

Motivation

Siobhan Robinson-Morris
Industrial Relations Officer

In the theoretical world, the concept of motivation seems to be very simple and that finding the keys to motivating persons is an easy undertaking. However, in the real world of business, theories such as Herzberg two factor theory and Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs become cumbersome to navigate and implement. Most managers want something practical and easy to institutionalize. So how then do you motivate your team?

Before you can begin to motivate your staff, one must consider what is motivation in the first place; motivation is defined as the process that initiates, guides and maintains goal oriented behaviours. Simply put, motivation is what causes us to act. Seems simple enough right? Wrong! There is a large degree of subjectivity in that definition, meaning that what causes people to act can be so drastically different, that within a team of five (5), each team member may be motivated differently. You may have one member of the team who thrives on praise, while another may rather recognition in the form of a reward. No matter the package, motivation is a critical aspect to managing persons and maintaining morale in the organization or team.

So how then do you motivate your employees? There is no one size fits all solution to motivation within an organization, however employers need to pay attention to the following areas:

- (1) What are the goals of the organization, and your employees, both in the short and long term. While goals are not static, it is important that the employee's and team's goals are aligned; you do not want persons who will be working at cross purposes to the rest of the team.
- (2) Secondly, what do your employees value? For example a person who values family and work life balance will not be motivated to undertake a lot of over time for money, however if you highlight that they will be able to get time back in lieu of overtime, you may be more likely to get them to agree.
- (3) Finally, the needs of the individual also should be taken into account when you look at how to motivate your staff. Needs are fundamental and

tend to be the same for all persons, they go to the root of your survival- shelter, food, clothing etc. One of the things that many of the theories highlight is that while the impact of needs on an individual's motivation can be minimal, they cannot be neglected. A person whose basic needs are not being met in their job will become demotivated and have extremely low morale.

To ensure that the chosen methods of motivation are indeed impactful and achieve the desired results, be cognizant of the following:

- Empower your employees- be sure not to micro manage and allow your employees to utilize and develop their skills within the department or organization.
- Set realistic goals- sit with your employees and develop realistic, achievable goals during the appraisal process. Unrealistic goals are demotivating and detrimental to morale in the organization. Do not set up employees to fail.
- Provide appropriate training- you must equip employees with the tools they need to be able to achieve the organization's targets.
- Encourage self-development – all training can't be provided by the organization, wherever possible encourage employees to pursue their own course of development.
- Expect performance- having well established standards for your employees, and demanding that those standards are met and surpassed is critical. All of the other parts of the equation are meaningless if you do not hold employees accountable and expect that they will give their all to the tasks at hand.
- Recognize and reward accomplishments- this recognition MUST be timely and meaningful.

Motivation is a vital part of any successful team or organization, and while there may be no prepackaged solution for all your motivational needs, paying attention to the factors above can assist you in developing the best programme for you.