In the age of social media and viral word of mouth, a layoff is everybody’s business — not least the employees who are impacted. When you must make a quick decision about transition, it helps to have a partner in outplacement who can guide affected employees toward better outcomes, so you can focus on what comes next.
In Silicon Valley, things can change on a dime, and when those changes occur at innovative companies with highly-regarded brands, those changes can lead to PR crises. One Silicon Valley biotech company, for example, underwent a very visible pivot that resulted in both negative press and a large reduction in force, so they sought an outplacement partner that they could trust to take care of their transitioning employees and provide a guarantee of confidentiality.

Suddenly caught up in a negative media storm, beleaguered by setbacks, and facing possible lawsuits, the company sought expert advice to help mitigate the impact on both employees and the employer brand. Under a cloak of secrecy, the executive team met with advisors to prepare for a variety of possible scenarios and put plans in place to respond to the crisis before them. No matter the outcome, one thing was clear: they would have to shut down facilities in several locations and lay off a large number of employees.

Prior to this situation, the company had been growing and thriving. Like many organizations in startup mode, they had focused on delivering a product to the market and not on establishing HR best practices around downsizing and restructuring events. The young executives quickly realized they didn’t need just an outplacement vendor; they needed a trusted advisor to help limit additional liabilities and to lead them through this critical juncture in the company’s operations.

Even as they were dealing with the crisis at hand, the leadership team had plans to rebuild the business and continue developing products. It was important to them to continue a positive relationship with their transitioning workforce, since they hoped to someday be in the position to rehire talented employees and continue their mission to provide new technologies to the biotech industry. In addition, the company was committed to its workforce, and the executive team wanted to make sure transitioning employees were taken care of, regardless of the troubles they were currently facing.

**EXPERT ADVICE TO MITIGATE IMPACT**

After a search for an industry-leading and trusted outplacement service provider, the executives turned to RiseSmart to deliver its contemporary career transition solutions to the company and its employees. During an intensive period prior to delivering employee notifications, the RiseSmart team offered expert advice and guidance to the executive staff, working closely with the company’s legal and finance teams to answer leadership’s concerns. More than simply developing a vendor/customer relationship, RiseSmart became a partner to the company, offering knowledgeable counsel and developing a customized solution to fit the unique circumstances of this organization.

**FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES**

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RiseSmart’s outplacement experts worked with the company’s executive team to discuss best practices for transitioning employees and successfully providing communication about the reduction in force. But the press in Silicon Valley is always looking for a story, and fears arose that the media would publish news of the layoff before employees could be properly notified. When RiseSmart received an emergency call from the company, the outplacement team fast-tracked plans and quickly pivoted to provide onsite support within 60 minutes of the call. Dispatching coaches and career transition experts to multiple locations around the country, RiseSmart reached the impacted employees and delivered critical notifications before the story broke in the news.

PUTTING VALUES INTO PRACTICE

RiseSmart recognizes the difficulties displaced employees may have finding comparable work in highly competitive industries, such as biotech. And so, though RiseSmart already differentiates itself in the outplacement industry by providing a team of three experts and access to contemporary job matching technology, the RiseSmart team went one step further.

Fueled by a passion to help people — no matter the circumstance — RiseSmart experts conducted systematic, proactive outreach to employers in the locations where the company had closed their facilities to recommend impacted employees for open positions. RiseSmart coaches and career experts conducted local market studies to identify a variety of available positions for the exiting employees. In an effort to lessen the impact on communities with a large number of newly unemployed residents, the team also organized and conducted career fairs specifically tailored for exiting employees.

RiseSmart’s efforts before, during, and after the notification led to results that exceeded the company’s expectations: transitioning employees took an average of only 44 days to land a new job. In addition, RiseSmart’s career transition solutions garnered excellent reviews and high marks for satisfaction from the company’s many displaced employees. The ease and swiftness with which RiseSmart prepared the company’s management for the event and the expert coaching, branding, and job search solutions provided to the company’s employees ultimately allowed the company to avoid generating further negative press over the layoff, and put both the company and its former employees in a better place for a new beginning.

**Results Matter:**

- **Overall Satisfaction Rate:** 94%
- **Coaching Satisfaction Rate:** 95%
- **Resume Satisfaction Rate:** 95%

*No matter the circumstances causing workforce reorganization, rightsizing, or reductions in force, offering the best in career transition solutions helps protect the employer brand, limit liability, and reduce costs.*