Layoffs and Survivors' Career Motivation

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Executive Summary

Hundreds of thousands of Canadian workers have been laid off during the organizational restructuring of the past decade. Although the laid-off worker has been extensively studied, until recently there has been very little research on the effects of layoffs on those who remain in the downsized organization—the survivors. This study helps to close that gap in the research by identifying the factors that help to determine the career motivation of survivors. It also provides practical advice for minimizing the detrimental effects of layoffs.

- When an organization manages a layoff badly, increased resignations, fatigue, depression, and anger on the part of survivors may result. The organization may lose a significant part of the savings it hoped to achieve.

- Survivors who believe that the downsizing was part of a well-considered long-term plan that will improve the organization will have greater confidence in management's abilities and more faith in their intentions. In addition to communicating a compelling reason for the change, management needs to delineate a clear path to the desired future state of the organization.

  When survivors identify with the layoff victims and have had a close personal or working relationship with them, their trust in management is weakened. The downsizing manager must therefore try to ensure that survivors perceive that the reductions are fair and respect the dignity of the workers who are laid off. Failure to do so will diminish the loyalty of survivors and increase their feelings of job insecurity. There will be a negative impact on career motivation and morale.

- If the survivors feel the layoff was necessary, just, and well-planned, and not too hard on their favourite co-workers, they are more likely to feel pride in working for the organization. Survivors in this type of organization are better able to deal with changing circumstances and career disruptions and to appreciate their own strengths and weaknesses. They are better able to make their careers of central importance in their lives.

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- The nature of the individual career is changing, and HR managers need to make survivors aware that organizations may no longer be able to provide employees with the almost parental care they traditionally received. The new 'protean career' that is now emerging is driven by the individual rather than by the organization, and it must be reinvented by the individual from time to time. The data points to the need for shared responsibility in developing career motivation: strategies might include rewarding continuous learning and providing opportunities to enhance continued employability.

Introduction

Rapid technological change, recession, political instability, government debt, and restricted access to financial resources have necessitated the layoffs of hundreds of thousands of workers in Canada. The laid-off worker—the 'victim' (Jahoda 1982) has been the subject of extensive study for some time. But until recently, researchers have paid little attention to the effects of layoffs on the survivors—those who remain in downsized organizations (Brockner 1986, 1992; Greenhalgh 1982). The model of career motivation that is proposed in this study provides an excellent starting point for investigating the effects of layoffs on the careers of survivors. The robustness of survivor careers after layoffs has never been tested. This study addresses that gap in the research. It also shows how organizations can minimize the negative effects of layoffs on the careers of survivors, but nevertheless points out that career motivation is increasingly viewed as a shared responsibility of the organization and the individual employee.

When an organization handles victims and survivors of layoffs poorly, increased resignations, risk aversion, fatigue, depression, a deepening sense of a loss of control, and heightened, more focused anger on the part of survivors may be the result (Brockner 1988). Noer (1993, xiv) points to the need for education in survivor treatment: 'The people who have survived the reductions are clearly angry, fearful and depressed. Yet the reorganization . . . was supposed to turn the organization around to meet global competition!' If layoffs are mismanaged, the organization may lose a sizable portion of the savings it hoped to achieve (Cascio 1993). Consequently, it must implement layoffs with special attention to the impact on the survivors (Brockner 1992).

Layoffs and Career Motivation

There are a host of personal and professional effects of a layoff in the workplace. Past studies have focused on such factors as work motivation and organizational commitment, job involvement and job satisfaction, and job insecurity and stress (for example, Allen et al. 1995; Armstrong-Stassen and Latack 1992; ArmstrongStassen 1993; Brockner 1988). There have also been some recent attempts to explain the effects of various aspects of the individual's career.

Exactly what effect does a layoff have on individual career decisions and behaviours? Cartwright, Cooper, and Murphy (1995) identify the 'career stress' that develops out of multiple negative career outcomes such as job dissatisfaction and job insecurity. Sauter, Murphy, and Hurrell (1990) identify threats to 'career security' as major risk factors that can damage workers' feelings of well-being.

The New Protean Career

Clearly, the nature of the individual career is currently in flux, and organizations need to understand the changing way in which their members view their careers. According to traditional models of career development, worker layoffs may be disconcerting, to say the least. Schein (1971) uses the term 'maternal organization' to describe the almost parental care of traditional organizations that provide career

development and advancement opportunities to members as they climb the proverbial corporate ladder. But organizations must now make survivors aware of the newly developing career models that are not as linear as their forerunners (Arthur, Hall, and Lawrence 1989; Gottlieb and Conkling 1995; Briody, Baba, and Cooper 1995; Waterman, Waterman and Collard 1994; Krecker 1994). The new career is driven by the individual's needs and values rather than by the organization, and it will be reinvented by the individual from time to time, as individuals become life-long consultants in their chosen vocations, not in their chosen organizations. This is the new 'protean' career of the twenty-first century (Hall 1996); Schein (1996) calls it an 'internal' career as opposed to an organizational career; Arthur (1994) calls it the 'boundary less' career. It is not surprising that these new, nonlinear career models are emerging at the same time as massive layoffs in corporate North America, since they are partly a result of these layoffs (Gottlieb and Conkling 1995). There now appears to be a continuum that stretches from the traditional, linear conception of career development to the boundary less model of career development.

Human resources managers will find that the new career model may necessitate new recruitment activities and staffing planning, breaks in succession plans, different approaches to training and development, or increased use of employee assistance programs. Understanding the new career model is crucial if the organization is to take full advantage of the savings it hopes to achieve by downsizing.

A Model of Career Motivation for Survivors of Layoffs

Barling, LeDrew, and Kelloway (1997) suggest that such factors as the perceived justice of the layoff, perceptions of management's planning of the layoff, survivors' continuance commitment, and perceptions of job security will affect the survivors' career motivation. How these perceptions affect career motivation depends on the level of trust in management and the survivors' affective commitment and negative mood. In this study I predict that the way layoffs are implemented—and, consequently, employee perceptions of justice and planning—will affect employee trust in management, job insecurity, negative mood, and affective commitment to the organization. Furthermore, the extent to which survivors had close personal and working relationships with the employees who lost their jobs will also affect these outcomes. These attitudinal outcomes will in turn predict the survivors' career motivation. A diagrammatic representation of these links is given in figure 1.

Career Resilience, Insights, and Identity

London (1983, 1993) and London and Mone (1987) identify three components of career motivation: career resilience, career insight, and career identity. Career resilience is the measure of a person's resistance to career disruption in a less than optimal environment; it is said to be the opposite of career vulnerability. Career resilience depends on the individual's feelings of personal efficacy, and on risk taking and dependency. Career insight refers to the individual's ability to form realistic perceptions about himself or herself and the organization and to relate these perceptions to realistic career goals. Career identity is a measure of the importance of a career to an individual's personal identity and depends on such factors as job involvement, professional orientation, commitment to managerial work, identification with the organization and a desire for upward mobility.

Figure 1
A Model Predicting Career Motivation for Survivors of Layoffs
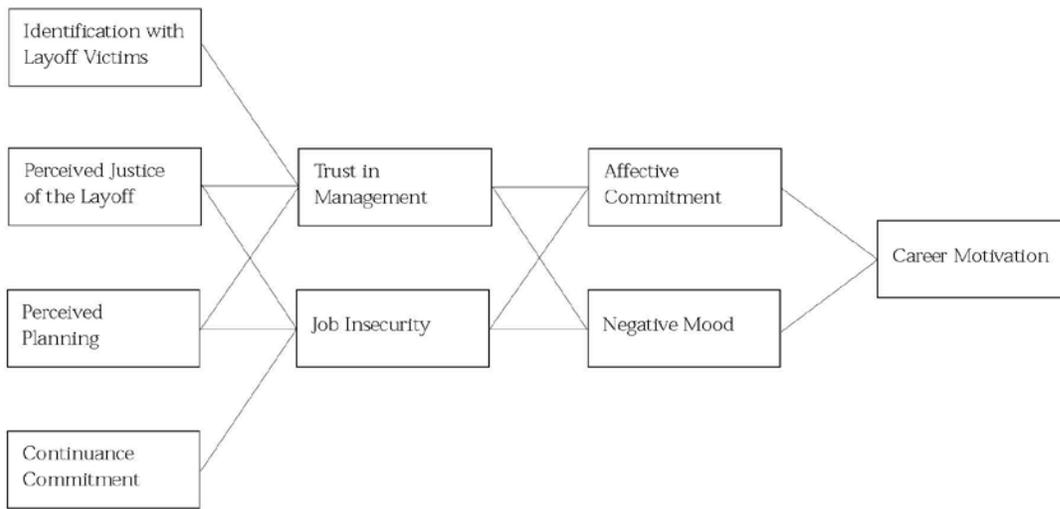
Affective Commitment

One of the factors influencing career motivation in my model in figure 1 is affective commitment, which is the 'psychological state that binds the individual to the organization' (Meyer 1988, 20). Employees are bound to the organization by affective commitment when they are satisfied with the content and context of the job. An employee high in affective commitment feels emotionally attached to the organization, is proud to work for it, and feels a strong sense of belonging (Allen and Meyer 1990; Meyer and Allen 1997). If survivors in an organization score high on affective commitment, it means that even after a major downsizing they remain loyal to the organization, like the content and context of the job, and are emotionally attached to it. It is probably a good environment for those employees to build career resilience in the face of less than optimal career conditions (like the current layoffs), get a good sense of their strengths and weaknesses, and make the career of central importance in their lives. Therefore, I foresee affective commitment as a predictor of higher levels of career motivation.

Trust in Management

Presumably, a survivor who trusted the management of the organization and thought that the layoff was relatively fair and just and well planned would be high in affective commitment. Trust in management after the layoff process, therefore, ought to predict levels of affective commitment. This hypothesis has received some empirical support. Operationally, trust can be viewed as faith in the good intentions of management and confidence in management's deeds and actions. Cook and Wall (1980) found correlations between faith in management and organizational commitment and between confidence in management and organizational commitment. Allen and Meyer (1990) concur, citing management receptiveness to employee ideas, perceived organizational dependability, and equity as antecedents of affective commitment.

Identification with Layoff Victims

Identification with the layoff victims is a logical predictor of the above relation-ships. Brockner et al. (1987) predicted that identification with the victims would alter the survivors' perceptions of fairness and justice. Identification with the vic-tims was also discussed by Fried et al. (1996), who found that survivors experience a heightened state of anger and hostility toward the organization when the organi-zation, and ostensibly its management, unfairly terminates employees they were close to.

Justice

The perceived justice or fairness of the way in which the layoff occurs is an important variable in the understanding of post-layoff outcomes for survivors. As the model predicts, it is difficult to conceive of a survivor who would perceive the layoff as unjust or unfair and yet maintain great trust in management and high levels of affective commitment. In other words, survivors who perceive that the layoff enactment was fair and just are likely to maintain their level of trust in management and remain proud to work for the organization. There is considerable support for the positive relationship between perceived justice of the layoff implementation and the psychological and behavioural outcomes of the layoff for survivors (Brockner and Wiesenfeld 1993; Brockner and Greenberg 1990; Brockner, Davy, and Carter 1985; Brockner et al. 1986; Brockner et al. 1987; Fried et al. 1996). The perceived justice of a layoff may also change the survivors perceptions of the link between work behaviours and attitudes and organizational rewards and punishments (Brockner 1988).

The survivors' perceptions of four different types of justice combine to form the overall justice perception: distributive, procedural, interactional, and information-al justice. 'Distributive justice' refers to the perceived allocation of rewards or outcomes during the layoff process and following the layoff of the victims. Noer (1993) refers to these outcomes as 'caretaking.' One determinant of distributive justice is the perception of how well the organization provided for the victims or intervened to ensure that the victims were treated fairly. Providing outplacement counseling, generous severance pay allowances, and sufficient notice for victims to search out new opportunities makes the layoff more likely to be perceived as fair. 'Procedural justice' refers to the perceived legitimacy of the layoff and the inclusion of laid-off members in the organizational decision-making process. Brockner and Wiesenfeld (1993) reveal that an antecedent of procedural justice and its effect on survivors' perception of fairness is 'the clarity and adequacy of the explanation the organization provided for the layoff; the more clear and ade-quate the explanation, the greater the perceived fairness' (122-3). Interactional justice is achieved when the organization is perceived to have treated victims with dignity and respect throughout the layoff process. The greater the perceived digni-ty and respect afforded the victims, the more positive the outcomes for survivors (Brockner 1988). Procedural and interactional justice are also referred to as formal justice. There is a substantial body of literature indicating that when formal proce-dures are unjust, they will be associated with negative effects (for example Brockner et al. 1990).

'Informational justice' refers to the amount and type of information provided in the organization's communications with victims about the layoff. Brockner et al. (1990) supports the view that as the clarity of explanation received during the layoffs increases, so does the perception of the layoff as a just and fair decision. Bies (1987) agrees that employees generally react better to undesirable resource allocations when they are given a good reason for those decisions.

Management Planning

The perception that management has engaged in proper planning prior to the layoff is closely linked to trust in management. A survivor who perceives that management had some long-term plan in mind when they decided to downsize the organization will have greater confidence in management's abilities and more faith in their intentions. Greenberg (1990) found that employees' perceptions of planning prior to a wage reduction greatly reduced employee theft and vandalism after the reduction. When the employees were assured by authorities that the wage reductions were temporary, that they were part of an integrated strategy, and that the company would be stronger than ever after the reductions, work-force shrinkage after the pay cut was lower. Clearly, when a less than optimal strategy needs to be implemented, the perception that the organization planned prior to the strategy will lead to more positive results for the organization and the individual. O'Neill and Lenn (1995) and Brockner and Wiesenfeld (1993) argue that as well as articulating a compelling reason for the change (thereby fostering perceptions of procedural and informational justice), management needs to delineate a clear path to the desired future state of the organization. When survivors perceive adequate planning, they will see the future vision for the new, leaner organization and feel that there was adequate notice and due process given to the victims. Trust in management will be the result.

Negative Mood

Negative mood is the other mediator of career motivation in the model set out in figure 1. Many different psychological states of the survivors of a layoff have been studied in the literature: feelings of job insecurity, inequity, relief (Brockner 1988); anger, disappointment, powerlessness (Armstrong-Stassen and Latack 1992); fear, guilt (Brockner 1986); and remorse (Brockner, Davy, and Carter 1985). There is a large body of support in the literature for the experience of negative psychological states and moods. Brockner (1988) found that layoff managers should expect survivors to experience a wide variety of psychological states which may lead to a change in employee behaviour—to risk aversion and lulls in creativity, for example. Armstrong-Stassen and Latack (1992) and Latack (1986) found that layoffs may increase levels of stress, anger, sadness, disgust, disappointment, guilt, worry, fear, and anxiety on the part of survivors. Quinn and Sheppard (1974) list a host of negative moods that can occur in a job-related context: workers may feel downhearted and blue, tired, restless, unclear, hopeless, irritable or unwanted at work. It seems logical to assume that someone who felt any of these emotions would have very little career motivation. If survivors felt this way after a layoff, they would probably not feel they could cope with another negative career disruption. They would not understand clearly what they do well and what they do poorly, and they would want their career to be as peripheral to their lives as possible.

> **L**ayoff managers should expect survivors to experience a wide variety of psychological states which may lead to a change in employee behaviour.

Job Insecurity

In the model of career motivation in figure 1 negative mood is a predictable consequence of job insecurity. Job insecurity, in turn, is a predictable consequence of downsizing (for example, Brockner 1988; Barling, LeDrew, and Kelloway 1997). Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) have suggested that employees' feelings of job insecurity depend on the threat to their jobs and their perceptions of control. This idea is supported by Brockner (1988) within the context of a layoff: 'survivors may come to perceive that they are performing their tasks in order to maintain their job security . . . they may perceive that in order to remain they need to outperform their remaining co-workers' (1988, 216). Kuhnert and Vance (1992) identify two different components. They suggest that employees' feelings of job insecurity depend on their feelings of insecurity about their occupation in the current organization and on the availability of similar work and the demand and compensation for their skills outside the organization where they are currently employed. Feelings of job insecurity can be identified by asking two questions undoubtedly pondered by surviving employees: 'What is the chance I will lose my job here at the downsized organization?' and 'If I do lose my job, what am I going to be able to do about it?'

Continuance commitment (from 'commitment to continue') and perceived planning of the layoff by the organization are the exogenous variables leading to job insecurity in the model in figure 1; they reveal the extent to which survivors are dependent on the downsized organization and believe the organization has a plan in place to realize the intended benefits of the downsizing. Survivors who thought that there was no plan and that the layoff was disorganized would obviously have no assurance that the layoff would have the desired effects on the organizations' success. Survivors would be left wondering if an additional round of poorly planned layoffs would be undertaken with similar haste and this time would affect them. Brockner and Wiesenfeld (1993) cite examples of heightened job insecurity when employees formulate ideas about the implications of working for a declining organization.

Continuance Commitment

Continuance commitment can be interpreted in different ways. Allen and Meyer (1990) view it as loyalty to the organization caused by a lack of desirable alternatives to working there. In my model, however, it indicates the extent to which the layoff has made employees feel trapped in the organization. Survivors who feel trapped by inadequate opportunity or personal cost outside the organization will feel as though all their eggs are in one basket and will perceive higher levels of job insecurity.

In sum, the model in figure 1 indicates that following a layoff the survivors' career motivation is predicted by affective commitment and negative mood. Affective commitment is linked, in turn, with trust in management, and negative mood is linked with job insecurity. Three exogenous variables that deal with the way the layoffs are conducted help to determine employee trust in management and job insecurity: the identification of the survivors with the layoff victims and perceptions of the justice of the layoff and of the organizational planning of the layoff. Finally, continuance commitment helps to determine feelings of insecurity.

> **F**ollowing a layoff the survivors' career motivation is predicted by affective commitment and negative mood.

Testing the Model

The model of career motivation outlined above (figure 1), was tested using data collected from white-collar and professional/technical employees at a large downsized manufacturing company located in a major southern Ontario city. Questionnaires were sent to 185 layoff survivors; 103 questionnaires were completed and returned (response = 55.6%) by 43 professional salaried employees and 60 professional/technical hourly rated employees. Sixty respondents (58.2%) in the sample were male and 34 (33.0%) were female. The respondents had a mean age of 43.1 (range—31–62 years). Nine respondents did not give their age. The organizational tenure of the 103 respondents averaged 19.9 years (range—6.5–38 years). The mean job tenure across respondents was 6.4 years (range—0–25 years). All respondents survived the workforce reduction that had taken place 20 to 36 months before the questionnaire was sent out.

The following sections briefly indicate how the elements in figure 1 were assessed. All of the responses to items in the questionnaire, with the exception of those dealing with career motivation, were scaled using a seven-point scale in which 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. The career motivation items were scored on a five-point scale by asking respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with certain statements about their career, with 1 = not at all and 5 = to a very great extent.[1]

Identification with the Layoff Victims

Psychological identification with the layoff victims was assessed using two items from Brockner et al. (1987). Respondents identified, on a seven-point scale, their perception of the closeness of their personal relationships and of their working relationships with at least some of the terminated individuals.

Perceived Justice of the Layoff

The survivors' perceptions of the justice of the layoff were assessed using items developed by Barling, LeDrew, and Kelloway (1997). Perceptions of formal justice were measured using four items assessing the procedural and interactional fairness of the layoff. For example, respondents were asked whether they believed the procedure used in the department to decide who was to be declared surplus was determined in an ethical and moral manner, and they were asked whether they believed the department treated the people who lost their jobs with dignity. Perceptions of distributive justice were measured with questions about outcomes of the layoff. For example, did survivors feel the package laid-off employees were given was fair? Informational justice was measured with three items. For example, did survivors believe the information provided about the downsizing was comprehensive? The mean of the responses to the ten items in the questionnaire was computed to provide a single variable identifying the perceived justice of the layoff.

1 A full treatment of the statistical details and of the questions asked in this study is available from the library of the Industrial Relations Centre, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.

Perceived Planning of the Layoff

Survivors' perceptions of the planning of the layoff was measured using four items from Barling, LeDrew, and Kelloway (1997). Perceived planning reflected the respondents' understanding of management's attempt to conduct the downsizing as a rational, measured, logical process. For example, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that their organization had maintained the correct pool of resources to ensure a successful future and would keep these resources in the long term.

Job Insecurity

Job insecurity was measured using thirteen items from Kuhnert and Vance (1992). The measure reflects both perceived employment insecurity and respondents' insecurity in their present occupation. For example, respondents were asked whether they could easily find a comparable job elsewhere if they wanted to, and whether or not they were sure how long their present job would last.

Trust in Management

Trust in management was measured with a shortened version of Cook and Wall's (1980) trust in management questionnaire. Trust in management can be thought of as faith in management's intentions (Do employees believe that management in their department is sincere in its attempt to meet the employees' point of view?) and confidence in the actions of management (Do employees think that management would be quite prepared to gain advantage by deceiving employees?).

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment, which reflects employees' willingness to remain employed by the organization and their pride as members of the organization, was assessed using Allen and Meyer's (1990) eight item scale. Respondents were asked, for example, whether the organization had a great deal of personal meaning for them.

Continuance Commitment

The six items used to measure continuance commitment were taken from a scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). One item determined, for example, whether employees felt that too much of their lives would be disrupted if they decided to leave the organization.

Negative Mood

Negative mood was appraised using Quinn and Sheppard's (1974) scale for depressed mood at work. Respondents were asked to rate how they felt when they thought about themselves and their jobs by agreeing or disagreeing with ten statements about their feelings: for example, 'I find myself restless and can't keep still.'
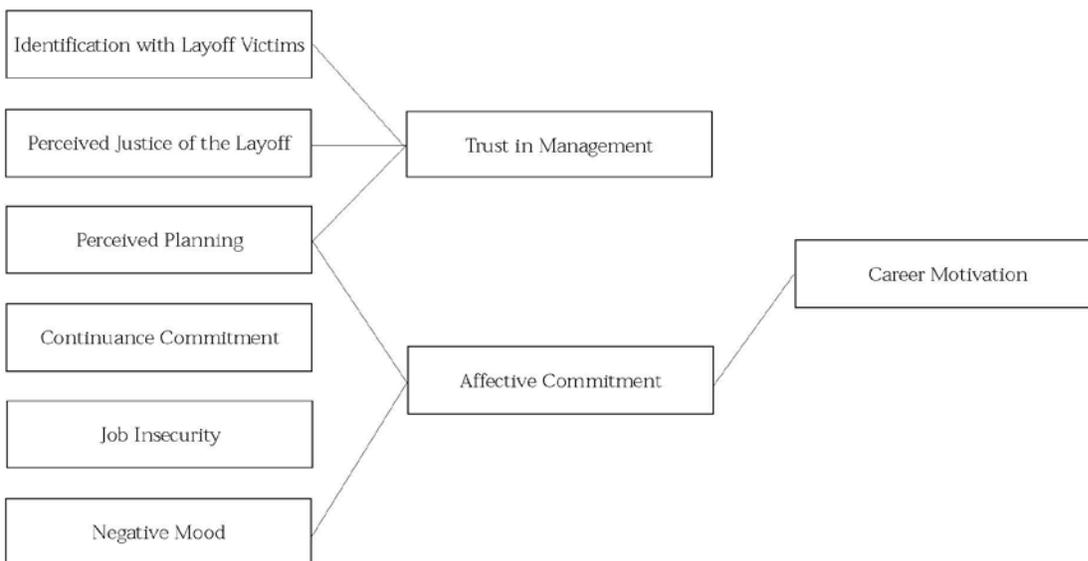
Career Motivation

The seventeen career motivation items were taken from London's (1993) scales for career resilience, career insight, and career identity. The responses were prefaced with the phrase. 'Please rate the extent to which you . . . ' and, as mentioned, were scored on a five-point scale exactly as in London's study. Five items measured career resilience (for example, 'Please indicate the extent to which you are able to adapt to changing circumstances') and career insight ('Please indicate the extent to which you have clear career goals') and seven items measured career identity (for example, 'Please indicate the extent to which you define yourself by your work').

Results

Statistical analysis of the responses to the questionnaire revealed that the model in figure 1 provides a reasonably good fit to the data. However, the goodness-of-fit of one model does not preclude the possibility that other competing models will also fit. Therefore, I generated and tested a competing model with only one level of mediation (figure 2). There was little support for this model in which six exogenous variables (identification with the victims, perceived justice, perceived planning, continuance commitment, negative mood, and job insecurity) were linked to career motivation through trust in management and affective commitment. As I expected, identification with the victims, perceived justice, and perceived planning were linked to trust in management. However, trust in management did not significantly predict career motivation. Perceived planning and negative mood did predict affective commitment. However, continuance commitment and job insecurity were not linked to any variables. When judged by the same criteria as the model in figure 1, the competing model in figure 2 did not fit the data as well.

Identification with the victims, perceived justice, and perceived planning were linked to trust in management.

Figure 2
A Competing Model of Career Motivation with One Level of Mediation

Consequences of the Career Model

The model illustrated in figure 1 of the various factors that help determine the career motivation of survivors of layoffs provides an excellent starting point for empirical investigation of the effects of downsizing and layoffs on the careers of survivors. When survivors identify with the layoff victims and have a close working or personal relationship with them, their trust in management after the layoff is attenuated. This is a predictable consequence when management actions are perceived to affect interpersonal relationships and not simply careers or job-related outcomes. The downsizing manager who is forced to reduce staff receives a clear prescription for action from the model. If survivors perceive that management was fair and just in the allocation of outcomes and information, that the layoff process respected the dignity of victims, and that the action was legitimate, they will have higher trust in management following the layoff. Failure to create these perceptions will have a negative impact on survivor loyalty and may, in turn, create job insecurity.

Equally important is the survivors' perception that management is carefully following a plan or strategy, to the betterment of the overall organization. The notion that layoffs are ad hoc, spurious, or not well thought out deflates trust in management and also makes survivors wonder about the security of their own jobs. A significant contributor to job insecurity is the lack of available employment and benefits outside the organization. Because layoffs and downsizing are so pervasive in the economy, survivors may feel they are 'stuck,' or 'in a rut.' They may want to leave the organization after downsizing but may be too insecure about the opportunities that exist outside the firm. These feelings called continuance commitment in my model also contribute to the overall impression that regardless of which company the survivors find themselves in, they will always feel some level of job insecurity. The model also shows that when survivors experience job insecurity they are likely to experience a variety of negative psychological states: feeling hopeless, restless, tired, irritable or useless. The survivors' experience of these negative moods accounts for a large portion of their inability to remain resilient in the face of career disruption, appraise personal strengths and weaknesses, and find meaning and identity in their chosen occupations and organizations.

Trust in organizational management was found to predict affective commitment. That is, if the survivors continue, for reasons already discussed, to trust in the management of the organization after the layoff, they will feel pride in working for it. Finally, the model predicts that this trustworthy, proud commitment will create an environment that supports career motivation. Survivors in this type of organization are better able to deal with changing circumstances and less than optimal career disruptions and are able to experience insight into their occupational strengths and weaknesses and feel pretty good about the meaning of their job and their identity in it and about their place in the organization.

Despite the fact that survivors showed relatively high levels of job insecurity and high levels of continuance commitment and perceived relatively high levels of negative moods when they thought about the layoff, they also scored high on career motivation. That is, although layoffs are related to negative psychological states, job insecurity, and the pervasive feeling that one is trapped in the organization, career motivation can 'survive' under certain circumstances.

The survivors in my sample perceived the organization to be relatively even-handed and responsible. Perhaps that is why they scored high in career motivation. However, it is important to remember, as well, that the new career literature suggests that factors internal to the organization (things like fairness, management planning, and loyalty) are not the only ones to consider. As we have seen, the current literature suggests that careers are increasingly boundary less and driven by the needs and values of the individual, not the organization. The results reported here support London's (1993) contention that career motivation remains stable over time and may not be directly attributable to organizational variables, as my model indicates. This indicates that employees will continue to build career motivation even if it means doing different things in new organizational environments. Downsizing managers should realize that these results indicate employees are not as dependent on organizations as they used to be, and they should recognize that, as the career path trends discussed in the recent career literature indicate, employees are willing to do what is necessary to build career resilience, insight, and identity—with or without their current organization. Future research may address this problem by assessing survivors' perceptions of career development: do they view career development as an individual responsibility or, in the traditional light, as the responsibility of the organization?

Implications for the Organization and Individual Survivors

These perceptions have implications for the downsized organization and the individual survivor. The fact that survivors remain hopeful about future career endeavors following downsizing indicates that the downsizing firm should take up the challenge of optimizing a work environment that nurtures career resilience and allows survivors opportunities to develop realistic perceptions about their work capabilities. I suggest that the data and the current career literatures point to the need for a shared responsibility to develop career motivation. London (1996) identifies ways in which organizations and executives can build career resilience, insight, and identity for displaced and surviving workers. The recommendations include rewarding continuous learning and providing information to strengthen self-insight and knowledge about organizational change and opportunities for enhancing continued employability, particularly for older survivors. The trimmed model of career motivation outlined here predicts that this 'caretaking' will lead to trust in management and affective commitment to the downsized organization. Survivors will be able to deal with negative career disruptions and their associated stressors when the organization offers 'regular appraisals . . . retraining opportunities, career sabbaticals and counseling' (Cartwright, Cooper, and Murphy 1995, 227). Frank information may reduce the survivors' tendency to feel trapped and lead to lowered insecurity and a more positive work environment. This may be part of the reason for the positive effects of perceived informational justice and planning on trust in management during the layoff process. Thus there is an implicit call here for more elaborate performance measures and appraisals, along with training and educational opportunities to help sustain the career insight and career identify of surviving employees.

Individual employees must come to terms with the adequacy of new employer-employee relationships and reframe their appraisals of what it means to have a successful career. The current data indicate that many employees are already coming to terms with new types of career development, while some still react quite negatively to the job insecurity it creates. Mirvis and Hall (1994) introduce the idea of finding

> **E**mployees are not as dependent on organizations as they used to be, and are willing to do what is necessary to build career resilience, insight, and identity.

success in one's life work instead of one's working life. They claim that the boundary less career expands the concept of career success. Psychological career success now extends beyond appraising work in a job at an organization to success in work as a spouse, parent, community member, and self-developer. If they are to remain a priority to the increasingly resilient survivor who craves career success, organizations must learn to reduce the negative effects of job insecurity through fair layoff execution (especially when layoff victims are particularly close to survivors), dissemination of planning information, and respect for the myriad ways in which psychological success can be achieved in one's life work.

Limitations of the Model

Although the model of career motivation tested here fits reasonably well, this support should be tempered by several considerations. There is one-way causal flow in the system of variables in the model; reciprocal causation between variables is ruled out. For example, there is a causal flow from job insecurity to negative mood (figure 1), but not from negative mood to job insecurity. The analysis also assumes for technical reasons, that all relevant variables have been included in the model; however, other variables may affect layoff survivors and their careers and may improve the model's overall fit. These factors include career stress (Sauter, Murphy, and Hurrell 1990), coping strategies employed by survivors (Armstrong-Stassen and Latack 1992), group interventions after the layoff (Noer 1993), and time elapsed since the layoff (Allen et al. 1995).

The use of a single organization and perceptual survey data in this study may have affected the results. It is impossible, of course, to contrast the effect of time elapsed since a layoff when the respondents have all survived the same layoff. Informal, tacit organizational cultures, codes, or policies may remain unnoticed when using the survey method and may also affect the validity of the study. Future research could overcome this problem through interviews with key employees, managers, and change agents involved in the downsizing. The validity of the study may be affected as well by treating moods or perceptions as separate items in a list. The survivors did not experience helplessness, then anger, then hopelessness, then irritability, they felt these negative moods at different times and in different combinations. The simultaneous effect of negative moods or fairness perceptions may be lost as the respondent checks off each mood and perception separately. These weaknesses could be addressed by additional research relying on experimental and qualitative designs to complement existing research. Finally, the sample size (103 respondents) is somewhat small, which raises questions regarding generalization. This weakness could be partially addressed using a longitudinal design dealing with change over time to provide greater external validity and allow for moderators like time elapsed since a layoff, job tenure, and organizational tenure (Brockner 1988), although there are well-documented problems with such a design (Latack 1984).

Conclusion

The model of career motivation outlined here provides support for Barling, LeDrew, and Kelloway's (1997) model of layoff outcomes and London's (1993) concept of the stability of career motivation. The stable perceptions of career motivation revealed

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by the survivors of layoffs support the growing body of literature that describes the emergence of the new boundary less or protean career, which is increasingly driven by the individual's needs and values and is viewed as a shared responsibility of the organization and the individual. Organizations that use the strategies outlined in this study to minimize the negative effects of layoffs on the careers of survivors must therefore make survivors aware of the new career models that are not as linear as their traditional counterparts.

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