1. When one person isn't working out

Check the system first, then give one clear written warning, prepare, keep it short, and tell the team simply.

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1 Five steps

Step	What to do	Example (Biljana, Skopje)
1 Check the system first	Run the five questions: did they know the standard, were they trained, did they have the tools and the time? If the answers a	Check: Have the tools and the time? If the answers a
2 One written warning	Sit down in private. Write three clear standards, a fair deadline, and offer extra standards; see below; a short notes of each-ir	Three standards; see below; a short notes of each-ir
3 Decide, then prepare	If little has changed, decide first. Check the local rules and the contract with a weekly or shift cover; two bakers can extra ov	Two weeks of shift cover; two bakers can extra ov
4 A short, kind conversation	Monday morning, not Friday evening, in a quiet room. Decision in the first sentence, reason in plain words, a fair reference f	About 12 minutes. Final pay, keys, a fair reference f
5 Tell the team simply	Who has left, who covers the work, and that you will not discuss the details. Not blame, no details shared.	The Not blame, no details shared.

2 Illustrative result

Biljana, bakery in Skopje, three shops, 14 staff, monthly sales about $62,000. Waste in one shop had climbed to about 9%, against about 4% in the others. Within two months of a fair process, waste in that shop came down to about 4.5%. Two bakers said they were relieved standards still meant something. These are examples, not promises. Example figures. General education, not legal, HR or financial advice. Employment rules vary by country, so talk to a qualified adviser before letting anyone go.

2. When the business has to shrink

Cut other costs first, choose roles with written criteria, follow the rules and add what you can, tell people privately on the same day, reset the team that

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1 Five steps

Step	What to do	Example (Tom, Christchurch)
1 Cut everything else first	Pause unused leases, cancel software nobody uses, delay purchases, and look at overtime before cutting roles.	Two equipment leases paused, unused software
2 Roles, not people	Write the criteria: skills, workload, the needs of each crew. Not who you like. Keep the criteria in Systex so any one can see	Chose which criteria in Systex for the more early
3 Follow the rules, then add what you can	Check notice, consultation and any redundancy pay with an adviser. Then add what you can afford: written references, and	An extra two weeks of pay, written references, and
4 Private, same day	Meet each affected person one by one, in the morning, with paperwork ready. Decision first, reasons, next steps, support	Three people, one by one, the team gets, support
5 Reset the team that stays	Explain the new plan, who covers what, and what the business needs to grow again. Answer every question you can	Then again. Answer every question you can treat th

2 Illustrative result, and partners

Tom, landscaping company in Christchurch, 18 staff. After a contract ended, monthly sales fell from about $85,000 to about $60,000. His first thought was to cut six jobs. He cut three, not six. Within eight months, sales had climbed back to about $72,000 a month, and he was able to offer one of those people their job back. If the hard decision is a partner: talk early, use the written agreement, agree a fair valuation and payout, set a timetable, and tell customers and staff one shared message. If there is no written agreement yet, write one while you still get along. These are examples, not promises. Example figures. General education, not legal, HR or financial advice. Employment rules vary by country, so talk to a qualified adviser before letting anyone go.

3. This week

Name the decision, write the standard, check the system, book the conversation, and look up the rules first.

1 Do this week

Name the one person or decision you have been putting off	[ ] Done
Write down the standard that is being missed, in one sentence	[ ] Done
Run the five questions, so you know it is not the system	[ ] Done
Look up the employment rules that apply to you	[ ] Done
Put a date in your diary for one clear, private conversation	[ ] Done
Keep the notes, checklists and handover in Systex (our own product, loftybiz.net)	[ ] Done

2 Watch-outs

One person: surprising people (if the first time they hear about a problem is the day you let them go, you skipped the warning); a long, emotional meeting (kind is clear and short); guessing at the rules. Cutting back: cutting too little, too late, then having to do it twice; letting the news leak before you speak to the people affected; forgetting the people who stay.

Biljana, Tom and their figures are illustrative. These are examples, not promises. Example figures. General education, not legal, HR or financial advice. Employment rules vary by country, so talk to a qualified adviser before letting anyone go. Free tool from LoftyBiz. Systex (our own product): loftybiz.net