

# PERSONNEL NOTEBOOK

For Your Most Important Resource—The Human Resource

Prepared By:

## HUMAN RESOURCE ASSOCIATES

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# MOTIVATING EMPLOYEES

## Part II – What Do The Experts Say?

In our last issue of *Personnel Notebook* we laid out the foundation for Motivation. We defined what it is, identified the de-motivators that can prevent Motivation, and then looked at the first steps to understanding how to create a motivated workplace.

In this issue we will offer the recommendations of some experts. The philosophies and the procedures they recommend to create Motivation in your employees

### **The Observations, Philosophies And Recommendations Of The Experts**

#### **1. Most Managers Think Money Is The Top Motivator.**

What do employees really want? They mostly want to be valued for a job well done by those they hold in high esteem! Mary Kay Ash, the founder of 'Mary Kay Cosmetics' stated, "Imagine that every person is wearing a sign that says **"Make Me Feel Important"**". That's one of the most important keys to Motivation. Money is not the best motivator. Most employees see pay as an exchange for the work that they do, not

for doing exceptional work or achieving major goals. As Management Consultant Rosabeth Moss Kanter puts it, "Compensation is a right; recognition is a gift". People want praise and recognition.

The President of the Drucker Foundation, Francis Hesselbien, says, "People want to feel that they make a difference". "Money does not do this; personal recognition does". When paychecks go out, write a note recognizing the employee's accomplishment. Feature them in the company newsletter. Read positive letters from customers aloud to your employees.

#### **2. What Motivates Others Is Often Different From What motivates You.**

Studies by Lawrence Lindahl in the late 1940s (and repeated by others in the 1980s and 1990s) showed that difference. Managers said that they knew that their employees primarily wanted:

1. Good wages
2. Job security
3. Promotion and growth opportunities,

However, when employees were surveyed, they reported that they primarily wanted:

1. Appreciation for a job well done

(Supervisors rated that as #8)  
2. Feeling that I'm in on what's going on.  
(Supervisors rated that last as #10)

Successful managers sometimes give index cards to employees and ask them to list the items that motivate them. An employee survey can also accomplish this. A Financial Analyst at BankBoston in Boston Mass. listed 'time off', 'lunch with her Manager', and 'Starbucks coffee' on her index card. After turning it in to her Manager, she forgot all about it. She was elated, about 6 weeks later when, after finishing a project, to find a coupon for Starbucks coffee with a personal note from her Manager. The fact that they not only accepted her input but also took the time to recognize her efforts in the way she liked best, left quite an impression.

### **3. The Most Motivating Things Tend To Be The Least Costly And Easiest To Provide.**

In a Study by Wichita State University, they discovered that 3 of the top 5 motivating incentives (as ranked by employees) had no identifiable costs! They were:

1. A personal 'thank you' for a job well done.
2. A written 'thank you' note for a job well done.
3. Public praise.

When recognition is accomplished in a timely, sincere and specific manner, employees feel more valued and appreciated.

Identify what each employee finds most interesting in their job and try to use that information in future work assignments. OurTown Television Productions of Sarasota Springs, NY, could not pay the same high salaries that their competitors offered. It competed by

offering people jobs custom-tailored to better fit each individual's tastes.

### **4. Increased Opportunity Is A Great Motivator.**

Giving your employees new opportunities to perform, learn, grow and develop not only produces Motivation but also is a form of recognition, and that's the prime motivator. Doing so, says to other employees that this person is worth developing and he/she has proven it.

At American Honda Motor Company in Marysville, Ohio, they create energizing, motivating opportunities by assigning specific employees to high-risk, high-reward projects. This might be a special assignment; using a new product, new technology, with a short time schedule or solving a persistent problem. They also assure that the project has a high degree of visibility. Some of these projects, if completed well, result in trips to Japan.

Another key lesson Honda learned however, was to focus the attention on the accomplishment not the reward. Neither the company's expenditure nor the employee's gain should be the message. They're the messengers. The message is the tough job well done by this person.

### **5. Awards Are Best When Presented In Public.**

Awards are not meant to be presented in the privacy of an employee's office or when they're alone on a job site. This employee needs to be presented 'In The Limelight'. Beyond the recognition to the employee, don't forget, you are sending a message about the type of performance that gets noticed in this company.

But be careful of giving undeserved awards, as employees will know if it's undeserved and that's a

message you do not want to send. You don't want to reward people for not doing what's needed to be done. Instead, you want to point out, not only the achievement, but also how it ties to the larger objectives of the organization.

When presenting the awards, try to do so with sincerity and energy. A Comment like "I'm proud to have you on my team" adds power to your message.

### **6.Rewards That Are Fun And Simple Work Best To Motivate Employees**

As Richard File, A Partner at Amergon pointed out "Spending \$1 on something clever and unique is better than spending \$50 on something ordinary and forgettable". Too often companies feel that fun and simple ideas are inappropriate, somehow undermining the seriousness of the business.

A legendary incident at Hewlett-Packard occurred when an Engineer burst into his Manager's office at Palo Alto, California to announce that he had just found the solution to a long-standing problem. His Manager quickly groped around his desk for some item to acknowledge the accomplishment and ended up handing the engineer a banana from his lunch, with the words "well done, congratulations". Initially the employee was puzzled, but over time the 'Golden Banana Award' became one of the most prestigious honors bestowed in that division.

### **7.Recognition Means The Most When It's Really Earned And When It Directly Affects The Bottom Line.**

Employees don't really want something for nothing. People receiving recognition know when it's not really for an accomplishment. So do other employees. Being rewarded for doing nothing can be harmful to everyone,

especially the company. Equally important are the advantages gained by recognizing accomplishments that affect the bottom line. You always get more of what you reward.

Robert Haupter, Chairman and CEO of ORYX Energy points out that if you "Give people a chance, not just to do a job, but to have some real impact, they'll really respond. They'll get on their roller skates and race around to make sure it happens"

Providing employees with good, related information really helps. Let them see the target they're aiming at! Goodyear Tire and Rubber in Akron, Ohio believes in that concept. All of their employees can access the company's computer files that provide information about the company, themselves, their department and their plant. Each shift can track it's own productivity. The results are posted on marker boards on the shop floor. A friendly rivalry between departments then results that incrementally improves productivity.

### **8.It's Much Easier To Maintain Good Results Than It Is To Create Them Anew.**

Once you are achieving better performance, it can be perpetuated through regular reinforcement. Even if your official Motivation program has ended, selective recognition and rewards can still be provided. And it will cost much less time, money and effort than starting up a whole new program. Sometimes changing the rewards or the methods in which they are rewarded can keep motivation alive.

Tektronix Inc, a manufacturer of electronic instruments in Beaverton, Oregon, created a simple way for Managers and employees alike to focus on recognition. Simple memo-pads were

printed that had a cartoon and the heading “YOU DONE GOOD AWARD”. The award, with space for comments, could be given to anyone in the company from anyone in the company. One company using this idea generated over 130,000 notes over 4 years. That’s motivating!

### **9. Managers Tend To Ignore Employee Motivation Until After They’ve Lost It.**

Too often managers are focused on what’s ‘urgent’. ‘Urgent’ screams out for attention. But ‘urgency’ and ‘importance’ are two different things. Putting out fires is urgent. Spending each day on the ‘Buzyness’ is urgent. But Motivation, productivity and results are ‘important! You have to focus on the donut, not the hole. Once you lose Motivation it can be very difficult and expensive to have to re-create it.

Bar-Nunn Transportation of Granger, Iowa provides it’s drivers with 2 monthly publications. A newsletter and a 4 hour cassette tape with industry news, country music, information on company benefits and personalized messages such as birthday announcements. Talk about focusing! Giving Truck Drivers a 4-hour cassette that sounds like a radio show, only about them! Since creating these, the company has experienced a 35% reduction in turnover. Strive to keep Motivation alive in your company.

### **10. The More You Help Employees To Develop Their Marketable Skills, The More likely They Are To Stay With You.**

Employees want to see themselves improving, being of more worth, being more valuable and being better off next year than they are now. By helping them to develop their marketable skills they will accomplish these life-enriching goals.

It’s pretty scary stuff for a Manager to help an employee to become worth more money and to make them more desirable to other companies. But, in fact, employees overwhelmingly stay with the company that makes them so valuable; the company they know has their interests at heart.

In other companies you often hear employees say, “I’m going nowhere here. This is a dead-end.” That’s not a motivated employee saying that. According to Adelle DeGiargio at Apple Computer, the message to give employees is not that you are going to be responsible for their success. The message is that they’re responsible for their success. But you can help them figure out which paths are best for them to take and to give them the opportunity to take it.

The reality is that you are not going to keep every employee forever. Some employee’s future success may require them to go on to other work in other companies. But you can make that a success for you both. You’ll know in advance when they’re leaving and they leave with good relationships. And they can begin preparing their replacement long in advance.

In Part III of *Personnel Notebook-Motivation* We will further identify programs designed to achieve Motivation and take a look at the masters.

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