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Steps to help employers motivate their workers

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Guest Columnist



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Are bad attitudes, lack of commitment and low morale cutting into your bottom line? Frustrated with hiring star employees with an "attitude" and poor performance?

Recent studies have suggested 70 percent of employees today are less motivated than they used to be, 80 percent could perform better if they wanted to, and 50 percent put forth only enough effort each day to keep their jobs.

Despite the scarcity of highly skilled workers, businesses today are on the verge of an extraordinary opportunity, a chance to realize the enormous unmet potential within current and prospective employees. But businesses will not achieve exceptional success by running their businesses in the normal way.

What is the normal way? As marketplace pressures put the squeeze on profits and the cost of running a business increases, businesses often respond by freezing wages or giving minimal increases at best, cutting or eliminating training time and benefits, and hiring temporary or part-time employees. The consequent employee response is loss of

motivation, lower job satisfaction, wavering loyalty and a loss of focus.

The normal business result is:

- √ A lower quality of customer service
- √ Increased turnover
- √ Increased absenteeism and tardiness
- √ Increased theft
- √ Lower productivity
- √ More accidents or incidents
- √ Lower profits

A less obvious but even more significant threat to performance and profitability is the demotivated employee's inability or unwillingness to share, learn and cooperate with other team members.

A milestone in motivation

People employed in your business bring their own unique motivational sources to the workplace. Does this mean the onus of motivation falls alone on the employee? The Quality of Motivation Theory, according to Dr. Charles Coker, president of LifeThrive Performance Systems, says no. If the employee feels the demands of the job are greater than the available individual or business resources, the individual (and the business) will demonstrate a lack of commitment and loss of energy.

The QM theory provides an empirical answer to the nagging question, "How do I motivate my employees?" The answer lies in your business values, policies, direction, actions and strategies.

It is therefore crucial for businesses positioning themselves as thriving businesses to select and develop employees who will become profitable, motivated and highly skilled at providing value-added services. The business must engage the emotional energy and attention of the employees and provide

the resources to help them cope with the emotional, intellectual and physical demands of the job.

How do you develop a business culture that attracts and retains highly motivated employees?

Employment security

The vast majority of society today longs for security and stability. Time and time again, job stability ranks far higher than pay on job satisfaction scales. People naturally resist change because it is simply too difficult or disruptive.

Employment security, based on successful job performance, is a key factor in a successful business.

Hire selectively. Surround yourself with people who share your fundamental values for a quality of life. Owners and managers can no longer hire by guessing, hoping, relying on gut reaction or believing a resume. The costs are too high and the results too threatening for the long-term success and profitability of a business. Managers must hire and train with special emphasis on top-notch verbal and listening skills, interpersonal effectiveness, willingness to cooperate, individual initiative and willingness to contribute. High-performance employees will display good initiative, judgment, adaptability and ability to learn, as well as a willingness to share what they know for the benefit of the customer.

Rethink compensation

Businesses must begin to offer compensation based on organizational performance as well as individual performance. This requires measurement. To know if the business and individuals within it have improved, employees

must have a reference point, clear expectations, be given feedback and direction, and receive training and support to meet business goals and satisfy personal needs.

Provide training

A recent Stanford University study showed 88 percent of successful performance is a direct result of

attitude and an individual's motivation. Only 12 percent of successful performance could be credited to skills or technical knowledge. Developing employees "soft skills" has a far greater likelihood of success and a higher return on investment. As an added bonus, a motivated person is more likely to take the initiative to learn and acquire new tech-

nical skills needed to grow and advance.

People assets

Finally, promote your employees as your competitive edge. Believe as Douglas Nester, CEO of Coca-Cola, one of the most successful companies in the world, does "People are your most defining asset."

Dr. Ira S. Wolfe is founder and president of Success Performance Solutions, a division of Poised for the Future Company. In addition to serving as president of Success Performance Solutions, he is a senior executive consultant and manager of the Central Pennsylvania office for PargasVenuto, and a senior consultant with LifeThrive Performance Systems. Wolfe is

a Certified Professional Behavioral Analyst, Certified Professional Values Analyst and Certified Motivational Interpreter. Dr. Wolfe is also an engaging and experienced speaker, and published author.

The innovative and practical systems from Success Performance Solutions unlock the tremendous potential of the workforce by providing employees with the

skills and motivations to make any business successful.

For more information on how Success Performance Solutions can help your business boost sales, select and retain employees, and reduce employee and customer turnover, call (717)656-4632 or email: iwolfe@success.net or visit their website at www.super-solutions.com