

7 Ways to Increase Your “Human Bottom Line”

Employee Morale Directly Affects Your Company’s Success

It is easy to assume that in this day and age, as we are facing a challenging economy, that most employees are just happy to have a job. While there may be some truth in that, studies done over decades are showing that employee motivation is a key to the company’s success. Even in a challenging economy, your employees won’t stick around without some solid motivators. But you’ll be surprised to learn what some of the most important morale boosters are for your employees. Contrary to conventional wisdom, incentives in the form of money and other financial compensation are not necessarily the most effective ways of increasing employee morale.



Motivated and positive employees are more focused, more dedicated and definitely more enrolled in the company's vision and objectives. Even when your employee has negative feelings about the company and they don't choose to leave, their decreased performance can cause serious problems for you.

You might be surprised at what the highest motivators are for your employees, and over the next few articles, we'll be discussing ways that you can increase your "*human bottom line*" by addressing some of the most important motivators for your employees.

Let's take a look at 7 ways that you can increase employee motivation:

1. **Praise and commendation from management for work well done** – Reviewing studies and surveys done across a wide variety of industries, you will find that by far, praise and commendation *increases employee morale* and productivity more than any other single action you can take in your business. Receiving praise, both privately and publicly for a job well done, is a high motivator for employees as well as management. Everyone likes to feel that someone notices and cares that they are doing a good job.
2. **Providing opportunities to lead projects or take on more responsibility** – Another high-ranking motivator for employee morale is providing increased opportunities for leadership and responsibility. Surprisingly, recent studies indicate that even in times when financial incentives and even workforces are being cut and employees have additional task work added to their current load, they are still ready to take on more responsibility in the form of leadership. These opportunities provide a sense of "advancement" even an environment where financial promotion may not be possible in the immediate future.
3. **Increasing autonomy and decision-making power** – Along with leadership and responsibility, giving employees the opportunity to have more independence in their decision-making also contributes to motivation. Find ways in your organization that you can allow employees to make decision, even if it means that they (and probably you) have to learn from their mistakes from time-to-time.
4. **Providing and open forum for feedback and staff interaction** – Honest and open communication is cherished in the workplace, at least by employees. Your employees want to feel that they have an open forum to provide feedback, whether it is regarding current projects, problems that they see in the organization or even understanding where the company may be experiencing challenges. Providing a platform that allows your employees to interact with management and/or human resources to provide their feedback can provide a significant increase in employee morale.
5. **Creating variety and the ability to use different skills** – Even when you love what you do, performing the same tasks over and over gets tedious and boring. If you can allow employee job descriptions to provide some flexibility in the way tasks are performed mix up

the tasks, allowing people to use different skills over the course their day, you will find that employee engagement increases.

6. **Offering flexible work schedules and dress codes** – The “good old 9 to 5” isn’t necessarily etched in stone in the business world anymore. More and more, companies are allowing employees to have more flexible schedules because of family and other personal obligations. In fact, many savvy business owners are realizing that some of their employees actually do their best work at times outside “normal” business hours or when they are working from home in a “flex schedule.” Where it is appropriate in your business, consider allowing flexibility in both hours, where the work takes place and in general dress code. Providing this type of flexibility, you may very well find that your employees are more creative and more productive.
7. **Starting or expanding an incentive-based employee profit-sharing plan** – There is no question that employee performance and engagement is directly tied to how vested they feel about the company their work for. An employee profit-sharing can be a powerful incentive for employees to be more productive and gain a sense of satisfaction from knowing they will get a share of the profits.

Your employees are the engine that drives your business. How you treat them and appreciate them will directly affect the bottom line of your business. Consider implementing some of these strategies to increase your employee morale, engagement and long-term stability and you’ll be pleased with the outcome to your financial bottom line and just as important, your human bottom line.