Motivate Your Employees and Uplift Your Bottom Line

Under-whelmed employees cost businesses money. Low productivity, high absenteeism, lessened loyalty and high turnover keep businesses from performing optimally. Don't think so? Consider what it costs your company in labor and direct cash every time you have to hire and train a new person. Businesses, like sports teams, need cheerleaders and to win you have to take the role of motivating your employees seriously.

Believe it or not, as a small business you're in a better position to keep your team motivated. Contrary to traditional thought, money is not what matters to most to employees. Recent surveys indicate that people rate "interesting work" as their top priority. This is closely followed by employees feeling appreciated, recognized for a job well done and feeling "in on things." As a small business, people often have to take on multiple responsibilities, so keeping things interesting can be a natural consequence.

Businesses that are known to have high team moral share several common characteristics:

- People feel they are treated fairly
- The employees feel valued and appreciated
- The business makes a point to recognize people for their work and performance
- Team members are paid a fair wage that meets industry standards
- People feel like they are doing important work

Here are some simple, easy-to-implement ways you can motivate your employees:

Identify Any Obstacles To High Morale

Let your team know that they matter to you. Hold a meeting or set aside some time during a regularly scheduled meeting to discuss any frustrations and potential improvements. It's important not to let this become a griping session but as means of identifying problems and considering solutions. Most importantly, for this to be meaningful you must take action. Your inaction can be the fastest way to de-motivate your team.

Let Them In

Be sure to share the vision, direction and current standing of the business with your team. After all they're the people who implement the ideas, policies and procedures that make your business successful. But people don't want to feel like "doers", they want to feel like participants. Schedule regular meetings to check in on the status of the business according to its goals and directions. This may be quarterly, semi-annually or annually. You decide what is appropriate.

Decide And Be Clear About What Power Your Team Members Have

For people to feel like their job matters, they have to feel empowered to make certain decisions that affect their ability to do their job. For example, consider the person who purchases office supplies in your business. Do they have to get your permission, interrupt you or wait until you have some time to approve a purchase order to buy staples and pens? Would it be more efficient, productive and less frustrating to empower the person to buy supplies under a set amount of money each month without waiting for your approval?

Create Group Activities Outside Of Work

As touchy-feely as it may sound, activities outside of work can help teams build strong relationships with each other and increase people's enjoyment at work. Consider starting a company sports team, holding a social picnic or creating an outing to a local amusement park or concert.

Leave Room For Some Learning Mistakes

Studies show that chastising an individual for a mistake can lead to a never-ending cycle of failure, low self-esteem and chronic under-achievement. Encourage people to try new things and express suggestions that they think will improve business.

Reward People For Their Performance

Sales professionals have been using this system forever.

Imagine if you were guaranteed a bonus every year in the same amount as everyone else. The incentive to perform your best is decreased and relies solely on an individual's work ethic. By setting certain expectations, acknowledging people for meeting them and rewarding those that exceed them, you instantly motivate your team.

Solutions At A Glance...

In summary, this article deals with these issues:

- ☐ Identify Any Obstacles To High Morale
- ☐ Let Them In
- ☐ Decide And Be Clear About What Power Your Team Members Have
- ☐ Create Group Activities Outside Of Work
- ☐ Leave Room For Some Learning Mistakes
- ☐ Reward People For Their Performance