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## Welcome!

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the first Great Place to Work<sup>™</sup> Australia Newsletter. Many of you know Great Place to Work<sup>™</sup> Australia through our Best Places to Work lists in partnership with BRW Magazine, conferences, seminars, and client engagements, and look to us for inspiration, trends, and tips on how to create or sustain a strong workplace culture and how to realise the business benefits that we see inside the Best Places to Work.



Through the year, the Great Place to Work<sup>™</sup> Australia Newsletter will bring you stories, fresh ideas, and best practices from the Best Places to Work for and companies that are committed to the journey of creating a great workplaces and happy to share what they're learning along the way.

We know that many organisations and individuals are under incredible stress right now as the economy brings new strains to our businesses and personal lives. The articles in this inaugural newsletter detail behaviours your organisation can pursue to maintain Trust during these challenging times. We invite you to share this newsletter with your colleagues and friends and contact us with any questions or story ideas you have for future editions.

Welcome.

## Maintaining Morale During Tough Times

What can an employer do to help maintain morale when the business, or many of our individual employees, may be struggling financially?

*Amy Lyman, Co-Founder and Director of Corporate Research, Great Place to Work<sup>®</sup> Institute*

Maintaining morale in difficult financial times can be a significant challenge when there seems to be no time and no money to direct towards morale building activities. Yet this is not something to be ignored. There are many ways that leaders and managers can help to maintain morale during difficult times. First, leaders need to be present at the workplace, to walk around and talk with people, listen to their stories. Second, leaders need to say "thank you" to everyone they see – thank you for

working hard, thank you for contributing. Third, leaders need to share information with people about the steps they are taking to keep the business as financially sound as possible. Employees need to know that their leaders are working hard to keep the business strong. Finally, it is important to plan some enjoyable events during tough times. Potlucks, employee hosted art shows, picnics at a local park, a talent contest, or volunteering together, can all help people to maintain their strong camaraderie during challenging times.

*For extended thoughts on "Maintaining Trust in Difficult Times", [download an extended version of this article](#)*

## **Fostering Employees Trust and Loyalty**

*Trish Dagg & Chris Taylor, Great Place to Work™ Australia*

Difficult financial times pose a challenge for employers and employees. However, as Amy Lyman co-founder of the Great Place to Work™ Institute points out; 'When people trust their leaders, work together to find solutions, and enjoy spending time with each other, the co-operation and commitment that follow help to fuel a collective effort to succeed.'



Indeed in Australia we have seen that this is certainly the case for the companies on the Great Place to Work™, 2009 Best Places to Work List. At all of these organisations we find leaders who have made a long-term commitment to creating trust and making employees feel valued. Our research has consistently found that leaders build trust with employees through walking the talk, valuing employees and their contributions to the organisation, respecting their work life balance, having policies and practices in place that take into account the needs and desires of their unique employees, and communicating in a way that is honest and transparent even in tough times.

Organisations on the 2009 list of Best Places to Work in Australia were all assessed using our employee opinion survey, the Trust Index© which has been developed by the Great Place to Work™ institute and is used in over 40 countries to examine workplace culture. The companies on the 2009 list of best companies to work for in Australia come in a variety of shapes in sizes. They represent many industries and range in size from 20 employees to more than 4400. And while all exhibit cultures of high trust, we do know that what works in one organisation may not work in another. It is therefore important for organisations to take into consideration the needs and desires of employees when planning programs and policies that will help foster positive relationships amongst staff and high trust relationships between staff and management, to help to sustain a great work environment and ensure that

employees will want to stay with the organisation a long time.

**Watch this space over the next 5 issues to view highlights from the top ten companies from the 2009 Best Places to Work Study.**



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