

COACHING TIP

From Rex C. Houze

MOTIVATING PEOPLE TO PRODUCE

Most people have an unlimited potential to produce great results in their chosen field. Their only limitations are usually ones they place on their own mind. People can change; they can be motivated to be more and do more. Unfortunately, most people will not change because we need, want, or even when we tell them to change. They will only change their behavior when they change their attitude. If you want to change what people are doing, you have to change what they are thinking. To change what they are thinking, you have to change what you are saying and, perhaps, how you are saying it.

Motivating people to produce must be affected through attitude change if it is to be permanent. The commonly used methods of fear and incentives have been proven to be temporary.

Fear is based on threat or punishment. Sooner or later, people become totally subjected to fear and won't do anything without first being told. Or, they become immune to fear and only do enough to get by. Either way, people will not give you their best effort, use their full potential, or get the results you want when fear is predominant in the culture.

Incentives are external rewards. They are designed to "lure" people to do something that they should have done in the first place. Incentives can work up to a point, but they will not provide long-lasting motivation. You will find that you have to give more and more for less and less.

Basically, an attitude is the way people think about themselves and their circumstances. When, you, as a leader or coach, help people change the way they think, you help them change their attitude, which affects their behavior and influences their results. Here are some things you can do to motivate people to produce:

1. **Help them crystallize their goals.** When people have a clear picture of exactly what they want, they do not need to be forced or rewarded externally to accomplish the goal.
2. **Focus on their strengths.** People will grow quicker and accomplish more when they concentrate on their strengths and compensate for their weaknesses rather than being reminded of their weaknesses.
3. **Use positive reinforcement.** Point out people's accomplishments and progress. Catch them doing things right. When you see it, say it. What gets noticed and reinforced gets repeated. Make sure you recognize what you want repeated, not what you don't.
4. **Expect their best performance.** People tend to live up or down to a leader's expectations. Expect little and you will receive little. Expect great performance and results and you are more likely to get them.

When you help people develop the attitudes necessary for peak performance and success, they will develop the confidence to reach for higher and more meaningful goals and will be more valuable to you and your organization. They will discover solutions for themselves and not depend on outside circumstances. They will understand that in order to change their circumstances, they must first change themselves.