

How to Get Your Employees
to Work Harder and Smarter
In Order to Motivate Better Productivity

Upturn
POINTING YOU IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Motivating Employees



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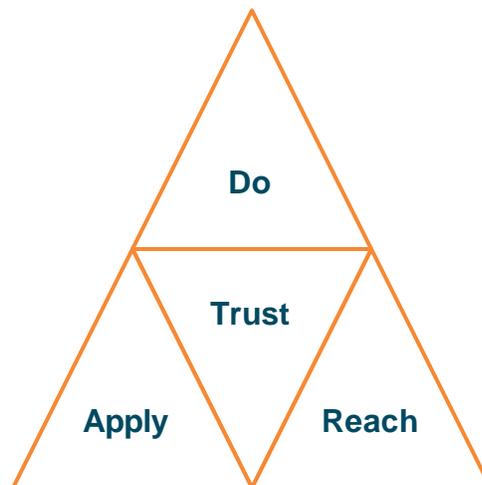
Are You Working Harder than Your Employees?

Are they underperforming? Are they a bit lazy from time-to-time? If so, they may be lacking in the proper motivation—or you're lacking the specific skills to motivate them. Either way, your company's efficiency is suffering. You're wasting your hard earned money, time and energy.

Employee motivation is complicated. Because of all the different personalities, skill-sets, self-esteem and many other issues, you essentially need to customize your approach for each person—and that's hard work. There's no one-size-fits-all approach...or at least none that works very well.

A simple way to think about employee motivation is to focus on four key strategies:

Four Strategies of Employee



- 1. Trust:** When your employees believe in your vision, the purpose of your company, what you're trying to do for customers and everything else you're about, motivation gets easier. Without trust, the focus is on negativity and suspicions. Instead of asking themselves what they could be doing to delight your customers, employees are wondering how you're screwing them over.

2. **Apply:** To what extent are your people using their complete set of talents and abilities? If they feel they are being underutilized, it's very difficult to keep them motivated. Few people want to do mindless work. They want to believe that they are making a real difference and not wasting away at their job.

3. **Reach:** The way in which you communicate with your employees impacts their motivation. While you may think you're being crystal clear, they may not. Even the same message may be interpreted completely differently because of generational differences. The toughest audiences for managers today seem to be Generation Y, which is just entering the workforce.

4. **Do:** Procrastination is a killer and can completely debilitate your day, department or company. People procrastinate for a lot of different reasons, often because they haven't clearly defined what needs to be done. When you help your people get past procrastination, they are more motivated because they are getting more done.

By applying these four strategies in concert, you'll find that your staff is more fired up than ever, not to mention working on the right stuff. Instead of you having to push everyone, they'll start pushing you. Productivity will skyrocket, you'll get more sleep at night and you'll be happier. Let's take a deeper look at each of these four strategies.

1. Trust: Start By Trusting Your Employees

Do your employees trust you? Trust is a two-way street. That's right, if your employees don't trust you, or visa versa, you're on the road to trouble. Managers must trust employees to do their job and employees must trust their leaders.

If employees know that their managers have trust and faith in them to get the job done, they are more likely to take bigger strides to make it happen. If employees do not trust you, then they may be less willing to work as hard or accept your motivation tactics. If this is the case, it could severely alter productivity. The main point is to start by putting trust into your employees. Have courage and give them permission to fail—at least once.

Use General Lee's Trust to Motivate Your Troops

An example of a leader that took trust into account is Robert E. Lee. Robert E. Lee knew that leadership took much more than the ability to manage and administrate. It took trust.

The two great armies of the Potomac and the Northern Virginia in our Civil War furnished an excellent example of this point. The Potomac Army, under General McClland, held the advantage of splendid organization and expert administration during most of the war. Supplies were bountiful and additional resources never too far away. Yet, during three years of war, this army was unable to defeat its poorly administered, poorly provisioned southern opponent.

What kept the determined southerners in the game? Leadership. The kind of leadership encouraged by Robert E. Lee. Experience taught Lee that success could not always be assured by the singular efficiency of the person in charge.

Lee trusted his junior leaders to act on their own initiative not just interpret and execute the orders received.

This trust, harmonized with the intentions and plans of the common superior, more than made up for what was missing in supplies, materials and organization.

2. Apply: Help Them Use All of Their Talents and Abilities

A lot of employees will freely admit that they could be using more of their talents and abilities on their job. They believe they have a lot more skill than is being called for. Most want to do more (and end up being even more productive).

If your employees are not working up to their full potential, they may not be feeling great about their jobs. The key to effectively solve this problem is to work with your employees. Help them define their specific skills and how they can apply them or find new ways of developing and using their skills. If your staff members have a better sense of what they can do for the company and can apply those talents it will be easier to motivate them. In fact, they may be the ones motivating you. Use these approaches:

- 1. Make sure your employees understand the mission of the company.** If employees have a greater understanding of the company and how their positions are contributing to this mission, they will feel more inclined to do their best in order to achieve it.
- 2. Have clearly defined job descriptions.** If they know exactly what their position is it will be easier to know how they can do it to their full potential. This may include having them set goals based on their position, so they have more motivation to achieve them and bring all they can to their position.
- 3. Try to find ways to get your employees to enrich their jobs.** Start by giving them more responsibilities at work if that is at all possible. This will challenge them as well as will lead to the need for them to be more motivated in order for them to succeed.
- 4. Institute a new training program if applicable.** To find out if this has an impact, design a survey that will measure the group's attitudes before and after the training.
- 5. Communicate.** If you cannot implement a whole training program, be sure to keep open communication with your employees and regularly ask them questions like "Are you utilizing your talents and abilities effectively in this current assignment?"

A key to ensuring that your employees use all of their abilities and talents is to keep them learning. Yes, some day-to-day tasks are completed in a specific manner. But your employees will be more satisfied with the company if they have room to grow. Help them find new ways of developing and using their skills. If they are using new skills and attitudes, they will be more motivated.

If your employees are working to their full potential, using all of their talents and abilities to contribute to their tasks, then the company will greatly benefit. If all employees are working at their best, productivity will be increased.

Check List for Determining If Your Employees Are Effectively Using Their Talents and Abilities

(Ask Them How Much They Agree with Each Statement)

- I have identified my skills, interests, values and needs for career development.
- I understand career options available to me.
- I have written personal career goals.
- I have developed an action plan to reach my career goals.
- I work with my manager to design challenging and rewarding assignments.
- I understand my department's strategic direction and challenges.
- I have recently identified the skills that will be needed to meet business challenges.
- I speak openly with my manager about my career opportunities.
- I work in an environment that supports my career and professional growth.

3. Reach: Overcome the Gen Y Gap

Do you have problems connecting with some employees, especially the Gen Y crowd? If you do, ignoring this issue or simply trying to make one size fit all won't cut it. And you're likely to cause even more motivational problems with your other staff. Gen Y'ers are seemingly carefree and self-loving individuals who have their own (different) ideas of what a job should be. Many managers are frustrated and have great trouble motivating this group to perform. The secret is to allow them to work in the way that they want to work. Use these 10 strategies for getting the most out of your Gen Y'ers.

- 1. Understand that Gen Y'ers want immediate gratification.** They like to go fast and see results right away.
 - Encourage them to cross off the tasks on their lists as they are completed.
 - Use their last success to motivate them for the next challenge.
 - Assign a series of small tasks that will eventually lead to the overall goal—so they can experience *more success more often*.
- 2. Teach your Gen Y'er.** Gen Y'ers are accustomed to learning from everything in their environment. They want to know why their job is important and what impact it has on the rest of the organization.
 - Create a workplace where they are able to learn from their surroundings.
 - Realize they see a larger value in their tasks than just completion.
 - Help them obtain useful knowledge from their co-workers and superiors.
- 3. Realize that work is not their life!** Many Gen Y'ers don't even identify themselves by what they do for a living. Their job is a way of enabling their desired lifestyle.
 - Allow them to work outside the office if possible. With the technology available today, it's easy to get a lot of work finished offsite.
 - If they can be as productive from their home as in the office, let them from time-to-time.

4. **Effectively communicate with Gen Y'ers.** Many of them are experienced by the time they reach you. Treat them accordingly. They do not want to feel like you are holding their hands.
 - Expect them to perform. They liked to be treated like they are worthy and capable.
 - Tell them what to do, but not what to think.

5. **Give Gen Y'ers praise for their success.**
 - Make sure they receive compliments for satisfactory work. It is how they identify with success.
 - Even give the smallest successes compliments to re-assure them that they are an important member of the organization. The compliment will motivate them to work harder.

6. **Utilize Gen Y'ers ability and desire to multi-task.** This generation is technology savvy. Use it to your advantage.
 - Enable them to be involved with more than one thing at a time.
 - Don't bore them by assigning them only one task at a time. Take advantage of their desire to multi-task.

7. **Gen Y'ers are often labeled as lazy and unmotivated**—similar to their predecessors from Gen X'ers when in fact most are not. They just need to be motivated differently.
 - Do not lump Gen Y'ers and Gen X'ers together when you are trying to integrate them. This is a mistake. They are two different types of employees.
 - Allow them to dress casual if possible and try to provide a laid back atmosphere.
 - Understand they normally do not show much job loyalty like previous generations.
 - Make sure to integrate them properly, because they are aware of the opportunities out there for them and will not hesitate to sign on with one of your competitors if you fail to do so.

8. **Get Gen Y'ers put their money where their mouth is.** If they believe they are the best, make them live up to their potential.
 - Many think highly of themselves and are confident that they can always produce high quality work, so make sure they do it.
 - Don't view their attitude as "negative." Turn the tables and require high quality work as the standard.

9. **A lot of Gen Y'ers are creative and have good ideas,** so use this to your advantage.
 - Allow these individuals to enter the organization and make an immediate impact.
 - Many will not be shy to try and change the organization that they have just started working for. This could have beneficial possibilities.
 - Have an open mind to their ideas, as these individuals might know something you don't.

10. **Don't look too far down the road,** because chances are they aren't. Do not try to interest these individuals with what is to come two or three years down the road, most are not looking the far ahead.
 - Allow them to focus on the "now" and complete their tasks and get on with their lives.
 - They might just be looking for a job in order to get paid and enjoy their lives now, so do not be too fast to talk about eventual promotions a couple years down the road. It might scare them away. Many do not want to feel that they are being tied down to a specific career.

4. Do: Manage Procrastination

Let's talk about procrastination—later. Even the best and most productive workplace may suffer from the procrastination bug once in a while and it really kills motivation. Here are some basic principles in reducing procrastination in the workplace.

1. Understand the basic reasons people procrastinate.

- Not enough time.
- Not enough information.
- “It’s too nice a day to be cooped up inside.”
- If I wait long enough somebody else will do it.

2. Understand the deeper reasons that people procrastinate.

- Fear of failure... “If I don’t do it, I can’t fail.”
- Rebel against authority. Growing up we were told what to do and how to do it. The only thing we could control was the when to do it, so we did.
- Crave the adrenalin rush. We press deadlines to the “Eleventh Hour.” This is the “I work better under pressure” crowd.

3. Suggestions on how to fight the procrastination bug.

- Place your first scheduled task for tomorrow right in the center of your work area.
- Do your unpleasant tasks first. You’ll feel great all day.
- Delegate them. Just because you find it unpleasant doesn’t mean that someone else will.
- Trade them. Same concept as 3. Mutual value.
- Handle in small pieces. Fragment the work. Example: 50 calls to make? Make 5 lists of 10 names each.

- Set a deadline. There is a big difference between “I’ll do that the first chance I get.” And “I’ll have an outline done by 3 p.m.”
 - Be Realistic.
 - Put it in writing, from a simple listing to a graphic depiction.
 - Try to post it so that you will see it.
- Give yourself a reward for completion along the way as well as at the end.
- Don’t wait for inspiration. Take a little action. The Law of Inertia is at work here. A body at rest, tends to stay at rest.
- Make your deadlines known. Have an “Accountability Partner.” Enlist the help of your spouse, co-worker, boss or friend. We tend to break commitments made to ourselves but are not so likely to break a commitment to someone else.
- Do a cost benefit analysis. List the advantages and disadvantages. If there are good reasons to procrastinate a task, re-evaluate your goals.
- Use the “Do it Now” as a motto, slogan or mantra.