

13 Ways to Inspire your Employees

In the midst of technological changes and dynamic environments, what keeps an employee inspired to analyze, discover, invent and innovate? Consolidating responses from an email survey, I found the following factors to be most significant:

- 1. A long-term goal:** "The world makes way for the man who knows where he is going," wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson. An employee who sets a long-term goal and has a directional sense of his efforts and achievements is motivated when his employer understands and supports his plan.
- 2. Short-term goals:** As the Chinese proverb says, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a small step." Short-term goals are the building blocks for long-term goals. Achieving these milestones ingrains confidence and self-belief.
- 3. Planning:** Good planning provides a clear-sighted vision to the employee. It doesn't require micro-management, and employees are able to assess the value of their contributions for a successful delivery.
- 4. Challenging work:** Challenges sharpen the mind. "Smarter thinking" happens when intriguing work stimulates the brain cells and improves decision-making ability. Employees yearn for a sense of accomplishment. Those who develop innovative strategies are more curious and marketable than those who do tedious work.
- 5. Rewards:** Recognition in the form of appreciation notes, monetary and nonmonetary awards, and verbal encouragement provides positive reinforcement. Looking at Maslow's hierarchy of needs, rewards help employees understand that they are respected by others.
- 6. Work environment:** An employee spends a large portion of his lifetime at work, and work environment makes a big difference. A positive environment is made up of positive leadership, positive thoughts, positive approach, and positive people. In addition to healthy competition and intelligent negotiation, cohesiveness and teamwork are very important. Respectful relationships lead to emotional balance and open communication. A supportive team is a strong team. Support from the employer, especially during a personal crisis, generates security.
- 7. Regular feedback and training:** Employees who receive regular feedback have the opportunity to work on their strengths and weaknesses. Easy access to training, reminders, and custom course suggestions are a positive catalyst. Negative feedback should be accompanied with learning opportunities and a chance to grow.
- 8. Interactions with leaders:** If the leaders are accessible, employees feel connected and heard. Valuable employee surveys provide an avenue for voicing their opinions.
- 9. Work/life balance:** Helping employees understand how to balance their work hours and providing benefits such as flex-hour options, health care, gym memberships, team lunches, etc. will rejuvenate employees.

10. Mentoring: Through mentoring, employees can tap into valuable in-house resources. Employees can become multifaceted through cross-functional and cross-business unit mentoring.

11. Policies: Streamlined, clearly documented, and easily accessible policies encourage employees to stay informed and ask questions.

12. Equality: All employees must be considered equal. Favoring one employee may demotivate another employee's performance. Factual and criteria-based performance evaluations motivate employees.

13. Camaraderie: Interactive sessions lead to networking and knowledge sharing. These are especially crucial for remote employees.

To me, the most important factor is knowing how my accomplishments are helping the community at large. How am I making a difference? When an employee is encouraged, he performs, but when an employee is inspired, he excels.

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