

How to motivate people

What motivates one person may not motivate another. What inspires a person one day may not inspire them the next. Unlike financial figures, people are not predictable or consistent. But there are still many things you can do to keep the culture of your company upbeat and individuals motivated to do well.

How you work will affect how employees work for you.

Lead by example. You are not the only one who does workplace evaluations. Your employees are observing how well you perform every day. If you have a positive attitude and a strong work ethic, your employees will likely have the same. Having a vision to share with employees so that they know what you are doing, where you are going and why, will increase their commitment to the company's success. And always follow through on your promises.

Provide the support your employees need.

Most people want to do a good job. They want to be proud of their accomplishments so help them to do their job well by providing adequate training. On-going training encourages continual improvement. Also consider offering them the opportunity to attend outside training courses which, if you pay for them, are completely tax deductible.

Employees are more dedicated if they feel that they play an important role in the success of the business. So give them responsibility but remember to also give them the authority required to meet their responsibilities.

Provide feedback.

Give public, positive reinforcement for what is done well and private, constructive criticism for what needs improvement. Personally congratulate employees for a job well done. Publicly recognise them for good work. Consider an "Employee of the Week" award to encourage everyone to do their best. And listen to them. Let them know that their opinion is valued.

Adapt to employee needs.

The employer - employee relationship is a two way street. If you want them to stick with you and work hard, you must meet their needs as well. Ask your employees what motivates them. Find out whether flex-time would be helpful, what productivity bonuses mean the most to them, whether they have personal development goals that you can help with. A caring and responsive attitude will build employee commitment.

Motivating employees comes down to respect. Respect for them as individuals, respect for their work and commitment and respect for their need to know the future of your business because their future is tied to it. So keep employees informed about what is happening in the business.

Finally, be likeable and have fun. Your staff will put in that extra effort if they like you and enjoy going to work. So where does compensation fit into the mix? Fair compensation is a basic requirement for employees. You should also consider a clear pay increase policy, commission for sales people and/or profit sharing. While pay is important it is only one aspect of the picture. A positive, supportive workplace keeps great employees great.

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