

9 Quick Tips For Motivating Your Employees

Motivating employees can often seem like a dark art.

While you might hope that providing someone with a job and regular pay should be enough, it often isn't. The continual changes forced on us by the turbulent times we live in can severely affect morale, and with it productivity nosedives.

On the other hand with motivated employees, productivity, quality and service all go up.

How can you motivate your employees?

1. Read about motivation

Before you start it's a good idea to read the experts. People are motivated in different ways and by different things. So it's good to know what the possibilities are.

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Douglas McGregor's X and Y theories and Frederick Herzberg's hygiene theory are good places to start.

2. Work out how you are motivated

You can't assume that others are like you, but at the same time don't ignore your own experiences. These are also valuable.

Through your working life you will have found yourself in situations where you were demotivated. What happened? What did you find helpful? What did you do to get out of it? Then at those times when you were well motivated, why was that?

3. What do your employees want from their work?

This can vary widely. One person may be ambitious and looking to reach the top, while another may need work that fits with their family obligations.

The only way to find out is to ask. Use performance appraisals and informal conversations to get to know what each employee wants.

4. Be an example

You will earn respect from your employees by setting an example. Show interest in the work that's being done. And, where you can, roll your sleeves up and get involved.

Employees won't expect you to do everything better than they can. But, they will be more motivated if you're involved in the work rather than just barking orders.

Remember too that, whether you like it or not, your own morale level will affect your employees' morale.

5. Get rid of demotivators

When you find something is demotivating employees then get rid of it. Demotivators could be physical, such as buildings or equipment, or they might be psychological, such as feeling overlooked or unfairly treated.

Getting rid of demotivators can be easier said than done. But, even the act of being concerned and trying to tackle the problem can help to motivate.

6. Show support

Your employees need to know that they are supported. Being unsure of what to do, what authority they have or feeling insecure about their role will all demotivate.

Instead make sure that your employees understand the kind of support they can expect. And then be careful to actually give the support you promise.

7. Know how to use money

A lack in pay level will demotivate, but - regardless of what people say - increasing pay doesn't motivate much past the day of the pay rise. Money may be why people go to work in the first place, but it's rarely why they behave as they do when they're there.

You must make sure you're paying competitively and at a fair level. If you don't, employees will vote with their feet. But beyond that, recognise that giving someone a pay rise won't substitute for missing other motivating factors.

8. Introduce change correctly

It's natural for all humans to resist change, even if the change is good for us. So the way that change is introduced can be critical to whether it will motivate or demotivate.

Avoid telling, selling and consulting. All these options say that you've already made your mind up and are not interested in your employees' concerns.

Instead share the problem-solving and decision making with the employees who are going to have to make the change. They will be much more committed and adaptable as a result.

9. Give feedback

Be generous, but sincere, in giving commendation. Feedback is very valuable in motivating employees. Don't leave them guessing. If their work is not acknowledged or doesn't seem to make any difference, morale will soon drop.