

Are your employees motivated?

In our current challenging economic environment, there's a distinct lack of motivation in the air, people would like to move, but can't. Statistics show that over 60% of people in their current jobs would like to change, but people are frightened and staying in jobs that they might not be completely happy with. This means that you might not be getting the best out of your staff.

Listed below are some tips on how to make sure you are getting the most out of your staff, considering that 1 in 6 of them is looking to move but can't!

A step-by-step approach to motivating your staff :

1. How long have they been in the job? Is it time to reassess their skills and capabilities?

Do you have employees who have been in their role for some time and may have been overlooked for promotion or training opportunities? It is true to say that employers can be guilty of promoting people out of their capabilities but it is also true to say that sometimes our 'worker bees' can be overlooked purely because they get the job done and don't 'shout the loudest'. Don't assume because you don't hear anything from them that they are happy. Use the appraisal format or a performance review to try and assess what is motivating them and what their goals and expectations for the future, both personally and professionally are.

2. Do they know where they are headed? What they are turning up every day for?

Employees like to have a sense of direction, know why they get out of bed and trudge into work every morning. The New Year is an excellent time to establish, or reestablish organisational and individual goals. If possible, have some team-building event that livens everyone up and gets their creative juices flowing. Use an event such as this to encourage employees to challenge the status quo or reinforce your organisational mission statement for everyone.

3. Do they know what is expected of them? Do they have goals and objectives?

'If you don't know where you're going, any road will do' (George Harrison). Corny but true. Employees like to have something to anchor themselves to in terms of expectations. All employees should be given job descriptions and regular performance appraisals to assess their performance and identify any needs, training or developmental. You cannot expect employees to perform well if there are no benchmarks and targets in place for them.

4. Are they capable of doing the job they are assigned to?

Ever hear the one about the accountant who called in sick once a month? Couldn't do month end. Everything else they could cope with but they just couldn't do month end. Again, performance appraisals are a useful tool in identifying where there could be performance issues. If an employee consistently fails to meet their targets, or achieve what is expected of them, you might be looking at a situation where you need to re position that person or train

them to be proficient in their role. The onus is on the employer to ensure that the employee is given every opportunity to succeed.

5. Are their concerns and issues listened to and addressed?

Do your employees have the opportunity to speak, constructively, to others? To the managers and other staff around them? When people have good communications with people, they are more effective. Communication is a two way process and the opportunity needs to be given to employees to give feedback. This can be done through the appraisal process, where a tool such as 360° feedback is useful for both managers and staff. A tool such as this provides an opportunity for managers and staff to highlight and address any issues that may otherwise not have come to light.

And finally, though we probably don't have the resources to make changes.....

6. Are they paid commensurate with their role and responsibilities?

If employees are not paid in line with their skills and abilities, everything you attempt to do to motivate them is a waste of time. It's a basic need to be paid your worth. As an employer, it is worth carrying out a salary survey annually to make sure that your salaries are in line with the market. Surveys such as these can be bought from organizations such as IBEC or can be conducted by external consultants.

But, whatever you do, the worst thing to do would be to leave those glum faces and unmotivated staff unattended. Sometimes a bit of attention can go a long way!

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