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This Issue: Town and Gown: Serving the Campus and Community

Managing for Success

by Dipak Parmar

Human resources are the only assets of a business that become more valuable with the passage of time. Effective managers know how to create a culture that motivates employees to be more productive, more efficient, and more loyal to the organization or employer. Ineffective managers need to take a lesson.

What Motivates Us?

When we accept a job, we bring our expectations with us. Consider the following:

- We expect to contribute to the success of the organization.
- We expect to learn and grow professionally.
- We expect to be accepted and respected by our coworkers.
- We expect to be compensated appropriately.

Although everyone has a different hierarchy of needs (both physical and emotional), a climate that promotes the realization of these needs is considered a motivational climate. Human behavior is influenced by our unsatisfied needs. To the extent that our needs and expectations are not met, we become dissatisfied and unmotivated, and our behavior as employees reflects our frustration.

Everywhere in the world, people approach a new job with enthusiasm and high expectations. In many cases, it doesn't take long to get discouraged and fall into a pattern of doing only what is required and dreading coming to the office each day.

How can a good manager prevent this?

Creating a Motivating Climate

Even a brilliant manager may not be able to turn the worst of times into the best of times, but there are ways to make tough times more tolerable.

Is your staff overworked? Be sure they know that management, clear up to the highest level, is aware that they are stretched thin. Be up front about why this crunch has happened, what you are doing about it, and how long you expect it to last. Ask them, collectively and individually, if there is anything they need to make their workload more manageable. Re-examine their normal workload and reprioritize nonessential projects.



Be a good communicator. Employees must know what you expect. Never assume someone understands your unstated objectives. Set realistic goals and, whenever possible, invite input from those who will be working to help you achieve them. Listen with both ears. Be aware of potholes—those gaps in communications where what someone says is not what others hear.

Support your staff in subtle as well as highly visible ways. Bring coffee and doughnuts one morning or have pizza brought in for lunch one day. Express your appreciation often for the extra time and effort everyone is devoting to meeting the goals. Be generous with your words of praise—but be genuine. Recognize milestones along the way if you are struggling with a long-term project. Offer incentives or rewards for meeting special goals.

Be a public relations agent for your staff or department. Let the campus—and especially your boss—know that you and your staff are committed to success and are taking extra steps to reach your goals. Whenever possible, publicize your staff's or department's accomplishments. Acknowledgement from those outside the department is important, too. Visible or tangible recognition of a job well done is a powerful motivator.

Provide your employees with plenty of opportunity to learn and grow. Anuj Bhargav, chairman of the Bombay chapter of The Institute of Manage-

ment Consultants of India, says, "When technology changes, not only technology but the people associated with it become obsolete." To survive in a fast-paced industry like IT and telecommunications, we have to keep ourselves up-to-date. Learning is a very important part of the compensation package. Whatever an organization spends on an employee should be considered an investment, not a cost, which ultimately results in either an increase in profits or a reduction of loss.

Encourage your staff to model excellence in customer service. Invest energy in your customer; he or she is your best spokesperson. If you are providing a service or product to the campus, make your customers feel important. It isn't possible to please all the people all the time, but it's important for customers to know that you are doing your best to serve them.

Support your staff's participation in volunteer activities or other worthwhile causes. When the workload is normal or light, look for a community project the entire department can share. Clean up a playground. Conduct a food drive. "Adopt" a family at Christmas. Build a spirit of unity within your department.

Have high expectations of your staff. People usually live up—or down—to our expectations. If you tell your employees how creative they are, chances are excellent that their creative efforts will increase. If you commend them for their accuracy, they are likely

to be more careful in order to preserve their reputation.

Reaping the Benefits

What do you have to gain from creating a motivating climate? In a word, success. It manifests itself in the form of lower employee turnover, improved relations between employees and management, reduced absenteeism, increased efficiency, higher profits, and a surge in innovation and creativity. A good manager recognizes that people are any business entity's most valuable resource.

In *New Patterns of Management* (1961), Rensis Likert wrote that "supervisors with the best records of performance focus their primary attention on the human aspects of their subordinates' problems and on endeavoring to build effective work groups with high performance goals." Likert defined two styles of managers: Job-centered managers were found to be the least productive. Employee-centered managers were found to be the most effective. Nearly half a century later, Likert's conclusions are still true. Dipak Parmar is a freelance writer who lives in India. He can be reached at dipak@journalist.com.

