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The Quick Guide to Employee Motivation: Thirty-Three Proven Employee Motivation Concepts to Make Your Company a Winner, 2013

Leonard C. Scott

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Comments

How leaders can bring out the best in their workers through effective leadership and motivation programs. Self-published book by Leonard C. Scott.

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Thirty-Three Proven Employee Motivation
Concepts To Make Your Company A Winner

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Thirty-Three Proven Employee Motivation
Concepts To Make Your Company a Winner

By

Leonard C. Scott
Dallas, Texas

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Second Edition

About The Author

Leonard C. Scott is a human resources professional with more than forty years in the field. He has been a corporate human resources and labor relations executive, has provided human resources consulting services to a broad range of American and foreign owned companies, and has taught business and human resources management courses at several colleges. He has appeared on a number of radio talk shows and made presentations at national and international professional and trade associations. His educational background includes undergraduate and graduate credentials from the University of Illinois, Northwestern University, and Cornell University. He lives in Dallas, Texas, and can be reached at scottco@airmail.net His website is found at www.lenscottandcompany.com
It contains information on his books, articles, programs and presentations.

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Introduction

One of an organization's greatest sources of creativity, energy, and developing a "winning way" is the workers in the organization. The charge of leaders is to bring out these qualities through effective leadership and motivation programs. Motivating employees to achieve stretch goals in their work and enjoy doing that makes for a consistently successful company and a happy, satisfied work force. How do you do this as an owner or manager? In my forty-five years of work in the human resources field as an executive, consultant, teacher, and author, I have used all the motivation programs described in this book to assist companies become winners. This little book presents these programs and describes how to use them. The title of this book reflects the fact that the concept for each motivation program can be grasped quickly. The development and implementation will take somewhat longer. However, there is not much complexity in motivating employees. It is really quite simple. In fact, a company that I worked for many years ago used each and every on one of these motivational concepts in its

business operations, and it became the fastest growing firm in its industry.

One of the prerequisites for successfully motivating employees is to hire high potential, bright workers suited for the jobs they perform. To accomplish this a company must have an in-house human resources department with a skilled leader knowledgeable in employee motivation and employee recruiting techniques and employee selection instruments (tests.) Using an outside personnel service makes the use of many of these employee motivation concepts impossible and ties the hands of the company to a significant extent in developing a high-motivation work force.

Money

If a group of entrepreneurs, managers, and executives were asked what motivates them the most, the vast majority would say money. In my experience, the same applies to workers. Most Americans are money motivated. So, one program in a company that wants to be consistently successful should be based on motivating employees through money. There are a few principles that make a wage or salary payment plan an effective motivator:

— Wages and salaries must rise in a progressive fashion as employees become fully qualified in their work. (See example below.)

WAGE RATE SHEETS
Dept. 100 - Toolroom

Classification Title	Staring Rt	Training Rates						BWR	MMWR
		F	E	D	C	B	A		
Die Maker A	7.94	8.10	8.26	8.43	8.67	8.93	9.09	9.23	9.53
Die Maker B	7.83		7.91	8.07	8.23	8.39	8.54	8.70	8.95

Dept. 130 – Maintenance

Classification Title	Staring Rt.	F	E	D	C	B	A	BWR	MMWR
Maint. Man A	7.94	8.10	8.26	8.43	8.67	8.93	9.09	9.23	9.53
Maint. Man B	7.80			7.89	8.03	8.19	8.31	8.42	8.66
Janitor	7.28							7.37	7.53

Dept. 200 – Heading

Classification Title	Starting Rt.	F	E	D	C	B	A	BWR	MMWR
Set-Up Man	7.85	7.93	8.10	8.26	8.42	8.55	8.67	8.80	9.09
Trucker/Wire	7.72			7.83	7.93	8.04		8.15	8.37

BWR = Basic Wage Rate   MMWR= Maximum Merit Wage Rate

— There should be an above standard pay range (MMWR) for employees who consistently perform above the standard level. Sometimes these employees are called "water walkers."

— Wage and salary increases should be based on regular employee performance evaluations and regular performance appraisal sessions. Performance evaluation programs can be based on the achievement of goals alone or on a combination of the achievement of goals and the measurement of an employees work using the standard work measurement factors: Quantity of Output, Quality of Output, Interpersonal Relations, Innovation, Initiative and Ingenuity. (See Employee Evaluation Form which follows.)

Employee Performance Evaluation Form
Employee Evaluation Report

Managerial and Supervisory Employees
Employee_____

Date _____

Title_____

Department_____

Performance Factors
Quantity of Output —

	Outstanding	Excellent	Good
	10	9 8	7 6 5

Make an overall judgment as to the
size of the employee's acceptable output
in relationship to what is regarded as
satisfactory/good, excellent, outstanding.

Quality of Work —

	Outstanding	Excellent	Good
	10	9 8	7 6 5

Make an overall judgment as the
Quality of the employee's output.

Interpersonal Relations —

	Outstanding	Excellent	Good
	10	9 8	7 6 5

Judge employee's cooperativeness,
influence on fellow workers,
nature of upward and downward
impact, and overall company
loyalty and spirit.

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Innovation —	Outstanding	Excellent	Good
	1●	9 8	7 6 5

Judge amount, quality, and
impact of employee's proposals
for increasing output quantity
and quality, and improving
work environment and work
group interpersonal relations,
cooperation, and creativity.

Leadership & Managerial

Skills —	Outstanding	Excellent	Good
	1●	9 8	7 6 5

Consider the employee's demonstrated
ability to motivate subordinates to be
highly effective workers. Does the
supervisor/manager impart the desire
in his/her subordinates to make an
impact in the organization through their
work?

Points	Rating	
48-50	Outstanding	Total Points_____
		Rating_____
40-47	Excellent	
25-39	Good	

Salary Increase Recommendation _____

Superior's Signature & Approvals

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It is important that all employees must know where they stand at all times. One final note on money as a motivator: companies who pay the average "going rate" in wages and salaries get the average "going rate" of employee motivation and efficiency. Companies who pay above this level get superior employee motivation and efficiency. A major national metal forming company had a policy of paying its employees up to 10% above the "going rate" for its jobs with the result that it became one of the most profitable, highly respected firms in its industry due to its reputation for quality output, high productivity, product innovation, community involvement, and unstinting customer service. Another enlightened firm in this same industry established a salary structure with no maximum salary levels. Theoretically, the top human resources executive could be paid more than the top manufacturing executive if he contributed more to company profitability than the manufacturing executive. This company in just a few short years became the fastest growing firm in its industry. Also this compensation philosophy

enabled the company to secure executive talent from firms ten times its size and maintain an executive motivation environment second to none in its industry.

Interesting Work

Some jobs have a greater potential to be interesting than others. However, even the most repetitious job has some potential to be made more interesting and thus more motivating. For example, training programs on the origin and history of a given manufacturing operation or technology application can provide interest and motivation to a worker performing that operation or using that application. Other things that can make a job interesting are having workers train other workers in their jobs, having workers explain their work to persons taking a tour of where they work, and having workers explain and train executives in their work in "The Boss Comes Down From The Ivory Tower" programs. Also, providing employees with the latest equipment, technology, and work environment is a way to make work more interesting.

Working With Winners From Whom Something Can Be Learned

Hiring high potential, high intelligence employees who have a track record of achievement and something to offer fellow employees in terms of new ideas, new approaches to jobs, friendly competition in the pursuit of goals, and building camaraderie within the work group is an effective way to motivate employees. How do you hire high potential employees? Check their background, references, achievement track record, and educational record and give them aptitude and intelligence tests. Making certain that a new employee is bright, trainable, wanting to be trained, and has a solid work ethic is most important in building a high motivation work force. Currently, using temporaries, leased employee, and part time workers is in vogue. The motivation and efficiency emanating from such employees pales in comparison to that from a permanent employee work force with company loyalty, high pride in employment, satisfaction in their work, and a work outlook characterized by an attitude of creativity, innovation, and

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ingenuity. My advice on using temporary and leased employees is to do this very sparingly and only when absolutely necessary.

Job Security and Opportunity For Advancement

Employees give their all when they feel they have job security, that is, employment that allows them to pay their bills, move up the economic ladder, put their kids through school, possibly buy a house, and enjoy a little bit of the good life. How does a company provide job security? It establishes an internal promotion and transfer system that allows all employees to rise to their highest level of ability. This is done through job ladders, self-nomination for openings, temporary transfers, added skills training, 100% positive performance appraisal, and culling out poor performers quickly.

Employees consider the opportunity for advancement highly motivating. It is important to post openings before going out of the company to fill positions. Employees should be able to bid or self nominate for these openings and be interviewed by the decision maker seeking to fill the position. All employees who bid on an opening or self nominate for it, should be informed why they did or did not get the

position after they are interviewed. There always is a valid reason why one applicant is placed in an open position over another applicant. The reason could be prior experience, record of accomplishments, performance appraisal ratings, special knowledge and skills, or superior education achievement and credentials. Employees applying for an opening want to know why they did or did not get the job. Telling the applicants who are not chosen solidifies their belief that the company is dealing with them equitably and keeps their commitment to the company intact. Another approach to use in showing that the company believes in advancing employees up the organization is to establish a temporary assignment system based on company service. Under this system, an employee with the most company service in the department would be given the opportunity to accept or refuse a temporary assignment to a higher rated position thereby getting the opportunity to secure experience in the job that might be useful in the bidding or self nomination process when and if the job ever comes open.

Encourage And Accept Employee New Ideas

Accepting an employee's new idea regarding a company product, service, procedure, or process is a great way to motivate employees. Encouraging employees to come up with such new ideas is an important motivational activity. Encouraging employees to do this should be embedded in the company culture. Department heads should regularly canvass their employees for their new ideas. Also, department heads should always have an "open door" when their employees come to them with new ideas. Informal "new idea" contests with symbolic prizes like "Einstein Genius Trophies" and "Most Creative Mind Trophies" should be held from time to time.

Attractive Work Environment

The presence of a highly attractive work environment is critical in establishing a high motivation work force. The work space that provided the maximum employee motivation that I have experienced had the following characteristics: a glass walled, office building set in a green space so that employees looking out would see spacious lawns, trees, modern sculptures, and plenty of sky; an open general office with desks set in a classroom format with no partitions which maximized communication among the employees in the general office; glass executive offices with doors that were almost never closed; a rear wall in the general office where beautiful works of modern art were hung and changed out every few months. Looking at these works of art provided a pleasant change of pace, an opportunity to think, and a visit to a beautiful scene where the mind rested for a minute and the spirit rose for a minute. Along this rear wall below the art work were stationed rows of cabinets and file spaces where employees could place their personal items, office supplies, files, etc.

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The reception area of this office had a free popcorn machine. The employee lunchroom had a lounge and reading area. The hum in this office reflected the ultra-high level of productivity, employee communications, pride in employment, and esprit de corps present in the company. This office picture might be used as a template for a high motivation office space any company might wish to build.

Modern Equipment

High on the list of employee motivators are attractive office furniture and the latest office equipment — computers, servers, copiers, hand-held computers, and phones. Employees, when given the best equipment available, will use this equipment to its maximum potential and often to levels beyond what is thought to be its maximum potential. Employees work with their equipment "all day every day" They know this equipment like they know their children. Over time they often find ways to use this equipment in new, ingenuous ways.

A Boss Who Cares

A boss who cares can get significantly more out of his/her work force than one who doesn't. What does a boss who cares mean? A caring boss knows something about his/her employees, their marital status, the number, age, and sex of their children, their hobbies, what schools they attended, their birthday, their favorite teams, their professional aspirations, and their family background. A caring boss uses this information to build a positive relationship with his/her employees. A caring boss "trades favors" with his/her employees. At times to get something important done, a boss will ask an employee, usually a natural leader in the work group, to influence another employee or a group of employees regarding an important matter that needs to be done. Reciprocating with the employee who "has gone to bat" for the boss cements the belief in the work group that the boss cares, can be trusted, and is worth going the extra mile for. In cases where a boss has to ask his employees to do something "above and beyond", a caring boss who is open to "trading favors" will motivate his/her employees to cooperate every time.

Tell Employees Where They Stand

Few things are more demotivating than keeping employees in the dark about where they stand. Establishing a performance appraisal system that is understood by all employees is critical to motivating employees. An effective performance appraisal system is characterized by simplicity, the incorporation of goals, regular reviews, honesty by the reviewing manager, and the opportunity for the employee to ask questions and learn how he/she can secure the qualifications to move up in the organization. Critical to an effective performance appraisal system is a policy that states that management must deal with unsatisfactory performance immediately. Management should not wait until performance review time to tell an employee that his/her performance is unsatisfactory. That should be done as soon as the unsatisfactory performance takes place. In such cases, the employee should be placed on a thirty day improvement program. During this time, the employee must improve the unsatisfactory performance or face further disciplinary action or discharge.

If the unsatisfactory performance is improved, the employee is returned to satisfactory performance status. (See below for sample Improvement Program forms.)

Employee Improvement Plan Form

To: (Employee) cc: Personnel Files
From (Supervisor/Manager)
Subject: Improvement Plan
Date: December 14, 2013

Example 1
This is to notify you that your punctuality in the recent past is not following the professional pattern that is required of all XYZ Corporation personnel. Punctuality reflects upon your overall job performance and has an impact on your continuing employment.
This improvement program will be in effect until January 14, 2014, in the sincere hope that your punctuality will become an issue of the past. If significant improvement is not seen during this period of time, the security of your position will be in jeopardy and your employment will be subject to termination. Please let me know if you have any questions about this plan of action.

Example 2
This is to notify you that your performance in the area(s) of

_____

_____

has not been acceptable. Effective today, you are being placed on a (30) (60) (90) day performance improvement program. During this period, you will be expected to avoid the following errors:

1._____

2._____

3._____

and to achieve the following objectives:

1._____

2._____

3._____

If these errors are not avoided and objectives not achieved, your employment will be in serious jeopardy and subject to termination. Please see me immediately if you have any questions about this program.

In tandem with a list of standards of performance or performance objectives, this Employee Evaluation report will do an effective performance appraisal job every time.

Continuity of Employment

Globalization, privatization, outsourcing, and offshoring have inserted a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety into the American labor force, and this has created a serious drag on employee motivation. The fear of losing one's job, even if it is at the subconscious level, impairs an employee from "getting his/her head into the game" all day every day. To remove this source of insecurity and anxiety and thereby increase employee motivation, human resources policy should include bidding, bumping, and recall rights after a certain amount of company service is accumulated, perhaps one year. Such policy will not only assist in maximizing employee motivation it will also assist in maintaining the health of the economy. Continuity of employment not only plays into maximizing employee motivation, but it also provide the means for employees to save for retirement, college expenses, and a home purchase, all beneficial objectives for employees, businesses, and the economy as a whole.

Hire Compatible Employees

Management literature has little to say about the relationship between employee motivation, organizational productivity, and like mindedness of the individuals in the work force. Serious problems with respect to employee motivation and organizational productivity arise when employees clash due to personality, culture, or worldview. Years ago a company for which I provided human resources and counter-union campaign consulting services hired large groups of Hispanic workers. This resulted in this company experiencing serious employee and union problems. The company had hired workers from Puerto Rico, Mexico, Central America, and South America. Due to cultural differences the workers in these groups would not work together. The conflict surfaced in low productivity, poor quality output, squabbles between the groups, and interest in unionization. The lesson from this situation is not to discriminate against one group or another, but to hire individuals with a strong work ethic, communicate the company's culture to them, hold regular diversity programs for employees and managers, tell employees in

orientation presentations what their employment rights and obligations are, and include in the performance appraisal system the factor of "Developing Positive Interpersonal Relations." If employees know their pay depends in part on their maintaining positive relations with their fellow employees and their working with others as a team, they respond in an appropriate manner. See page 8 for sample employee appraisal form that includes Positive Interpersonal Relations as a rating factor.

Discharge Hiring Mistakes Quickly

No company can be 100% correct in all its hiring decisions. Poor performing employees are a significant drag on employee motivation. When one employee sees another employee not pulling his/her weight or not possessing the capacity to get the job done no matter how much training he/she is given, the employee may very likely "turn off" and lose trust in and respect for the manager of the non-performing employee. In such cases, the non-performing employee should be placed on an improvement program (See page 23) and if he/she does not bring his/her performance up to the required level, he/she should be discharged promptly. Letting under-performing employees stay on the payroll does serious damage to employee motivation. Under-performance should always be "nipped in the bud."

Teamwork

Developing teamwork within an organization is an important motivational activity. This teamwork can be seen in manufacturing cells, within a company's process, design, or in quality problem solving teams, or in strategic planning teams. Teams can be put together by self-nomination, colleague nomination, or leader choice and direction, or some combination of some or all these approaches. Recognition of team achievements is critical to maintaining team motivation. Simple notices in company communications to team bonuses and team recognition awards can be employed to provide this recognition.

Provide Opportunities For Mavericks

A high motivation organization is characterized by teamwork, individual initiative and ingenuity, creativity, pride in employment, company loyalty, and the presence of mavericks. I can't stress too much the important of having mavericks in an organization if it is to maximize its productivity, creativity, and innovation. Mavericks, those employees who do their best work alone or in concert with one or two other employees, are the "seasoning" for the company's "stew." Mavericks provide the "out-of-the-box" views, the challenges to the "that's the way we always did it" thinking, the impetus to take risks, and the single mindedness that every organization needs to become and remain a winner. Mavericks often break the rules in arriving at a breakthrough in product development, financial innovation, manufacturing operations, organizational structure, new marketing concepts, or design of services. They "march to a different drummer." They are invaluable in the overall scheme of putting together a highly motivated work force. How do you identify

these individuals? They often come out of consulting and public accounting firms. Some of them have been successful entrepreneurs who for one reason or another entered the corporate world. Some have experience as inventors and track records that include positions in research and development.

Flexibility

Maximizing employee motivation requires flexibility in organization, policy, and procedures. One size does not fit all in the world of work. It is impossible for rules to cover every situation. If a policy does not work, change it. If the change does not work, change it again. Making exceptions to policy in dire situations should happen without a lot of red tape. Common sense should rule when it comes to when and where to be flexible. Legalistic companies never maximize employee motivation and organization productivity. With respect to organizational flexibility, employee motivation can be achieved by giving special assignments to employees outside their ordinary function. This broadens the experience of these employees, provides them with interesting new work, and motivates them by showing them management believes that their capacity goes beyond their regular area of work.

Opportunity For Family Involvement

As a youngster I remember sitting around the dinner table listening to my father, who worked in a commercial bakery, talk about his job, his fellow workers, the bread making process, and the bread, pies, and donuts he baked. My enthusiasm in listening to him led me to ask him to take me on a tour of his job and the bakery where he worked, which he did. This tour resulted in a great deal of pride throughout my family, pride in employment for my father, pride in me that my father made such an important product, and pride in my mother who felt that the company my father worked for was progressive and stable enough to allow an employee to bring his son in for a tour. All this pride added up to a big motivational influence on my father in his work and on my mother as well when she had to change family plans because my father had to rise to the call of duty at work. The principle here is that an organization maximizes employee motivation when it has programs that involve workers' families, such as company tours, company picnics and outings, company presentations at the schools of the children of employees, and

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company assistance to the children of
employees with respect to school projects.

Develop A Specific Company Vocabulary

I have already touched on the importance of building teams in employee motivation. Another aspect of this activity is naming these teams and building a company vocabulary. It may seem like a small thing, but labeling teams with apropos, fun names can add a motivational lift to the employees in the teams. Back in the 1970's the Chicago White Sox were a pennant contender. The sporting press gave this team the nickname of "The Go Team" because of the speed of its players and it strategy of stealing bases as often as it could. At one of the companies where I worked in my early career, the owners gave this nickname to the executive committee because of the speed, accuracy, and right judgment that it displayed in making top level decisions. The members of "The Go Team" were proud to be part of this group. The entire company knew who "The Go Team" members were and what the name stood for. Other teams at this company adopted names as well: "The Inspection Detectives" (Incoming Raw Materials Inspectors), "The Drill Sergeants" (Trainers in one of the manufacturing

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departments), and "The Computer Wizards." The Sales Department at this company had some fun generating sayings also. This firm had an "inside sales team" and an "outside sales team." Each outside sales rep had an inside sales rep to follow up for him, take calls when he was on the road, and generally be available to customers and prospects when the outside sales rep was not. Based on this "inside-outside" sales department structure, the company used in all its sales, advertising, and marketing activities with very good effect the slogan "Even When I'm Out I'm In." One of the wags in the Sales Department brought in and posted a comic strip dealing with inside and outside sales reps that included a punch line explaining why inside sales reps could not be outside sales reps: "They are too ugly."   All this added up to great fun and good employee motivation.

Employee Speak Out Meetings

No employee motivation program would be complete without Employee Speak-Out Sessions. These are semi-annual meetings between the employees in each department and the top executives of the company. Employees are requested to speak their minds, pro or con, about issues that they believe are important to them and the company. They are given the chance to bring up grievances, gripes, and positive comments about company operations, policies, procedures, products, services, and anything else that they might want to touch on. These sessions are kind of an "open mike" opportunity for any and all employees to speak their mind and ask questions of top management. The best way to run these sessions is to set a time limit on them, say one hour or so, have no agenda, announce that top management will be listening and not talking, and announce that answers will be given to all employee questions at the session or after if some research is needed,

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and absolutely no recriminations will be involved for anything that is said. Having the top human resources executive take notes at these sessions will insure that all questions and comments are answered. It has been my experience that these speak out sessions are highly motivational in that they often clear the air on issues bothering employees and top management, give employees an opportunity to get "up close and personal" with their top executives, provide employees with the thinking of top executives on issues that everyone in the company sees arising down the road, and provides evidence to all employees that their top executives are "regular persons" open to interacting with their employees in an open and fair way.

Set Up Departmental Competitions And Have Fun On The Job

Rapidly growing organizations in highly competitive environments generate a host of problems, frictions, stresses, and anxieties. Installing a sense of fun in the workplace by posting funny materials as mentioned above is important for employee motivation. Having inter-department competitions with recognition for the winners and "payoffs" for the entire company also make for employee motivation and group stress release. To increase employee motivation, one of my clients would hold production output contests between manufacturing departments in the summer months with the winning department getting company-wide recognition and the entire company getting a free barbecue lunch on the company with the event being held outside on the company lawn in a picnic style atmosphere. As the CEO of this company used to say "Life is short, and our working days are long. Making work as enjoyable as possible and having as much fun as possible while working hard to make the company a winner is the best way to go."

A Management That Listens, Looks, and Interacts

Company "Speak Out" programs have already been discussed. However, these programs are not enough. A company culture should be set up wherein all managers make it a regular practice to interact with employees at their work place. Asking questions, getting answers, and encouraging employee's to input about everything and anything that affects the company as a whole and the employee's job should be in every manager's management and motivation "tool box." I recall a company president at a highly successful firm where I worked many years ago engaging most every employee every few weeks with the question "what's cookin?" The answers given and the communications involved kept the President up to the minute on company affairs, greatly decreased the number of meetings that were held in the company, and provided motivation to employees in that they felt good about the President taking time to speak with them, listen to their ideas, and with certain matters getting something very important done right away.

Innovation Awards

Many companies have suggestion systems and awards for suggestions that are adopted by a suggestion review committee. Many of these suggestions deal with low productivity increase items. Few companies have innovation awards. These are suggestion that result in major productivity increases and offer major awards, awards in the thousands of dollars. Some examples of game changing innovation ideas are the following: At one of my clients, an employee suggested that instead of running parts through a central heat treating operation, mobile, mini-heat treating ovens should be moved from machine to machine to heat treat parts right as they came off the forming machines. This was a major productivity increase innovation and the employee who suggested it was awarded an award in the thousands of dollars. Another game changing innovation involved the setting up of an "in-house" set-up man training program due to the extremely tight labor market for experienced set-up men. This innovation dropped labor costs, increased quality, and significantly increased productivity per set-up man. This

innovation did not pay an award because the corporate culture of this company dictated that every executive strive to come up with game changing innovation in his areas of responsibility. The payoff for such innovation at this company came in the areas of salary increases and year-end bonuses.

New Employee Orientation And Senior Employee Brush Ups

To get new employees motivated and off to a good start, a company must provide them with a thorough orientation program which covers company philosophy and culture, operation of the compensation system and performance appraisal program, the rights and duties of all employees, company discipline policy, company communication channels, company service accumulation policy, general company policies, employee benefits, promotion and transfer policy, company speak out sessions and open door policy, where the company stands in its industry and where it wants to go in its industry. These orientation sessions should be delivered by someone in top management. Also, "brush up" orientation programs should be offered annually to employees who have accumulated some company service to keep them up to date.

Company Culture Regarding Making Decisions And Mistakes

An important driver of employee motivation is company culture. A correct company culture engenders high employee motivation, whereas an incorrect company culture engenders low or no employee motivation. Critical aspects of a correct company culture are what I call "fearless decision making" and pushing decisions down to the lowest level. "Fearless decision making" involves encouraging all employees to make the best decisions they can make as quickly as possible and based on their best knowledge and judgment and not fear recriminations if they make a mistake, Of course, consistent bad decisions are not to be tolerated, but rather eliminated through added training or discharge. The impetus to high efficiency, smooth operations, and employee motivation and satisfaction that the practice of "fearless decision making" generates is very significant. Pushing decisions to the lowest level creates two things: constant focus on training all employees to do their jobs at the highest level possible and insuring speed in decision making that

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maximizes efficiency and smoothness in operations. Also, pushing decisions to the lowest levels builds employee confidence, job satisfaction, and personal achievement.

Open Communication Channels

High employee motivation is maintained through regular and open communications throughout the organization. Generating an atmosphere wherein employees have no reluctance to speak their ideas to management, disagree with management ideas, and bring issues, complaints, and congratulations to management is critical to developing a high level of employee motivation. I recall a situation wherein the company president at a firm where I worked employed his "management by waking around" approach in assessing a planned change in operations and was told in these "what's up" mini-meetings that this planned change was the most unreasonable thing he had promoted in many years. When he came to me, and I told him the same thing, he just smiled. What did this smile mean? His satisfaction that his people where telling him what they really believed and that there was broad consensus throughout the company that his idea was wrong and would be disruptive to operations. He backed off this planned change. That provided a tremendous shot in the arm to employee motivation throughout the company.

Employee Empowerment

The famous behavioral psychologist
David McClellan found that work groups
with track records of high achievement were
characterized by bosses who empowered the
people in these work groups. By making
these workers feel strong the bosses insured
that things would get done in the fastest,
most efficient way possible. How do you
empower an employee? Part of the
answer is to ask employees how something
should get accomplished rather than telling
them what should be done and when they
offer up their solution, tell them to go do it
right away. There is a story about a famous
retailer that instructed its sales personnel to
in all situations make certain that the
customer was totally satisfied with its
interaction with the retailer. Based on
these instructions, an associate decided on
her own initiative to allow the return of a
very expensive wedding dress by a customer
who was not satisfied with it and wanted to
return it. The customer was so impressed
with this quick action that she bought
another wedding dress there and gave the
store all the clothing purchases for the
entire wedding party. The quick response of

a frontline employee in a transaction that would at another firm take multiple levels of decision making resulted in significant increased business and possible future business rather than a lost customer and the negative comments of this customer to friends, relatives, and fellow workers.

Employee Surveys

In addition to a semi-annual employee speak out program, periodic employee attitude surveys are good motivational instruments. They not only provide a lot of information on what employees are thinking about their job, their work, and the company, but they also provide important information on the effectiveness and leadership skills of managers.

Communicate on Company Progress

Employees are motivated through regular information on company progress. They feel a sense of accomplishment and empowerment when they know that their efforts are resulting in positive outcomes for the company and that they are working for a "winner." Keep the good news and not so good news flowing to employees. They will be turned on by the good news and turned on to solutions by the bad news.

Train Managers in Employee Motivation

All the programs in this book will not bear fruit unless the Human Resources Department and line managers know what they are and how to implement them. Regular management training on motivational techniques must be an integral part of overall management training.

Build Bridges With Natural Leaders

In every organization there is a small group of natural leaders that are not in the management ranks. These individuals for one reason or another do not want to move into managerial positions. However, they have a great deal of sway in the organization. They are the people who can get things done using unorthodox approaches and personal loyalty. They are the people who can sway other employees when there is resistance to a change or a need for the work group to perform above and beyond the call of duty. They are the unseen movers and shakers of opinions and attitudes in an organization. Getting to know them and earning their trust are critical to getting continuing employee motivation.

The Human Resources Department

In recent years the Human Resources Department has lost its clout in companies. This is unfortunate in that the key player in a high impact employee motivation program is the Human Resources leader and his/her department. People issues and employee motivation should be the bailiwick of Human Resources. If a company's work force is not motivated, it should be the responsibility of the Human Resources group to get them motivated. The motivation "buck" should stop at Human Resources. It is critical then that the CEO of a firm wishing to maximize the motivation of employees and utilize them as a factor in gaining competitive advantage in the marketplace hire the best Human Resources leader available with a proven track record of establishing and implementing highly successful employee motivation programs. Actually, these Human Resources leaders are few and far between and difficult to locate. It may be an overstatement, but many believe that in the last thirty years Human Resources has become a record keeping function with the responsibility for keeping the company out of legal and union

trouble. Nevertheless, these top human resources executives are out there and can be found. The key quality of a top human resources executive knowledgeable in employee motivation is the capacity to tell truth to power, the ability to stand up to backward thinking operational managers, and the possession of a track record of human resources achievement. The true high potential human resources leader will have an entrepreneurial approach to the human resources function. He/she will be a risk taker, perhaps a maverick, a highly self-assured individual with a creative mind capable of utilizing critical thinking and personal charisma to enliven the people energy of a company and bring it to an optimum level.

Incidentals

There are little things that managers should remember with respect to employee motivation. Smile and say hello to employees even if you don't know them personally. Employees expect this, and when they don't get it, negativity toward the company arises. Also, employees want to work in an environment as clean or cleaner than where they live. Therefore, it is important to keep all office areas, operations areas, eating areas, washrooms, and green spaces as spotless as possible. This point may sound like an exaggeration, but it is not. Few things turn off an employee more, especially a female employee, than a dirty bathroom. I have seen companies forced into battles with union organizing attempts due to bathrooms that were dirty, that did not have inside locks, and that did not have sufficient toilet paper. Never turn down an employee who wants to have a word with you. Always stop and hear a person out. If the conversation looks like it will take a long time, at least start it, get the gist of the matter, and set a time to continue the discussion to its conclusion. An employee will feel comfortable about having

something dealt with if he/she feels that he/she has gotten the ball rolling. In situations like this, always follow up until the matter is settled. Further, learning important information about employees' family members, sports likes and dislikes, and hobbies and interests is money in the bank with respect to employee motivation. Short personal written notes of encouragement, recognition, and thanks from managers to employees are strong motivators. Finally, make certain that employee safety is a priority. Employees turn off quickly when they hear that another employee has been hurt on the job due to a safety omission.

Mission Statement

Including in the company mission statement a section on the view of the company vis a vis its employees can provide strong employee motivation. The Employee Section of the mission statement might include the following:
— We have a high regard for our employees.
— We wish to be the employer of employee first choice in our industry.
— We wish to create a highly motivated employee work force that is very knowledgeable and highly trained.
— Through continual management, leadership, and worker skills training we expect to generate within the company significant creativity and innovation to achieve and surpass company goals.
— We believe our workers and managers should be proactive in all their work.
— We believe our leaders should show the way and be examples of initiative, ingenuity, creativity, innovation, company loyalty, and pride in employment.
— We regard our employees as a source to achieve competitive advantage in the marketplace.

When a company places in black and white its high regard of its employees and states that it consider them a source to achieve competitive advantage in the marketplace it makes for a high degree of employee motivation.

Conclusion

At this writing (2013) a survey of employee attitudes indicated that 65% of those surveyed did not like their work and 44% wanted to change jobs. This clearly indicates that employee motivation is lacking in today's world of work. As this little book indicates, motivating employees is not difficult. Actually, it is quite easy and when made an integral part of a company's culture, it is "money in the bank." So why don't companies do it? Some don't care. In this age of globalization, it is a buyers job market and not caring about employees is the easy way out. Some don't know how. This little book solves that problem for these employers. It may sound "pie in the sky", but the implementation of the motivational programs discussed in this book would have far reaching effects — increased productivity, increased profits, increased customer satisfaction, increased job satisfaction, and increased national wellbeing.

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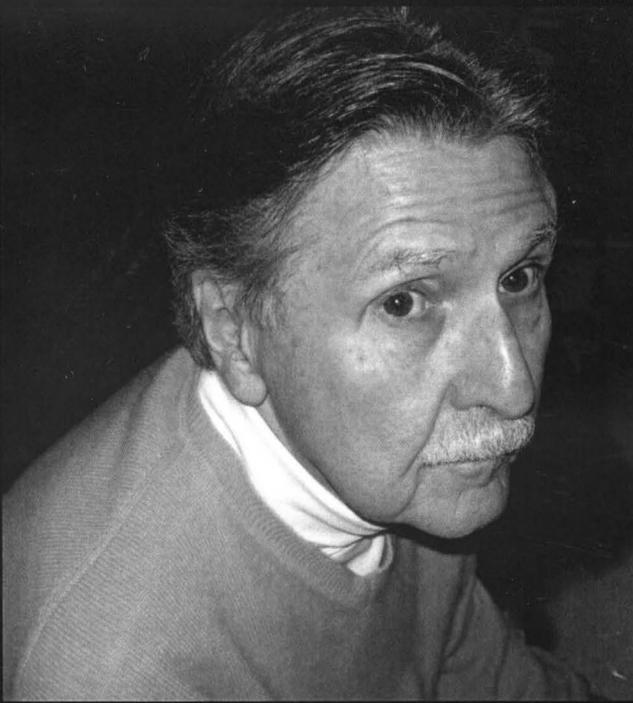
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