Ascencia Group

Unleashing Tomorrow's Leaders, Today

Looking for Ways to Grow and Develop

Having a motivational climate begins to build the foundation for maximizing the talents and abilities of the people on your team.

People who are motivated, maintain a positive attitude toward the organization and their role in it. They are enthusiastic about their work, and look for opportunities to grow and develop. Self-motivated people want to grow in personal effectiveness, in career standing, and in work productivity. The most effective impact a leader can make on the bottom line – the place where all productive effort is eventually evaluated – comes through helping team members develop and utilize more of their full potential.

People grow personally in a climate conducive to personal and professional development, and performance is maximized through intelligent supportive leadership. Discovering your team's best qualities, and growth areas, can be a complicated process where talents and abilities are often unrecognized. Develop a variety of techniques for discovering individual strengths and areas of growth.

- **Tests.** Some qualities can be measured by tests, but others can be discovered only in practice. It is fairly easy to test objective knowledge and skills, but much more difficult to test such intangibles as attitudes, judgment, and motivation. Tests are valuable in identifying individuals with the foundation or training needed as a starting place for development of the special skills required by the organization. Tests, however, must be clearly designed to produce specific information, and they must be given and interpreted by a qualified administrator.
- **Interviews.** An employment interview is just the first of many possible interviews throughout the employment relationship. Asking questions about job experience is an excellent tool for discovering what a person does best and enjoys most, as well as what new skills that individual might be able to learn. *Periodic performance reviews and mentorship conversations* are excellent opportunities for finding out more about people, inquiring about their desire for advancement, and hearing their ideas. Reviews indicate the direction of the team member's personal development. Informed, generous listening is the key to learning about people. Interviews may range from a few odd minutes standing in the hallway to a structured meeting discussing a current project.
- **Observations.** The most accurate tool for discovering the true qualities of people is observation. Watch what people choose to do first, which items are always completed on time, and which ones are always late. Notice what causes one person's eyes to light up with interest while others groan

audibly. See what people do with pride and care, and notice which projects are thrown hurriedly together. Observe personal interactions to identify natural leaders.

Using each person's leadership potential may call for some reorganization. It may demand reshuffling duties, areas of authority, and accountability. Some individuals will initially dislike the changes that trickle throughout the organizational structure when such realignment takes place, but the final result is profit – profit through more productive people, through systems that operate more smoothly, and through bottom-line impact.

Plan for Growth and Renewal

Even though a new team member has been selected and initial orientation provided, the task of training has just begun. People – like their attitudes, skills, and interests – are never static. They either grow and develop, or stagnate and deteriorate. A person who is productive today will be producing substandard work five years from now, unless regular and continuous learning takes place. This is true for people at every level of the organization.

As a leader of a learning organization, you have the responsibility to provide adequate training for continuous improvement in these areas:

- **Knowledge and skills.** Every field is evolving. New methods, ideologies, and approaches are being developed daily. Be sure training addresses new ideas, processes, systems, knowledge, and skills.
- **Personal effectiveness.** Time management, communication, motivation, delegation, and goal setting are personal effectiveness skills that can be sharpened by appropriate training and coaching.

Well-trained, knowledgeable people are always available for important tasks, and morale remains high because people know they are appreciated and considered valuable to the organization. Ultimately, individuals become more productive – personally and as a group.

Develop a Motivation Plan

Since motivation depends on individual needs and is developed internally, any effort you make to encourage the development of individual motivation must be done on an individual basis.

How well do you know the people you count on to get the work done? Could you read the list of names and say with certainty what each person needs to be better satisfied on the job? Resist the temptation to say, "They all want a raise." To be self-motivated, people must feel worthwhile and productive. A raise is not a motivator when it is awarded merely because the employee has managed to stay on the payroll for another year. Such a raise is seen as a function of the passing of time.

Use some of these techniques to encourage the development of self-motivation in employees who have a need to feel productive:

- Delegate a task, clearly stating your expectations and confidence that the individual can successfully accept and succeed at this new responsibility.
- Provide context, making sure people understand *why* the task or project is important. Explain their role and *purpose* in the bigger picture of the making the organization successful.
- Take note of specific actions and accomplishments that demonstrate initiative, and express your appreciation for those actions personally to individuals.
- Find ways to let the rest of the team know how the team is doing, and who is doing a great job; post the team accomplishments and performance indicators on a departmental notice board.

- Make it a point to speak personally to those who have been absent as a result of illness or vacation. Tell them how glad you are to see them back and how their presence contributes value to you, and the organization.
- Ask team members for their suggestions about how to solve problems that arise. Even though you cannot use all suggestions, you communicate respect when you ask for suggestions ***and seriously consider them***. Always remembering to give feedback!
- Learn about the families of your team members. Compliment them on the personal achievements of their family, or inquire about the health of a family member who has been ill.

Use visual reminders and acknowledgement of success to build pride and cooperation among the members of the team. Track and monitor performance, and display the success being achieved. For example, display how many days the team has met or exceeded the production quota; or how the team is exceeding the equipment availability targets. Whatever the goal is, a way to track progress can be devised which will encourage the development of self-motivation.