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- I-Beam
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- HR Sheet & Coil
- CR Sheet & Coil
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- Square Bar
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- Round Tube
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- Trench Plate
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- Forming
- Cutting
- Punching
- Shearing
- Slitting
- Beam Splitting
- Welding
- Coating

## PRODUCTS

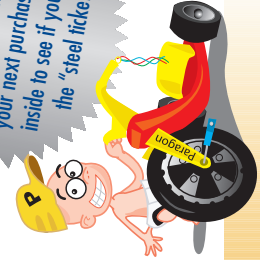
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# Keeping Morale High When Business is Down

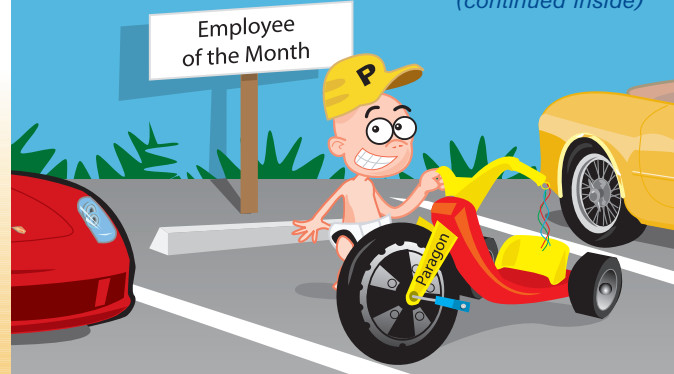
By Jim Stavits

We recognize one simple fact of business life these days: Business stinks. We have to work harder for less; face challenges we never faced before; and even people like me who see their glass as half full are having a hard time keeping it that way.

I'm neither the first nor the last to say this about today's business environment. But saying it is the easy part—doing something about it is another thing all together. And whether or not you discuss it with your employees, they know it stinks too—and many of them are scared about it.

The one thing we try and do in this newsletter is to keep it real. The most important action managers or owners can take during these economic times is to be real with their employees. They must be expert

*(continued inside)*



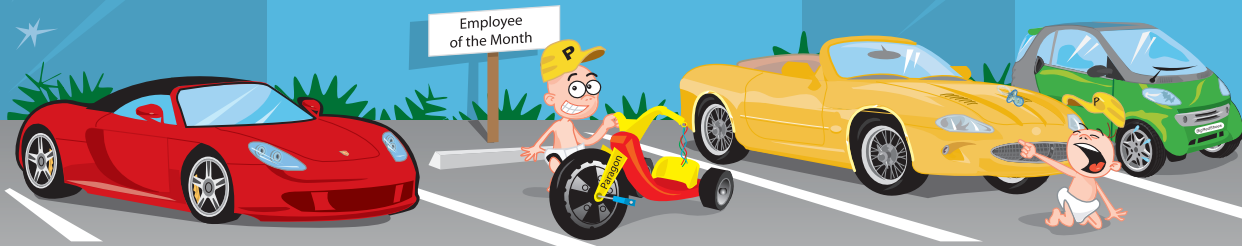
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# PARAGON STEEL

Newsletter • August 2009

# Keeping Morale High When Business is Down

(continued from front)



**Quote  
of the Month**  
**“Morale and attitude are  
the fundamental  
ingredients for success.”**  
Bud Wilkenson

communicators of the facts and expectations for the company's future. There is no benefit in trying to candy coat the situation, because employees can see what is going on for themselves.

Secondly, it is important for management to be optimistic and think positive. No one wants to work for a doom and gloomer. And even if the business environment is presently slow, there is good reason to believe that better times will return again as they always have. Work on your attitude first and then convince those around you to come onboard.

Thirdly, it is necessary for management to be creative with positive reinforcement. Good work still needs to be recognized even if overall performance is lagging. Employees still need to know that their work and efforts are appreciated. There are perks other than monetary rewards. You can recognize them as employee of the month, mention them in the company newsletter or take them out for lunch. Studies show that the majority of people work because they like the work and the company versus just earning a paycheck. Continue to make your work environment fun and invigorating versus nine-to-five drudgery.

Finally, and perhaps most important, is to develop a dialog with your employees. Get their feedback on how they believe the company can get better. This is a great time to make improvements within the organization. Take advantage of it to change for the better. We recently sat down with our key employees and talked about what they thought we could do to spice up our marketing program. We were surprised by some of their creative ideas.

In fact, one of our salespeople, David Ohlberg, came up with the smart idea of a randomly distributed coupon for customers, which we have incorporated into this issue of the newsletter. Thanks, David!

Morale is a very strange phenomenon. Like momentum, it feeds upon itself. Fueled by emotion, it can quickly spread from kindling into a raging fire. Before you know it, the entire company is enflamed—and if it's on fire with negativity, you're looking for the hose. Take the necessary steps today to keep your employees focused in the right direction. Sure, business may stink, but your attitude doesn't have to.

## Gaining Perspective

Once upon a time there was a wealthy man named McFarley who was miserable. He tried everything he could to soothe his misery. He went to doctors, but they said he was completely healthy. He took up hobbies, from sports to music to travel, but nothing could reduce his depression. He even tried meditation and that didn't work. Finally, after much boredom and depression, he sought the advice of his clergyman. He said, “Father,



I have tried everything and nothing seems to make me happy. What am I missing in life?” The wise Father listened to his complaints and said, “Your problem is that you never give back to others. You live totally for yourself. If you want to be happy, than start helping the needy.” That was an idea that McFarley hadn't thought of, so he went away with a new sense of hope.

McFarley soon learned that the idea was not as easy as he had thought it would be. Most of the people who looked poor gave him the feeling that they really weren't. On the other hand, he was certain that there must be many people who really needed money, but wouldn't ask for it. He needed to find a way to locate those who were really in need. Suddenly, he hit on an idea. He would give only to people who had lost all hope. That, he concluded, was true poverty. So, McFarley began going to places where the unfortunate could be found: hospitals, orphanages, jails and the slums. He met many people with problems, diseases and debts. There were homeless, jobless and helpless people, but he never met any hopeless people.

As McFarley continued his search, he walked past a scrap yard. There, he saw a dirty man in tattered clothes wallowing in the scrap heap. McFarley eagerly asked him, “What happened to you?” The man replied, “Ayyyi, don't ask,” holding his hands upon his face. “I lost everything...my money, my job, my house, my family. Everything!” “Tell me,” said McFarley excitedly, “do you still have hope?” The man responded, “Of course I have hope!”

The poor man looked at him wide-eyed and replied, “As long as I'm on earth and the earth isn't on me, I have hope. In the graveyard, there's no hope. If you're looking for the hopeless, go to the graveyard.”

And then Mr. McFarley understood what had been lacking within his own life: perspective. Rather than wallowing in his misery, he had learned the lesson of hope and life. And ultimately he learned that to not have hope is equivalent to death itself. These are lessons we can all learn from.