

Effective Ways to Motivate Employees

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WHAT'S THE DRIVE

What is it that drives an employee? More specifically, what is it that causes an employee to WANT to do his or her job? After all, the answer to this question is the key to the motivation of employees and employer happiness. And, even more important than knowing what it is that motivates an employee is whether or not this "motivation" is something that will cause an employee to go through the motions of doing the job or instill actual desire for a job well done in the employee's mind.

The answers to these questions and more are what should always be on every employer's mind if they are to create effective, productive workforces. A lack of motivation is a true killer, as anyone certainly knows.

SHOW ME THE MONEY...OR NOT

Popularized by the movie Jerry Maguire, starring Tom Cruise and Renee Zellweger, "Show me the money" has become a commonly used term in society. And, often, this is the basis for what most people think is at the top of the list for employee motivation. But, is it?

Naturally, higher pay is never frowned upon. There is not a person in the world that couldn't use more money. Between bills, children, higher education, and personal desires, among many other reasons, money is a factor that can never be ignored. It is a need that we must all have filled.

Many companies use money as incentive for motivation. Is this wrong? Not necessarily. Big pay raises and bonuses are always something that a person can use and these are things that will certainly never be turned down. Cash is a motivator that will always be popular. And, if possible, money is always a good choice to use for employee motivation because who doesn't like money?

But, money should not be the ONLY tool used from the toolbox of motivation. There are many other choices for motivational increase. In fact, many employees who claim money is the only thing that will drive their motivation higher do so because there is a lack of any other form of compensation. This frame of mind adheres to the comment so often heard, "Well, they better pay me more money or give me a bonus because I'm sure not getting anything else out of working here." In other words, there sure isn't anything else the employee is receiving that even remotely resembles compensation to increase motivation.

SOMETHING ELSE

Employee contribution is something that can increase employee motivation. If an employee is regularly able to contribute thoughts, ideas, and suggestions to problems at hand or regular work activities, that is a feeling of accomplishment which goes a long way. It makes an employee feel as though he or she is important and, hence, their motivation is elevated.

Recognition is another form of motivation. If all an employee hears is the things he or she does wrong, the opposite affect of motivation will occur. Of course, an employee is going to do things wrong, at times. But, they will inevitably do things right, as well. Let them know when this happens, always.

If an employee feels he or she has the respect of his or her peers and colleagues, this is another motivation booster. Stifle negative comments in the workplace. Do not allow employees to talk down to one another and/or "drag each other through the mud". Likewise, make sure you don't do the same when other employees are able to see it happen to a fellow co-worker. That's bad for moral and only downplays motivation.

Keeping an employee “in the loop” is something else that is important to motivation. When an employee feels he or she is not up-to-date with what is occurring in the company or their department, that is a message to the employee that says, “You are not important.” That’s not the kind of message that increases motivation. Keep information flowing to each employee; let them know what the company is doing and the direction it is taking.

Stay flexible. Make an absolute effort to ensure your employee is not tied up in red tape. If an employee is not able to solve problems with a degree of flexibility because there are too many company rules hampering common sense progress, an employee feels nothing but frustration. Motivation is not built on frustration.

Constant check-in with higher-ups when working on a project undermines an employee’s confidence and willingness to think for themselves. It also deteriorates motivation.

Make sure plenty of sufficient resources are available for an employee’s use. Motivation cannot thrive if an employee is constantly faced with having inadequate resources to do the job.

Create a fun and stimulating work place. Let everyone address each other on a first name basis or have a “casual dress day”. Encourage employees to create a work environment that is as comfortable as possible and not so office-like by bringing in personal pictures and things such as plants, for example. This will only promote creativity and, in the long run, increase motivation.

Communicate with your employee. Find out what interests them and what doesn’t. Speaking with an employee frequently shows that you care about them in more ways than simply wanting them to keep up with productivity. This will increase an employee’s motivation as well.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

Keep these points in mind and motivation will have a chance to soar:

- Employee contribution important
- Recognition from an employer a must
- Retaining respect of peers and colleagues
- Keeping employee informed
- Stay flexible and make sure the employee can avoid as much red tape as possible
- Constant check-in with higher-ups only leads to micro managing and lack of motivation
- Make sure an employee has sufficient resources available to them
- Create a fun and stimulating work environment
- Make sure you communicate

Keeping these methods of compensation in mind is what it takes to understand what it is that drives your employee to want to do a better job. They must WANT to do a better job or the work they do will never be as excellent as it could be. If you are ever in doubt as to what it is that drives your employee, simply ask, either in a group meeting or one-on-one. In fact, asking an employee what it is that motivates him or her is a good idea right from the start. Then, you can always be sure of what to provide.

All in all, make sure that money isn’t the only thing you can offer an employee to increase his or her motivation. If it is, then as soon as the money is better somewhere else, your employee’s motivation will definitely increase...working for the other company.