Motivate for success

You may refer to your staff as a team, but do they really function that way? Members of a successful team collaborate to develop solutions to work challenges, and they depend on each other for information and support in achieving the organization’s goals. They do more than just going through the motions as individuals.

As a supervisor or manager, you are the most powerful factor in building employee motivation and positive morale. You can serve as a motivational coach if you empower team members to 1) make decisions, 2) expand their skills, and 3) handle broader responsibilities. Some of the many other ways to motivate staff include:

- Recognizing and praising individuals for their contributions in front of the team member’s peers and management.
- Holding regular meetings with each of your direct reports—getting to know them and enabling them to be comfortable discussing any subject. This helps accommodate employees’ uniqueness while managing toward high performance.
- Providing feedback respectfully. Most people know when they’ve made a work mistake, so strive to highlight employees’ successes so that mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities.

Effective leaders don’t simply provide a one-time explanation of what they expect from employees. Instead, they talk often with employees about their responsibilities, priorities, challenges and progress. This powerfully supports employee engagement.
Team building tips

When emphasized continuously, team building boosts group synergy and productivity.

- Communicate employee goals and responsibilities clearly. Make sure each team member has a distinct definition of his or her responsibilities—both individually and in relation to group projects and the organization’s mission.
- Delegate problem-solving tasks to your team so that they’re working together on creative solutions.
- Organize occasional team building exercises away from the office setting. Some light-hearted group activity can transfer a positive vibe back into the office, promoting better communication, cooperation and understanding between team members.
- Share as much high-level organizational information as you can with your team, particularly when such information may impact their work.
- Plan team building exercises that are relevant to the team’s current needs.
- Whether it’s an award, a lunch, or some other enjoyable treat, provide the whole group with a reward for their productive work or a successful project outcome. This will help build team spirit and renew employees’ enthusiasm for their jobs.

Course correction in job performance

Specify performance concerns
Don’t delay when an employee’s performance becomes unsatisfactory. Convene a one-on-one meeting to review where performance has slipped compared to past work. Provide specific, objective examples with dates. Emphasize the seriousness of the situation and the potential consequences of not meeting expectations. Maintain a respectful tone with the employee.

Plan for improvement
Jointly agree with the employee on a performance improvement plan based on your guidance and the employee’s input. Specify the desired results. Emphasize that the employee is responsible for resolving the situation. Be prepared to follow through if performance does not improve. Set a date for the next meeting to assess results.

Get good counsel
Consult with your HR division to handle the employee problem in accordance with your organization’s policies. If a personal problem appears to be contributing, don’t try to diagnose it. Instead, offer access to your Magellan program. Explain that the EAP is a confidential resource available at no cost to help address personal problems.
