



Turning People on – Motivation of Staff as a key HR Role

In many companies, work has become a place of disillusionment. Employees start with enthusiasm and creativity, but day after day they feel more and more helpless, as if they don't have any real choices anymore. Employees are overwhelmed, exhausted and bored.

Does this sound familiar?

How do we keep the passion alive in the employment relationship? Deep down, employees are begging to gain a sense of hope and enthusiasm again. In HR, it is part of our role to ensure that passion, hope and enthusiasm are maintained.

If we encourage Managers, writes Caroline Griffiths, Managing Director of Bradfield Consulting Ltd, to take note of the following ten points, they will not only notice attitude shifts, but real changes in behaviour amongst their staff.

1. **WALK THEIR TALK.** Instead of talking about better communication, encourage Managers to start communicating better. By developing open two-way conversations that are energetic and contagious, employees will feel comfortable to speak their minds. Manager must make sure they listen to what is not being said. They should include employees in meetings to get their perspective and make their meetings interesting by surprising employees with a new incentive or a message of appreciation. These ideas show that they are not just the leader, but one who really cares.
2. **BE SUPPORTIVE.** Managers should be able to discuss the weaknesses in the system without blaming individuals. They should look at their team's wish lists and follow-up with their requests, or ask them what they need from management to feel more valued. Employees need to know that their concerns are being heard. They need not only constructive feedback; they also need positive comments. When employees meet deadlines or suggest creative solutions that positively affect the bottom line, Managers should recognize the behaviour immediately. Include their names in a company newsletter, write a personal note or ask to see them in person and tell them how much their work is appreciated.
3. **BE A LEADER WITH VISION.** True leadership requires foresight, integrity and trust from both sides. Leadership liberates employees by giving them inspiration, direction and letting them do the job. Managers should set up periodic reality checks to evaluate the progress of their staff, to make sure they are moving in the right direction. They need to know you are willing to hear about ideas they have - to make the company better than it already is today. Sharing a vision with staff makes them feel in the loop. Many rumors and a lot of back-biting would stop if only leaders would share future goals and visions of the company.



By Bradfield Editorial
Published on Bradfield.co.uk 30/08/2007

4. USE STRAIGHT TALK. Straight talk means being able to communicate without alienation or hurt feelings. Many managers have found straight talk to be very difficult. They cannot communicate criticism or compliments without feeling uncomfortable. Managers and employees need to learn to be direct and truthful. Straight talking can be made easier by thinking about what it is that really needs to be said, writing it down and practicing it. This is where HR can help – by being a sounding board. “So often” says Caroline, I find myself taking through with clients how to handle a tricky situation. So often they need to talk through what to say and then rehearse this with me - I guess I am often in the role of coach and mentor”.

“The down side of not using straight talk”, says Caroline, “is that you can end up destroying someone by not being honest with them. In my early career I once saw an HR Manager become an alcoholic because no one was being honest about his lack of performance. This was twenty years ago, but the memory of what this did to this man’s career still shocks me to this day. If the Company had done some straight talking early on the net result might have been so different from the reality.”

It is important to tell others what they need to hear, not necessarily what they want to hear. Leaders who are able to give constructive feedback have a rare gift. This is an area that some people still feel uncomfortable with, however, it is necessary in order for all managers and their staff to continually improve and grow.

5. BUILD SUPPORTIVE TEAMS. Managers need to build teams within departments, and throughout the entire company, to allow an open discussion of dreams and obstacles. They should encourage staff to help each other when needed. In some small teams, being able to multi-task is an absolute must. Rewarding employees who help others and contribute to the company as a whole is also key. There are many exercises that can help teams to find their strengths and weaknesses. The best are the real live occurrences that cause the team to bond. Such exercises or occurrences can remove barriers and blind spots and move the team forward. The "we versus they" attitude must be eliminated in order to make the team work. We don't need to like each other. We do need to respect each other's differences. The most successful teams are the ones with diverse members. They bring in different ideas and a variety of strengths.

In our team at Bradfield, we enjoy our differences. We are very culturally diverse and we have a female Managing Director. We thrive on our diversity. We value everyone for what they CAN contribute. Not knowing how to do something is regarded not as a failing but as an opportunity for someone else to help out. The bonding that this brings about is staggeringly positive.

6. ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY AND LAUGH AT MISTAKES. When employees aren't afraid to take risks, their creativity will soar. Feeling "in" on things is still a major concern of employees. They have great ideas, yet are afraid to voice them. This is such a waste of possible solutions to key challenges of a company. Front line employees have a different perspective and must feel comfortable to share their ideas. At Bradfield Consulting Ltd, one of our values is learning from mistakes. Blame is not in our vocabulary. “It is too energy wasting” says Caroline “to blame someone



By Bradfield Editorial
Published on Bradfield.co.uk 30/08/2007

for not doing something or making a mistake of they did not mean to. It is much better to encourage the member of staff not to make the same mistake twice! Of course there are times when disciplinary action can not and should not be shied away from. But even the word “discipline” is defined as “training” in the Oxford English Dictionary. “it is not so much about punishment but about the encouragement of the right behaviour or performance level, says Caroline. So many managers do not realise that this is precisely what the procedures are for. They are about correction, certainly, but above all they are about bringing about the right standards. If this can be achieved then everyone is happy the employee, the manager and the team in which the employee is based.

7. EMPOWER EMPLOYEES TO FEEL LIBERATED. Managers and employees need time alone, time to think creatively. Intense and important work requires reflection. Companies that are obsessed with productivity usually have little patience for the quiet time essential for profound creativity. An element of fun lifts morale and increases productivity. At Bradfield we have one member of staff who provides ten minutes of entertainment each day – this may be just an anecdote or similar, but it always brings a smile.

8. HELP EMPLOYEES FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH CHANGE. Managers must learn how to start again and to let go of ideas that may have worked in the past, but are no longer effective today. Reminding the team that status quo is the kiss of death. We need to constantly look for new ways of doing business. The minute that someone says how good you are is the minute you need to improve. Companies that fail start believing in their own hype! Confront today's challenges while simultaneously probing new opportunities. Eat change for breakfast, lunch and dinner!

9. INSIST THAT EMPLOYEES ALWAYS KEEP THE CUSTOMER IN MIND. Every company has a lot of competition. Managers must make sure that their employees know why customers keep signing your contracts. Ask employees "How can we exceed our customers' expectations by knowing their needs, emotions and wants?" Get employees involved with customers. This way employees will be able to get into the customer's shoes and hear what "keeps them up at night." They can take the ideas back to the team and figure out how to go the extra mile to help the customer. An employee with a customer focus will naturally be creative and intuitive.

10. KEEP EMPLOYEES FOCUSED ON THEIR FANS. Have your employees make a list of ten clients or co-workers that are thrilled with them and the way they conduct business. Managers should ask their employees to figure out new ways to service their clients to help them in any way they can. Employees will shape their own future as they build relationships with their fans.

These ten tips will help HR professionals to help the Managers with whom they work improve the motivation of their individual staff members. Making employees feel like they are part of the team and that they can influence the way things are done, will ensure they come to work energized and full of passion. Managers can have such fun being intuitive and creative leaders and it is our role to encourage this.



Bradfield Group

HR Consultancy Solutions

www.bradfield.co.uk
salvatore@bradfield.co.uk
Cambridge T: 01223 264687
London T: 020 7977 9200

By Bradfield Editorial
Published on Bradfield.co.uk 30/08/2007
