

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO MOTIVATE AND ENGAGE EMPLOYEES?

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What does it take to engage and motivate employees today. While financial rewards are often mentioned as a motivator, the most common were intrinsic motivators, according to a recent study of employee motivation by the Ashridge Business School.

The top most important motivator was the work itself, followed by the need for work to be challenging and interesting, as well as valued and recognized by the company, according to the Ashridge study. The key motivators were praise and recognition from the manager, and the organization and celebration of success.

The Ashridge study also found that a very important theme is the employee's desire for autonomy and freedom to do his or her job, the ability to make decisions and the authority to deliver the work in a way the employee considers the best. Another important employee motivator is being trusted to get the job done – without being micromanaged. Other key themes are communications, objectives and goals, and a shared vision.

Ultimately, the quality of leadership is paramount to good employee morale. Poor leadership results in poor employee engagement, which results in poor performance. According to the Ashridge study, the following elements are essential for motivational success:

- Organizational structure and processes – performance management, reward systems, training, interesting work – must be supported by a clear vision, strong communication, quality decision-making and a culture of mutual respect.
- Companies need to pay attention to the working environment. For example, too many meetings and poor meeting management negatively affect the levels of employee engagement
- The individual employee needs to know what motivates him or her and be aware of how work satisfies these needs. The manager can support this process by facilitating opportunities for employees to meet, talk and share their views with colleagues and managers.
- Colleagues make huge difference. Working with people who respect and support each other is positively motivating.

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An inspired, motivated staff makes all the difference in your company's ability to deliver on its brand promise. How many of these "12 Important Ways to Motivate Employees" do you see in your workplace.

12 IMPORTANT WAYS TO MOTIVATE EMPLOYEES
1. Provide employees with the information and resources they need to do a good job.
2. Ask employees for their input and involve them in decisions that affect their jobs.
3. Find out from employees directly what motivates them to do great work.
4. Personally congratulate employees individually for their excellent work.
5. Recognize the needs of employees.
6. Establish good communication channels – be accessible and available (mentally and physically).
7. Use performance as basis for promotion/advancement.
8. Rely on a promote-from-within policy.
9. Publicly acknowledge employees for good work (when and where appropriate).
10. Include recognition as part of morale-building activities to celebrate group success.
11. Set clear goals.
12. Foster a sense of community.
Source: Adapted from Top 20 Ways to Motivate Employees, (Sept 2008) Super Vision, 69/9, 26

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