

# MOTIVATION TIPS

Getting the most out of employees is one key to a successful operation. A salary by itself will not provide the motivation necessary for optimal productivity.

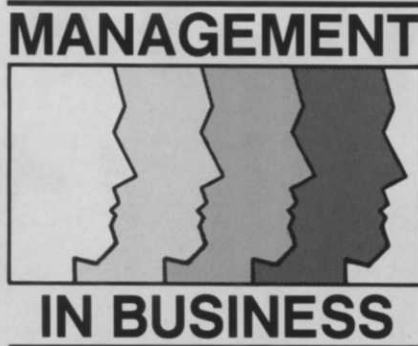
by Rudd McGary and Ed Wandtke

**M**ost major motivational theories used to explain organizational life are applicable to green industry organizations. But this month we want to be more specific about issues you face in managing your staff.

Several basic concepts relate to the green industry. Let's examine each:

**1. Salaries don't motivate.** Giving someone a salary for performing a task isn't a motivational tool. We have heard managers in the green industry say that performance was going to be rewarded by "letting the guy keep his job." That's sort of an Attila the Hun approach to management. There is often a rise in productivity when a salary raise is given but it levels off quickly. Salaries don't motivate a workforce because they become expected rewards. Once something is expected and given on a regular basis, it ceases to be motivational.

**2. Part-time employees are often harder to motivate than full-time.** They enter during your peak time and aren't being protected by the organization over a whole year. Therefore they don't have the same motivation that your full-time people do, and you shouldn't expect it from them. In addition they are at the low end of the pay scale and probably don't have incentives built into their compensation. For these reasons, you shouldn't



expect the part-timers to have the same high-level motivation as full-time employees. They may have, but don't expect it.

**3. Non-cash incentives may be more motivational than money.** Most workers in the green industry aren't afforded executive perks but may respond to small amounts of money used as motivational incentives. Instead of giving someone a \$25 or \$50 bonus, try rewarding on a social basis. For instance: dinner for two at a nice restaurant or tickets to sports events. By getting these types of motivational rewards the employees get something that shows them that you are interested in them as people. This reward may also provide the individuals with some time off, an equally wanted reward in the heat of summer.

**4. Rewards given for extraordinary performance are highly motivational.** If someone simply does his/her job, it's hard to compensate in any exceptional manner. However, if they do the job well above expectations they should be rewarded.

**5. Rewards are motivational only if they come close to the action being rewarded.** If someone does well and you wait six months to reward them, they'll find the reward scarcely motivational. The event itself and the reward must be linked in the person's mind or they won't be motivated.

**6. Everyone needs verbal pats on the head.** (Also known as the famous "attaboys" or "attagirls.") Most managers who enjoy good relationships with their employees are very good at

giving both praise and criticism. We all need both. Since the employee is probably not as motivated as the manager, the manager's responsibility is to let the employee know how they are doing. It is surprising how motivational the simple phrase, "you did a good job today," is to most people.

**7. Some rewards for performance should be stated, some can be given unexpectedly.** If you have a specific task or project that has to be finished in a given time frame, you can offer rewards based on performance. State the rewards you're offering before work on the project begins. These bonuses are often very motivational. Bonuses or rewards given on an unexpected basis can be even more motivational. An unexpected bonus, particularly non-cash, will often be remembered long after the expected performance bonus is forgotten.

**Manager/worker communication**  
Considering these factors, we can see patterns that are applicable to the green industry.

First, part-time people can be motivated but are less likely to be highly motivated all the time. This means that your spring or summer crews need to have more management communication, a responsibility that lies with management.

Second, don't use money as a motivator exclusively. You probably can't afford to give bonuses all the time but you can give non-cash incentives and rewards. They can be even more motivational than money.

Third, do the unexpected. It's extremely motivational. Timing is important and employees rewarded unexpectedly do remember.

Finally, don't expect the same level of motivation from your people that you have. You're the manager, you see more of the overall situation, and you have more control over it. In order for you to be successful, your people have to be motivated.

There are many opportunities in the green industry to use some of the concepts above. Good managers do. **WT&T**



Wandtke and McGary are senior consultants with All-Green Management Associates in Columbus, Ohio. Dr. McGary focuses on marketing and management issues. Wandtke focuses on operations and financial questions.