

7 top tips to motivating your team



I would like to offer you my top 7 tips to motivate your team. I draw upon years of experience and hindsight to help you keep your team highly motivated and achieving results for your business. There are numerous ways of motivating your staff and there is a general misconception that money is the number one choice. Yes, we can all do with more (money), but if the working conditions are not right then there is no amount of money that will motivate your staff enough to go that extra mile. During the current economic climate retaining good team members is essential, as we know that it is a substantial cost to any business to recruit and train new team members and get them up to the standard of performance that you require.

1. Organisational climate

The climate does not necessarily mean a warm and comfortable work environment, but rather that you need to consciously create a working emotional/psychological climate that is conducive to aiding effective team performance. You need your company to have a sense of inclusiveness; people need to feel that they are a valued part of the team and that the organisation recognises them as a valuable individual and team player. Employees enjoy this sense of belonging and the feel good factor that is created by inclusion, nurturing and being part of a successful team.

2. The power of belief

As individuals we like to know that our boss believes in and has time for us, even if it is just to say 'hello' when touring the workplace. I believe that Arsenal will win the premiership but believe in a lesser way that my boss has my health and wellbeing at the foremost of his company strategy.

As the boss or manager you need to believe in your people. Your team are the most important resource in your business. You pay them a reasonable living wage to produce your product and serve your customers, but what do you do to ensure they are helped to do so? How do you show your team that you have faith in their skills and ability to do the job and even go the extra mile for you? How do you inspire this in your team?

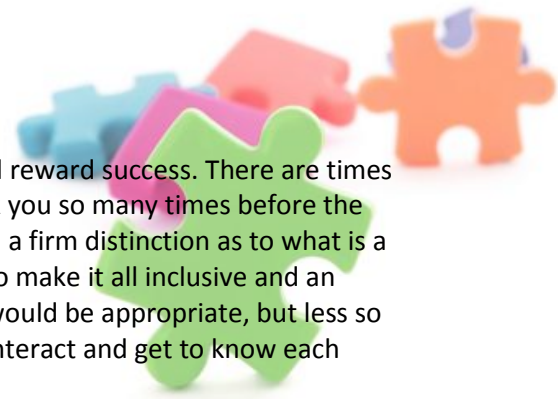
If you don't actually believe in some of your people it is worth considering that you may need to commit to their development and training more strongly. Another option is to ask yourself if perhaps you are actually the problem here, unable to trust other people fully and are guilty of micro managing and interfering. Both of these are worth considering as you can then take steps to amend the situation.

3. Open and honest communication

From the following statements, which one can be regarded as 'open', 'honest' or both?
Mr Bill Clinton swore under oath that he 'did not have sexual relations' with Lewinsky.
Arsene Wenger at a post match interview claimed that he saw the foul committed by one of his defenders. Well we know that both statements are less honest than they could have been!

What you have to ask yourself is how much do you want to give your employees by way of 'open', 'honest' and fair statements? Equally, are you prepared to listen to open and honest communications in return from staff?

As employees, we want honesty, so communicating even the bad news is appreciated as people will only make up their version of the truth if they think that you are not telling them the whole story. Do you fail to show your commitment to them by not listening to them? In most cases, they know more about how to achieve a satisfactory outcome than you ever will, but yet often you fail to listen to their input and ideas.



4. Recognition of good performance

The purpose of a recognition scheme is to publicly acknowledge and reward success. There are times when just a thank you is sufficient. However, you can only say thank you so many times before the workforce gets restless and want a little bit more. You have to make a firm distinction as to what is a team or individual reward. If you are going to reward the team try to make it all inclusive and an occasion where you can enhance the team interaction, a meal out would be appropriate, but less so would be a night out at the theatre, as there is less opportunity to interact and get to know each other better .

For the individual this means that you have to devise a more wide ranging strategy for recognising good performance appropriate for your company e.g.

- Gift Vouchers
- Employee of the month
- Employee of the Year
- Adjustments of working hours
- Extra Holidays.

Keep it fresh and imaginative and try to rotate the award in a way that ensures that it is spread around the workplace. However, **DON'T** just give it away to prove that you are being fair.

5. Fun!!

After work activities are always a good way of motivating the team. Set aside a small sum of money and use that as a pot to finance activities that bond everyone together. How easy would it be to have a company get together to say thank you? Think about the small meaningful things that you know the team will enjoy and that all can participate in avoiding events that involve alcohol or sport as they can alienate members of the team. Having more fun also reduces stress levels and opens the door to more effective communication so it's a real winner for team dynamics and team output. Why not ask the team to decide on the activity that they would most appreciate and enjoy?

6. Commit to developing your people

Appraise your staff, give them a chance to talk to you, the appraisal is vital to giving each person your full time and attention. Make sure that you are not interrupted and that you set enough time aside for each interview. Encourage open honest communication – you could learn a lot here about what is going on of which you are not aware!

Set aside a budget for staff development, one neat idea is to evaluate how much of your budget you are going to allocate for each team member. Then divide that up so each member gets an equal share. Once you have appraised them, get the individual to source their own training, working within the set budget which creates a sense of empowerment and a 'buy in' to the development too.

7. Money!

I opened up my tips with a statement that money 'is not the number one choice' as a long lasting and meaningful motivator. However, we should not discount this as a driver. At a time when money is tight and companies are looking to save money by resorting to cost cutting measures it cannot be overlooked. Wallace and Szilagyi (1992) had the following theories regarding financial rewards:

- It can act a goal that people generally strive for, although to different degrees.
- It can act as an instrument which provides valued outcomes.
- It can be a symbol which indicates the recipients' value to the organisation.
- It can act as a general reinforcer because it is associated with valued rewards so often that it takes on reward value itself.

So how about some of the following?

- One off bonus payment
- Incentive payments
- Commission
- Service related pay
- Competence related pay
- Career development pay
- Allowances.



These are just a few ideas, but are the most commonly used.

Remember! Think carefully about how this financial inducement is going to affect the company, the employees, teams, clients and your bottom line. There may be tax implications and any form of long lasting reward scheme should be backed up with sustainability and fairness in its application.

Summary

Within the current economic client organisations are facing challenges that some of us have never had to encounter in our working lives. Hard choices have to be made in order that the profitability of an organisation is maintained and the jobs are secure. My **7 tips to motivating your team** are part of a possible solution and not the solution itself. A holistic approach has to be adopted with a view that no one solution is going to make everything right. T. Taylor Solutions provide the support through planning, mentoring and coaching to make some if not all achievable. The key to successful implementation is through careful planning and ensuring that your strategy is sustainable, practical and fun where appropriate.

You can get your teams to aid you in creating a culture of trust, they will, if put to them in the right way and using the right approach, help you drive change and encourage greater team performance. They are already motivated in a negative way by external pressures like the need to survive in a pressurised job market. But you are able to release some of that pressure by showing your commitment to motivating them to feel good about themselves, the team, the organisation and the work they do.

Motivation is not solely about spending vast sums of money. It is about targeting the areas of the business that need a little lift, putting a human face to the organisation and last but by no means least ensuring that your most prized assets, your workforce, are empowered to achieve sustainable standards and results. Our solutions are practical, easy to implement and sustainable against a backdrop of competitive pressures.

Use the following as a starting point.

1. Think about why you want to do it, what are the benefits to you, the organisation and the workforce
2. Plan your strategy
3. Consult stakeholders
4. Implement your plans
5. Review on a regular basis how it is working. Assess the mood and the attitude of the team, and most of all assess the sustainability of your plans so that it does not lose momentum and positive energy.

Good luck!

We are here to help you so do contact us on:

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