

## November's Workplace Tips from Employer-Employee.com

- Employee Motivation 101: The Basic Principles.
- Do You Work for a Company that is Conflict Prone?
- Telephone Consultation.

---

### Employee Motivation 101: The Basic Principles

---

If I could give managers just one motivation tip, it would be simply not to rob their employees of motivation. A new employee usually arrives at work ready to perform duties with energy, meet new challenges with creativity, and cooperate with coworkers. A few years later that same employee is watching the clock, taking as many sick days as allowed, avoiding new challenges by sticking to routine, and disagreeing with coworkers. Does that scenario sound familiar to you? If it does, your company is probably robbing employees of their motivation.

The first principle of employee motivation is to set up your company's work environment without motivation robbing practices. How many unproductive meetings can one employee sit through? How many unnecessary rules can you ask an employee to follow? And how many unclear expectations, personal criticisms, and dead-end assignments can you ask an employee to tolerate? Lastly, how many incidents of company politics can you ask an employee to endure? Get the point!

Before any company launches a motivation initiative, it is wise to first do some house cleaning.

Get rid of meetings based on duration and institute meetings based on tasks. Develop a company rule that meetings end when the task is complete versus when the time is up. Meetings that end when the task is complete are generally quicker and employees leave feeling positive.

Get rid of any procedure that has more than four steps--remember your organization is not the IRS. It is important to review all workplace procedures for their relevance and ability to be simplified.

Talk *to* your employees, not *at* your employees. An employee may only remember a compliment for one day, but will remember criticism for years.

Treat you employees fairly and honestly. Replace company politics with a company handbook that outlines rules and procedures that are clear and easy to read.

Do not be afraid to tell an employee when he or she is not performing well. Under performers lower the performance of others, just as superior performers help other employees increase their performance.

The second principle of motivation is not to confuse employee motivation with employee retention. A human resource manager told me that her company was planning on improving employee motivation by setting up a 401k plan, increasing employee health benefits, and setting up onsite daycare. I explained to the manager that the result of her

plan would only help the company retain all their poor performing employees for years to come.

A great benefit plan only helps companies attract and retain employees whether or not they are motivated. For example, you probably have never heard an employee say, "Boy, I am going to be productive today because my company has a great 401k plan?" However, you are likely to hear an employee say, "Why leave? This company has too many perks." Employees who are truly motivated do not stay at a company for the benefits, they stay because the work is challenging and they feel that what they do makes a difference. The definition of a motivated employee is one who has developed a "drive" to excel and be creative day after day—just like they were on their first day on the job. Employees who focus on work benefits versus work performance quickly lose their motivation to excel and be creative.

The third principle of motivation is to discover what truly motivates an employee and not to just put "carrots" in front of them. Money or other rewards generally only work as motivators for employees who work in sales jobs or on commission. Providing money or rewards to salaried or hourly employees can create a loss of both intrinsic motivation and a decrease in motivation after the reward is removed. What works best to motivate employees is to focus on their internal or intrinsic needs for motivation.

To have fun and variety in their daily work routine  
To be given opportunities for input, choice, and feedback  
Receive responsibility, leadership and growth opportunities  
Work in a team and have social interactions  
Have a manager who coaches and encourages  
To be given job ownership over some aspects of their work  
Receive goals, challenges, and obtain success  
To receive appreciation and recognition  
To be evaluated by accurate performance measures

The above intrinsic needs come with an employee on their first day of work. Therefore, all a manager or company has to do is tap into those needs and not rob them from the employee. Once you remove some of your company's motivation robbing practices, you can start meeting your employees' intrinsic needs for motivation. After some of your employees' intrinsic needs are met, you will have employees acting as if it is their first day at work everyday.

---

### Do You Work for a Company that is Conflict Prone?

---

Have you ever wondered if it is you or your company that is the cause of all your feelings of frustration, conflict with coworkers, or your daily thoughts of running away and starting a new career in vacuum sales. The following seven qualities are qualities of a company that is just begging for conflict to develop between their employees or between the employees and the company.

A company that promotes competitive coalitions between workers. Is the first shift competing against the second shift, and the second shift competing against the first and third shift?

A company that sets up ambiguous goals and outcome measures. Have you ever been given unclear work objectives and goals, and then had your performance measured by your manager's feelings and not by an objective measure? If so, you were the victim of ambiguous goals and outcome measures.

A company that promotes on who you are versus your accomplishments, hard work, and commitment to your company's goals. Has favoritism of another employee ever caused you to lose out on a promotion?

A company that sets up confusing roles and work responsibilities between staff or departments. Are you not sure which coworkers or departments are responsible for what? Do you end up arguing with other departments who are blaming you for not getting work done on time?

A company that has no formal or informal methods in place to resolve disputes between workers or between employees and manager. Are you not sure who you should make a complaint to if you feel that your supervisor is sexually harassing you? If so, your company has not either fully explained or developed formal methods of dispute resolution.

A company that operates under rigid ideology and does not have room for diverse points of view. Have you ever presented a great new idea to your company only to have it shot to pieces? If so, your company may not welcome new ideas.

A company does not get rid of the one bad apple. If your company maintains a coworker's employment even when he or she violates company policies, causes conflict between coworkers, or has extremely low performance, guess what? You get to work with that employee 40 plus hours a week! Sound motivating?

If your company has 3-4 of the above qualities, chances are you are working for a company that is conflict prone.

---

### Telephone Consultations

---

Telephone consultations are available Monday through Saturday for both managers and employees.

You can contact me at 1-800-216-3177 and enter PIN 500-1-755.

Happy Working,

Gary Vikesland, MA LP CEAP  
HYPERLINK <mailto:Employeremployee@juno.com>  
[employeremployee@juno.com](mailto:employeremployee@juno.com)  
<http://www.employer-employee.com>