



MANAGEMENT FUNDAMENTALS HOW TO MOTIVATE

Everyone, even the most disinterested team member, is motivated by something. The challenge for managers is to identify each individual's motivational drivers and play to them – it will improve their performance and your job satisfaction, as **Scott Beagrie** finds out



Credit where it's due: regular praise will help motivate team members

MOTIVATION IS ARGUABLY ONE of a manager's most powerful tools since it can self-propel your charges to increased productivity and efficiency, make them better at innovating, not to mention happier and more fulfilled. As Alison Gill, managing director of talent management consultancy Getfeedback and a former Olympic rower, points out, tapping into what motivates people equals 'free fuel' as far as organisational productivity and employee satisfaction is concerned. Some managers erroneously think employees can be given a dose of motivation by injection, but the drive to do well has to come from within, and that is the manager's first challenge.

01 UNDERSTAND WHAT MAKES YOUR TEAM TICK

To gain the motivational results you want it's important to establish what individual team members think about their work and what really matters to them. Invest time in getting to know one another from a personal as well as a professional perspective. Appreciating what they like to do, what they feel they are good at and what disheartens, frustrates or even concerns them will help you start to build a picture of their motivational profile. Coax information from them by asking open questions which will allow them to reveal occasions when they felt at their most productive, stretched and inspired, and listen carefully to what they say. Above all,

show them that you are genuinely interested in what's going on in their lives.

02 ALIGN NEEDS AND GOALS

Having explored what makes your team members tick, work out how to align their expectations with the goals of the department or business. This may mean redistributing work or redesigning job roles, and while it may not be possible to balance everyone's needs perfectly and still meet the business aim, such adjustments signal your intentions are good. Make sure everyone understands the aims and objectives of the team and wider business, and it's crucial that they understand how they contribute to the bigger picture.

THIS MONTH

- 048 THE SCIENCE OF PERSUASION
- 050 TAMING TIGERS
- 052 MEDIA MOGUL
- 056 LAST GASP

Involve them, where possible, in the mission planning process and seek input from them on how goals can be achieved to engage them further. Regularly praise progress and/or thank individuals and give full credit for their achievements.

03 MAKE MOTIVATION LAST

Managers need to continually monitor and review behaviours and performance. This can't be left solely to an annual appraisal, so implement regular one-to-ones in which you give feedback and clarify and set new personal objectives. It's important to identify new ways to challenge employees, whether it's by giving them more responsibility or encouraging them to step out of their comfort zone. It can be a fine line between creating a healthy challenge and overloading, which in turn can be demotivating, so be sure to bring them into the goal-setting process.

04 OBSERVE GROUP DYNAMICS

Motivating people draws on a range of core management skills including delegating, influencing and facilitating, but there are also some inherent traits that make some

individuals better motivators than others. Managers who are empathetic, reflective and able to see another person's standpoint often have a natural advantage. Gill advises that managers learn to observe and interpret what they see. 'Use your interpretations as a means to explore what works for your staff. Learn to ask really good questions and build your ability to empathise with people by truly exploring things from their perspective.' She adds that individuals who are hopeful and optimistic about their chances of success are typically good at motivating others. Managers should also pay attention to group dynamics and connect those with similar passions who are likely to spur each other on. 'Galvanise them in united action to achieve greater things,' she says.

05 ADAPT TO THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE

Bear in mind that an employee's values and motivations will change as they move through different stages of their life. Moreover, the economic climate has changed many people's priorities and put financial and job security high on everyone's list. The recession has brought a raft of

additional motivational challenges for managers, not least in those companies where employees have watched colleagues being laid off. Make them aware that they are key to business survival and this will hopefully keep them focused and motivated to perform. It's also vital to keep employees in the loop instead of letting the rumour mill take over, which has a detrimental effect on motivation.

06 MEASURE YOUR OWN PERFORMANCE

To a large extent you'll be able to assess your own performance as a motivational tour de force by the performance of your charges. One of the positive side effects of being a successful motivator is that it does your own motivation levels a power of good. Gill explains that motivation is self-feeding – when someone in your team successfully carries out a task as a result of your motivating efforts, you want to repeat the experience. 'There's an element of being able to recognise the button and push it to get results, but at the same time, employees' motivation will rub back onto the manager and give them the energy and focus to push the team further,' she says. ■



MOTIVATION CHECKLIST

- Acquire a complete appreciation of individual team members' motivational profiles
- Try to balance the needs of the group with business objectives
- Provide regular and constructive feedback
- Get fully behind your team, encourage them and support their decisions
- Recognise that motivations might change over time

THE WAY I SEE IT



ALISON GILL MANAGING DIRECTOR, GETFEEDBACK

Q. Which organisations would you say are particularly good at securing high levels of motivation?

The best employers thoughtfully match their cultures, benefits and management practices to the needs and desires of their workers and don't get hung up on following 'best practice' which can be completely unsatisfactory for your specific business. The SAS Institute has

created an employment brand that says: 'Come to work for us and enjoy a campus-like environment, and have a life outside of work.' This software-development company is famous for its three per cent turnover rate in an industry where 20% is the norm.

O2 works tirelessly to create a working environment that cares for its employees and customers, focusing hard on engaging them

and making space for their home lives.

Q. Are there any misconceptions about motivation?

Don't confuse energising people with motivation. Motivational speakers do a great job of energising people; this is not the same as truly understanding the things that motivate individuals over the long term. Avoid applying the same rule

to all, as different people are motivated by different things – for example, setting really challenging goals motivates some and de-motivates others.

Q. What's the latest thinking?

There are endless studies that show it's the direct line manager who builds or damages employee commitment. Holding managers accountable for how motivated (or not) their

charges are is becoming increasingly popular.

Futurologist Patrick Dixon criticises the world's leading management gurus as being 'relatively silent [on] motivation'. He suggests that work has lost meaning and compels us to 'forget the old days when ambition meant rushing up the career ladder. Today the great dual ambition is to have a satisfying job and a fulfilling personal life'.