



January 2010

Alpha Business Coaching Newsletter

"Motivating Employees"

Dear Small Business Owner:

As we think about approaching this New Year with a fresh start, this newsletter will focus on caring for the biggest asset in our business. What might that be, you ask? Our employees, of course.

While we have equipment, tools, electronics, and machines that support our businesses, these are simple to maintain compared to our people. Leading our people to be successful and feel successful is one of the most critical and most difficult things to accomplish.

So, how do we get our employees engaged to make the business successful? One might quickly say "just set goals and make them measurable." This has often become the mantra of business leaders-"what's measured improves." While this is part of motivation, I have seen some corporate goals actually become de-energizing to staff. If employees think their hard work will just increase profit and help the boss make the payment on their Mercedes, which will not be motivating for them!

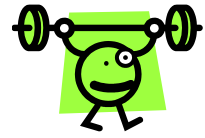
Companies need to set individual goals that will be personally motivating to employees, as well as contribute to the larger company goals. Here are some better ways to set personal goals:

- 1. Provide choices not demands.** A basic tenet of human nature is that when we choose to do something, we have more energy for it. When we are forced into something, our energy is likely to flatten and decline. This difference is shown in the attitude of coming to work asking "what do I have to get done today?" vs "how can I help today?" or "what can I create today?" This is the difference between good enough and world class companies. Give your employees room to set some of their own measurements that they're driven to hit.



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2. **Match people's strengths.** Setting goals that focus on types of work and tasks that people like to do is energizing. We are more and more realizing that playing to people's strengths creates more inner satisfaction on the job. People will always put off tasks they hate to do. Why fight that fight? Generally, have them focus on what they love to do.



3. **Use inside-out driven motivators.** Intrinsic motivators (those that come from within us) are more apt to keep employees happy. If they feel a sense of achievement, appreciation from the boss, clarity on their purpose at work and satisfaction on-the-job, they will give more of their energies to the job. Help them find goals that can contribute to their well-being, not just the company's.



4. **Provide experiences not just commodities.** In general, we're a society that has our basic needs met, so we're often looking for new experiences. If all you provide is a paycheck, your people may look for an employer who will provide more of a team experience, a learning experience, or an ownership experience.



You've probably heard about setting Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAG's) in a company. But if those BHAG's make employees roll their eyes instead of roll up their sleeves to get to work, they are counter-productive. Use the above tips to set goals that will be more personally motivating to your employees and you'll see the bottom-line will also benefit.

If you need some help getting this done in your company, this is where we shine.

Sincerely,

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