

Tap Into Employees' Internal Motivation

Approximately 80% of employees say they could perform significantly better if they wanted to, according to a survey conducted by and published in *Credit Union Magazine*.

What makes employees want to be high performers? The key is tapping into their internal motivation, maintains Jeanne Murphy, Growth Strategist and President of Strategic Solutions. People achieve more when they feel good about themselves and their work.

As manager, you can inspire and nurture motivation. Try these tips:

Check your attitude regularly. Are you focusing and building on what the employee is doing right or mainly commenting on their mistakes? Are you talking with employees about areas that need improvement for your own benefit....or are you doing it as a means of helping that employee? “Coaching that comes from a position of wanting to help somebody will be effective. Coaching because you want to put someone in their place is demoralizing,” says Murphy.

Ask questions that encourage employee participation. Encourage people to think up their own ideas and solutions. Let's say you're 3/4 through the month but only halfway to meeting the branch's deposit goal. If your branch keeps performing the same, obviously you're not going to meet the goal. Use a team meeting to get ideas on how to boost results. Ask your staff *Okay, what are we going to do about this? How can we change this and turn it around?* Focus on *what are your ideas and how*. “Be the facilitator of that brainstorming process,” Murphy says. “If you tell employees what they need to do and how to do it, it's not only a huge de-motivator, but it prevents the employee from learning to become a problem-solver.”

Let employees talk. Whether you're meeting with employees one-on-one to discuss progress on goals or having a team meeting, employees should do most of the talking – not the manager. “Don't fill quiet spaces with your own ideas. If you don't get feedback immediately, say something like *Why don't you think about it a day or two and we'll bring this topic back up again,*” Murphy says. “You want employees to think for themselves and talk so that you're constantly getting their input, ideas, and buy-in.”

Encourage employees to participate in performance planning. During reviews, spend time with the employee thinking about performance for the coming year. Discuss issues such as:

- *where you (and the employee) think the employee needs to grow and develop*
- *what the employee wants to do professionally and personally and how to integrate the two in the workplace*
- *any training the employee feels would be beneficial*
- *what the employee feels he or she needs to maximize their effectiveness*

Meld personal and business goals when possible. “If you can, blend your branch goals with the employee’s professional and personal goals. It helps people use the capabilities they have and motivates them,” says Murphy. One of Murphy clients, for example, is a credit union with bilingual membership. The Marketing Director had an assistant who wanted to learn to speak Spanish. The credit union needed to get lobby brochures written in Spanish. The Marketing Director gave this assignment to her assistant as a goal. The credit union paid for the assistant to learn Spanish in order to meet the goal.

Tackle obstacles that block goals. “Frequently, what management thinks is going on in an employee’s everyday work life is vastly different than what the employee thinks,” observes Murphy. When launching a sales culture, for example, management often thinks employees can just add the new sales skills and processes to whatever they’re already doing. But usually there are obstacles that get in the way of employees reaching those new sales goals. “Time is usually the number one thing. *I don’t have the time* and that’s a reality – in part,” Murphy says. “In a sales culture, take a look at what employees’ job duties are now. Try to move some of the paper-pushing tasks to the back office or support staff to give front line staff the necessary time to focus on the member.”

Survey employee satisfaction. Surveys should be anonymous to encourage open and honest responses. Murphy recommends asking:

- *Are you clear about what the organization is trying to achieve in the next 5 - 10 years?*
- *Do you understand the organization’s goals and how you specifically can help the organization to achieve those goals?*
- *How often do you receive specific feedback from your manager?*
- *How much of that feedback reinforces what you’re doing right?*
- *How do you rate your relationship with your manager? Why?*
- *How do you rate your relationship with immediate team members? Why?*
- *How do you rate your relationship with intra-department (i.e. back office) team members? Why?*
- *What do you think are some of the things working best in the organization?*
- *What do you think needs to improve in the organization?*

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