



Ten secrets to motivate employees

Leaders have a major role in helping employees achieve goals that will ultimately benefit the business. So how can managers motivate staff?

Some people do not want to be led. What they really want is exceptional support, encouragement and coaching from leaders.

The most effective way to truly understand each team member is to invest time and meet them one-on-one, ask the right questions and without judging them, listen to their responses. This simple act demonstrates your interest and appreciation for their opinion.

Once you have a clear picture of what motivates each employee, the following 10 non-monetary motivational principles will help you achieve success.

1. It begins with you

Having strong self-awareness, the right attitude, reasonable expectations and a positive solution-focused approach to every situation are primary traits. If you think positively, your energy goes there and everyone follows.

2. Encourage independent thinking

Do you ask questions? Leaders who are hard-wired to “tell” others what and how to do things or offer “quick fixes”, discourage innovation and creative thinking which demotivates employees. Thinking for others is non-productive. You must let them think for themselves or employees become unmotivated to act on your ideas.

3. Inspire when you talk

Storytelling is a highly effective method of influencing and inspiring innovative thinking when focusing on solutions and motivating your team. Using the right words, phrases and language can transform a person’s thinking.

4. “Up your mouth”

Are you always serious with a frown on your face? Humour quickly builds rapport, motivates and creates an environment of calmness, support and receptiveness. Consciously practice an “up mouth” – a soft smile. Use it frequently to get into the habit of constantly wearing it. That small change in appearance can significantly impact how others perceive you.

5. Surrender control

Micromanaging is highly demotivating. Although instructions help staff quickly understand the job, learn to shift control outcomes to individuals. Allowing freedom to design and control their own work inspires creativity, improves productivity and results.

6. Continuous learning and development

Humans have an inherent desire to learn new skills and experience personal growth. Work with individuals to help them identify and strengthen their competencies, then make relevant internal or external training available. Continuous learning ensures ongoing success and builds loyalty.

7. Coaching and mentoring

Studies have shown training improves productivity by only



Leading by example: Inspiring others with ideas and praise will boost productivity.

22%, but when it’s combined with coaching, productivity increases to 88%. Your only cost in coaching someone is time. Spending time means you care. Allowing individuals to be guided by experienced colleagues, who share knowledge and experience, motivates both the mentee – who feels connected and supported – and the mentor, who becomes an inspiration to others, which improves their attitude and motivation.

8. Appreciation, recognition and praise

When was the last time you complimented someone? Some leaders are reluctant to give subordinates credit for their contributions because they fear it will somehow endanger their own career. When team members excel, it further validates your leadership skills and demonstrates that you have created more great leaders, not more followers. Praising and appreciation are basic human necessities because everyone wants and needs them. Be masterful at giving on-the-spot praise. Make it sincere and from the heart and not contrived to manipulate others.

9. Encouragement and “FeedForward”

When you give a performance review, do you first speak the positives, then transit into what they did wrong? People welcome positive feedback, support and words of encouragement. Use Marshall Goldsmith’s “FeedForward” thinking which focuses on what was successful, not what went wrong. Conduct collaborative feedback sessions and explore what went right and how to make it even better.

10. Handling underperformance

When people do not perform well, they feel negative because they are often their own worst critics. They continually think about the reasons for their failure which increase the mental hard-wiring that causes barriers to exploring possible solutions. When people fail, they usually expect to be reprimanded by management. Learn to not criticise performance. Instead, avoid an emotional situation by using the “self-directed” approach, focusing on allowing the person to rethink the situation, uncover what they learned and what they can do going forward to improve. **H**