

SUCCESS SERIES



MOTIVATION FOR SUCCESS

Management development is a priority for most organizations. This course is targeted for supervisors, managers, and leaders who need practical skills so they can manage people most effectively.

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MOTIVATION FOR SUCCESS

How you will benefit:

- Motivate yourself and your employees
- Energize your employees through surprises, team-building activities, and risk-taking
- Discover how to use fun to improve productivity
- Determine the right motivation to bring about positive outcomes
- Discover the value in positive reinforcement
- Avoid burnout by inspiring and rejuvenating employees
- Overcome adversity and cope with change

What you will learn:

1. Motivation for Success
 - How to identify your outcomes
 - The importance of being true to yourself
 - Setting goals
2. Energize
 - Specific ways to energize your employees
 - How offering surprises motivates your employees
 - Team-building activities
 - Risk-taking to profit employees
3. Fun on the Job
 - How to find fun in the corporate world
 - Using laughter to improve productivity
 - Leading your employees on the road to fun
4. Motivation through Positive Outcomes
 - The value of positive outcomes
 - The B.F. Skinner behavioral theory
 - Determining the right motivations
 - Offering constructive praise
5. Feedback
 - Making positive feedback a regular habit
 - Do's and don'ts of positive and negative reinforcements
 - The value in rewards
6. Inspire and Involve
 - The importance of employee involvement
 - Steps to building involvement
 - How to avoid burnout by inspiring and rejuvenating your employees.
7. Triumph through Motivation
 - Overcoming adversity
 - Showing gratitude motivates employees
 - Practicing self-discipline
 - 6 hints for coping with change

MOTIVATION FOR SUCCESS

1. Motivation at Work

Webster's Dictionary defines "motivate" as "to provide with a motive." A motive, as defined by Webster's, is "something (as a need or desire) that causes a person to act."

What motivates people? A desire for love, money, recognition? What motivates you? Your employees? These aren't such easy questions, are they? That's because everyone's motivations are as unique as they are. But, together, we will learn how to motivate, energize, and inspire ourselves and our employees.

**According to Bob Nelson, author of 1001 Ways to Energize Employees, when looking for ways to energize your employees, you should consider the eight human desires:*

- *Activity*
- *Ownership*
- *Power*
- *Affiliation*
- *Competence*
- *Achievement*
- *Recognition*
- *Meaning*

Identifying Your Outcomes

The first step in motivating your employees, naturally, is to determine what exactly are your, and their desired outcomes. You cannot work toward something, or help others work toward something, if that "something" is unknown.

Stephen Covey, author of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, says that the second habit of successful people is to "Begin with the end in mind."

Let's pretend we're taking a road trip. How do we know which highways to take, which roads to avoid, and in which direction to head, if we do not know our destination?

Identifying this destination is the most important place to start. But, before we load the car with snacks and luggage, we need to evaluate ourselves, and figure out where we want to go.

Who am I?

Before you can set your destination, you must take a close look at yourself, and your company. If you have any questions about who you are, what your identity is within your organization, your strengths or weaknesses, you will not be able to clearly keep the “end in mind,” as Covey suggests.

Consider what makes you tick. If you’re a people person, then an office job where you have no customer contact isn’t for you – even if it pays well. The same goes for your employees. If you offer a prize of hockey tickets for your staff of all-female employees, none of whom are sports fans, how motivated do you think they’ll be? Probably not very.

Be True to Yourself

We’ve all heard the over-used clichés about being true to yourself. As with most clichés, these have become overused because they are true. Your values are what rule the choices you make in your life, on a daily basis. If you are true to your values, you have a great chance of succeeding, and reaching your personal, and professional, destinations.

Within your workplace, your values should be similar to those of your co-workers, and your supervisors. Everyone has his or her own background, which means they’ll all have some differences. But, if these differences in your values are opposite, or clashing with one another’s, perhaps this company is not the one for you.

Think of your values as your compass. As long as you follow them, they’re not going to steer you wrong.

**Be TRUE to yourself in your choices: Truthful, Realistic, Upstanding, and Ethical*

Goals in Your Professional Life

Goals – really worthy goals – are also based on your values. Some goals, while temporarily satisfactory (winning a promotion based on someone else’s work, for example), in the end, clash with your values, and the overall desired outcome (being a well-respected leader within your company). This makes them empty goals.

In business, you are not only concerned with your personal goals, but also the goals of your company. Businesses that enlighten employees to their goals not only stand a greater chance of achieving their desired outcomes, but they also involve employees in the bigger picture of their companies.

Consider your workplace. Are the company’s ethics in sync with yours? Are you proud to say you’re a member of the company? Does your company support both your personal and professional values? If so, you’re already a step ahead!

Just Do It

All the talk of goals in the world is merely hot air, if you don’t have a plan of action to help you along the road to your destination. Your plan of action is the road map to your destination – if you

don't have it, can't measure the distance you've come, and how far you have to go, you'll never make it through the long stretch.

An action plan can be made by determining the step-by-step actions necessary for your desired results. In deciding your action plan, consider the following questions:

- What needs to be done?
- Who's going to do it?
- How is it going to be done?
- When is the date of completion?

Motivation: The Road Trip

Okay, so we know we're going on a trip, and we know our destination. We have our compass (values) to guide us; and our road map (action plan) to show us the way. What about the trip itself? Miles and miles of boring highway, with no end in sight?

No way!!

This, my friends, is where the fun comes in. Remember those trips you took, as a kid, with bags and bags of goodies in the trunk? New toys, yummy treats, and games to play along the way? We have something just as good, and that "something" is motivation.

Now, let the fun begin!

Motivation, Professionally Speaking

Debates are ongoing over the most effective sources of motivation. While some experts insist motivation only comes from inside an individual, other experts say that by providing ongoing encouragement and incentives, you can motivate employees to do what you want. Which is the correct answer? Both, actually.

While on the road to your destination, be it great customer service, higher sales numbers, or increased job satisfaction and less employee turn-over, you should keep these two motivations in mind – the internal motivations, and the external motivations.

They go hand-in-hand.

**Harold A. Poling, the former Chairman and CEO of Ford Motor Company, says, "One of the stepping stones to a world-class operation is to tap into the creative and intellectual power of each and every employee."*

Motivation: A Win-Win Situation

Motivating your employees is a win-win situation. You recognize their hard work, they feel a sense of personal satisfaction; they work harder, or don't mind putting in overtime on the next big project; you give them a day off for their hard work, they feel rewarded again, and so the cycle continues.

Don't be intimidated by this – rewards and recognition can come in many, many different forms. While sometimes, larger, more extravagant incentives are called for, even the smallest of rewards can motivate employees.

Where Does Motivation Come From?

As we said earlier, motivation comes from numerous and varied sources. Let's say Tom, your junior accountant, who also happens to be a sports nut, was offered tickets to the season opener of the local major league team. Would this be incentive enough for him to work overtime every night for two weeks, to get a special project done? Probably.

But, let's say, June, your sales rep, and a struggling single mother of two, were offered the same incentive. Isn't it likely that the tickets would hold little to no incentive for her? However, to June, perhaps a week's worth of paid daycare would make it worthwhile to do a little extra work at home, on the weekend.

People are different, so they have different motivations. Remember that, in dealing with your employees.

Energize and HAVE FUN!

Yes, we said, "HAVE FUN!"

"But, it's called WORK for a reason," you're saying.

Right? Well, yes. And no. Work and fun can, and must, go hand-in-hand. Fun, whether considered "appropriate" in the workplace, or not, is a necessary part of our lives. Consider the amount of your waking time that you spend at work. Most people spend, by conservative estimates, 1/3 of their awake time, at their jobs. How do you expect to stay motivated, and to keep your employees motivated, if there is nothing fun about your work.

"But," you're saying, "I'm an insurance salesman. There's nothing fun about that."

We're here to tell you – yes, there is! And it's up to you to find it.

2. Be Wise - Energize!

Energize Your Employees

It's time now to examine specific ways in which you can energize your employees. Remember, these are JUST examples to give your creativity a jump-start.

What's the value in energizing your employees, you ask? Consider the energy we'd need to make our road trip. We can plan all we want, and have the best of intentions, but good intentions pave the way to ... nowhere! So, let's put some gas in that car, to give it energy.

Just like your car needs fuel on an ongoing basis, so do your employees need to be energized frequently. An annual employee awards banquet is nice, but if the entire year's recognition is tied up in that one night, you're not setting a good precedent for your company. On the other hand, if

your company can't afford a black-tie banquet, but you hold a monthly pow-wow at the local pizza parlor, you're already fueling up!

And Now, for Something Completely Different!

Spontaneity is an overlooked pleasure in our lives. In the workplace, where everything is organized, scheduled, planned, and timed to the minute, spontaneity may seem impossible.

But, never say never! Remember, it's up to you to make it work.

Remember being in school, on fire-drill days? Even if it meant standing outside the school in 20 degree weather, it seemed fun, didn't it? That's because it broke up the monotony of yet another boring lecture by your old Drill Sergeant or an algebra teacher, Mrs. Griffin. Somehow, the rest of the day seemed to pass more quickly after that.

For employees, doing the same thing day after day after day can lead them into a robot-like existence. What can you do, TODAY, to snap them out of Robot Mode, and into the present moment? (We don't recommend holding a fire drill, in case you're wondering!)

Baby Steps

For those of us who've fallen into the "My Employees Won't Respect Me if I Act Silly" myth, it could be a little harder to do something as frivolous as dressing as the company mascot at the next meeting. That's okay!! By taking it one day at a time, you'll learn to be fun-loving at work, too. While it's probably true that if you're perceived as a hard-working, never-crack-a-smile boss, your employees would probably think you'd gone a few fries short of a Happy Meal, that doesn't mean you can't, and shouldn't, go for a gradual change. Taking baby steps in the right direction, will still get you to your destination.

The Three F's

If you answered yes to any, or all, of these, you are in serious need of frivolity, frolicking, and fun. It's time to loosen that tie, and do one spontaneous thing today. Send your secretary flowers – even though it's not Secretary's Day! If you still need time to ease into the World of Spontaneity, send them anonymously.

You'll be amazed at how good it makes her, and you, feel. And if she feels good, it's going to shine through in her voice, in her smile, and in her warmth, when she interacts with clients. You see – you've just given business a little boost – without even realizing it!

Surprise!

Don't limit yourself to sending flowers. Try this, the next time you have an employee traveling on business. Order a hot fudge sundae, from room service, to be sent to his room at midnight. You can do it anonymously, or not – that's up to you.

Or, order a pizza to be sent to an employee's desk, when he or she is working through dinner one night.

Remember, a little goes a long way!

Encourage Team-Building Activities

Some managers have found that by promoting non-work-related team-building activities, they encourage unity among employees – a unity which carries over into the workplace.

There are a number of options for non-work-related team-building activities – a softball team, a bowling league, a twice-monthly happy hour, a weekly after-hours ice cream fest.

By forming relationships that exceed the boundaries of a workplace, employees will not only enjoy coming to work more than they had, they will also be more likely to help one another when the need arises. This means increased productivity and a better employee morale for the company! Not bad results from such an easy feat.

You've Got To Give a Little

Matt Weinstein, author of the book, *Managing to Have Fun*, and founder of Playfair, Inc., an international management consulting firm that presents team-building programs to over 400 companies each year, suggests combining spontaneity with giving, for a delightful result!

Because of Playfair's close proximity to San Francisco, it is often necessary for employees to cross the bridge on company business. Playfair's policy is that, when an employee is paying her \$1 toll, she is to pay the toll for the person behind her, as well. Playfair, in turn, reimburses the employee both tolls.

While the \$1 is certainly not going to make or break the benefactor of the toll-paying, it will provide them a "Fire Drill" of an awakening – wake up! This is no longer a boring, everyday routine – it's spontaneity at work!

A Day Off

How many times have you rewarded employees who have really worked hard on an important project? Think of the days of overtime, the missed family outings, the late nights at the office – did you thank them? If so, pat yourself on the back – you're already way ahead of most managers.

Now, consider taking this a step farther. How about giving those all-important right-hand-men and women a day off? Of course, hour-by-hour, it will hardly make up for the time spent on a big project, but, again, "it's the thought that counts." And wouldn't they love to play hooky for a day, and spend it at the beach with their families? Or take a three-day weekend trip away to rejuvenate, and forget about work for a while?

If it's not within your power to give a day off, be creative. Give a half-day off, or even an extra couple of hours at lunch. Tell your receptionist that you'll answer the phones, while he takes his wife out to lunch.

Take a Risk!

Don't assume it's all up to you, to change your business' atmosphere – encourage your employees to help! After all, if you're always the one coming up with new and creative ways to have fun – you'll never be on the receiving end of spontaneity in the workplace!

Appeal to your employees that have a flair for creativity, and yes – let them work on "fun" projects during work time! You'll be glad you did.

*Which of your employees has a flair for the creative? Which are most fun-loving? Can you set aside time, this week, to talk to your most creative, fun-loving employee, about energizing your business with some fun? How many of this employee's hours could you spare for him to be your company's fun patrol? Two hours a week? Four hours a week?

Risk-Taking, Rewarded

In addition to allowing employees to have a hand in taking risks for “fun”, encourage them to take some business risks, too. Remember – they know their jobs, and probably, your customers, better than you do.

Alex Dillard, executive vice-president of Dillard Department Stores, recognizes that his store managers know their customers better than the corporate employees do. Because of this, he gives the authority to each of his managers to merchandise products as they see fit, as opposed to some generic company plan-o-gram. This bestows Alex’s faith in the managers, as well as giving them the freedom to better serve their customers.

Talk to your employees. What ideas do they have for the company – small or large?

Consider this – at billion-dollar company 3M, employees are encouraged to work on their own projects. One of these projects became Post-It® notes, which brings in more than \$100 million annually.

Reverse Those Roles

At one Houston area Supercuts, managers took role reversal to an extreme. When store employees exceeded their monthly goal, the two managers became their “Servants for the Day,” donning French maid costumes, and waiting on the employees. While the “maids” didn’t cut hair or handle cash, they did everything else, including shampooing customers’ hair, sweeping up after haircuts, and fetching lunch. It was a fun way to repay the employees for their hard work, and a nice bolster for employees.

In addition, the managers had a chance to see the job from their employees’ perspective, and interact directly with customers.

Even if your role reversal is just getting your employees lunch, and driving their cars through car washes, it’s good for them to see you doing for them, instead of the norm of them doing for you.

3. Fun, Fun, Fun!

A Change Will Do You Good

It's understandable that with increased talk of downsizing, increased productivity, and budget cuts, that finding "fun" in the world of business will be a challenge for some. However, challenges can be overcome. It's up to you to set the tone.

Yes, it may take a bit of doing on your part, but don't give up. One by one, you'll find that your employees are following you.

Employee loyalty is something many companies lack these days. Studies show that many employees feel their company doesn't care about them – so it stands to reason they're not going to care about their company, either, beyond showing up for work, doing the necessary amount of work, and picking up a paycheck.

You can change that, though. Your changing your work atmosphere is an important part of the journey to your destination.

Are We Having Fun Yet?

Still unsure of how you can possibly bring fun to work? Take a hard look at your employees. What do they do for fun? What do they like? How can you match their style of fun (outside of work) to their work life? Be creative!

Remember, bringing fun into the workplace isn't just about bringing fun to them – it's about fun for you, too! By giving to them, you're receiving, too – the emotional rewards that everyone needs. It's a win-win situation!

Mixing Business with Pleasure

Okay, so the old saying is "You should never mix business with pleasure." But, you know what? We're telling you now, to throw that old saying right out of your head, and out of your place of business. You **MUST** mix business with pleasure. It's essential to your well-being, your employees' well-being, and your company's well-being.

Many corporate heads seem to overlook the fact that even if their companies operate like well-oiled machinery, a business without heart is not a business with a long life expectancy. Working for a business without a human side depletes employee morale, discourages employee loyalty, and adds to employee turnover. Besides, do you really want heartless, emotionless robots interacting with your customers? Of course not!

Go Ahead – Make Fun!

It's been proven that the use of fun at work can encourage team-building, customer service, and employee satisfaction.

Yet, some people confuse having fun with "goofing off." There is a big difference here – having fun and working go hand-in-hand; goofing off is a perception that is in the eye of the beholder.

Remember, we want to mix business with pleasure. Having fun WHILE working is in the best interest of everyone concerned – employees, supervisors, the company, and the customers.

Laughter, The Best Medicine

If we haven't convinced you already of the value play has in the workplace, then consider this – laughter really IS the best medicine, according to scientists.

Laughter can be beneficial to your entire health, say many experts. When you laugh, your muscular system relaxes – it's virtually impossible to be laughing hard, and be tense, at the same time.

It's long been proven that negative emotions – stress, and depression, for example – can make us ill. By the same token, positive emotions – relaxation, happiness, and laughter – can make us feel better, both mentally, and physically.

All Work and No Play? No Way!

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, but dullness isn't the only problem with this picture. All work and no play is productive for no one.

Laughter and play at work are not important only in and of themselves. They are important for the connectivity, to others, that each of us needs. Work places these days tend to be isolated, and lonely. Individuals spend their whole days seeing nothing but the same boring walls, the same boring work, and the same uninspired expressions on the faces of their co-workers, as are on their own faces.

It's time to change all that. The time is now. The person is you. Let the change begin!

Follow the Leader

As every good leader knows, it is not enough to talk the talk. You must also walk the talk. You cannot encourage your employees to have fun by frowning at every bit of laughter you hear. Your employees will not feel confident being light-hearted if they do not see the same attitude reflected in your eyes.

Maybe you'll need to do something out of the ordinary! Be silly! Wear a clown nose to the next meeting. Or wear Groucho Marx glasses. Play practical jokes. And don't forget to laugh!

The Ripple Effect

In the last unit, we discussed the policy at Playfair, Inc., where employees were encouraged to pay the toll for their car, as well as the one behind them, when crossing a toll bridge.

Consider now, the recipients of this unexpected “gift” of a free toll. Research has shown that one positive act can inspire the recipient of this act to behave in kind to another person. A chain is formed, in which people continue doing good deeds for others, just for the thrill of it. This is the ripple effect. Taking this idea the next step, we can apply it to customer/employee interactions. If an employee is particularly kind or helpful to a customer, or goes “above and beyond” the call of duty, the customer is going to remember both the employee, and the company, the next time he needs the service you offer. When the customer tells his friends and family about his great experience with the company, the ripple effect will continue.

Do It Yourself

It’s not enough to put your best Human Resources person on the job. Even if you are the driving force behind the project, you must be out in front – leading the way.

If, for example, you give each of your employees a gift certificate for a free dinner for his or her birthday, that’s great. However, if on Tom’s birthday, you pass him in the hallway, and don’t mention the day, he’s going to realize that your acknowledgment of his birthday was just “going through the motions” for you, rather than actually caring. In this way, the act of having a gift, with no thought behind it, can actually do more harm than good.

Remember, you have to walk the talk.

Relax!

Stop worrying so much about every little thing. The world isn’t going to end if your employees – and you! – have some fun on the job. In fact, studies have shown that not only does fun on the job improve the employees’ frames of mind, it also helps to better the business.

If the people around you aren’t as quick to fall into the fun mindset, it’s okay. Everyone will come around to it in his own time. In the meantime, there’s work to be done. PLAY work, that is!

Positive Thinking

Think of how you’ve felt at happy work occasions – celebrating the acquisition of a large account, or doling out gifts at the annual Christmas party. Isn’t it easier to make it through the next rough time, with the memory of the fun you’ve recently shared with co-workers? In order to motivate yourself, and your employees, you must fully embrace positive thinking, about your company, and positive living, in acting out what you want to happen.

Remember, you have to make it happen. And, if you want it badly enough, it will.

4. Motivating Yourself and Others Through Positive Outcomes

Positive Outcomes

As we said in the last unit, from positive thinking, comes positive results.

For your employees, simply working toward the success of your business may not be enough to motivate on a day-to-day basis. That is why small, fun, ongoing motivations are so important. And, even though you may think the success of your business is emotionally fulfilling enough to keep you going, you might be surprised to realize how much laughter and fun has been missing from your work life.

Positive outcomes don't refer only to bottom line business goals – it is much more than that. If you organize a sports team of your employees, and through playing softball together, they develop a greater sense of being team players, which carries over into your company, then that is a VERY positive outcome.

Celebrate these successes – all of them!

The Skinny on Skinner

Well-known researcher B.F. Skinner spent much of his time examining the issue of positive versus negative reinforcements. Skinner, a behaviorist, determined, through experiments with rats, that given repeated negative consequences, discouragement was likely to set in, eventually making the rat (or person) give up.

On the other hand, offering positive consequences – food for the rats, when they pushed a certain lever – the rats soon learned what type of behavior would achieve, for them, the desired results.

Consider yourself – if you were given the choice of two activities, one of which would bring you positive consequences, and the other of which would bring you negative consequences, which would you choose? The positive one, of course!

Achieving the Desired Results

For you, figuring out what employees need to motivate them may not be quite as simple as teaching them to push a certain lever. However, it also may be easier than you think.

Stop to consider the following questions:

- What does the person need?
- When would be the right time to present it?
- What would be the best way to reward the person?
- What would you be willing to give up to get what you need from this person?

The Right Motivations

Although they may seem good at the time, quick-fix programs are rarely successful in the long-term. Sure, they may make employees happy for a week or two, but what then?

You can give a whooping, hollering motivational speech at your monthly sales meeting, but the enthusiasm built by that will wane as quickly as your adrenaline does.

By the same token, you can institute policies which will be sure-fire “wins” with employees – an extra day off for each employee each week – but is this realistic? Work won’t be more fun to them, or YOU, if everyone’s running around trying to pick up the slack from everyone else’s days off.

Which of the following are examples of positive outcomes, given appropriately?

Discussion

If you guessed that all the preceding rewards, except for “effusive praise for someone who did a job incorrectly,” were great examples of positive consequences, you’re right!!

Offering false praise, in the hopes of motivating someone, is counter-productive from every standpoint. It de-motivates other employees, who really do deserve the praise they receive. It also gives the wrong message to recipient of the insincere compliments.

Constructive Praise

We’ve all heard of constructive criticism – a phrase that, in some ways, seems to be an oxymoron. Criticism, however constructive, is often hard to take. What we suggest, instead, is constructive praise.

Let’s say that Tom, your sales manager, worked on a marketing project that could have been successful, had it been planned better. Instead, it failed miserably.

Neither, “Jeez, you bonehead! You sure screwed THAT one up!” (which will make him have a hard time seeing past your mean comments, to find anything constructive in your words), or, the exact opposite, “Tom, EXCELLENT job on that marketing project – it’s the best work I’ve ever seen!” (he’s going to doubt your honesty, because of the insincerity of your comments), would be helpful to him, or the company.

More Constructive Praise

Okay, now consider the same scenario. How could you deliver praise which is honest, yet helpful for future endeavors?

Try this: “That was one of the best marketing projects you’ve come up with, Tom. Next time, let’s see what we can do to implement it a little earlier,” you’ll both praise him, and offer a way to make it better next time.

Nixing Negative Feedback

While it’s true that instead of motivating someone with a positive consequence, you can also de-motivate them with a negative consequence, we don’t suggest this route in most cases. Negative consequences, or feedback, which include threats, belittling, or punishment, often backfire, causing worse behavior than what was initially the problem.

A few people might even resort to negative behavior, in order to receive any kind of attention, in much the same way that a neglected child would misbehave, in order to be in the center of attention with his parents.

It's best, in most cases, to change the behavior by changing the consequence to a positive one.

Fear as a Motivator

Advertisers use fear as one of the top motivators to encourage people to use their products. Fear of dying, for example, convinces people to buy bigger, sturdier cars. Fear of cancer convinces people to buy lotions with higher sunscreen.

So, can you motivate your employees by putting fear into them? As with other negative feedback, we don't recommend this.

It's true that you can put a fear in them, of losing their jobs, or being passed over for promotions. But, over time, those threats not only lose their impact, they also force you to lose your credibility with your employees.

Incentives

Offering incentives is a great way to motivate many people. While the joy of a job well done is always good for the company, and the employee's self-esteem, little "perks" along the way seem to help significantly.

Different employees are motivated by different things. Be creative with your ideas – sometimes, the most off-the-wall reward is the one most appreciated, and most remembered. Take the time to get to know your employees' likes, dislikes, and hobbies. This will give you some idea as to the incentives he or she would find most motivating.

Praise and Recognition

Keep the following pointers in mind, when praising your employees:

- Be specific. Don't just say, "I liked the way you handled that customer" – tell the employee exactly what you liked about his actions.
- Give timely praise.
- Give regular praise. Don't assume your star employee doesn't "need" the praise, or "knows" she's doing well.
- Write letters, or memos of praise. Send a copy of the memo to anyone else who is affected by it.

5. Right Back Atcha! Feedback

The Value in Feedback

We talked in the last unit about the value of positive outcomes as a reason to motivate. Although we touched on the importance of feedback, it's worth discussing further.

Feedback, both positive and negative – but, in particular, positive – is an essential tool in motivating employees.

Make it a habit

Positive feedback is most effective when delivered on a regular basis. Don't wait for the employee to do something huge before praising him – offer praise for small feats, as well as larger ones.

Make praise a regular part of your interactions at work – not only with your subordinates, but with your superiors, and other co-workers.

Fighting the Misconception

Some bosses think if they start praising their employees, the employees will “slack off” and do nothing. But, this is unlikely. If people are praised for good behavior, experts have found that the praised (and desired) behavior, is repeated.

As Skinner proved with his experiments, the more rewards, and positive outcomes, an individual experiences, the more likely he'll be to “push the right lever” time and again.

Reprimands and Responses

While we encourage the use of positive reinforcement, rather than negative reinforcement, there are circumstances that call for a reprimand.

If it's necessary to resort to this method of reinforcement, here is a list of “do's” and “don't's” in delivering reprimands:

- Don't use them frequently.
- Don't deliver them in anger.
- Don't give them in public (if possible)
- Do deliver them in a timely manner.
- Do offer an alternative, positive behavior.
- Do give the reprimand when the behavior is first seen.

Keep in mind that if negative feedback is used on a regular basis, it creates an unproductive, and negative work environment.

Unexpected Feedback

It doesn't matter if you're the CEO of the company, or an intern – it's time to practice giving positive feedback to everyone who deserves it.

From your boss, to her boss, from your subordinate, to his subordinate, no one should be above your notice for compliments.

Don't let it stop at the workplace, either. If you make it a regular practice to compliment people you come in contact with every day, from your waitress, to your spouse, it will become a habit with you.

Compliments – unexpected ones, in particular – are always a way to brighten others' days.

Jeffrey Randall, a member of Playfair, makes a habit of treating the person behind him, in the concession line, at a movie, to popcorn. He never fails to put a smile on someone's face with this unexpected act.

Anonymous Feedback

If complimenting someone directly is uncomfortable for you, or, just for a nice change of pace, you might want to consider giving someone anonymous feedback.

Anonymous feedback can be delivered through an unsigned note of appreciation, or an anonymous, complimentary phone call to the person's boss.

Rewards

In many organizations, years of service are rewarded with a gift. Some employees are given a gift catalog, in which they're allowed to choose a gift; in others, the gift is a standard crystal letter-opener, or a silver frame.

Gift-giving is a good way to express appreciation – however, such benign gifts are not. Gifts like these, which are generic, and not personalized, show little thought on the part of the company's management.

The best choice for gifts is something that is specially chosen for the employee. If that is not an option, then perhaps a gift catalog with a wide array of choices can be chosen from. Keep in mind, that some of your employees may just be making ends meet. To them, a gift certificate to a grocery store, or a cash bonus, would be infinitely more valuable, and appreciated, than a silver candlestick holder.

Be Creative

Rewarding your employees doesn't mean you have to have an extravagant budget. Rewards can be made to fit any budget, with a little creativity.

While cash bonuses are always appreciated by employees, some employers have given bonuses with strings attached. The "strings" required that the employee spent the allotted \$50, or \$200, on a gift for him or herself, rather than putting the money toward something practical.

How did the businesses manage this? One dentist shut down his office, and took his entire staff to the mall for a two-hour shopping trip. He handed each of them \$200, with the stipulation that, at

the end of the two hours, they had to return with gifts only for themselves. And, any money that was left over at the end of that time, would have to be returned to him.

By using a little creativity, this dentist gave more than just \$200 to his employees, he showed them that he really does care about them, and want them to enjoy themselves. You can bet these workers will remember that shopping expedition, and their boss's thoughtfulness, much longer than they'd have remembered an extra \$200 tacked onto one of their paychecks.

Encourage Peer Pressure

Yes, we said, ENCOURAGE peer pressure. But, this is good peer pressure.

As a business leader, it's not enough to tell your employees they should compliment each other. Again, they need incentive, they need inspiration.

They need motivation.

Many businesses have found that by instating peer recognition and reward programs, employees become excited to look for the good in others, and actually seek out opportunities to offer praise to their co-workers.

Be Sensitive!

Keep in mind that while most people love being publicly congratulated on a job well-done, being in the spotlight can be embarrassing for some people.

By being sensitive to your employees, you'll learn which are the ones that would appreciate a more discreet show of recognition, in which your happiness with their work is communicated in private.

Public Recognition

It's a fact of life that many of us will never see our 15 minutes of fame. However, the high points of our days, and lives, are the times we feel best about ourselves, and what's going on around us.

Being recognized for a job well-done is great for the self-esteem; being recognized publicly for a job well-done is, for most people, even better for the self-esteem.

By receiving kudos from your superiors, and co-workers, in the middle of a board meeting, or during your company's awards dinner, you're not only being told "Great work!", but you're being singled out as a "Star achiever".

6. Inspire and Involve!

Employee Involvement

The importance of worker involvement in a business cannot be stressed enough. In yesterday's business world, executives made blanket decisions for everyone within a company, giving little to no regard to employees' thoughts or feelings. Today, smart business leaders realize that the only way to make intelligent, workable decisions is to involve the employees.

The employees tend to know more about the customers, their needs, and the problems within the workplace. They're the ones who come in contact with customers on a daily basis, so of course, their involvement in key issues and decisions should be solicited.

I am Worker, Hear Me Roar!

As attitudes toward authority change, and the notion of the almighty boss is thrown out, employees are demanding more say, and more respect, within their companies.

For workers, involvement in the workplace increases their sense of self-worth, as well as their level of responsibility to the organization.

Smart business leaders ask their employees' input in formulating goals, and setting long-term plans.

If you can achieve a spirit of TEAMWORK at your company, you're already half-way to a positive outcome.

Building Involvement

Use the following steps to build employee involvement in your company:

- Identify problems standing in the way
- Let your employees know your vision for the business
- Empower your employees
- Let them take risks
- Encourage creativity among employees
- Reward and recognize employees' hard work

Irresistibly Irreverent

Think about the last time you read a magazine article, or heard a speech. Did the article or speech begin with an amusing anecdote? Many do begin this way, because anecdotes are fun, and keep our attention, even through the rest of an otherwise boring barrage of information.

Can you incorporate an anecdotal type atmosphere to your workplace? Of course you can. Try irreverence, to involve your employees. Few people can resist being a little "naughty," especially if the boss gives them the okay.

At Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream, for example, company founders, Ben Cohen, and Jerry Greenfield, make a habit of being irreverent. Although stockholders' meetings are generally stuffy and yawn-producing, Ben and Jerry livened up one of their meetings by performing carnival tricks.

In addition, at Ben and Jerry's, there is a permanent committee, known as the Joy Gang, which plans fun activities for its employees. Company leaders find that by being irresistibly irreverent, they're knocking down the walls between employees, and involving them in the company's big picture.

Lighten Up!

While the old days of formal dress in the office was thought to be the "proper" way to run a business, most organizations have adopted casual dress, or dress-down, days. As with any kind of rule-breaking, even in regard to something so minor, employees enjoy the opportunity to add some spice to their work world.

Some businesses, who have an already-established casual dress code, find that an occasional extra little variety in dress code – say, a Tacky Dress Day, or a Ugliest Shoes Day – is a big hit with employees.

In addition to the "fun" of an altered dress code, employees appreciate the freedom to express themselves – as well as the company's gesture in allowing them to do so.

Inspiration and Rejuvenation

In the day to day work environment, it's not surprising that people experience burn-out. At the very least, it's difficult to stay motivated, when you're faced with the same routine, day after day after day. Remember, the only way you're going to motivate your employees is by getting involved. No, we're not saying you should baby-sit them – but, at the same time, reducing your relationship with them to abrupt "I-need-this-by-three" calls, and delivered reports, will be harmful to everyone involved.

Kindness begets kindness, as the old saying goes, and we can carry that a step further. To encourage their involvement (With the company's well-being), the company must first involve itself with the employees' well-being. (Within reason, of course – no one likes someone peering over their shoulder constantly.)

Rah-Rah, and then Some!

Employees may get fired up after an enthusiastic rah-rah sales meeting, only to feel their enthusiasm wane in the ensuing weeks. While rah-rah sessions cannot be overlooked for their effect on overall business enthusiasm, sometimes workers need more than just a once-a-month adrenaline boost.

For employees under severe deadline stress, or facing a particularly rough project, try offering some tension-tacklers to help him through.

Take a trip to your local toy store, and buy some miniature gag gifts, or party-type favors – a little Etcha-Sketch, a package of crayons, with a coloring book, and miniature wind-up toys. Add a

bottle of aspirin, for those post-complaint-call headaches, and some bubble gum, for a harmless stress reliever. Fashion these treats into your own, homemade kit of Tension-Tackling Treats, and distribute them to those who seem to need it.

Random Acts of Kindness

We've all heard the alternative to "random acts of violence" – it's random acts of kindness. But, have you ever considered performing a RAK? If not, now is the time to start.

There are two ways in which RAKs can help to inspire your employees. One, by random acts of kindness performed FOR the employee. These could include a vase of fresh-cut flowers, delivered to his desk, a couple of movie-passes for her and her husband, or telling her she can leave work an hour early on the day of her daughter's dance recital.

Many RAKs are performed anonymously, but the choice is yours.

More Random Acts of Kindness

Company wide random acts of kindness include anything from donating food and clothing to a homeless shelter, to volunteering at an animal shelter, to sponsoring a local underprivileged kids organization for a night at the circus.

Be creative with your random acts of kindness. And, don't be surprised if you find yourself on the receiving end of these!

Company-wide random acts of kindness involve and inspire employees. Not only are they "doing good", but so is the company for which they work – which instills pride in themselves, and in their company. Pride and self-esteem are among most people's primary motivators, according to experts.

Treat Others

Even in the best of companies, it's no secret that the farther up the corporate ladder one travels, the bigger the perks. While perks are arguably "earned" after climbing the often treacherous ladder, why not share some of these with your employees?

For example, try sending the company limo to an employee's house on his birthday. Or, for the employee who is working late, and still has to go home and worry about dinner for her family, order pizzas to be delivered to her house, and charge them to your expense account.

As the saying goes, a little goes a long way. And, there are few areas of business behavior in which this applies as much as motivation.

Self-motivation

Before you can do anything to inspire, involve, or motivate others within your company, you must motivate yourself! Think of something you feel strongly about – a sport, a musical group, or a belief. Isn't it easy to become impassioned, when speaking about this topic? Of course it is, because you believe in what you're saying.

The same applies to workplace motivation. If you're truly enthusiastic about motivating others, if you truly believe in the value of motivation, and if you truly believe in your company and employees, it will be easy for you to inspire others.

7. Triumph Through Motivation

Triumph over Adversity

It's easy to understand how a company that is doing well could adopt a more "fun" approach to business. After all, who isn't jovial when the money is pouring in, and employees are receiving nice monthly bonuses?

The trick, and the challenge, is to incorporate "fun" policies, even if your company isn't doing its best right now. Or, for companies that are doing well, to hang onto its fun atmosphere, even when business is slow.

Thank you! Thank you!

While we've already discussed the importance of regular praise for employees, praise isn't the only kind of positive feedback you can deliver to your employees on a regular basis.

Just as we were taught when we first learned to talk, saying "please" and "thank you" are as essential as ever. Whether or not it's Chris' job to write the report you requested, you should still thank him for doing so. A simple "thanks" or, "I really appreciate you getting this to me so quickly" is sufficient, and should become a part of your everyday dialogue, with everyone.

Be particularly expressive with your gratitude for those employees who are willing to go the extra mile.

Thank you, to you, too!

Keep in mind that by requiring an employee to work a lot of overtime, he or she is not the only one feeling the burden of such long hours.

Many companies reward the employee's spouse, after a week or month of especially long hours, by giving the couple a gift certificate for a fancy dinner out for two. Others hire a cleaning service to visit the employee's home, or send flowers to the employees' spouse.

Don't Sweat the Silly Stuff!

It's easy to get so caught up in the small stuff, that you have a hard time looking at the big picture, but try to maintain a distance, if possible.

Some things are not within your control, and some things are not worth the time you'll waste worrying about them.

Our advice to you is this: think about the problem, make a decision, and then let it go! There is no changing the past, and no sense wasting time worrying about something you cannot change.

In motivating employees, it's natural that, at times, some programs will be more effective than others. That's okay! Don't stress out over it – just come up with new and better ideas all the time!

Rate the following statements to determine if you view them as “small” stuff, or “not-so-small” (more important) stuff.

Small, or Not So?

While different things have the ability to stress different people out, keep in mind that all of the preceding issues can usually be lumped into the category of “small stuff”. If it’s something you can’t do anything about, like the traffic, or an impending snowstorm, there’s no sense in wasting any more of your day being angry about it.

Even if you had a minor altercation with a customer, don’t let it ruin your day. Have confidence in your ability, and the manner in which you helped the customer’s problem, and let the worry slide off your back. It’s just not worth it to waste time constantly second-guessing yourself.

Self-Discipline

Managers and business owners must practice what they preach, or they will never be true leaders.

Here are some helpful self-discipline tips:

- Set the example
- Walk the talk
- Keep specific goals in mind with everything you do
- Organize your time
- Practice smart work habits, including planning, organization, and scheduling

Going it Alone

The lucky organizations are the ones in which everyone whole-heartedly embraces a fun, positive, motivated work atmosphere. The others, in which nay-sayers delight in throwing roadblocks in the way, are not quite as lucky.

Even if the nay-sayer in your organization is your boss, don’t be deterred.

If your boss is a numbers man, don’t be afraid to tie in fun with productivity. To convince a “Doubting Thomas” boss of the value of motivation and fun at work, you must show him the effect on the bottom line.

Remember, you’re still walking the talk... it’s just that the talk is in HIS language, now.

Proceed with Caution!

If your supervisors are anti-fun, because they feel it is unproductive and frivolous, then you CAN go it alone.

However, proceed with caution! You should not outright DEFY your boss, because that will land you on the street.

Change takes time, and is gradual. Patience and persistence are key to its success.

Coping with Change

People have different ways of coping with change. Some welcome it with open arms, anxious to break out of the day-to-day doldrums. Others are resistant, but gradually can accept change. And a small number of people fight change, clinging to the past, fearful of the unknown future.

Here are a few steps to helping people deal with change:

- Be patient
- Be sensitive
- Be honest
- Use knowledge to help people fight fear of the unknown.
- Be reassuring
- Focus on the positive, and help others to do the same.

Mixing Business with Pleasure?

Motivation, as we've seen, is a gradual undertaking for your company. It's more than just giving a mumbled "thanks", or an added cash bonus.

By motivating employees, on a regular, ongoing basis, your employees will:

- Have fun on the job
- Feel more loyalty to the company
- Enjoy their jobs more
- Put their hearts into their work
- Help increase productivity

These are only a few of the bonuses your company has to reap from offering your employees strong motivation.

So, should you mix business with pleasure?

Absolutely!