

How to Motivate your workers

There are some workers who are naturals at being able to keep focused, stay busy and accomplish all that is necessary to get the job done in the allotted timeframe, with little or no prompting. Still, there are others who are not quite on task, take their time to get the job done and need that extra motivation towards accomplishment.

So how do you motivate workers who are a little less than enthusiastic when working for you? First, make this determination: Is this a temporary issue, a recently occurring issue or habitual?

Is this a temporary issue? Your worker has been continuously great at getting to work on time, getting tasks done during their work schedule and now the past two days they seem to have hit a wall. Everyone has those days where we are not on our game. If this continues for any length of time, it is not temporary and you will need to address.

How to handle demotivation if it is temporary: If this is just a temporary issue, ask the worker if they want to talk about what is bothering (de-motivating) them. Listen, let them know you are understanding of their situation, and tell them you hope things will be resolved shortly. Temporary loss of motivation should abate in a few days and letting your worker know you are understanding of their problem will decrease the stress they are going through and hopefully good work habits will resume.

Is this a recently occurring issue that is continuing? Your worker was great when they first started working for you but their motivation seems to have decreased and they are slipping up, coming in late more often or taking longer to perform tasks that they once flew through.

How to handle demotivation if it is recent and continuing: You should never put off talking about a work related issue for any length of time— ignoring a continuing problem will not solve it or make it go away and may serve to allow your worker to think you are okay with their actions. If you have a worker who used to be motivated and seems to have lost that motivation, finding out what has caused this demotivation is key. Ask your worker if you can have a conversation when you both have time. Begin that conversation by letting your worker know how much you appreciate all they do, and let them know how important their work is. Explain how you have noticed their recent lack of enthusiasm or motivation. Be open and honest and ask them to be open and honest as well. Ask if there is a problem you can help with, you might even ask them if you have done anything to cause this. It is important that you listen carefully and don't interrupt as they speak so that you can hear the reason behind their lack of effort. It could be a personal or health issue, or it could be something you are doing. Once you have determined the cause, then you can make a plan to resolve the issue. Again, if you can't determine the cause, you might not be successful in resolving the problem.

Has your worker's lack of motivation been an issue from the start? There are some people who have little sense of urgency to get tasks completed in a timely fashion. Their ambition, motivation and drive is tempered by a "what will be will be", "it will get done eventually" attitude. If you have a worker with this issue, training will be key as will knowing other components that will help increase their productivity. Keep in mind some people just have poor work habits and if you hired someone with poor work habits, it can be very difficult to get them to change those.

How to handle demotivation if it is habitual: If this is an all the time issue, then you will have to start from the beginning and train your worker to instill an urgency to get things accomplished. A time-management task sheet will be a good tool for you to use. Make a list of the tasks they need to accomplish, prioritize them and add a timeframe for them to be completed. This will help keep your worker on task and knowing where they are in the schedule and how much needs to be completed by the end of their shift. Also, they won't have to ask what needs to be done because it will be written down. Communication with your worker will also be key and letting them know that if they don't complete what needs to get done, it will not get done and you will have to deal with those consequences (no clean clothes for you to wear, or dirty dishes left in the sink, or whatever the action left undone will cause).

Remember, some of the best motivators, as proven over years and years of employee management are:

- **Personal motivators:** Find out what it is that gets your worker motivated, happy to work and excited about coming to work. If you do not know, ask them! It could be a variety of things: Money, the satisfaction of being able to help, a good schedule for them, your always smiling face...one never knows what motivates another unless you ask (or they have already told you!)
- **Appreciation:** Say thank you - and mean it! Let your worker know how much you appreciate them and don't be cheap with the praise. Letting someone know what a great job they do goes a long way in keeping people motivated. A hand written thank you card works very well because the effort behind that speaks volumes – I still have hand written thank you cards hanging on my wall from 3 years ago that I read – and they still motivate me to keep on doing a great job!
- **Convey the value and importance of their work:** When a worker understands the importance and value of what they do for you, they are likely to be more motivated to want to do their best. Knowing the benefit of what one does can go a long way in getting someone to think about what they do and be motivated to do better.
- **Please say Please:** Workers will be far more motivated if you treat them with respect and if you ask instead of demand. A good manager can get their workers to perform well because they are respectful and kind, therefore they are respected in return. That old saying "Treat others as you would like them to treat you" still applies today.
- **Change it up:** Sometimes similar routines done all the time can zap motivation, because they become rote and boring. Change it up! Make it challenging and fun. Put a little spin on things to surprise your worker and it doesn't have to be big...it can be something like changing out a routine: I know you usually do the laundry at this time, but maybe you can cook my meal instead (you know they love cooking) and I'll have Joe do the laundry instead. A change in routine keeps the element of surprise and keeps workers guessing from time to time, keeping their interest in looking forward to those differences in routine.