

Motivating Without Money



By Carol Spiers

Last week, I was speaking to Samina, in Dubai. She is a senior sales manager in an engineering company and she said that her greatest challenge was motivating her team. In previous years, the usual way was to pay a bonus or increase salaries. However, this year there was no bonus to be paid and despite her team working very hard, sometimes putting in a 12 hour shift per day, the company Board had decided not to award any bonus during the current economic climate.

So what are the other alternatives and how can she motivate her team? Is it possible for her to motivate her team without giving additional financial reward?

Motivating Factors

One of the most effective ways of motivating a team is to ensure that they understand and appreciate the aims of the company or organisation for which they work and that they are supported by management all working towards the achievement of those common aims. They need to appreciate the current situation and one-to-one discussions are imperative to achieve this understanding.

In this case, where company policy dictates that there will be no increased remuneration, there is still an absolute need to get team 'buy-in' and commitment. Any manager is only as successful as his or her department and that means that the team must be properly advised of the overall position and the need to conserve funds and to increase efficiency in order to survive.

There are many positive ways to motivate a team and here are a few ideas to start off with:

1. One-to one sessions in which the situation is explained in full, that although there is no more money at this time, there may be other ways in which the employer can show its appreciation for work done well. Each individual should be asked what else, other than money, is important to them and tell them that you value their input.
2. The completing of feedback forms or questionnaires, which should be confidential, will give your team an opportunity to be open and honest about their feelings towards you and the company and what ideas they might have for improvement.
3. Team building activities outside the working environment can be a definite advantage. This can lead to a much happier and healthier working environment and such exercises can also help in the resolution of pre-existing issues within the team.
4. Every month, have one lunchtime activity where you discuss how things are going, what improvements can be made. In simple terms, involve everyone all the time. Everyone takes it in turn to bring in lunch for everyone else.
5. Communication does not only mean talking to your team but also listening to them. It is important to ensure their full understanding of the company objectives and their individual roles but it is equally important to show them the importance of their feedback to the achievement of targets and standards.
6. Small incentives like McDonald vouchers, spa days out for the family, cake days on a Friday et al. These are token gestures and don't cost much money but they do show, albeit in some small way, that you care and that you take their situation seriously.

Motivating a team is always easier if you fully understand that they may not necessarily be motivated by the same factors that motivate you. The most effective teams are those that feel valued, supported and recognised. If a team understand the company challenges, then they are more likely to work harder towards their achievement.

Furthermore, people tend to respond well to being given the opportunity to make decisions and take on additional responsibilities. Some teams may welcome the opportunity to work for a charity where they feel they are making a real contribution.

Whatever motivational techniques work the best, it is always best to ensure that your team feel they are making a valuable and positive contribution and that way, you are doing your best to retain talent and for them not to look elsewhere.

Key Points

1. There are other ways to motivate apart from money
2. Employer and employee must have a common commitment
3. Listening to the individual can bring valuable input

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