

# 5 Ways To Be A Motivating Leader

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As we begin to wrap up 2013, many of us are starting to think about resolutions for the New Year and what we can do differently in 2014. The common resolutions like going to the gym more often, losing 20 pounds, or the like tend to lose their luster before the end of January. Why not take a different approach to your New Year's resolutions and make it a goal to be a better leader? People follow and support leaders they believe in and create positive influences in their lives. A Gallup poll found that only 1 in 11 (9%) employees are engaged when led by a leader that neglects to focus on individual's strengths. Yet when a leader acknowledges an individual's strengths, that statistic jumps to 3 in 4 (73%) employees.

While we can't necessarily control the budget cuts or whether there will be another



round of furloughs next year, we can absolutely control the type of leader we choose to be and the reputation we build as we lead others to greatness.

Here are a few traits you can add to your resolution list in your quest to becoming a more well-rounded leader.

1. **Allow for autonomy** – Empowering your staff to make decisions is key to creating a motivated and productive staff. Employees need to be allowed to make mistakes as well as have the support and guidance from their manager when flubs do happen. A [Situational Leader](#) knows when to provide support and allow individuals to grow into great leaders, while a self-serving leader only has their best interest in mind. Coach your direct reports to come up with a winning strategy and work with them on defining that strategy rather than dictating their next move.
2. **Build trust with everyone** – This is a tough one as trust among many government employees has been tested with the recent sequester, shutdown, pay freezes, and furloughs mandated government wide. But all hope is not lost. The individual encounters you as a leader have, not just with your staff but with everyone you come across at the office, help to build, or in some cases rebuild, trust. Trust is the crux of everything we do and is the foundation of effective leadership. Without

it dedication, loyalty, motivation, willingness to support the agency's mission falters. The ABCD Trust Model that promotes a leader's Ability, Believability, Connectedness, and Dependability is a good place to start to evaluate how trustworthy you are within your agency.

3. **Create a culture that people want to be a part of** – I recently watched a news segment about Zappos, the online shoe retailer, and was impressed with the culture they've created at the organization. The CEO of Zappos, Tony Hsieh, was proud to say that the first requirement they take into consideration when hiring for a position at the company is whether or not the candidate would be a good culture fit. In fact, they label the coveted culture they've built as their biggest asset. Take a look at this [30 second video](#) the folks at Zappos created to give you an insight to their fun, yet productive, culture.
4. **Acknowledge even the smallest successes** – It's an important motivator and morale booster when you catch people doing things right. People like their accomplishments to be acknowledged and to know they are truly appreciated for the hard they do day in and day out. The number one criteria, however, is to MAKE IT MEANINGFUL. There's no point in praising someone for a task they've accomplished if there's no substance behind it. Be authentic with your praisings.
5. **Thank your employees** – It's amazing the impact a smile and a thank you can have. Government workers are dedicated and work hard, despite the continuous ups-and-downs they've endured lately. Showing your employees some gratitude for that dedication, loyalty, and unrelenting productivity makes a difference. Follow your action from item #4 above with a thank you and watch your employee's motivation and satisfaction soar.

What steps are you taking to become a more motivating government leader?

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