

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR EMPLOYEES

The secret to unlocking your staff's full potential has less to do with money and is more about creating an office culture people enjoy being part of.

Employee performance is not about offering the highest pay. People are not exclusively motivated by the size of their pay cheques says PAG. There is a complex set of physiological and psychological needs that have to be met. Companies that understand this concept and pay attention to how satisfied their employees are, are normally the leaders in their respective sector or industry.

Recent surveys among work seekers confirm that compensation is lower down the list than other factors like growth and development, working environment and a healthy work-life balance. In addition, leading recruitment providers as well as others who study workplace trends are unanimous in their conviction that the office culture plays an essential role in the motivation and well-being of the company's workforce.

To understand motivation, you need to look at psychologist Abraham Maslow's theory of human motivation and his hierarchy of needs. This hierarchy is depicted as a pyramid with the more primitive, physiological needs (food, security, esteem, belonging) at the bottom and the psychological, growth needs (development and self-actualisation) at the top. The model says you cannot satisfy a higher-order need without first meeting the lower-order ones. In other words, you cannot expect an employee to work at their best when they feel unsure of their value or their role in the company or when they are sick or concerned about car or house payments.

So how do you go about getting the most out of your employees? PAG offers the following advice:

Instill an active and effective corporate culture. Make your company's vision your employee's mission. Start by inspiring a personal passion about your company's goals and objectives. Invite them to not only know your mission, but to own it. Generate enthusiasm about your reason for being and create excitement about your operating plans and practices. These actions create a sense of ownership and dedication. They help staff members feel positive about what they do and why they do it.

Reward performance. Implement performance reward programmes linked to targets, complete with merit certificates, employee of the month photos and even cash to reward achievers. However, you don't have to wait for a formal award ceremony to recognise good performance: a simple 'thank-you' can go a long way.

Maintain a healthy work environment. Ensure the office environment is motivational and inspiring. At the very least, the furniture and equipment should be in good order. Make sure your people have the

business tools they need to do the job properly: make it easier for them to reward you with good performance. Brighten the office environment: make it a pleasant place to work. The use of certain colours in a work environment has been shown to promote positive thinking and behaviour.

Initiate a wellness programme. A properly managed wellness programme can go a long way to satisfy Maslow's lower order needs, allowing your employees to focus on self-actualisation. If you are unable to implement such a programme, the least you can do is source articles on debt or stress management for your employees.