

Money isn't the only thing that can motivate workers

During hard times, focus on other employee values

By Rick Conlow

Q. Our organization has been going through downsizing, layoffs, wage freezes and cost cutting. Under these conditions, how can I motivate employees to produce better results when I do not have the option of offering them more money?

A. You might be surprised to learn that money isn't all that motivates employees. In fact, it's often not near the top of the list of motivators.

A survey of employees in a recent issue of *Total Quality* newsletter identified the top job satisfiers as, in descending order of importance: interesting work; appreciation for work done; the feeling of being in on things; job security; good pay; promotional growth; and good working conditions.

A survey conducted by Lawler and Redwick, published in *Psychology Today* magazine, showed money was 12th in a list of 18 items. Employees responding to the query said their top priorities were feeling good about themselves, accomplishing something worthwhile, doing their best, and learning developing skills.

Your employees may be accustomed to having supervisory reviews that usually results in salary increases. Even

when a salary increase isn't possible, it's still very important – maybe even more important – to meet with your employees on a regular, one-to-one basis. When you meet with them, discuss these points: job duties (make a list); what they're doing well; and where they need to improve, citing two to five goals they can work on. Meet with employees every one to three months to review these issues.

MANAGER'S ADVISER

Going through this process usually motivates employees regardless of company circumstances. You open lines of communication, give recognition, receive employee input, solve problems, define expectations and set some goals – just what employees need from supervisors. In most cases, employees will respond by increasing their efforts.

Always keep your people informed about the state of the company. They should know what's occurring, even if it means bad news. In answering their questions, try to calm their fears and discuss support systems or options. For example, if layoffs are imminent, remain composed and don't criticize or attempt to place blame. No matter what's happening, there's still a job to do, so focus on that.

Now's the time to recognize your employees for producing good work.

Give them more attention. Talk nonbusiness occasionally. Say thank you more often. Write thank you notes. Greet them daily and praise individuals publicly.

DEALING WITH MISTAKES

Q. How do you admonish employees who make mistakes?

A. There are a couple of general ways to handle this situation.

If the employee is new, simply point out the mistake and tell him or her how to correct it. Always correct mistakes in a helpful, noncritical manner. Your goal is to redirect and then monitor the employee's progress.

If the problem continues, meet with the employee privately and review what is going on. Explain clearly what is expected. Then develop a game plan, defining specific goals to meet at specified intervals.

About WCW Partners

Rick Conlow, CEO/Senior Partner, and Doug Watsabaugh, COO/Senior Partner have helped companies, governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations achieve record-breaking results for more than 20 years as performance improvement experts. Their clients' achievements include double digit improvements in repeat and referral business, triple digit increases in sales, more than 50% reduction in customer complaints, 34 quality and service awards and domination in their respective markets. Rick and Doug are popular motivators and speakers, inspiring audiences with their engaging down-to-earth but down-to-business approach. They have authored more than a dozen books, including *SuperSTAR Customer Service*. This year they will publish the *SuperSTAR Leadership Model*.

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