



Creating a Motivational Environment

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Leaders and business owners around the country continuously lament that employees could be more productive. You hear things like “people are just going through the motions.” People are saying, “Our company is desperate to improve sales, increase operating efficiency, and reduce expenses which will boost profits.” With all this urgency and need for improved results they still say many employees do not appear motivated. Leaders even voice the feeling that for an employee “having a job should be motivation enough.”

Even today, is simply having a job enough to create motivation? No! As a matter of fact, something the individual already possess rarely motivates them to extend themselves beyond their normal activity level, to work harder or longer. To get individuals to work more, or perform at higher levels, you must provide an environment where their interests are protected and they perceive there are reasons for them to extend themselves. What are those reasons that increase motivation?

Mission that motivates. In today’s demanding business environment the question is, “What can you as a leader do to improve the motivation of your work group?” Begin by creating a “mission that motivates.” This mission must be something large, is something that everyone perceives as beneficial for all, and is perceived as making a real difference so everyone will be better off when the mission is accomplished. The best example of a “mission that motivates” was in the 60’s when the U.S. Space program set the objective to put the first man on the moon. This caused those involved to unselfishly work longer hours and make many sacrifices to accomplish this worth-while goal. Find a mission that motivates, even if it’s as simple as protecting jobs in a certain location or taking over the position of leadership in the industry, or reaching a specific result by year-end.

Once you have a mission that motivates, publicize it frequently and at all levels to get everyone to focus their thoughts and behavior on its accomplishment. Everything that is said and done must be viewed in terms of whether it gets the organization closer to accomplishing this mission. Get all employees involved. Assign specific tasks for each to accomplish. This creates individual, as well as group, motivation.

Set standards and goals. Standards are minimum accepted, performance targets. Everyone must clear this hurdle to meet their job requirements, but don’t just stop there. Set goals which are higher than standards for both individuals and the group. Don’t just focus on goals, but also ensure you hold people accountable to meet and exceed minimum standards. If someone is not pulling their weight or reaching standards, take action without delay! Lack of correcting

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performance problems, or delaying action, devalues the contribution of those who are working hard, contributing to the mission, and achieving goals.

Monitor and publicize progress. Publicly track and display the success of individuals and groups accomplishing their goals. Measure progress each step toward the goal. In the lunch or break room put up a tracking chart so everyone can see progress toward the overall the mission. By simply making performance standings public and showing progress toward goals, it will create increased motivation.

Reward progress frequently. Don't just reward performance when the individual crosses the finish line, reward each step all along the way. Be sure to think in terms of small rewards, not just large ones. Small rewards can be as simple as an extra fifteen minutes for lunch for a job well done. For getting things done early, you can allow people to leave early on a Friday. Create an atmosphere where everyone celebrates the success of others and looks for ways to increase success.

Creating a motivational environment means understanding the needs of employees and creating an environment where employees can satisfy their needs. If you look at the word motivation it can almost be a contradiction of the two words motive and action. Give employees a positive and worthwhile motive for their actions and they will be motivated.

While a leader can identify the mission that motivates, he or she must also involve employees in setting the objectives, getting their cooperation, and supporting them to create a motivating environment. Never before has business needed more effective leaders to ensure success. Search for ways to create a motivational environment!