

## **Motivation – the key to Staff retention**

By applying some simple success principles on a regular basis as part of the normal management process, organisations will enhance the attitudes, motivation and performance levels of their staff. This will not only improve corporate bottom line performance, but also help to keep and retain staff.

So here are some pointers for successful motivation.

- **Introduce a coaching culture.** Rather than finger-pointing and asking “why?” focus instead on what is working well. Shift the emphasis from blame to support, concentrate on developing strengths, and build on weaknesses rather than highlighting them. If shortcomings have to be addressed, remember the adage - *praise, criticize, praise* – lead with a positive statement about what they’re doing well, introduce what needs to be addressed, and always leave them on a high note.
- **Give your staff the space to communicate with you.** This means making time for your staff, either at regular meetings or on a one on one basis. Don’t make assumptions about what drives your staff; rather ask leading questions to find out. This takes courage but you’ll be amazed at what emerges by asking “What would make your role more fulfilling?” or “Which aspect of our operations would you change, and why?” And remember, there are always three sides to every story, so try to understand the situations from your staff’s perspective.
- **Staff want to be appreciated,** so find out how best to express this for each individual. It need not necessarily involve money, indeed in my experience it may be as straightforward as improving a work environment, having a team lunch, introducing a target board or just saying “thank you and well done”.
- **Every business has its own unique quirks and characters,** but time after time, I have found that a number of pivotal questions are asked by managers. Here are some suggested responses to the most common dilemmas.

### ***How can I raise motivational levels?***

Work out what motivates each member, find the elements of the job that they love and acknowledge what they are doing right. Ask solution-based questions, i.e. “what” not “why”.

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***How do I get staff to fulfil areas of their role they don't want to do?***

Get them to identify what the activity will give them in the long run, or in other words, find out what the long term benefits to them will be. This is in effect what M. Scott Peck calls 'delayed gratification', the process by which we schedule the pain and pleasure of life in such a way as to enhance the pleasure by getting the pain out of the way first.

***How can I significantly improve overall performance levels?***

Align the corporate values towards the values of each individual and find out what motivates them, and what they are working towards. Create an environment where communication is important and where positive feedback is the norm. Do an inventory, by asking yourself what more could be done to help staff improve their performances.

***How can I improve relationships within the team?***

Get them away for a team building day. Have a bit of fun together and let them discover the benefits of co-operating, planning and working together to achieve a common goal. Also, learn to adapt your language and behaviour to the personality type of each staff member by considering whether they are for example, a nurturer, an analytical type, a social butterfly or power drivers. The way you act and talk will determine the success path they walk.

Motivation is the key to professional and personal success. So find out what makes your people tick and help them to enjoy a more fulfilling work life.

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