

Back in 1993, IBM had its first layoffs in history, and everybody took notice. Tom Peters wrote a book, and the concept of loyalty took a few steps backwards. I think what we have today is a bit of a chicken or egg situation; did employee loyalty diminish because corporations no longer care, or is it because we treat employees as if they aren't loyal, so they're simply reacting that way?

We'll never know, but I can tell you this; I believe that there are millions of qualified, effective employees still out there that just want to trade a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, and these folks make up the bulk of your work force. Not everyone wants to be an entrepreneur or run the company.

So, what I tell managers is to simply be genuine with your folks and show them that you truly value them as human beings. Do things to show that you're glad they're on the team. Once employees begin to believe you really mean it, you'll be amazed at how open they become to performance improvement opportunities and will bust their rear to help make the company strong - not because you told them to or because you're dangling carrots or threatening with sticks, but because it's *they're* company and they have a growing level of pride.

Then, you get their improved productivity, lower turnover, higher morale, better teamwork, and lower training costs for no additional cost.