



better work, better life



# Motivating employees

Strategies for creating a winning  
work environment.

Engaged employees  
- the heart of every  
successful business.



As the world leader in workforce solutions, Adecco believes that one of the greatest business challenges in today's economy is attracting and retaining top talent. Research shows that companies who recruit and retain a motivated, engaged and responsive workforce are more successful than those who don't.

Employees who feel engaged are more likely to work even harder for the good of the company, because they can see first-hand what their contributions mean to its success.

These employees are more productive, they generate higher-quality results and, thanks to their lower turnover rates, they even save your company the time and money it would take to recruit and train their replacements.

## Motivating employees

### **Don't wait to motivate.**

Employees who are busy and satisfied in their work have a major impact on the growth and success of your company. By the same token, disengaged employees can have a negative impact on your organization's ability to become or remain an industry leader. In fact, experts estimate that the costs of a disengaged workforce run into the trillions of dollars. And, according to a recent Gallup Poll, less than 30 percent of North American workers claim to be fully engaged at work. There's a good chance that at least a few of the remaining 70 percent work for you!

If you need yet another reason an engaged workforce is so important, consider this: with 70 million Baby Boomers set to retire over the next 15 years, many businesses and entire industries are already finding it difficult to attract new talent - especially where specific skill levels are required. Thanks to a shrinking labor pool, the impending worker shortage in many industries has increased the pressure on businesses to offer more than a high salary and competitive benefits.

With compensation packages often very similar across the board, many employees are seeking other non-financial benefits. Opportunities for advancement, a positive, challenging work environment and the ability to see the effects of their daily contributions to the organization are commonly cited reasons for accepting a position.



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Developing talent within your company and grooming employees for advancement to leadership positions is an ideal way for you to prepare for the future. It is often faster and more effective to promote from within your own ranks rather than search for new talent outside your organization - if you have a strong career development plan. Just imagine the reduction in turnover that can result when your employees feel excited about their work and a sense of commitment to you.

### **Know where they stand.**

Determining if employees are engaged is the first step to creating a winning work environment. Typically, employees who work with passion and feel a deep connection to the company are the ones who drive innovation, take more initiative, deliver higher quality work and move the organization forward.

The flip side of the engaged employee is the actively disengaged employee who actually acts out their unhappiness. They are the most detrimental to your organization because they can infect the rest of your team with negative views. This not only slows productivity, it can cause key members of your team to leave in search of new opportunities. Identifying these employees and addressing the cause of their unhappiness is critical. If actively disengaged people are unable or unwilling to reenergize and refocus, it may be necessary to remove

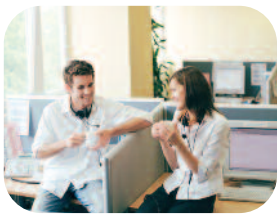
them from the organization for the good of the entire team.

The middle ground between engaged and actively disengaged employees is reserved for the not engaged - essentially, these people are "checked-out." By sleepwalking through their workday, they are only putting time - not energy or passion - into their work. As a result, they can negatively impact productivity and quality of work. Fortunately, those falling into this middle ground usually have the best potential for being reengaged.

### **Recognize what drives employees.**

Once you have a rough idea of which group the majority of your employees fall into, it's time to take action. Creating an environment where employees feel that their contributions are integral to the overall success of the organization can be a challenge, but it is certainly worth the effort. In fact, the top drivers of employee engagement are relatively simple:

- Management's interest in employee well-being
- A clear vision from senior management
- Challenging work
- Decision-making authority and input
- Career advancement opportunities
- A collaborative work environment
- Resources to get the job done



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### **Motivate from the inside out.**

Enthusiasm is something that must come from within each employee. However, what inspires one individual may not work for someone else - your challenge is to create an overall “winning work environment” and encourage employees to believe in it.

- **Set the tone.**

Projecting a positive attitude about your company, your position and life in general can have a significant impact on morale. Your attitude carries over to those you manage, so it's important to begin and end each day on a positive note. Simple compliments, enthusiastic greetings and small talk with members of your team can help keep employees energized.

- **Give them what they want.**

If an employee wants more feedback on their work, or more responsibility, give it to them! Someone who is actively trying to become more involved in the success of the organization should be encouraged to do so. Allow a responsible employee to make more decisions or ask for their input on a business matter. When your best people feel that their talents and contributions are valued, they are more likely to remain motivated.

- **A little praise goes a long way.**

Offer sincere, targeted praise. Most people can sense when a manager is being insincere, or offering general feedback rather than commenting on a specific accomplishment. So, determine the amount of praise each employee requires and dole it out when appropriate. Some, like new or inexperienced workers, typically require more praise than their more seasoned coworkers.

Remember, waiting too long to praise an employee does little to encourage them to repeat their actions. Above all, remember the cardinal rule: praise in public, reprimand in private.

- **Invest in employee recognition programs.**

Company-wide or regional contests offer an additional incentive for employees to strive for success. These are fantastic opportunities for employees to shine and they give you a chance to reward your top people and publicly acknowledge their contributions. When deciding on parameters for a contest, don't forget about employees who work in an area in which their results are not easily quantified - i.e., a non-sales position. Often these people may have a significant impact on your business, yet go a long time without any special rewards for their work.

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Programs that highlight employees' successes are a smart investment for your company. So, be sure to budget for these awards and really make them a reward worth earning- cash bonuses, trips and gift cards are all excellent options. Make it clear to your employees that this is a major program and have the prizes to reflect that. Their efforts to qualify will surely correspond.

- **Keep the lines of communication open.** Schedule regular meetings and forums where employees can provide input and ideas. Setting up a company e-mail address for feed-back and suggestions is also a great way to encourage employees to take a more active role in the company. By offering opportunities for employees to voice their concerns and comment on company and industry issues, you are keeping the lines of communication open and providing them with a view of the big picture. In addition, you are showing them that their input matters - both to you and to the future of your organization.
- **Pay them what they're worth.** Paying your employees a fair salary shows them that you value their contributions to your team. and, while money usually isn't the main source of motivation for employees to

consistently perform well, underpaying members of your team is a sure way to lose them. When someone believes that you don't value their efforts, they will look elsewhere. This increases staff turnover and decreases team morale.

- **Don't skimp on training.** If you want to retain and get the most out of your top people, you have to invest in them. That's why an effective training and development plan is essential for leading companies in today's business environment.

Organizations that have well-established programs to help employees develop their skills and that work to maintain and nurture a diverse and highly-talented workforce have a proven track record of business success and profitability over an extended period of time. Without such a program in place, employees may fall behind in job performance compared with others in their industry that are provided with current training. In addition, they are more likely to become bored, restless and disengaged. This leads to higher turnover and an inability for your company to promote from within - both of which cost more in the long-term than investing in training for the talented staff you already have.



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- **Encourage industry involvement.**

How can you help your people stay in the loop on industry trends? For starters, consider subscribing to an industry publication and having it delivered to the department for your employees to read. Or, take it one step further and encourage your people to join professional organizations. You can even sponsor their membership, as some organizations offer a discount for group membership. Most professional organizations offer workshops or seminars on various topics. These provide more fantastic opportunities for your employees to enhance their skills and keep abreast of industry trends. Encouraging your people to participate in professional organizations and activities will help them stay in tune with workforce developments and, ultimately, benefit your business.

- **Sometimes, simple is best.**

There are plenty of simple, cost-effective ways to connect with your employees. For example, taking time out of the workday for a quick game, or playing some upbeat music allows employees a break from the daily grind and actually may result in higher productivity. Likewise, occasional outings for mini-golf or bowling can be great team-building exercises that further demonstrate your commitment to the overall well-being of your people.

- **Put a positive spin on performance reviews.**

Many managers rely on annual performance reviews, raises and bonus programs to motivate their people. However, a performance review that simply details what an employee did wrong or the areas they need to improve upon - and whether or not they will receive a raise or bonus - typically is not helpful in keeping them inspired and energized. In fact, many experts refer to this as “threat-based management.”

When an employee’s raise or bonus is directly based on the results of a performance review conducted by their manager, they often feel forced to withhold their true feelings rather than risk missing out on their raise or bonus. As a result, performance reviews can be inaccurate and actually contribute to a loss of productivity and interest among workers. So make sure you use this opportunity to measure each employee’s growth and discuss the positive contributions they have made throughout the year.

There are ways to ensure that annual performance reviews are a positive process that contribute to your winning work environment and help keep your employees engaged:

- **Ask open-ended questions.**

A good way to put a positive emphasis on the performance review process is by asking employees to write a self-assessment detailing their impression of the work they

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have done over the past year. Be sure to ask plenty of open-ended questions, as they provide employees with an opportunity to discuss the parts of their job that are the most - and least - rewarding. This can help you determine the areas where they may require assistance or where they are interested in learning more.

- **Focus on the future.**

Asking your people to share their professional goals helps you determine if you are on the same page as your employees. This is a great time to discuss additional responsibilities they might take on, or how you envision their place within the company in the future. Employee goal-setting should be a collaborative effort, and annual performance reviews are a perfect opportunity to open this discussion.

- **Offer constructive criticism.**

Letting employees know exactly what areas of their job you believe they need to improve upon can be crucial to their professional development. After all, if you don't tell them when their performance is lacking in a particular area, how will they know? Offering constructive criticism lets employees know exactly where they stand and provides them with an opportunity to improve their

performance. The key to keeping things positive is to balance the criticism by making it clear that you believe they can improve their performance and that you support their efforts to do so.

Be sure to check in with the employee on a regular basis to determine how they are progressing and to praise their efforts accordingly. When offered in a positive manner, constructive criticism can be a valuable tool that benefits the employee and their manager.

- **Encourage open dialogue.**

After reading the employees' self-assessment and discussing your review of their work, allowing them an opportunity to reply to any of your comments helps to keep the lines of communication open. If your employee mentions something negative about you as a manager, accepting their constructive criticism - and working to improve the issue - is a great way to enhance your managerial skills.

Regardless of how you decide to handle performance reviews, be sure to provide your employees with feedback throughout the year. No one should be surprised about performance issues during their annual review. Checking in with your employees on a regular basis provides plenty of opportunities to deal with issues as they arise rather than allowing them to escalate until review time.

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### **When employees are engaged, success is inevitable.**

The contributions made by engaged employees are integral to the success of your business. Likewise, disengaged employees can have an equally significant impact on your company's performance. That's why it's worth the effort to create a work environment that motivates and inspires your employees to do their best. Ultimately, when your employees are engaged, your company's achievements become their achievements - and success is all but guaranteed.

**To learn more about how Adecco can help you hire the right employees for your company, please contact your local representative at 877.8.adecco or visit [adeccousa.com](http://adeccousa.com).**



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