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# Five Ways to Motivate Yourself and Your Employees

By **Kimberly R. Tarnasky**

Imagine waking up Monday morning thrilled to be heading back into the office. Better yet, imagine that you and those you manage wake up excited to start the workweek!

You might think this isn't possible; however, companies that have created the right motivational environment have seen a 75% increase in high-performing employees after only four years (Rheem 2018). Increased motivation among employees has also led to decreased turnover rates, better attendance, and increased customer satisfaction (Moodley, Hove, Karodai 2018, 63).

Unfortunately, studies have repeatedly shown that most companies fail to take advantage of the benefits of employee motivation. In one study, Sarveshni Moodley and his colleagues found that 59% of employees feel an average amount of motivation at work. Shockingly, only 14% reported feeling a "very high" level of motivation (Moodley et al. 2018).

All together, these studies demonstrate that employees need to feel more motivated, and here's how managers can ensure that they do.

1. Utilize Financial Incentives
2. Hire Quality Management
3. Recognize a Job Well Done
4. Break up the Monotony
5. Allow for Advancement and Innovation

## Utilize Financial Incentives

While offering financial incentives may not be feasible for every organization, some studies have shown that offering financial rewards to employees increases motivation (Novianty and Evita 2018, 3). Financial incentives include any financial reward outside of the employee's usual salary.

Moodley's study also found that 46% of people are mostly motivated by financial rewards. This is in stark contrast to the 1% who are more motivated by nonfinancial rewards.

Although studies have shown the motivational power of financial incentives, the unfortunate truth is that such incentives don't lead to employee loyalty.

Unsurprisingly, employees motivated primarily by financial incentives often leave their jobs upon receiving a higher paying offer elsewhere (Panait and Panait 2018, 148). As a result, this motivational strategy is best utilized when coupled with a few other strategies.

## Hire Quality Management

Upper management plays an integral role in the motivational status of their employees. Think of a boss that you didn't respect. Now, think of one you did. There will likely be a clear difference in your work ethic and passion for your work when working under these two different managers.

To illustrate the point, consider the case of Lucia, a manager of a diabetes care products sales team. Lucia has often struggled to find ways to keep her salespeople motivated when they aren't passionate about what they sell. She found, however, that focusing on building personal relationships with her team gets them more excited about the work than talking about work (Jones, Block, and Daley 2018, 10-11).

Choose to hire management who can discover what will motivate your specific workforce.

## Recognize a Job Well Done

People have a need for self-esteem, and this need can be met by recognition in the workplace (Panait and Panait 2018, 152). Feeling recognized at work reinforces good behavior, thus leading to motivation to do more good work. Don't think that recognition must involve a big award ceremony. Often, the most meaningful forms of recognition can be as simple as a handwritten "thank you" card (Gold 2018).

"The manager must also be involved in creating a team spirit in which each employee feels at ease, as a useful part of a whole." (Panait and Panait 2018, 151).

## Break Up the Monotony

Clive, the captain of a private yacht, found that one way to keep motivation high among his crew was to rotate the tasks assigned to each crewman (Jones et al, 2018, 11-12). Under Clive's watch, even the junior stewardesses were trained on naval operations, including helping to bring the ship into shore. This rotation of tasks decreased burnout, causing motivation to rise (Jones et al. 2018, 11-12).

Incorporating this practice in your organization will require more training and will perhaps decrease efficiency for a time (Panait and Panait 2018, 152), but the long-term benefits far outweigh the short-term costs.

## Allow for Advancement and Innovation

Self-actualization is at the top of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This can be fulfilled in the workplace by providing opportunities to advance and innovate within the organization. According to Maslow, unfulfilled needs motivate one to work until that need is fulfilled (Moodley et al. 2018, 56).

The opportunity for promotion is a powerful motivator, being second only to financial incentives. Of people surveyed, 41% said opportunity for advancement was a “highly effective” strategy to motivate them (Moodley et al 2018, 61).

While not all employees may benefit from a culture of innovation, it is certain that high performers will (Rheem 2018). Managers have the responsibility to foster an environment of innovation to fulfill the self-actualization needs of their employees.

## Conclusion

No matter what kind of organization you are in, everyone can benefit from a little more motivation at work. Some of these strategies may not be feasible in your workplace; nonetheless, go ahead and try the ones that are! Do your best to try to get things to “roll” along. Who knows? You might even find yourself excited when your alarm goes off next Monday morning.

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