). Perceptual Motion in Organizations: Effective Management and the Impact of the New Psychological Contracts on "Survivor Syndrome". European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 8(2), 295-306.