

Motivating Employees to Change Behavior

As a leader and manager, one of your primary responsibilities is to get your employees to produce desirable results through specific behaviors. To do this, many times you have to get them to actually change their behavior patterns. The key principle to understand in changing employees' behavior is that you can't change it for them; they must change it themselves. With that principle in mind, the following is how to motivate employees to change their behavior:

I. Identify the Desired Behavior You Want the Employee to Have

To help you identify the desired behavior, apply these principles:

- A. Behavior is something the employee does. Attitudes and feelings aren't behavior.
- B. The outcome or result of the behavior must be positive and help you and the employee reach your goals. The behavior must also be meaningful to the employee.
- C. The behavior must be specific and easy to understand. For example, scheduling interviews, closing sales, calculating cash receipts, etc.
- D. The behavior must be easy to measure accurately.

II. Communicate the Behavior You Want and Be Sure the Employee Understands What You Expect in Terms of:

- A. The specific behavior you want.
- B. The benefits of mastering the behavior.
- C. The consequences of not executing the behavior.

III. Keep Score

- A. Score keeping must be seen as helpful and positive.
- B. Accurate score keeping motivates people to do better. Personal biases Of management are removed.

Results are rewarded.
C. Score keeping can make work fun.

IV. Evaluate the Results of Keeping Score

- A. How did the employee do in mastering the behavior?
- B. What went well?
- C. What went wrong? How can it be corrected?

V. Dealing With the Consequences

- A. Reinforce the desired behavior. With reinforcement, the employee will adopt the new behavior. Without it, the past behavior will return.
- B. In the absence of positive and/or negative reinforcement, you will get behavior at a level just above the point of punishment or the minimum acceptable.
- C. When negative behavior is exhibited by an employee:
 1. Give a warning and explain in depth the new behavior you expect.
 2. Give frequent feedback on the spot. Don't wait! Don't store up criticisms.
 3. Be sure the feedback you give is appropriate.

VI. Encourage Positive Productive Behaviors

Form the habit of complimenting Your employees for their accomplishments to reinforce desirable behavior. Even though an inept employee behaves as you want about 80% of the time, most managers tend to reinforce behavior in the opposite ratio. They typically give four reprimands or criticisms for each compliment.

- A. Use intrinsic (internal) rewards as opposed to extrinsic (external) rewards.
- B. Give positive "strokes: for positive behavior quickly and often.

Give strokes honestly and unconditionally. Don't give them and take them away by adding comments such as *"that was great, but I know you can do better."*

- C. Don't penalize the employee you're rewarding by adding work to their jobs unless you're certain they want added responsibilities and duties.

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VII. Evaluate and Adjust

Evaluate the results of the behavior. Did you and the employee succeed in reaching goals? Where do you go from here? In motivating your employees to change their behavior, one of the key criterions is that you and the employee both agree that the behavior needs to be changed and that both know exactly what the desirable behavior is. By having this clear understanding, you're both able to continuously monitor and observe the actual behavior. This allows you to deal with it immediately and make the proper adjustments. What most employees tend to do is "keep the water muddy" by not having this clear understanding with their managers. To effectively help employees change their behavior, clear understanding and accountability is an absolute must.

Use these principles to get the most out of yourself and your people.



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