



Creating and Sustaining a Motivated Workforce

by Lynnea Brinkerhoff

In his article for *Employment Relations Today* titled “Employee Motivation: Addressing a Crucial Factor in your Organization's Performance,” Dr. Ken Kovach found striking differences between how employees rank ten possible reward factors and the ways their managers rank them. Here is the comparison:

| What Employees Want | What Supervisors Thought Employees Wanted |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Interesting work | 1. Good wages |
| 2. Full appreciation of work done | 2. Job security |
| 3. Feeling of being "in" on things | 3. Promotion and growth |
| 4. Job security | 4. Good working conditions |
| 5. Good wages | 5. Interesting work |
| 6. Promotion and growth | 6. Personal loyalty to employees |
| 7. Good working conditions | 7. Tactful disciplining |
| 8. Personal loyalty to employees | 8. Full appreciation of work done |
| 9. Tactful disciplining | 9. Help with personal problems |
| 10. Help with personal problems | 10. Feeling of being "in" on things |

So why is it that managers choose to ignore what are the most effective ways to motivate the employees under their supervision? Could it be that managers mistakenly use their own criteria for what motivates them?

Missed Perceptions

Many supervisors make the mistake of trying to be efficient in motivating employees and think that a managerial style of command and control will get the results they seek and that the employees will fall in behind them, ask few questions, and be enthusiastic about the change. And since most supervisors feel that motivation is about money, promotion, and security, it is no wonder that employees and supervisors are at odds. Appealing to the employee's humanity and offering them key information on a real time basis are usually the last things on a manager's mind.

When employees have not been brought into the performance and communication process early on or do not have a chance to make comments on events affecting their job, then employees reserve the right to resist or simply leave. Remember the top motivating factors for employees is being inclusive, not exclusive, to the events around them.

A Holistic Performance Management Program – Key to Sustaining a Workforce

The Purpose Behind the Process – As employee surveys repeatedly suggest, employees want to feel that they belong to an organization and that their comments and suggestions are heard and acted upon. The purpose of any worthwhile performance management program is to create a repeatable and reliable system (and the working documents) that captures and provides the framework to act on the goals to which the employee and supervisor have agreed. The agreed upon goals must be established and clearly communicated so that the employee feels an "ownership" in them. A performance management system can meet this challenge in a two-step process:

- Establish a communication stream. This exchange must be regular and address the employees' (1) need to improve, (2) why making these improvements is worthwhile and (3) recognition and reward based on job performance.
- Create a compelling plan for improvements. How and when employees must meet or surpass their goals must be clearly laid out. This way, employees can actively pursue improving or correcting any problems that stand in the way of their best performance and feel that they have input into their job.

Mutual Goal Setting- The Easy Way – Implicit in this process is the fact that supervisors and employees can set goals together. For the goal setting process to succeed, the agreed upon goals must be designed to measure the following:

- Results (evidence-based and not just behavior traits, such as loyalty, dependability and initiative).
- Job-related skills (e.g., speed, accuracy and safe equipment operation).
- Behavior, especially toward critical job incidents (e.g., meeting deadlines, arriving at work on time and participating in special projects).
- Depending on management styles and work dynamic, there are two typical strategies for setting goals.
 - 1) Supervisor and employee may draft independent goals and then meet to dialogue about and finalize the goals.
 - 2) Supervisor and employee may draft goals together in a two-step process. First the supervisor drafts a few goals

and then the employee drafts the remaining goals and finalize.

- At one large West Coast casino, they decided that regardless of which goal-setting strategy used, the final meeting should cover the following information:

- 1) When are the goals revised?
- 2) What are the expected measurable results and behaviors?
- 3) How will the goals be measured?
- 4) What resources are needed to achieve the goals?

Accountability Goes Both Ways – At every stage, the performance program should be interactive. Even though it is time-consuming, the interplay between supervisor and employee is critical to success. During this interaction the key element is joint accountability to capture and document performance information. This makes for a strong sense of give and take and generates the all elusive “ownership”

Feedback – The adage that feedback is the breakfast of champions it is essential to record and fine-tune the performance cycle with the following steps:

- Both supervisors and employees should establish when and how often feedback communication should be exchanged.
- The form and format for the feedback should be specified (e.g., oral or written, e-mail or meeting) based on style preference.
- Ground rules for listening must be established (e.g., basic courtesy of not interrupting, specific time allocated for each party to exchange information and privacy assurances).

When in Question... Ask Them!

The simplest way as a manager to find out how to motivate or reenergize someone is to ask a well place question. Instead of assuming that money is the primary motivator, managers should ask what types of rewards employees would value most. So easy but rarely consistently done!

To create and sustain a motivated workforce, keep it simple by remembering and emphasizing the acronym of **HOPE**:

HIRE employees that have good 'job-fit'. An experienced interviewer elicits exactly how an applicant would go about resolving a typical issue faced in their potential position. An interview is not a conversation but a structured event to get the best information for both applicant and interviewer. Start to create a motivated workforce by hiring the best person for the job.

ORIENT employees consistently about the organization's mission, values and goals. Use every technique

available and keep experimenting. The mission statement on the wall is never very effective in the long term. It has to take life in the hearts and minds of all employees.

PROVIDE feedback on a regular basis. Research indicates that people crave immediate feedback (think slot machines). Thus frequent, informal feedback conversations are essential and yet they should never take the place of a formal dialogue about performance and personal development.

EXPRESS appreciation. This cannot be emphasized enough. Most people are anxious to hear supportive words specific to what they did well.

It is said that we get more of that which we focus on. Therefore, place your gaze upon what is working, speak up about it and then sit back and enjoy the results. ♣

Lynnea Brinkerhoff is Vice President of Flatb & Associates Consulting, Inc., with 20 years experience in resolving unique organizational challenges. She can be reached by calling (203) 913-7398 or email lynneabrink@gmail.com

MLP casino**collection**

options anyone?

Did you know that every component of our gaming stools can be altered to meet your specific function and design requirements?

why not let us customize it for you!

contact: sales@mlpseating.com

MLP SEATING CORP.
2125 LIVELY BOULEVARD
ELK GROVE VILLAGE, IL 60007-5207

T: 847.956.1700 • F: 847.956.1776
TOLL FREE: 1.800.723.3030
www.mlpseating.com