

# Motivation

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What's a superintendent to do when all of his open and reasonable efforts to motivate employees to come to work promptly, work carefully, deliver exceptional results, and operate as if they were pleased to be a part of the team, fail? There is no lack of reading material and motivational speakers who'll tell you countless ways to start burning a fire under your employee's butt. But what do you do when the fire goes out and nothing in the many of ways seem to work anymore? What do we really know about motivation?

Given the continuous barrage of advertisement, mottos and free opinion on the topic of motivation, without doubt there are at least a few key rules that naturally work out every time. Aren't there? Or are we wrapped up with the idea that everyone is an individual, and what sets a person in action is likely to get in the way of another?

Instead of wondering, let's gather some information. Recall through the course of all the jobs you've ever had, and bring to mind the job you had that produced the highest amount of motivation in you. It doesn't matter what the job was. It is probably the job you have right now or it might be a part-time job you had in high school.

Now that you've got the job in mind, write down the things that caused you to feel motivated and satisfied. If you're like most people, the factors you listed are common and so are the ones that didn't make your list. On your list are items such as recognition, opportunities for achievement, freedom, challenge, the chance to learn and grow, and the work itself. What was not there? You most likely didn't write down items as job security, benefits, working conditions, and the organization's policies and procedures.

I think the missing link in understanding motivation is that there are two different aspects at work. On one hand there are the things that motivate us, that turn us on, that cause us to feel satisfied with the job. On the other are those things that dissatisfy us, that turn us off, that prevent us from being motivated. There are two

employees.

But you can't get away with working exclusively on the make happy level. You have to make sure that you clean up the job to reduce or get rid of those things that cause people to be unhappy and quit.

*Where does money fit into this scheme?*

Pay is the ringer in the equation; the one factor that shows up as both a source of satisfaction and a cause of dissatisfaction. I think employees are dissatisfied with their pay when they feel it isn't equal with their efforts, or is distributed unevenly, or doesn't reflect the responsibilities of the job, or is out of touch with market realities. If you don't pay competitive wages, people will be unhappy and they will quit. But no matter how much

you increase salaries, you won't create motivation and job satisfaction, because job satisfaction is about the content of the job.

Look at it this way: Hire me to scrub dirty floors and pay me pennies and I'll be unhappy and unmotivated. If you raise my wages to a large amount, I'll still hate scrubbing dirty floors. But I won't make a complaint any more about my crummy compensation. I probably won't quit and I may even improve my attendance record (if you pay me my generous wages on an hourly basis). What you have bought with the generous pay increase you provided me was not real job satisfaction. All you have bought is the absence of dissatisfaction. I don't think they are the same thing. If you really want me to be a happy employee, you'd better change the nature of my work.

*(Continued on Page 19)*

***"Motivation represents a measurable increase in both job satisfaction and productivity. The motivated employee does his job better and likes it more than those who are not so motivated."***

variables at work, and you have to attack both of them. Psychologist Fred Herzberg stated it best: "Job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are not flip sides of the same coin. They are entirely different coins, and the wise manager uses both those coins to buy better performance."

*What is motivation?*

A good definition of motivation is this: motivation represents a measurable increase in both job satisfaction and productivity. The motivated employee does his job better and likes it more than those who are not so motivated. I think what makes true motivation is the first set of factors mentioned: opportunities for achievement and accomplishment, recognition, learning and growth, having some say in how the job is done, and worthwhile work. Those are the things that build strong feelings of loyalty, satisfaction, enthusiasm and many other important attributes we want to see in our

## Motivation-

(Continued from Page 18)

Modifying the nature of the job is the real key to motivation. You need to do everything you can to get rid of the things that generate employee unhappiness.

Recognizing that regardless of how big an investment you make you will get little in return. All your budget will acquire is the absence of dissatisfaction. You have no choice but to pay people competitive wages, provide a healthy, safe and desirable work environment. It is important to give as decent insurance policies, vacations and retirements plans as people could get working for the insurance company down the street. If you don't, employees will quit and it will be tough to hire replacements. But all you'll get for the money you spend in this endeavor is a bunch of employees who have to look for something to complain about.

If you want genuine motivation you have got to look at the job itself. Does the work provide me with the chance to actually achieve something? Does my job let me to do something that makes a difference? Do I have a lot of input in how I do



MGCSA volunteers help groom Interlachen during the Womens U.S. Open in June. Photo courtesy of Judd Duinick, Duinick Bros., Inc.-Golf.

my job or am I completely limited by standard operating procedures? Can I learn and grow and mature on this job, or will I be hooking into the same quick coupler watering the same green for the next twenty years? Do I get any appreciation when I do something particularly well?

Providing appreciation of high-quality performance is the best place to begin.

Recognizing good performance any time it's come across - with just a "Thanks" or a literal pat on the back - can be enough to get the motivational engine running. An employee will need more than just an attaboy, but acknowledging excellent work every time it appears is a great place to start the engine of motivation running.

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