REACH YOUR GOALS FASTER BY LETTING YOUR PEOPLE AIM HIGHER!

Are you striving to boost productivity, build stronger teams and develop your people? One of the best ways to do that is to motivate them to perform and achieve the most they are capable of.

Alignment of aims, purpose and values between staff, teams and the organisation is the most fundamental aspect of motivation. The better the alignment and personal association with organisational aims, the better the platform for motivation.

Where people find it difficult to align and associate with the organisational aims, then most motivational ideas and activities will have a reduced level of success. Motivation is a complex area. It's different for each person.

Motivational receptiveness and potential in everyone changes from day to day, from situation to situation. Get the alignment and values right, and motivational methods work better. Motivational methods of any sort will not work if people and the organisation are not aligned. People are motivated towards something they can relate to and something they can believe in. Times have changed. People want more.

Motivational methods are wide-ranging, from inspirational quotes and poems, to team building games and activities, to inspirational talks and speeches. Motivated people perform better. People playing games or competing in teams learn about each other, they communicate better, see each other in a new light and it creates opportunities for people to experience winning, achievement, learning and personal development. Mutual respect grows. People often enjoy events which include new non-work activities, especially when bosses and superiors take part in the same teams as their junior staff, which also helps cohesiveness and a 'can-do' culture. Experiencing these positive feelings is essential for broadening people's horizons, raising their sights, setting new personal standards and goals, and increasing motivation.

Inspirational quotes, stories and poems all help motivation too. Powerful positive imagery stimulates visualisation in the conscious and sub-conscious brain, which encourages self-motivation, developmental behaviour, confidence and belief. Playing games enables people to experience winning and achieving in a way that their normal
work might not. People become motivated to achieve and do better when they have experienced the feelings of success and achievement, regardless of context. This is why fire-walking and outward-bound activities have such powerful motivational effect. All of these ideas contribute to improving motivation, inspiration and performance.

Work and business-based training commonly concentrates on process, rules, theory, structure and logic, all of which tend to develop and use the left-side of the brain. However, modern successful organisations rely just as heavily on their people having well-developed skills and attributes, such as self-motivation, confidence, initiative, empathy and creativity, which all tend to use the right-side of the brain.

When a group of people assemble for a conference, or training course, there is always a feeling of uncertainty and discomfort. Even if people know each other, they feel uncomfortable in the new strange situation, because it is different. Mankind has evolved partly because of this awareness to potential threats and fear of the unknown. Games and team building activities relax people, so that they can fully concentrate on the main purpose of the day, whatever it is, rather than spending the morning still wondering what everyone else is thinking.

Learning something new and completely different liberates the mind. Facing a challenge, meeting it and mastering it helps build confidence.

When you break down barriers, misunderstandings, prejudices, insecurities, divisions, territories and hierarchies - you begin to build teams. Get a group of people in a room having fun with juggling balls and barriers are immediately removed. Teams unite and work together when they identify a common purpose - whether the aim is the tallest tower made out of newspapers, or a game of rounders on the park. Competition in teams or groups creates teams and ignites team effort.

Saying thanks and giving praise are the most commonly overlooked and underestimated ways of motivating people. And it's so easy. Saying thanks is best said naturally and from the heart, so if your intentions are right you will not go far wrong. When you look someone in the eye and thank them sincerely it means a lot. In front of other people even more so. The key words are the ones which say thanks and well done for doing a great job, especially where the words recognise each person's own special ability, quality, contribution and effort. People always appreciate sincere thanks, and they appreciate being valued as an individual even more. When you next have the chance to thank your team or an individual team-member, take the time to find out a special thing that each person has done and make a point of mentioning these things. Doing this, the praise tends to carry even greater meaning and motivational effect.

Inspirational quotes contribute to motivation because they provide examples and role models, and prompt visualisation. Inspirational quotes stimulate images and feelings in the brain - both consciously and unconsciously. Powerful positive imagery found in motivational quotations and poems is genuinely motivational for people, individually and
in teams, and can help to build confidence and belief. Inspirational examples motivate people in the same way that the simple 'power of positive thinking', and 'accentuate the positive' techniques do - people imagine and visualise themselves behaving in the way described in the quotation, saying, story or poem.

Visualisation is a powerful motivational tool - quotes, stories and poems provide a very effective method for inspiring and motivating people through visualisation, imagination and association.

Here are a few motivational quotes, relating to different situations and roles, for example; achievement, management, leadership, etc:

"We cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them."
   (Albert Einstein)
"It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit."
   (President Harry S Truman)
"In the midst of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer."
   (Albert Camus, 1913 - 1960, French author & philosopher)
"A dream is just a dream. A goal is a dream with a plan and a deadline." (Harvey Mackay - thanks Brad Hanson)
"I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles overcome while trying to succeed." (Booker T Washington, 1856-1915, American Educator and African-American spokesman)
"Most people never run far enough on their first wind to find out they've got a second. Give your dreams all you've got and you'll be amazed at the energy that comes out of you." (William James, American Philosopher, 1842-1910)
"Whatever you can do - or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it." (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German writer, 1749-1832)
"A dwarf standing on the shoulders of a giant may see farther than the giant himself."
   (Didacus Stella, circa AD60)
"If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." (Sir Isaac Newton, 1676.)
"The most important thing in life is not to capitalise on your successes - any fool can do that. The really important thing is to profit from your mistakes." (William Bolitho, from 'Twelve against the Gods')
"Management means helping people to get the best out of themselves, not organising things." (Lauren Appley)
"The world is divided into people who do things, and people who get the credit. Try, if you can, to belong to the first class. There's far less competition." (Dwight Morrow, 1935.)

"What does not kill us makes us stronger." (attributed to Friedrich Nietzsche, probably based on his words: "Out of life's school of war: What does not destroy me, makes me stronger." from The Twilight of the Idols, 1899)

"A life spent in making mistakes is not only more honourable but more useful than a life spent doing nothing." (George Bernard Shaw, 1856-1950.)

"I praise loudly. I blame softly." (Catherine the Great, 1729-1796.)

Motivation of sales people commonly focuses on sales results, but nobody can actually 'do' a result. What matters in achieving results is people's attitude and activity and the areas of opportunity on which the attitude and activity is directed. What sales people can do is to adopt a positive and creative attitude, and carry out more productive and efficient activity, directed on higher-yield strategic opportunities. By doing these things sales people and sales teams will improve their results.

However the tendency remains for sales managers, sales supervisors and team leaders (typically under pressure from above from executives who should know better) to simply direct people to 'meet the target', or to 'increase sales', or worse still, to pressurise customers into accelerating decision-making, which might work in the short-term but is extremely unhelpful in the medium-term (when business brought forward leaves gaps in the next months' forecasts), and damages the long-term (when as a result of supplier-driven sales pressure, the customer relationship is undermined or ruined).

Instead think about what really motivates and excites people, and focus on offering these opportunities to sales people and sales teams, on an ongoing basis. Don't wait until you find yourself 25% behind target with only half of the year remaining, and with targets set to increase as well in the final quarter.

People will not generally and sustainably improve their performance or attitude when they are shouted at or given a kick up the backside. People will on the other hand generally improve their performance if empowered to develop their own strategic capability and responsibility within the organisation.

Sales teams generally comprise of people who seek greater responsibility. They also seek recognition, achievement, self-development and advancement. So if we know these things does it not make good sense to offer these opportunities to them, because we know that doing so will have a motivational effect on them, and also encourage them to work on opportunities that are likely to produce increasing returns on their efforts?

If you are managing a sales team try (gently and progressively) exploring with the team how they'd like to develop their experience, responsibilities, roles, status, value,
contribution, within the business. Include yourself in this. Usually far more ideas and activity come from focusing on how the people would like to develop their roles and value (in terms of the scale and sophistication of the business that they are responsible for), rather than confining sales people to a role that is imposed on them and which is unlikely to offer sustainable interest and stimulation.

All businesses have many opportunities for new strategic growth available. Yours will be no different.

Most employees are capable of working at a far higher strategic level, developing ever greater returns on their own efforts.

Performance improvement is generally found through enabling people and teams to discover and refine more productive and strategic opportunities, which will lead to more productive and motivating activities. For example: reactive sales people are generally able to be proactive account managers; account managers are generally able to be major accounts developers; major accounts developers are generally able to be national accounts managers; national accounts managers are generally able to be strategic partner and channel developers; strategic partner and channel managers are generally able to be new business sector/service developers, and so on...

**Genuinely motivated people are capable of dramatic achievements.**

People are motivated by growth and extra responsibility, while at the same time the organisation benefits from having its people focus on higher aims and activities. Be aware however that people in different roles will be motivated by different things, and particularly will require different types of support and guidelines when being encouraged to work at a higher strategic level. For example, engineers require more detail and clarification of expectations and process than sales people typically do; administrators are likely to require more reassurance and support in approaching change than sales people typically do.

You should encourage and enable people to develop their roles, but make sure you give appropriate explanation, management and support for the types of people concerned.

**Motivating Factors – summary**

Tangible rewards play a role in job satisfaction, but for many workers, the "happiness factor" depends heavily on intangibles, such as respect, trust, and fairness.

Is money the key to retention and productivity? It helps, but it's not enough. Beyond pay and benefits lie eight key factors that motivate workers and keep them at your organisation.
1. Appreciation
We have already mentioned this but praise heads the list for many workers, and it doesn't cost the employer anything to provide it. A sincere thank you or a short note can mean a great deal.

2. Respect
Again there is no cost. Respect plays out in letting people know that their work is appreciated, in treating them like adults, and in being fair in your dealings with them.

3. Trust
Trust is the action side of respect. People need guidance, but they need to know that their boss trusts them to be able to get a job done on their own.

4. Individual Growth
Today's workers want to take on new challenges, and want to advance based on their new abilities. Giving a raise without increasing responsibilities could actually backfire. As one expert says, if you give more money to an unhappy employee, you end up with a wealthier unhappy employee.

5. Good Boss
It's the old saying: People don't leave companies, they leave bosses. In a recent Robert Half survey 1,000 workers ranked "working with a manager I can respect and learn from" as the most important aspect of their work environment.

6. Compatible Colleagues
Working with people you enjoy being with is also very important. Spending the day-every day-with people you don't like does not make for a productive workplace.

7. Compatible Culture
Employees want a work environment that fits their needs. That could mean hard-driving, high paying, or it could mean high flexibility and significant attention to work/life balance.

8. A Sense of Purpose
People want to know that they are contributing to something worthwhile. They need to know what the organisation's core purpose is and what it is trying to achieve. And then they need to know how their particular job fits into the whole.

One of the interesting things about employee "happiness" is that there is a disconnect between what managers think and what employees think about happiness at work.

Managers tend to think that salary and benefits are the main motivators, while workers
consistently respond that factors such as those mentioned above are what is important. Successful organisations will find a good balance to retain their best people.

To discuss ways to give your leaders and managers the motivation skills to take your organisation forward or to motivate your staff please call us now on 01460 61459 or 67480.