How To …

Get Your Employees Fired-Up To Achieve

When individuals and teams are motivated, extraordinary things happen. The group seems to be on fire. Employees don’t simply perform their jobs, they attack them – eager to make contributions. And the results are obvious: customers are delighted, employees are energized, innovations – large and small – happen with regularity, revenues are healthy, and the organization continually grows and develops.

Consider this: Your success – your very job itself – depends upon motivation! It’s a critical component of leadership … something deserving of your constant attention and focus. Fact is, if you can’t open the door of possibility for others, or light a fire under someone to create a sense of importance, the results you achieve will be mediocre at best. So, too, will be your reputation as a leader.

So how can you motivate people? Well, the academic answer is you can’t! Motivation is internal – it comes from deep within each of us. The only person who can truly motivate a person is the person. Sure, you can order someone to do something. Pick up the proverbial stick and most people will comply. But that approach neither brings out a person’s best effort, nor does it encourage sustained good performance. You don’t have to be a rocket scientist to know that “my way or the highway” supervision is the anti-matter of enthusiasm and commitment.

Although you can’t control motivation, you certainly can affect it. You can create conditions where employees want to be motivated and therefore motivate themselves. And here’s one you can take to the bank: With few exceptions, all people want to achieve, contribute, and be a part of something special. Our inherent drive challenges us to achieve. The task of the leader, then, is to harness and nurture that drive; to feed it and encourage it to grow. The following pages should help you do just that.
Motivation Tips

- **Teach Business Literacy**
  One powerful way to get people motivated is to teach them the business of the business. The more people understand how a successful organization is run, the better they’ll be able to contribute to your overall mission and the bottom line … and feel like they truly are a part of your success.

- **Involve Them In Decision Making**
  Have an important decision to make? Let employees decide! Or at least ask for their ideas and suggestions. They are, after all, the ones who will feel the impact the most. Besides, you’ll probably end up with a better decision – one that your people will be inclined to support because they helped make it.

- **Let Your Employees Lead**
  Help others on your team develop by letting them take the lead on certain activities and projects. Most of us like “being in charge” – at least some of the time. It’s a great way to build skills, commitment, and responsibility.

- **Address Performance Problems Early**
  One of the surest ways to demotivate employees is allowing people to do sub-par work. When that happens, others have to pick up the slack. You owe it to the rest of the team to address an employee’s deficiencies as soon as you become aware of them. Waiting only increases the intensity of everyone else’s bad feelings.

- **“Spread The Wealth”**
  Rotate the drudge work so that everyone shares part of the load. Likewise, spread around the high-profile assignments so that every person has an occasional opportunity to strut his or her stuff.

- **Keep Them Informed**
  Hold regular “state of the business” meetings to keep everyone informed on what’s happening within the organization (future plans, new products or services, planned purchases, etc.). Make sure people do NOT feel “kept in the dark.”
Go Beyond The Tangible
To be sure, tangible acknowledgments (awards) for long-term service and special accomplishments certainly have their place. But lasting motivation occurs when people are given challenging assignments, fulfilling tasks, and ongoing, positive feedback. Put your focus there, and you’ll cause people to care about themselves AND the job they’re doing.

If you ask people confidentially what they want most in their job – if they’re paid anything decent at all – they will say a greater sense of self-worth …
~ Fritz Maytag

Think “Development”
Make developing the members of your team (and yourself) one of your top priorities. Besides providing formal training, pursue opportunities for building skills, awareness, and confidence that require minimal time and resources (e.g., watching videos, distributing industry publications, mentoring, etc.).

Always Give The “Why”
A combined lesson from Human Nature 101 and Common Sense 101: There’s a much better chance that people will be motivated and give their enthusiastic support if they understand the reason behind a goal, assignment, or decision. So, always follow the what with the why!

Respect Their Time
If you expect employees to believe that their work is important, you have to believe it, too. More importantly, you have to behave like you believe it! Don’t expect people to drop whatever they’re doing every time you need something. Instead, ask if they have a few minutes to chat. Better yet, ask for a time when they’ll be available to meet with you.
The key to sparking employee motivation is turning your good intentions into actions. You have to apply the ideas and strategies you find in this handbook, as well as others you discover ... you have to “walk the motivation talk.” And to make sure you stay on track, you should monitor and periodically assess how well you’re doing. Here’s a short self-assessment to help you do that.

Mark your calendar or personal planner as a reminder. Once every three months, get a notepad, turn to this page, and answer the questions below. Analyze your responses. Are you satisfied with what you see? If you are, keep doing what you’ve been doing. If you’re not satisfied, make the appropriate changes. It is, after all, your success that’s ultimately at stake!

### Self-Assessment On Motivation

What SPECIFICALLY have I done in the last 3 months to...

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<td>... Help others learn, develop, and grow?</td>
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<td>... Support the people who work for, and with, me?</td>
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<td>... Communicate, listen, and keep people informed?</td>
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<td>... Involve people in the processes, decisions, and changes that affect them?</td>
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<td>... Recognize performance and reward achievement?</td>
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<td>... Create and encourage fun and enjoyment?</td>
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<td>... Maintain high standards and expectations?</td>
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<td>... Exhibit contagious enthusiasm?</td>
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<td>... Demonstrate that I care – about work AND people?</td>
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<td>... Set the example for the behaviors I desire from others?</td>
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