



Motivation, Rewards and Incentives

Too often, in sports, in work, and in life, we try to motivate with trophies and other external rewards. We ignore the consequences. We blind our own people to ambition. We control instead of inspire! And dare I say, that is why it feels like something is amiss in the average workplace. And it is! We are missing the spark of excitement and inspiration that is found wherever people are inspired to pursue excellence and do their best. We must remember that nobody does their best unless that is their purpose!

As leaders it is our duty to be and become excited about the potential of our staff members. I can not think of anything more worthwhile that bringing out the true potential of our people. Most people perform far below their potential most of the time and as managers, we are forever seeking for the right things to say to motivate them! Dare I say that most (if not all) managers suffer from the same frustrations. Jack Welch said ‘that whenever we must accomplish our goals through other, their motivation is our greatest limiting factor. No matter how many ideas we try, it all comes back to people – their ideas, their motivation their passion to win.’ People are capable of far higher motivation and performance levels than we see in the average workplace.

If you truly want to understand motivation, we must seriously consider the full range of situations in which people are highly motivated. Some of these situation are ones in which extreme coercion is applied and people are motivated by the desire to survive, rather that the desire to succeed. The strongest level of motivation comes from within – intrinsic motivation – whether it is based on the desire to succeed or to simply survive.

As the leadership of organizations we also need to understand that the incorrect application of Performance Management Processes can be seen by employees as

threats rather than a motivational and development tool. When Performance appraisals are implemented incorrectly, employees feel that their bosses use their power to withhold opportunities and rewards and on occasion to actively punish them. We must understand that their (employees') understanding of the situation drives their behavior and so our understanding of the situation is really quite irrelevant.

I am of the opinion that work is its own greatest reward when you are pursuing a compelling goal and are able to perform optimally by becoming totally absorbed by your task. It is the responsibility of each leader to ensure that he or she knows exactly what their respective staff members must do – according to their individual Balanced Score Cards – ensure that you know their strengths and capitalize on them in the right way! The story of Alexander Hiam says it all: 'Here at our summer cottage there is a long grassy hillside leading down to a set of long wooden steps leading down to a beach. My daughter could not walk the entire way for many years. But one day one of her older brothers showed me how to avoid the arduous task of carrying her up the hill. He simply said three magically motivating words: "I'll race you" Now it was not longer a boring walk. It was on all-or-nothing challenge, a thrilling gem. (My sons were wise enough to set their pace so she could stay in the game, since it's no longer fun if the challenge is unrealistic.) And when the racing finally grew dull, my daughter became a bird and "flew" up and down that hill with a beach towel fluttering behind her. Our ability to motivate her was limited only by our imagination!'

We are older and wiser than kids on their way home from the beach, however we are still the same people deep inside where our motivations took root and grew. The average dull job is like that long hot walk from the beach back home. The average manager is like that well-meaning parent who keeps carrying, encouraging and threatening in turns to get us to walk up the hill whilst the truly inspiring manager is like the older brothers who turn the trip into a race!

Motivation can be this powerful! Rewards can be achieved successfully and for the right reasons and carefully structured incentive schemes can add value to the overall outcome and **be** the outcome!

Let's bring that same excitement to our jobs and organizations. There is an eager child within each of us waiting to jump up and win the race up the hill!!

Should you consider upgrading your incentive or rewards scheme, or re-look at the important contribution of your Performance Management Processes within your organization, please give us a call. We would gladly assist you in this process.

For further information on the above, or any of our other services, contact Charmaine Reid at 011-9751586 or visit our website: www.talentmanagementsolutions.co.za. We are waiting for your call!