



Building a Motivated Team

Contents

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What is Required	3
Overview	4
The Importance of the Manager	5
The Pygmalion Principle	8
Using the Appropriate Managerial Style	9
Knowledge and Meaning	10
Responsibility and Status	11
Sense of Belonging	12
Recognition and Feeling Valued	13
Satisfaction and Enjoyment of Work	14
Achievement and Self-Actualisation	15
About Results Plus	16

What is Required?

There are a number of factors that make up a congenial work environment. For instance working conditions, approved salary bands, hours of work and the various rules and regulations.

These factors are necessary in that they enable a person to perform a job to at least minimum standards, but they will not necessarily encourage high performance.

This means, in the organisational context, for people to be able to work at all there needs to be minimum delivery on the following aspects:

- *Corporate policy that is neither too stifling nor too lax*
- *Values that are seen to be fair and reasonable*
- *Administration that runs smoothly and adequately for the work or services that are performed*
- *Resources that are easily accessible and enable people to do the job. This includes training and development*
- *Working conditions that are reasonable, including quantity of work, hours, provision for leave, salary and similar*
- *Relationships with manager and peers*
- *Clear understanding of work contract (i.e. roles and responsibilities of employee and of employer)*

Providing these are the responsibility of the organisation and thus generally, many of these factors are outside the direct control of a manager.

Once these factors (or working needs) have been satisfied, a person can begin to direct attention to the higher level motivators/performance.

An organisation exists for a specific purpose, usually either profit based or a non-monetary concern such as to provide a subsidised service to the community.

The organisation is thus structured and run accordingly, using the best model to achieve this. The executive team monitor global progress towards these aims and usually this is their primary or sole focus.

On the other hand, line management have a dual role, being charged with the responsibility of attaining set corporate outcomes and at the same time, creating optimal conditions for their employees. It is the latter that will enable people to perform to their optimum and this flows on to greater organisational effectiveness and performance.

This makes your role as manager of paramount influence, irrespective of other organisational realities.

It is important to realise that the external environmental conditions are largely set by the organisation and out of the direct control of the manager. The role of the manager is to create optimal conditions for employees within the organisational context.

In simple terms, the role of the organisation is thus to provide:

- *A means to attract the “worker” (premises, salary, hours, working conditions etc)*
- *A means to ensure its efficient running (policy, procedures, checks and controls etc)*

Overview

A congenial work environment will get people working but without self-motivation, they will need to be continually monitored to keep the momentum going.

To stoke the “internal fire” so that the motivation is self-perpetuated rather than externally applied, you must acknowledge and cater to aspirational needs. Only then will you create an environment where people become passionate about their work and begin to take responsibility for their own performance.

This supportive work environment that needs to be created and sustained can be summarised under eight headings:

- *Appropriate Managerial Style*
- *Knowledge and Meaning*
- *Sense of Belonging*
- *Recognition and Feeling Valued*
- *Satisfaction and Enjoyment*
- *Responsibility and Status*
- *Achievement and Self-actualisation*
- *Appropriate compensation / Financial Reward*

A manager wishing to help their people become self-motivated should allow them to fulfill these needs in the context of work.

Your Role as Manager



The Importance of the Manager

“Never forget that spending time with your people; coaching, communicating, directing and developing them, is what you are paid to do.”

From the perspective of your staff, the manager is:

The Embodiment of the Organisation

Your team's experience of their company depends, to a large extent, on you.

The Conduit of Information

It is the manager who has the highest level of clarity amongst the team. If they are absolutely clear about the direction of the organisation, its mission, vision and values, they will be able to effectively translate and link this to the overall purpose of their department. The flow-on to individual staff objectives will then be consistent with overall corporate strategy and the full human resource potential fully realised and optimal results achieved.

The Creator of Understanding and Meaning

There are two aspects to this - providing a positive understanding to each employee of their role and preventing misunderstanding. People need to understand the what, why and how. If their manager creates a special and personal meaning for them, it gives a vitality and sense of purpose to their work. This happens when people feel what they do is worthwhile and see the link to the overall organisational picture.

Corporate life is ever changing and increasingly demanding. Much anguish is caused when people misinterpret the “unwritten code” or latest organisational initiative. And this misunderstanding often leads to dissatisfaction, conflict, lack of motivation and other negative feelings.

The manager, in creating a “haven of understanding”, acts as a buffer between their staff and the rest of the organisation.

An Important Role Model

Often we see a direct correlation between the quality of a manager and the quality of their team's output. This is evident in most companies where there is usually at least one department or team that tends to be more productive and satisfied than others.

This demonstrates the potential power of the manager in making the most of available organisational resources.

Leading by Example

One of the privileges of your position as a manager is that people look to you for guidance and support.

As the most powerful form of influence is by direct demonstration, a critical trait for the manager to embody is acceptance of the responsibility for the well-being of their team. The buck stops with you on this!

The Importance of the Manager

If you are enthusiastic and take a positive approach to your work, then this will automatically filter down and permeate your entire team. Within time your employees will learn that they too need to take responsibility for their work situation rather than look for external factors to blame. There's no telling how much they and you stand to gain!

A code of conduct operating in your department will silently reinforce organisational values and if applied consistently, will give you an opportunity to effectively deal with a lack of compliance. Should this situation arise, counselling can be given and the employee has the option of improving their performance in line with the minimum standards of the department. As there can be no doubt as to what these are, if an employee is unwilling to lift their game, they will get poor performance reviews and eventually be forced to leave your department. This is a powerful tool for performance management.

"Nothing is as infectious as a great attitude!"

Good Managers Do

People, projects, resources... whatever you manage, it is the reason you are in this role and managing should be your priority.

A smart manager realises the goldmine they have amongst their team. Being charged with a number of objectives and responsibilities which is greater than they alone could handle, they wisely invest the necessary time in developing their people to help with the workload.

The manager also realises that the more their staff can do, the more productive and satisfied their people will tend to be. And the less headaches for them!

One of the keys to being a good manager is in being a people oriented person

The Importance of the Manager

Effective Managers:

- ✓ *Acknowledges and values the unique talents, personalities, styles and opinions of their team*
- ✓ *Empowers staff*
- ✓ *Demonstrates what they say*
- ✓ *Explains the “why”, not just the “how”*
- ✓ *Rallies their team. Makes them feel that each person’s role is special and vital in contributing to the overall success of the organisation*
- ✓ *Involves their staff in issues relevant to them*
- ✓ *Clearly sets expectations and the measures that will be used to judge performance*

*In summary, a manager needs to demonstrate, through their words and their actions just one thing, **I care.***

The Pygmalion Principle

“People succeed if someone they admire believes they can.”

What you believe is possible of yourself and others, will become reality.

Otherwise known as the self-fulfilling prophecy, a concept pioneered by sociology professor Robert Merton in 1957, it is as relevant today as it was then.

Much behavioural research has been conducted to support this theory in classrooms and the work situation. In one study, a group of job applicants was tested on their skills relevant to operating machinery.

Their supervisors were told that some of the women had performed extra well on the admission tests. The result was that the supervisors rated the performance of the “bright” workers higher than the rest, and these so-called “bright” workers themselves performed better than their peers! Yet the supposedly bright women were chosen at random and thus were no different to the others.

The explanation for this lies in our need for achievement and need for self-actualisation.

What is your Expectation?



Using the Appropriate Managerial Style

Using the appropriate style means:

- *Constantly being aware of how your interpersonal style is affecting your people and modifying this as needed. This includes the Pygmalion Principle*
- *The ability to change your style of relating to your staff, based on an understanding of their behavioural and preferred mode of communicating*
- *The right people skills in imparting information, listening, delegating, resolving conflicts, giving feedback and similar*

Knowledge and Meaning

“People look for meaning and a sense of purpose.”

A good manager is like a “buffer”, interpreting organisational life and creating a haven where their staff are not hampered by wider organisational issues.

Ongoing communication is your key tool in creating and sustaining a sense of meaning. This would include; updates on corporate direction, initiatives, policies, progress and other issues of organisational concern.

As a manager, you can help people to create personal meaning in their work life by:

- *Explaining the broader picture and the link to their specific roles, so that they feel a sense of purpose in their activities*
- *Clearly communicating expectations and the measures by which performance will be assessed. This gives staff a focus to direct their energies and activities. Linking these expectations and measures to overall corporate goals enhances motivation, as each employee feels a personal connection to the wider organisation, thus strengthening their personal commitment and sense of responsibility*
- *Explaining the “why’s”. In your privileged position in the organisational hierarchy, you have access to much more information than your staff. You thus become their conduit to what is happening in the organisation. You can help them understand the necessity for certain activities and policies, which will avoid misunderstanding based on lack of information*

Responsibility and Status

Although the degree of influence varies from person to person depending on their psychological makeup, it is important for one's self esteem to be held in high regard by others and therefore people are, at least partially, motivated by their peers.

As a manager, you can provide staff with a means to have responsibility and status by:

- *Trust*
- *Empowerment*
- *Removing some controls*
- *Making staff accountable for their actions and performance*

The strong influence of peer pressure on individual performance is an additional opportunity that a manager can use, as is status as a reward for performance

Sense of Belonging

Everyone wants to belong and to feel part of the relevant sociological group, whether that be personal, work or social. Further, people want to feel part of a successful organisation, winning team, or group.

To maximise performance, a manager needs to demonstrate genuine commitment to their people.

The manager who makes their staff feel a valuable part of the team, backed up by company resources and their personal support, will be more successful. To do this, communicate your belief in your staff's ability (Pygmalion Principle) and make them feel secure in their roles.

Common understanding is the basis for belonging and ownership. If the manager creates a sense of shared meaning and purpose, then staff can relate to one another and feel personally sympathetic to the objectives of the role, the department, and the organisation overall. People will take more ownership if they are involved in the activities of their peer group and they feel their contribution is valued, so emphasise this wherever possible.

Get Staff Input

It is well documented that people are also more likely to feel ownership of something to which they have actively contributed.

To foster this:

- *Ask for input*
- *Call the team together to make up your departmental or group version of the mission statement, vision, or values*
- *Get each person to take ownership of their job role by asking them to design it, and then work together to set objectives and performance outcomes*

Shared Reward

If you use some form of shared reward or benefit, this encourages everyone to work towards the same outcome. And this shared goal helps to foster a feeling of common understanding and identification.

Recognition and Feeling Valued

“This is one of the most important reasons why people feel inspired to keep delivering high levels of performance and often the least utilised by supervisors and managers.”

People have a longing to feel appreciated and to know that their efforts are well justified.

By and large, how well this is conveyed will depend on your daily management practices.

You can demonstrate how much you value your staff and their contribution by:

- *Celebrating success with a team get together. Use your imagination; a plaque of appreciation, a party, champagne after work, movie tickets, an early mark, letter from the CEO, write-up in the staff magazine, badge, photo and name on display in a public place, gift or similar*
- *Recognising achievement and effort in front of the peer group*

Other ways to demonstrate you value staff:

- *Ask for and thank them for their input*
- *Be sympathetic to personal needs, such as allowing flexibility with work hours, where appropriate*
- *Provide opportunities for professional and personal development (training, attendance at conferences, special courses etc)*

The most powerful combination is continuous, informal activity on the manager's part, supplemented by a formal recognition and reward program on a needs basis. This “perks” things up, to prevent any staleness and is an exciting addition to daily routine.

Satisfaction and Enjoyment of Work

“It is a natural instinct to seek that which is pleasing and avoid that which is displeasing.”

People who enjoy their work do better than those that don't. Work satisfaction and enjoyment is a very subjective measure and will depend on individual make-up and the nature of the work itself.

Work can fulfil many roles in addition to a financial aspect. It may provide challenge, social contact, a sense of purpose, achievement or ego gratification; depending on the person, the nature of the job and what they find personally appealing.

A manager can create an atmosphere where work is a positive experience by leveraging off the main aspects that the group as a whole seeks from work. For instance, sales people will be motivated by reaching target, whilst an inbound customer service team is motivated by social aspects; meeting customers, making personal contacts and having a relaxed, fun office atmosphere.

To keep work pressure at a productive and reasonable level, it is particularly important to provide stress diffusion at times of added demand. For those in occupations with continuous pressure, a regular stress diffuser should be incorporated into the regular routine.

This can be achieved by numerous group activities; theme days, social events, shared lunches, group target setting, special 'Einstein' or 'spit the dummy' rewards etc. Use your imagination and get the team involved in inventing these.

It is important to provide the right mix between tasks that are easy to do and those that are a stretch for the employee, to foster their continuous development. The most appropriate mix will be determined by the employee and scope offered by the job.

For those with narrow job confines, you can circumnavigate this by giving staff supplemental duties such as chairing a meeting, reporting on an initiative or working on a special project. If you rotate job responsibilities, even for a small period of time, you will add job enrichment to a repetitive limited job, and increase the value obtained from work.

Achievement and Self-Actualisation

This is one of the higher, more 'noble' motivators.

For a minority of people, this need is fulfilled solely through work, whilst for others this is met solely by activities outside of work. A greater percentage fall between these two extremes which creates an opportunity for a manager to help "receptive" employees fulfil a proportion of their self-actualising need through work. This results in a greater commitment to work.

To create an environment where staff can grow, progress through the organisation, and achieve specific goals, adopt one or more of the following ideas:

- *Actively encourage staff to pursue career objectives, supporting them with training and development*
- *Use coaching and mentoring to boost staff confidence and belief in their own ability*
- *Put learning on the organisational agenda by encouraging staff to actively share knowledge with each other*
- *Give staff special projects to help them develop additional skills*
- *If possible, provide a career path and opportunities to progress through the organisation*
- *Regularly involve your staff in developmental activities such as; brainstorming, identifying trends, putting forward recommendations, and decision making, both on a collective and individual basis*

About Results Plus

“Our mission is to research, develop and implement performance improvement programs to help organisations achieve improved results and reach specific outcomes. We value lasting relationships with our clients, built on trust and a shared vision of seeking opportunities for continuous improvements.”

Results Plus Pty Ltd was established in 1989 by Harry Coomans, Neil Southwell and Steve Dunne.

With a unique blend of specialist consulting, creative and communication skills between the three partners, Results Plus has developed considerable expertise in the design, implementation and management of programs which have helped organisations across a wide industry spectrum achieve increased performance.

Our current clients include high profile multinationals, and working with these companies over the years has given us considerable experience with franchised organisations and businesses with large distribution channels ... valuable experience that we can offer you.

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