Motivation Strategy

Ponder 12

# Impediments

## Conflict With Co-Workers

### Description

When there is rivalry or conflict between co-workers, be it from being the new kid on the block who got on the wrong side of the big clique, or a personal conflict with another employee due to differences of opinion or work styles, the employees involved are likely to not be performing their best. This is especially true when said employees are required to work together.

### Scope

This is generally and individual problem, though situations do arise where animosity exists between factions of employees, which can be a much larger problem.

### Mitigation Strategy

Get HR involved, and get the disputing employees to communicate and resolve their differences. They don’t need to be best friends and love each other, but they need to be able to work together.

### Source

Members of my family have had experience with this problem

## Burn Out

### Description

When an employee’s tasks are monotonous, or the employee feels overworked or generally feel like they are not being well taken care of, they are prone to experience burn out.

### Scope

While this is an individual problem, if one person is experiencing it, it may be a sign that others will soon.

### Mitigation Strategy

Reduce expected hours worked per week to 40. Create an employee appreciation plan that includes workplace perks like free coffee or occasional free lunches.

### Source

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/14/business/dealbook/when-employee-engagement-turns-into-employee-burnout.html

## Poor Communication

### Description

When Managers have difficulty expressing their expectations in a way that is well understood, and when employees have difficulty expressing their concerns, the field is ripe for miscommunication. Miscommunication in the work place can lead to frustration, un met expectations, and division between management and employees.

### Scope

Depending on what level the poor communication is occurring at, this could be an individual, team or company-wide problem.

### Mitigation Strategy

Have managers check in with their employees on a regular basis. [1]  
Record policies and expectations in readily available internal documents. [1]  
Implement a social intranet. [1]

### Source

[1] https://axerosolutions.com/blogs/timeisenhauer/pulse/210/30-smart-tips-to-improve-workplace-communication

## Unrealistic Time Tables

### Description

Upper management wants X thing done by Y date. Do you think you can do it? Poor estimators that we are, especially when we don’t have a firm grasp of what X entails, leads us to optimistically over promise and set unrealistic deadlines. Inevitably, this leads to products being late since you agreed to an unrealistic time table. Being late (or anticipating being late) means a lot of overtime, and that impedes on employee morale and motivation.

### Scope

This level can be on the individual level, but it is much more likely to occur on the team level.

### Mitigation Strategy

Follow a defined method for product time estimation. Even with that plan, under promise, and over deliver.

### Source

http://www.workplaceinsanity.com/2011/10/unrealistic-expectations.html

# Company Level Plan

## Economic

### Description

Comp Days – When an employee has gone above and beyond, give them a paid day off.  
Buy them Lunch – If a whole team has done well on something, buy them lunch, or bring them donuts.

### Upside

Everyone loves days off and free lunches/treats.

### Downside

A day off is expensive. This would need to be used sparingly.

## Organizational

### Description

Flatten the horizontal boundary – At one place I worked, I had three bosses. My team, the head of my department, and the CEO. Functionally, my team was my boss, and that flat hierarchy made me feel personally invested in my tasks, rather than feeling forced to do something because my boss assigned me to do it.

### Upside

Employees are more invested in the company

### Downside

This structure can lead to a loss of vision/direction if not exercised well.

## Physical

### Description

Open plan. An office space is divided into team rooms, with a team to each room. No walls/cubicles/etc divide members of the team from each other.

### Upside

Everyone has easy access to everyone. You need someone’s opinion? You can see them right there and can easily ask them.

### Downside

Everyone has easy access to everyone. If not well managed, this can create more of a social club than a team of employees working together. This is also difficult socially anxious employees, or people who enjoy their privacy.

## Cultural

### Description

Business-casual dress – Ragged t-shirt and shorts are too casual, but a button up shirt and slacks is too formal. Upscale casual dress sets a nice tone.

Flexible work hours – Require 40 hours a week from every full-time employee, but allow employees to set their own hours. This should be tempered with a set of required hours, say 10-2pm that forces everyone into the office at the same times so that things requiring more than one person can be addressed together.

### Upside

These changes prevent a job from feeling stuffy or like prison. The freedom to dress more casually and to pick what hours you will work promote a culture of self-empowerment.

### Downside

When you approach something casually, this generally is done without vigor/rigor. Without holding employees accountable for their efforts, the casual approach to dress and hours could spread into a casual approach to work and deadlines.

# Team Level Plan

## Empowered Teams

### Description

Create a company road map that details the goals and major projects of the company. Let each team choose what they want to work on from the road map. Give teams the ability to suggest items for the road map.

### Upside

By allowing teams to choose which projects they want to work on, you’re more likely to have the team invested in the project and motivated to succeed at it.

### Downside

You lose control over which people are working on which tasks. In order to get high priority items worked on, you may end up removing lower priority items from the road map in order to focus your teams on the most important goals.

## Easy Transfers

### Description

Make it easy for employees to transfer between teams, and create a company culture where switching teams every few months is seen as a positive and healthy thing to do.

### Upside

If there is friction between team mates, this proved an easy way to resolve it. Also, if one person has friction with a lot of teams, it’s easier to decide to let them go. This can also prevent people from getting tired with their job since they can switch to a new one relatively frequently.

### Downside

If a team has taken on a particularly difficult job, it may be difficult to keep people on that team. Also, bringing employees new to a team up to speed takes time and will likely slow teams down for a bit after a transition.

# Individual

## Empowered Individuals

### Description

Once your team has chosen a project, allow each individual to choose which aspects of the project they want to work on. Allow them self-organize around tasks.

### Upside

The freedom of choosing what you will work an allows employees to stretch themselves when they want to, and work on what they are comfortable with when they want to. This freedom helps improve their morale and their motivation to complete the tasks they have self-assigned.

### Downside

Difficult or unpleasant tasks are likely to remain uncompleted until either someone steps up and takes it, or until it the last thing left to do. Since the difficult tasks often have bearing on how other tasks will be completed, this has the potential to cause trouble.

## Be Available

### Description

A boss who is distant or difficult to approach makes an employee feel like they are unvalued. A boss who visits their employees socially, and on a regular basis, is a boss who can be approached when there is a problem. An employee who is personally acquainted with their boss is more likely to communicate with their boss when it needs to happen, especially when compared with an employee who isn’t sure if their boss even knows their name.

### Upside

When bad things happen, like a product going over schedule, or a work place conflict that needs to be addressed, a boss who is in touch with his employees isn’t going to be blindsided by the trouble, he’ll know about it as it develops.

### Downside

The time spent building relationships with employees is time taken away from a boss’s other responsibilities. It can be difficult to see socializing as a productive use of time.

# Additional Sources

https://blog.scottsmarketplace.com/how-to-motivate-employees/