

Coaching Works Newsletter

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Leadership and Motivation

Leadership training in the workplace is one of the hottest things in human resources. Leadership training is often performed by coaches and/or consultants, but it is a skill that can be learned by anyone and taught by anyone. Leadership and coaching go hand in hand. Most of what has been learned about leadership has been tried and tested in the corporate/business world, so here are some of the most effective strategies they have learned.

First, corporations have found out that management by coaching is the most effective way to improve employee relations and morale. Corporate culture is changing rapidly. It used to be the *American Dream* to go to work for a big corporation like General Electric or Dow Chemical, work for 30-plus years, retire and live happily on one's retirement income. This scenario is a thing of the past. The average corporate worker now changes jobs every five years. What's really driving the coaching boom, says John Kotter, professor of leadership at the Harvard Business School, is this: "As we move from 30 miles an hour to 70 to 120 to 180 . . . as we go from driving straight down the road to making right turns, left turns, abandoning cars and getting on motorcycles . . . the whole game changes, and a lot of people are trying to keep up, learn how, not fall off."

Corporate attitudes are also changing with the times. "Command and control" style of leadership doesn't work with today's employees. The old "lean and mean" attitudes won't work either. The new culture is more appropriately called "lean and meaningful." Meaningful work is increasingly important to people, along with a collaborative environment and attention to work-life balance. Employees want to be validated for their contributions. They want to feel a sense of purpose and meaning about their work. Employees also want to feel "taken care of" by their employers -- not just monetarily.

---I attribute my success to this: I never gave or took an excuse.

----Florence Nightingale

Mission Statement

The first order of business is to create a mission statement. The mission statement should encompass the primary aim of the business. It should be the main goal of the organization and each person working within it. The mission statement contains the “what” and “how” and “to whom” of the company. It is amazing that in most businesses not one single employee knows the mission of their organization. This should be the first thing the coach should assess. If no one knows the mission statement, what is going on? This shows a general lack of communication, poor management, poor leadership, and lack of motivational training.

Beyond the mission statement should be the main goals and/or objectives of the company as well as each department within the company. The coach can assist each department or division with creating and writing out their goals and objectives, making sure to get input from all members of the team so that there will be an agreement. The agreement on the goals is crucial to team cooperation and motivation. When there is dissension among team members, the coach can remind them of the agreed upon goals, and assist them in getting back on track for the sake of the common goals.

The term “big, hairy audacious goal” comes from motivational experts who recommend that you take the company’s current goals and challenge them to increase it to a higher level than they think they could possibly achieve. The purpose of this is to push everyone to higher limits, therefore, achieving more than they thought they could.

Embodied within a mission statement should be a statement of objectives with a cause. People like to work for a cause, not just a living. Make sure everyone knows the goals and objectives, while promoting a cause they believe in.

----To be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed.

----Booker T. Washington

What Really Motivates Employees?

Most employers think that what motivates employees is “more financial compensation.” Therefore, they heavily focus on the six month or yearly employee

review with salary raises. In actuality, when employees are asked what they want from their employer to keep them motivated, they rate these things before money:

1. Consistent, frequent communication
2. Recognition
3. Personal growth and job skills training
4. Challenge
5. Promotions and/or better job titles
6. Time off with pay, or travel benefits
7. Fun

In a study by William M. Mercer, Inc., 25% of workers said they were capable of doing 50% more work. On average, they estimated they could do 26% more work. Why don't they? These were the most common explanations:

- 1) Not being involved in decision making
- 2) Lack of a reward for good performance
- 3) No opportunity for advancement
- 4) Lack of supervision
- 5) Inadequate training

----*The giant oak is an acorn that held its ground.*

----Anonymous

Values and Personal Growth

Many corporations are attempting to change their focus to creating a corporate culture based on values. According to Valerie Sokolosky, author of *Creating a Culture Based on Values*, (1999), "companies improve when people improve. To recognize the value of employees the company's leadership must look at their contributions. People can make many contributions, such as value to the customer with the products they produce or services they provide. They can bring value to each other by accomplishing things together. Management must not only recognize people's contributions, but also assist in development of these contributions."

If people feel valued as contributors to a company it usually leads to financial results. It's so simple. People who feel valued are usually committed employees. Commitment enhances job performance, which results in profit.

All successful companies work toward creating and keeping customers. It does not matter whether the company is selling something tangible or intangible, people buy your product or service because it offers a solution or benefit. Every employee should make sure the customer gets results. Equally important is for managers to show employees how their job contributes to the success of the organization. In an Ernst & Young LLP survey, 59% of employees said the best way to motivate them is to show them how their jobs help the company make money.

----*The only place you find success before work is in the dictionary.*

----May V. Smith

Motivation and Empowerment

Even the most ambitious and hard-working employees can become de-motivated by bureaucracy of a company. People with the knowledge and information of what the customer wants must be empowered to act. Successful companies listen to those closest to the customers.

Some ideas offered in an article called “Employee Motivation” in the *American Express Newsletter* are:

- Get to know your employees -- spend the time it takes to know them as people, not just workers
- Open the lines of communication -- an exchange of ideas is encouraged, otherwise employees feel as if they’re operating in a vacuum
- Delegate responsibility -- make your employees feel that their input and abilities are important. Let them take the initiative and solve some problems
- Reward workers for jobs well done -- even just a kind word can go a long way toward making employees feel their contributions are important
- Encourage teamwork rather than competition -- this is critical, because employee backstabbing can destroy a healthy working environment
- Offer a flexible work schedule -- employees’ lives are often hectic, and flexible schedules are an option that can alleviate this stress and reward you with increased employee loyalty

- Redesign jobs -- certain tasks may bog down an employee and hinder her or his overall performance
- Implement work forums -- set up occasional lunch hour or informal get-togethers so employees can discuss how to identify and manage stress

One excellent way to recognize an employee is to send them a letter of commendation or appreciation. Employees appreciate positive, informative letters from the boss, whether from the manager or the owner.

---When I must criticize somebody, I do it orally; when I praise somebody, I put it in writing.

---Lee Iacocca

Recognition

The key to a motivating work environment is to give employees recognition. Even though people work best when they are part of a cause, they still need recognition. Whether it's thanking employees by a pat on the back or a day off with pay, the significance of recognition cannot be overstated.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the number one reason people leave their jobs is because they "do not feel appreciated." Yet praise seems to be rare in the workplace. Numerous studies show that most employees are never praised or complimented at work. One poll found that an astounding 65% of Americans reported receiving no recognition for good work in the past year. Further studies show that recognition and praise are two of the best ways to motivate others at work. A study by Rath and Clifton (2004) that included more than 4 million employees worldwide, found that individuals who receive regular recognition and praise:

- Increase their individual productivity
- Increase engagement among their colleagues
- Are more likely to stay with their organization
- Receive higher loyalty and satisfaction scores from customers
- Have better safety records and fewer accidents on the job.

Therefore, one of the most crucial things you can do to motivate people at work is to simply praise, recognize or compliment them.

---I learned that a great leader is a person who has the ability to get other people to do what they don't want to do and like it. ---Harry Truman

The One Minute Leadership Technique that Works Better than Anything

Many books have been written on the subject of motivation, such as *The One Minute Manager* by Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson (1983) and many other books with the words “One Minute” in their title. “One minute” simply means that it only takes a minute or less to motivate someone to their fullest! The one minute motivational technique that works better than anything else is *validation*. Below are ways of validating people to get the most from them:

Saying (or writing) something positive about someone

Affirming them

Praising them

Complimenting them

Thanking them

Noticing them

Paying full attention to them

Listening to them

Empathizing with them

Understanding them

You will notice that none of these things takes more than a minute to do. You will notice that they are all fairly easy to do. When people are validated they feel valued and empowered. They also enjoy their work more when they are around positive people who pay attention to them. People want to *matter*. It is your job to make them feel that they matter. Be sure to focus just as much on the *person* and their *effort* as on their *results*. This is so easy to do that it is amazing that most people hardly ever do it! It is SO worth the time and energy. Try it for a few days. You will be amazed by what happens!

----I can live for two months on a good compliment.

----Mark Twain

Management By Walking Around

The famous management consultants Tom Peters and Nancy Austin (2004) studied a number of successful companies in an attempt to discover the secret of their success. The management technique they found most common to these successful companies was something they call MBWA – *Management by Walking Around*. Instead of staying behind their desks in a private office, the most successful managers were constantly moving around the establishment, talking with customers, employees, and anyone else who might give them a new insight into how to make the business better.

Some progressive companies have instituted ways of recognizing employees such as “Employee of the Month.” However, more recent studies have shown that these types of awards do not have as much meaning as simply saying, “You made a difference today,” or “Thank you for getting our accounting in order with XYZ Company. I really appreciate your efforts on that project.” Generic, one-size-fits-all awards don’t work. Neither does recognition that seems forced or fake. Whatever recognition and praise you provide must have meaning that is specific to each individual.

----The key to success is to get out into the store and listen to what the associates have to say. It's terribly important for everyone to get involved. Our best ideas come from clerks and stockboys.

----Sam Walton, Founder of Walmart