**Motivating employees**

Motivation is important for both employees and employers. If your workers are not engaged and motivated, then there will be less productivity and this can cost you more money as a business owner. It can be a real challenge motivating those who have no desire to work and sometimes its just a matter of finding the right technique that appeals to your staff. There are many reasons why people become unmotivated at work and disinterested in what they are doing. Some of these reasons could be :

* They don’t like the company they work for
* There is no trust between staff and managers
* Bad management
* No long term or short term goals to work towards
* Boredom
* No sense of purpose
* No recognition
* Too many rules and regulations (no feeling of freedom)
* Poor work culture
* No support

Good management should take the time to get to know their employees and to find creative ways to motivate them.

**Motivational theories**

 There are many theories around the topic of motivation. These are a great starting point for finding a way to motivate and encourage your workers. The most important fact is that you find a way that suits your business model and most of all, suits your budget.

It can be said that the following 3 motives can improve employees motivation. They are :

**Play**

The best productivity comes from staff who love what they do. If you truly love your work, then you will enjoy it. Play is about learning and being curious about new and exciting way of doing something. If you are solving problems in your job, this will keep you motivated.

**Purpose**

People have a purpose when they have a connection to what thy do. When you value your work and you can identify with it, then you are more likely to be more engaged.

**Potential**

This happens when someone sees the full potential of the possibilities of their job. This si when the time and effort that you put into your work, will eventually lead to something bigger like a promotion, bonus etc.

The following 3 motives are connected with a reduced work performance and unmotivated staff these are :

**Emotional pressure**

This is when as an employee you re only working due to an emotional factor. This could be because you are only doing it to please someone, or you have been pressured into doing something you don’t agree with. Employers can also sometimes use emotional tactics to get you to be part of something you don’t feel connected to in a professional context.

**Economic pressure**

This is when you are forced to work due to an external pressure. This could be financial reasons, family reasons. The main reason you are working is to gain a reward, not because you love what you do. This is when people take on a job for the sake of having a job.

 **Inertia**

This is the worst factor for unmotivated staff. This is when a staff member has no connection to their work and their identity that they wonder why they are working. Its when someone is on auto pilot with work, when they are no longer challenged nor motivated to do their very best.

**Maslow’s hierarchy of needs**

The theory of hierarchy of needs is based on the concept that humans all have basic needs and once a need is met they will move on to the next need until all have been met. In most cases a person will; not move on to the next need until they are satisfied with the first need. These needs start at the basic level of needs such as water, food and air (which all employees will have) and will move up a scale to include other needs such as self esteem. These needs are a great tool for motivation.

**The hierarchy of needs**

**Physiological needs**

This refers to basic needs such as food, water and air. Every person employed will have this need. It is the most basic of all human needs.

**Safety and security**

This is the sense of feeling safe both at home and at work. As an employer you can ensure that you have a good security policy and that your workers feel safe. This hierarchy also refers to workers feeling safe from work place bullying and other factors such as job security.

**Social affiliation and belonging**

 This is the feeling of the need to be social. It also refers to having a sense of belonging at work and being a part of a team working towards a common goal. Employers can implement programs such as team building days or social events where workers can mix with others in a less formal setting.

**Self esteem needs**

This is when you feel good about yourself. Its about having s life that is meaningful and has a purpose. At work this translates to ensuring that a job that you create as an employer is meaningful and has reasoning behind it.

 **Self-actualization**

This is when people reach a good level of well being. As an employer you can ensure that a person is in the right position that suits their abilities. You can also give recognition to workers when they do an good job.

 **Herzberg two factor theory**

This theory is one of the most straight forward and practical methods. It is based around the concept of those who are satisfiers and those who are dissatisfiers. Satisfiers are those who are motivated by achievement, advancement and recognition at work. Dissatisfiers on the other hand are more concerned with aesthetics of the work environment, working conditions and pay scales. As an employer you should ensure that your work environment has a mix of both activities that opportunities that will appeal to both types of workers.

Motivation is the key to success and the key to getting your staff to be more productive. Sometimes its not so clear cut how to motivate staff without knowing what’s bothering them. Its important that management is transparent in their communication. IF a manager is transparent, there is a degree of respect between employees and employers and if there is respect, then there is more change a person is going to be more motivated to work to their full potential. If your employees feel like they are being trusted and included, then they will perform better.

Being positive and upbeat as a manager is also a great way to motivate your staff. If you are happy to be at work, then this is going to set a great example to your staff. By radiating positivity and being upbeat you are building a positive workplace culture. By working in a fun environment , staff feel a sense of belonging. Its important to ensure that its not all fun, that there is also a high level of productive work being done as well.

Many employees after a while feel as if there is no sense of purpose at work. They feel that they are working and not progressing or being valued for what they are doing. IF you give them a sense of purpose you are encouraging them to work harder and smarter. When your workers have a reason for being at work besides wages, you will find that they will be more motivated and more positive about their job.

Researching what your employees think about their work place can help you understand what makes them tick. Spend time doing performance appraisals with staff. Find out what they like or dislike about work. Send out a staff satisfaction survey each year and use the results to help you plan activities that will motivate and encourage your staff. By appealing to what they like and fixing what they don’t like, you are providing them with a positive and productive work environment.

By taking the time to survey and get feedback from your employees you can then use this data to design a reward system. It’s a great idea to give your staff a goal, both short term and long term to work towards. This can be in the form of key performance indicators (referred to as KPI) or incentives such as wage bonuses or prizes. It is a proven fact that if a person has a goal to work towards they will be more motivated and more engaged in their work.

While its fine to motivate a team of staff, you also need to motivate individuals. By investing time to motivate each person, you can ensure that everyone in a team is working towards a common goal. By taking the time to individualise your strategy, this will bring each person together. This will ensure that each person has a clear understanding on how they can befit not only the team abut also themselves. People are more likely to be motivated if they know the outcome is going to benefit them as well as their team.

**Rules, polices and motivation**

 Rules and polices are a part of all work places. They set out the beliefs and values of a business , they are also designed to provide direction for staff. The way in which you design, update and implementing these rules and polices can have a huge impact on the motivation of your staff. By having theses in place you are creating an environment that is fair and consistent and ensures all are treated the same.

While rules and polices are good tool for consistency, at the same time they can be restrictive. For best results , only have polies and rules in place that are essential to the work environment or ones that are required by law. Don’t over do the rules and polices as this could make staff feel trapped and unmotivated. The last thing you need is a high turn over of staff because of the feeling of being trapped and no freedom.

When it comes to writing polices and procedures for your business, it’s a great idea to involve your staff. This way they will be more meaningful and staff will feel like they have a sense of purpose. Employees can help you identify values and also advise you on what they feel should be included in the professional code of conduct. By seeking feedback and consulting with staff, you are ensuring everyone is working towards a common goal and is motivated about working for your company. Don’t forget people like to work for an employer that is well organised and fair.

**Coaching your staff**

Coaching or mentoring yours staff is a great way to motivate and encourage your staff to be the best they can be. Get your staff engaged and thinking about training and further education. IF staff feel that they are being valued and respected, they are more likely to be more motivated to perform well. Give your staff a chance to make decisions and never punish staff for wrong choices, instead guide them and coach them to be the best they can be.

When a staff member makes a decision about their future that will improve their work performance. Motivate staff to suggest improvements and education opportunities that will benefit not only themselves but also the work environment. When a staff member makes a good decision, reward them and recognise their achievements. The most important factor is support. That you as a manager support your staff and encourage them.

**Work culture**

The work environment is very important for motivation. If a staff member feels comfortable, they are more likely to be motivated. When staff are recognised for their work , they are more likely to be motivated and work harder. IF work is fun, staff are more likely to stay. Office completions or social activities encourage staff to have a good work life balance. Don’t over work your staff, understand that they have a life outside of work.

Flexible working arrangements can help with staff motivation. Many work places are offering their staff options from working from home to being able to purchase extra annual leave. Some work place even have a bring your pet to work day or a pot luck lunch day. All these incentives help to promote a fun and inclusive work environment Sometimes thinking outside the box can result in a more happier work place and more motivated staff.