



TenStep Supplemental Paper

27 February 2004

Motivating Environment

Neglecting one's motivational skills has a significant adverse impact on a manager's performance. Newly promoted managers need to realize the importance of motivating their employees. The ability to motivate is, however, an inherent gift that one is either born with or without. Nevertheless, motivation management can be learned, and essentially focuses on three factors: confidence, trust and satisfaction.

Confidence

Lack of confidence in employees is a persistent motivation problem. It happens when performance expectations are unrealistic, workloads are impossibly high and training fails to keep pace with employee needs.

Employees are afraid to tell the boss that they cannot do it because if they do, the manager will assign the duty to someone else. Thus, employees go through the motions, giving the appearance that everything is fine, leaving problems unnoticed.

A good manager can recognize when an employee says he can do something but does not mean it. Managers can improve motivation by assigning work to employees who will excel at it and enjoy it. When employees enjoy the job, they can perform well and there will be no confidence problems.

Trust

Trust problems are easier to spot since employees are usually vocal about them. There are two difficulties, however, that managers face.

Trust problems cannot be corrected quickly. It takes time to build trust. Managers need to be courageous to give employees what their performance deserves. It is easier to reward star performers, but withholding rewards from non-performers can be frustrating.

Too much trust can also be crippling. Managers who delegate duties to employees and then never follow up may think they are doing the right thing. In fact, they are not reinforcing positive behavior. Employees want managers to follow up with them on assignments to find out whether the tasks are being performed correctly. Tying positive outcomes to the employee's bonus reinforces desired behaviors and improves productivity.

Satisfaction

Employees may have the confidence and trust to perform their jobs, but they will not be motivated if the outcome is dissatisfying. It does not make sense for anyone to work hard for something he or she does not want.

Many managers fail to notice what is satisfying and dissatisfying to their employees. Different things motivate each employee. What motivates one person may even demotivate another. Managers cannot assume that each employee will be satisfied if the



TenStep Supplemental Paper

three big outcomes - money, advancement and job security - are fulfilled. Often, praise, recognition, openness and honesty are more motivating to some employees.