

Will I have a Job Tomorrow?

That's the quiet question so many people are carrying right now, especially given the recent mass layoffs we've seen across industries this past week alone. The workforce is under pressure to deliver results in an unpredictable economy, and employees are expected to meet and exceed expectations. But each day presents a new challenge. Bills don't pause, student loan payments are deducted each month, rent's due, and groceries still need to make it to the table. Every morning, people wake up managing through the unknown—and that uncertainty builds a level of anxiety that's hard to navigate.

In recent weeks, several companies have laid off workers, signaling that more changes are on the horizon. According to Challenger, Gray & Christmas, U.S. companies announced over 600,000 job cuts in the first half of 2025—a 14% increase from the previous year. Meanwhile, Edelman's 2025 Trust Barometer shows that only 46% of employees trust their employer's communication during times of change.

As of August 2025, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the unemployment rate is 4.3%, with 7.4 million Americans currently unemployed. The latest wave of layoffs has sent ripples through the workforce, with big names like UPS, Kroger, and Target making headlines. The unemployment cloud continues to hang overhead, leaving many employees bracing for the next wave of cuts.

Change Starts from Within

Businesses are constantly transforming in response to an ever-changing external environment—but the ones that succeed are those that prepare their people to adapt, not just their processes.

I recently reconnected with a former colleague from my early days at Moen. After catching up for the first time in nearly a decade, I thanked her for certifying me (and several others) in Change Management all those years ago. Back then, I was still early in my career and didn't fully grasp how foundational that experience would become.

Years later, across every organization I've supported, I've leaned on what I learned from her—particularly how to guide employees and leaders through their most complex transformations. Communication, transparency, and trust became my compass points. Those principles not only earned me credibility as a leader, but they also created the psychological safety employees needed to understand and embrace change.

Thank you, Terri, for planting those seeds of transformation that continue to shape how I lead today.

The Smithers Effect



I'm not a big Simpsons watcher, but I can appreciate a well-written character. For those who are fans, you'll know Mr. Smithers—the loyal assistant to Mr. Burns. His loyalty runs so deep that it clouds his judgment. He often makes decisions on behalf of his boss, even when he knows they're wrong. He doesn't challenge; he complies. Outwardly, he projects morality, but inwardly, he lacks the courage to stand up for what's right.

I once worked with a leader who mirrored that same dynamic. She wasn't malicious—she was simply misinformed and out of her depth. She made critical organizational decisions without truly understanding the business or the people who made it run. Instead of seeking guidance from the right partners, she deferred to whoever validated her choices—even when they lacked the expertise to advise her.

She made sweeping staffing changes, removing key roles twice within a short period. Both times, the outcome was disastrous: operational gaps, disengaged teams, and business leaders left scrambling to hold things together. It wasn't strategy—it was guessing. And in her effort to appear decisive, she revealed how little she actually understood.

Like Smithers, she acted on behalf of authority without the courage to question it. She didn't take the time to learn, to challenge, or to communicate. And as a result, she lost the very thing leaders can't afford to lose—trust.

When transparency disappears, fear fills the silence. Employees start whispering, "Will I have a job tomorrow?" Not because they fear change—but because they no longer believe in the people leading it.

The Real Cost of Poor Change Leadership

Change management isn't about control; it's about courage. It's about understanding systems, people, and the purpose behind every decision. Leaders who fail to do that don't just mismanage change—they erode confidence, credibility, and culture in the process.

Because when leaders choose courage over compliance, they don't just manage change—they build the kind of trust that makes people believe they *will* have a job tomorrow.

References:

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