

The value of a motivated work force

In the very recent past, the generally accepted thinking within the business world was that workers were expendable. If a worker needed motivation, then they needed to look no further than the fact that they should feel lucky that they had a job in the first place



Charlie Mernagh Associate Director BTS

Of course, such thinking has been replaced by a philosophy that actually values employees, and in today's business context it is widely accepted that the best means of achieving results is to have an energised and motivated workforce.

"Loyal employees are highly important to all organisations," said Charlie Mernagh, associate director of Business Training Solutions. "In today's labour market specifically, the options for employees to look elsewhere are increasing every day. Not only are unsatisfied employees looking for another job, but satisfied employees may also seize their opportunities elsewhere. Employee loyalty is thus at the centre of attention for many organisations."

But how can a company increase or even create employee loyalty? To begin with, they can offer their employees sufficient opportunities for development. If employees feel that your organisation is willing to invest in their future, they will in turn be more loyal to your organisation. And that is a very powerful tool for employee motivation, which, according to Mernagh, is one of the key variables determining employee performance. And one way for a company to motivate



employees is by making them part of the organisation."

"It is hard to allocate a fixed definition for motivation," he said. "Rather, it is a process in which employees are driven to take action and make an effort."

Motivated employees are of great importance within an organisation; they propel the organisation forward by positively influencing the following factors: work atmosphere, work attitude, customer orientation and company results."

In order to engender a sense of motivation, it is vital to respect your employees, to communicate with them, to offer opportunities for growth and development, in short, to make them part of the organisation. But it is also crucial for the manager to offer the right sort of leadership.

"It must be stressed that

the only sure way to develop Leadership/Management is to practice," said Mernagh.

"Leaders/Managers are successful when they know how to get things done in a particular context and can establish a rapport with a group of people who have respect for them. No amount of theory or knowledge can compensate for lack of rapport and respect. That rapport needn't be on a personal level - it's on a working relationship basis."

However, there are certain management styles, from authoritarian to participative and delegative, which, when judiciously employed, can have a real effect on staff motivation.

Some examples include: using an authoritarian style on a new employee who is just learning the job, because the leader/manager is competent and a good coach, and the employee is motivated

to learn a new skill; using a participative style with a team of workers who know their job, because the leader/manager knows the problem, but does not have all the information, while the employees know their jobs and want to become part of the team; and using a delegative style with a worker who knows more about the job than you, because the employee needs to take ownership of his or her job. A good leader/manager uses all three styles, depending on what forces are involved between the followers, the leader/manager, and the situation.

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