

Adversity Reveals Character

We have all heard the quote, "Adversity does not build character, it reveals it." While this was probably not meant to address business management or leadership it applies just the same. Very few companies have escaped adversity in the past 6-9 months. This time period has challenged leaders and managers more than any time in recent history. It has also provided the vehicle to reveal true character.

Terminations. Salary reductions. Bonus eliminations. Benefit reductions. All on Management's top 10 list of least favorite things to do. This has been adversity for sure and it has affected almost every organization and manager in Central Iowa. At the same time, it has also provided the window for organizations to demonstrate their true character.

As you may expect, we have spoken with hundreds of individuals that have experienced compensation reductions or lost employment in 2009. Here are some of the comments we have heard in recent months;

- "I was provided a fair severance."
- "My employer is providing for outplacement support".
- "If the executives are taking salary cuts, I guess I can too".
- "I understand why cuts are necessary".
- "There is no severance pay".
- "What are outplacement services"?
- "Why is my boss still entitled his bonus but I lose mine"?
- "These cuts will just put more money in management's pocket".

The comparisons go on and on. These challenges do provide opportunity for companies and their leaders to show their true colors and to differentiate themselves moving forward. As you face difficult HR issues, please keep in mind it is also an excellent opportunity to show your business character.