

Let's Talk: Staff Motivation



📅 Tue 12 February 2019 - 4:58 pm

[Let's Talk](#)

By Rebecca Thacker

How to motivate staff to ensure they're giving your business all they've got.

Let's face it; staff motivation is one of the biggest challenges for employers today. And yet, surprisingly, money is not the main influence when it comes to keeping staff motivated. In fact, several business leaders agree that staff development, well-being and a connection to their work are among the biggest factors in keeping staff enthusiastic. However, according to HubSpot's managing director, Shahid Nizami, it's not as simple as providing free snacks and ping-pong tables. "True motivation comes from feeling a sense of purpose around the work being done ... you can't expect your teams to truly care about the work they are doing if they don't feel connected to the company's mission."

In this week's Let's Talk we asked several business leaders 'how to motivate staff to ensure they're giving your business all they've got'.

Troy Martin, General Manager APAC, Instructure

The most successful employee-manager relationships and staff motivation initiatives today have focused a great deal on the increasing need and desire for personal development. Gone are the days where financial incentives alone will suffice in retaining staff – this is particularly so with younger generations, many of whom prioritise career advancement over money.

Employees are consistently looking at ways they can reskill and upskill, especially in a technology-driven era where today's skills may no longer be relevant for tomorrow's workforce. By creating a meaningful culture of continuous learning and helping staff grow in their jobs, businesses have a golden opportunity to really engage, motivate and retain employees all year round – whilst saving costs required to hire new employees with the desired skillsets.

To put things into perspective, Australian businesses spend millions of dollars a year recruiting new employees. Majority of these investments could be saved if organisations better understood the correlation between meaningful employee development and staff motivation levels.

Rafael Moyano, CEO, Australia, The Adecco Group

Businesses that offer workplace benefits and invest in staff development will see increased engagement and productivity. Constructive feedback through performance reviews, and the setting of KPIs, will give employees a clear path that keeps them motivated.

Incentives outside of salaries are also needed to attract, motivate and retain staff. Increasingly long commutes, paired with pressure to be always online, can quickly lead to burnout if not monitored carefully. Whether an employee is a millennial with family commitments or a baby boomer transitioning to retirement, flexible working policies can have a dramatic effect on work-life balance. Staff will have a far more positive approach to work if they are happier overall.

Work-related training can motivate staff members by growing their knowledge, but it's important to consider activities outside of the day to day. Initiatives that teach financial literacy, improve overall wellness and encourage social interaction, can boost morale and create a sense of community that makes people feel valued.



Emma Bannister, CEO, Presentation Studio

How to motivate staff to ensure they're giving your business all they've got passion and purpose are your two best friends when it comes to motivating staff. Where possible, tapping into each staff member's passion and linking that with the purpose of your business ensures a united and driven team. Invest time and energy into understanding the specific passions and interests of your staff individually, or as a whole. Then, you are assured a personal connection as you communicate your purpose. This approach makes your staff feel known and heard and helps them to direct their efforts towards a shared goal!

Alan Manly, CEO, Group Colleges Australia

Motivation starts at the interview where each party enters into a business agreement. The employer makes the offer of a paid task and the employee proposes that they would be suitable to do the task. The next element of the business agreement requiring negotiation is for each party to conclude that this new partnership will be mutually beneficial. The most common successful agreement is when the employer can honestly offer the next step in the employees career and the employee can understand that this job offer is not just a job but of professional and personal value to them. If both parties can see a personal advantage in the new relationship mutual respect will develop and the employee is motivated to give your business all they've got.

Darrell Hardidge, CEO, Saguity

Motivation requires a consistent external force to cause change, such as coaching, training and accountability. Inspiration is self-generated by aligning values and merely requires support and guidance to keep momentum. To achieve the greatest team output you must connect inspiration with their desire to achieve, it must have a 'what's in it for me' focus in order to have alignment on the business goals. Often the focus of money fails, as it doesn't connect with the individual values. Sometimes it's just the ability to take the kids to football practice every week is all that's required to achieve results.

Vu Tran, Co-Founder, GO1

It's a cliché, but JFK's "ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country" comes to mind. When we look at the increasing representation of millennials in today's workforce, sense of belonging and identity play a pivotal role in our day-to-day lives. Whether it be our increasing connectivity through social media and the internet, through our association with family and friends or even what sporting team we barrack for, a sense of belonging is something that often not only unites us but drives us at an individual and collective level.

The workplace is no different. In a start-up, incentives, share schemes and bonuses play a role but in great workplaces a common vision is often what brings people together. At GO1 our shared vision is the sense that we change the world through learning. It is therefore only fitting at this time of year to bring teams together and reaffirm our collective vision with each and every person and to remind them – as Simon Sinek says – of the "why".

Glenn Bedford, Head of Global Sales, Cohort Go

As the leader of a global sales team, one of my biggest challenges is getting the best out of my team every day.

Recently, I was lucky to meet Dave Alred, a performance coach of elite athletes such as former English rugby star, Jonny Wilkinson. Dave's approach to modifying behaviour in his clients stems from his observations of how human self-incentivisation systems change over the course of childhood and into adulthood.

A child attempting to perform a new task will persist until they are successful, generally ignoring the failed attempts along the way. Each success is rewarded with a big emotional reaction – a beaming smile, a fist pump or a celebratory "Yes!". As adults, the same learning moments occur, however most of the time our emotional reactions favour the failures. We berate ourselves for making mistakes, whilst ignoring the successes because these are expected. This behaviour teaches our brain through incentivisation to fail.

While Dave's approach is related to sport, it easily translates to business. While, of course, there is always a place for traditional monetary incentives and tangible rewards, celebrating our successes is a big focus for me this year and I will be encouraging my team to train their brains to recognise success and use this to drive elite performance.

Ruth Hatherley, Founder and CEO, Moneycatcha

It starts when you initially recruit team members – you must have a clear vision and culture framework, and your recruitment process must include an assessment of alignment with these because when the going gets tough, we always refer back to what it is we're collectively trying to achieve. You can change up the way to you provide praise and feedback. Email is the normal communication medium these days so do something different each week with at least one individual or team. Make a surprise call or visit to personally convey your message of appreciation. Recognise small wins and celebrate big ones, and publicly acknowledge progress and momentum.

Dr Jana Matthews, ANZ Chair in Business Growth, Director of the Australian Centre for Business Growth

There's a lot being written about how to motivate staff to ensure they're doing whatever they can to make your business successful. But I don't believe you can motivate people. Instead, you need to hire people who are already motivated, and whose values are aligned with your company's. Then, you need to make sure you don't de-motivate them.

A lot of people think that money is the most important way to keep people motivated, but managers, co-workers and a company's culture actually play a bigger role. People want to be compensated fairly for the work they do, but even more important is a manager who communicates expectations, helps professional development, and recognises contributions.

The bottom line is to recruit and select people who are motivated and who can see how working with your company enables them to achieve their personal mission. Keep them motivated by providing opportunities for additional learning and personal development. Don't de-motivate them by failing to communicate expectations or ignoring high performance. Recognise a 'job well done'. Writing a quick note or e-mail thanking them, call



out their great performance at the weekly team meeting, or providing an award for extraordinary performance are all ways to maintain motivated employees.

Adam Noall, APAC Channel Director, BlueJeans

The start of the year is a great time to sit back and look at business morale, and in particular, how the company's org chart is influencing it. According to the [2019 Edelman Trust Barometer research](#), Australians are placing more trust in their CEOs than ever, but that's only the case when staff see transparency from the top down.

While advocates of company culture, leadership efforts can fall short if employees feel out of the loop through real or perceived knowledge gaps. Part of the disconnect comes from a lack of accessibility; part of it comes from misunderstanding the intentions of leadership.

One effective way to promote honest feedback between staff and leadership is by encouraging and providing the right tools for open forum discussion, from any endpoint in the world. Employees need an effective means to ask questions – especially during all-business meetings – and allowing interactivity by using any-to-many video streaming is an excellent way to do that.

Heidi Rossi, Chief People Officer, Ansarada

At Ansarada, we believe in our people. We pride ourselves on a culture that emphasises transparency, collaboration and work-life balance, and our values are care, courage, change and curiosity. We encourage this by supporting flexible work practices, utilising collaboration tools, and taking time each week to reflect on our successes and learnings as a team. This has helped increase productivity by creating a system based on trust that makes our team feel truly valued for their ideas and the work they do.

We've found our workspace has a significant impact on the team's productivity and overall wellbeing. We keep up with the latest technology, have designed our offices with collaboration in mind, stock our cupboards with healthy snacks (AKA brain food), and put on free breakfasts and lunches each week. We firmly believe employees doing great things starts with them coming into a great place to work every day.

Shahid Nizami, Managing Director, HubSpot

Employees are the lifeline of a company and if businesses want to grow better they need to invest just as much time and effort into empowering and motivating their teams as they put into marketing, sales, and customer service.

While perks like ping-pong tables and free snacks are great for boosting morale, true motivation comes from feeling a sense of purpose around the work being done. Businesses do a lot to encourage their employees to chase targets, but you can't expect your teams to truly care about the work they are doing if they don't feel connected to the company's mission.

When your leaders can clearly and genuinely communicate the company's mission, vision, and values, your employees are likely to feel motivated to contribute to it. And when your employees genuinely care about the work they do, your customers will undoubtedly feel it too.

Lisa Stephenson, CEO, Who Am I Projects

We all know that motivation is a feeling, and normally something that passes quickly. It's a real challenge to create a motivated culture, whether you are a small business or global organisation. If you want to be sure that your staff are bringing their full potential to their role, then consider what you are asking them to commit to. There are two critical questions to consider:

1. Do your staff know what the vision for success is, and their role in that?
2. How are you creating a strong sense of belonging for every individual?

When people feel like they are part of something that is bigger than them, you'll see commitment skyrocket!

Rohan LePage, co-founder and COO, ShareRing

At ShareRing, we are big on flexibility in the workplace. As we are a global company, time zones can make meetings difficult. All our staff can work from where they like and with flexible hours. If home is a productive place, we are happy to facilitate. This has a very measurable motivational impact on our staff.

Our office runs a Monday morning breakfast smorgasbord to start the week. There are always smiles when there are scones or fresh fruit and yogurt to fuel the first day of the week.

Our culture is supportive and approachable, and we encourage employees to get involved across all areas, employing just as much on company fit as skill and experience.

We offer incentives to encourage our employees to talk to and sign up businesses in the sharing and rental economy and are always open to listening to new ideas.

ShareRing is open to improving employees' personal and academic experience through training and understanding of personality types and working styles.

As such, this year we will also be introducing team bonding and development days that will be held across different locations. This is to give the team the opportunity to brainstorm ideas, while experiencing a change of scenery.

Alex Hattingh, Chief People Officer, Employment Hero

Communicating a strong purpose for the year ahead is vital for motivating your employees to understand where their role and work contributes to the purpose and mission of what you are trying to achieve on a larger, more strategic level.

The beginning of the year is also a great time to communicate the annual business strategy, as this again motivates your team members as individuals to understand the link between what they are doing and what the business is aiming to achieve in 2019.

Rewards and recognition that reinforce your company values also drive individuals and teams to strive harder to achieve goals. For example, at Employment Hero we have awards linked to each of our four values that team members can award to peers. We celebrate these awards and recognition on a daily basis when they occur. It helps teamwork too.

We also have a Thank A Hero on our platform as part of our announcements module. This allows any employee at any time to thank another employee for their work or congratulate them on an achievement. It is really important that we have leadership play a strong role in getting



involved in recognising employees. This has been a fantastic avenue to drive on-going daily recognition for team members.

Employees are also asking for flexibility in their work more and more. By providing this and illustrating your trust in employees, they will be incentivised to appreciate what a great employer you are and will be more committed to their role and deliverables. This is all about the individual and allowing them the flexibility to live their life and enjoy the benefits. For example, being able to attend a weekly sports practice session for their kids, or leaving early to grab a team sports game for themselves.

Perks and benefits are also important. The new year is a great time to remind employees about the perks you have, such as wellness initiatives where you may have free yoga or personal training sessions or breakfast, as we do here at Employment Hero. Or, even being able to bring your dog to the office for a day...we find having dogs in the office makes for a really fun day, and gets everyone smiling!

Isabella Zamorano, Senior Employment Relations Adviser, Employsure.

Every business owner, manager and supervisor in the country wants their employees to work hard — but it's not as straightforward as it sounds.

Some employers think it's all about money; they throw salary raises and cash bonuses at their employees to improve productivity; and while that might be cause for temporary improvement, consistent raises may actually decrease morale and productivity, making employees complacent in a predictable environment where performance means little.

Instead, *Employsure's State of Work Research [Report](#)* 2018-19 shows that one of the true secrets to employee productivity is counterintuitive – autonomy.

Autonomous workers are able to make decisions for themselves, without the need to run every decision “up the ladder” or submit it to management. This makes employees feel more in control, especially over their own responsibilities, and less subject to the direction of others. When employees feel like their ideas and contributions matter, they're willing to contribute more frequently, and with more effort. Autonomy trusts workers to accomplish their goals and motivates them to give all they've got.

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There is no doubt that social media can be a highly effective marketing tool for small businesses in order to build brand awareness and generate leads. Within social media marketing, we have Instagram influencing; essentially paying people with a high amount of influence on the platform to endorse your product or service. It is becoming

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