

# Motivating Employees Without Using Money

*how to develop performance and create a climate of motivation*

Many companies that operate fleets are looking for ways to develop personnel performance and create a motivational climate in the workforce. To this end, I felt it would be helpful to outline what has recently been implemented used in large fleets, including those in a city government setting throughout the United States.

Robert Martinez, a graduate student at New York University, has utilized his education and work experience to develop a model for creating a climate of motivation and developing performance in the workplace. What follows is Robert's detailed written plan that he authored.

"My aim is to combine Kegan and Lahey's "Seven Languages for Transformation" along with material from Stephen Covey's "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People". I intend to focus on the fourth habit called "Win/Win" as well as other material. Civil Servants are sometimes stereotyped as lazy and unmotivated. However, in my 23 years as a civil servant, I have met some of the most talented, proactive and motivated employees any organization could have. On the other hand, there is cycling of motivation that goes up and down depending on the environment which is greatly affected by management. In my experience, management often does not know the effect they have on their subordinates and only manages to create a positive work place by chance. My goal is to develop a program that creates a work environment where employees are highly productive, highly motivated and a Win/ Win for all levels of the division and the police department as a whole.

Some recent research has shown that unmotivated staff are more than just lazy staff. They are not proactive and are afraid to make decisions. The following are some remarks that typically reflect these symptoms:

*"The more you work, the more mistakes you make. So don't do anything unless you have to. And even then,*

*do as little as possible"; "We just do our job, play it safe"; We are not paid to make our own judgment"; It is perfectly alright to seek and follow the boss's instructions every time."*

Or, you may have heard these comments that are also indicative of such a mindset :

*"Why bother making suggestions?" or " Let's check how the job was done last time and follow suit."*

Some of the common responses from government workers as to why they are not motivated are: office politics, repetitive, simple tasks all the time, unclear instructions, organizational vision, mission, and values not clearly communicated, vague and contradicting instructions, unproductive meetings, unfairness, lack of information, discouraging responses, tolerance of poor performance, over-control, no recognition of achievements to mention a few. In this recently implemented program I hope we can all find something to help address some of these problems.

Part of the program will focus on empowerment and on a special form of empowerment called delegation. The following quote expresses the idea clearly:

*"Evidence shows that empowered employees are more productive, more satisfied, and more innovative, and that they create higher-quality products and services than un-empowered workforce employees. On the other hand, empowerment means giving up control and letting others make decisions, set goals, accomplish results, and receive rewards. It means that other people will probably get credit for success. "You cannot empower me; you can only create the circumstances in which I can empower myself." (McClelland, 1975).*

Kegan and Lahey's premise that work settings are language communities brings us to a corollary premise: all leaders

are leading language communities.

*"Though every person, in any setting, has some opportunity to influence the nature of the language, leaders have exponentially greater access and opportunity to shape, alter, or ratify the existing language rules. In our view, leaders have no choice in the matter of being language leaders; it just goes with the territory. We have a choice whether to be thoughtful and intentional about this aspect of our leadership, or whether to unthinkingly ratify the existing drift of our community's favored forms. We have the choice to make much of the opportunity, or little. We have the choice to be responsible or not for the meaning of our leadership as it affects our language community. The only question is what kind of language leaders we will be."* (Kegan, 8).

Below are two quotes to keep in mind when designing the new program:

*"You cannot motivate someone, all you can do is provide a motivating environment and players will motivate themselves"* (NBA coach Phil Jackson, 2000).

*"There is sometimes a tendency for supervisors to attribute the cause of poor performance to low motivation"* (Bitter & Gardner, 1995).

Various organizational scholars (e.g. Gerhart, 2003; Steers, Porter & Bigley, 1996; Vroom, 1964) have summarized the determinants of task performance as follows:

*Performance = Ability x motivation (Effort)*

In this formula:

Ability = Aptitude x Training x Resources

Motivation = Desire x Commitment

Aptitude refers to the native skills and abilities a person brings to a job. Most of our inherent abilities can be enhanced by education and training. Motivation represents an employee's desire and commitment to perform and is manifested in job-related effort. Areas that will need to be addressed in this program are supply of resources, training, and redesign of the current

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evaluation program to motivate the employees.

Beginning such a program starts with focusing on motivation and establishing clear performance expectations. Each supervisor and their assigned personnel must be asked to establish their own set of goals and create a mission statement that will be measurable and achievable.

*"Taken together, they build a mental machine. If you value this machine, you will want to maintain it and upgrade it"*

*"Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; but directly involve me, and I'll make it my own"* (Kegan & Lahey)

The hope is to have all employees buy into the goals and mission statements that they develop. Within 60 days of the start of this program, the manager in charge should personally visit each work location to provide feedback opportunities for clarifying expectations; adjust goal difficulty, and gain recognition and trust. The manager's job is to support the work environment, reward, and discipline as well as mentor when able. The more feedback individuals receive about how well their jobs are being performed, the more knowledge of the results they have.

*"We may know in our hearts that what we do matters, but it is certainly confirming to hear the words from others. Perhaps more important, hearing that our work is valued by others confirms for us that we matter as a person. One way we experience that what we are doing at work is valuable is by hearing regularly from others how they value what we do"* (Kegan & Lahey).

In civil service cash incentives are not readily available but, as Abraham Maslow (1970) wrote

*"Human scientific needs begin with physiological, followed by safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization."*

Clay Alderfer (1977) proposed a more hierarchical model of existence, relatedness, and growth. Cash might help to motivate people, but there is more to life than just money. Real motivation is not for sale – buying allegiance is not an effective long-term motivational strategy.

Getting people to buy in and believe that this should be and could be and a Win/ Win program will most likely differ at each and every work location. Some will follow, and others may take on a leadership role as it progresses.

*"Whether you are the president of the company or the janitor, the moment you step from independence into interdependence in any capacity, you step into a leadership role" (Covey)*

The goal of Win/ Win is to make all parties feel good about the decision and feel committed to the action plan. Covey asserts that the basic task of leadership is to increase the standard of living and the quality of life for all stakeholders. In Win/Win, people evaluate themselves, using the criteria that they themselves helped to create up front. The reward system must also be in-line with established goals and values. The character of a motivated staff is reflected through their actions. Some of the traits or characteristics that a motivated staff would exhibit include: Energetic; full of initiative; committed to serving the work place; want to think for themselves; appreciate recognition and challenges; seek opportunities to improve their capabilities; take proactive and positive actions to solve problems; believe that they can contribute and make a difference and set their own challenging and achievable work targets.

Robert Martinez's plan starts with giving the whole division time every two weeks to sit down and discuss and develop a set of goals and a mission statement for their work location. They must also come up with a plan to evaluate if they are meeting their goals. I hope to see a first draft of their goals and mission statement within 60 days. The goals and mission statement will not be written in stone and should be updated and change annually or as needed to keep all employees on the same course as the mission and goals of the entire division. Within the goals, the needs of both the employees and the police department must be addressed. Specific areas that I want them to address are safety, quality, cleanliness, improvements, professionalism, and anything else that they feel is important to them and the department. Some of the free time is just for the worker to interact and maybe have a barbecue and share family or personal stories. My goal is to build morale and have most of the employees buy into the new programs. All employees will be reminded that their job is crucial for the men and woman in the government fleet workplace. The department would not be able to protect the citizens of the city properly without the services they supply.

Before any of this can start I must first get all my supervisors to buy into this new program. I must also do some leadership training in the areas of Emotional Intelligence and develop an understanding of how important good two



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way communication is.

*"Being direct, specific, and non-attributive are three features that make the language of ongoing regard more powerful and less subject to formulaic insincerity" (Kegan & Lahey).*

My supervisors need to understand that their assumptions are not always accurate or valid. The "I'm right" assumption is one of the most popular among people in leadership positions.

Part Two of this program is to redevelop the current evaluation program. The current

program was a set of tasks and standards for each member of the division. These tasks and standards are somewhat basic and neither the supervisor nor employee has had any input as to what is rated. The whole program is seen as an exercise and a chore to do every September with no real benefit for anybody. Evaluations are only reviewed when someone is getting promoted. Some supervisors give all the employees the same rating and this only serves to help the lowest performers. Proactive workers, after a few years of seeing this, start to slow down and feel "why should I work harder when nobody cares or recognizes good work." There is an open box on the front of the evaluation form that supervisors can write comments and list the number of sick days used.

In my plan I am going to have all my supervisors trained in how important it is to give true honest evaluations. The goal is to foster a work environment in which people are empowered and motivated to contribute to continuous learning, performance improvement and mission accomplishment while ensuring accountability and fairness for all employees. This is most likely going to cause some hard feelings among the low performers when they receive the rating they should have been getting in previous years. When I visit the shops and offices over the next few months I am going to try to make them understand that the evaluation program will be a departure from the status quo. No longer

will the evaluation program be a once a year program. Throughout the year there will be a periodic feedback and coaching features of performance and management to allow parties to continuously communicate and document the results of performance discussions and monitor how well the stated goals and objectives are being met. If this continuous communication occurs throughout the rating period then there are no surprises when the formal performance appraisal is done. Recognition can be provided and noted when objectives are met, are progressing as planned, and when performance exceeds expectations. Areas needing improvement are identified and provide the basis for individual development plans.

"This project will be a challenge, but I have the courage to try it" Bob stressed as he discussed his plan further.

During the implementation of the program, I will be listening to feedback from all levels of the division. Parts of my program I started over a year ago and the results have been well worth the effort. About a year ago I formed a mechanical personnel focus group that identifies mechanical problems and ways to improve the division.

This past year they identified over thirty problems with vehicles as well as areas in which conditions needed to be improved. In some cases within days of the group's meeting, action was taken and the condition was corrected. Another

part of this new culture was making me approachable and everybody feels welcome to make an appointment to meet with me. The program is very complex and I realized that not all will be able to be achieved, but it will give me and my model staff some direction. Listed below are the bullets that will be handed out for phase two of the program. I will also be having monthly(follow-up) training for all levels of supervision.

At least once a week, I will read my mission statement and make adjustments to try to keep myself on course. I am grateful that I am able to utilize some of the material from my graduate course work to create a better environment for the work force, whether it be in a city government environment, a corporation, or any business.

Stephen R. Covey." The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People"

Robert Kegan, Lisa Laskow Lahey. "How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work"

Abraham Maslow. (1970)" Motivation and Personality "

Goleman (1998) "Working with Emotional Intelligence "

Bitter and Gardner (1995) "A mid - range theory of the leader / member attribution process in professional services organizations"

Whetten and Cameron." Developing Management Skills"

Clay Alderfer (1977) "Humanizing Organizational Behavior"

ROBERT MARTINEZ

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## Shop/Office Goals & Mission Development

- Redevelop mission, vision, goals and objectives
- Management support and model performance-based behavior.
- Open lines of Communication between Supervisor and Subordinates
- Bi-weekly time allocated for the development of the programs
- Individual and organizational competencies needed to accomplish the mission and achieve organizational goals are identified and defined.
- Job duties and responsibilities are aligned with the mission and goals
- Employees know how they contribute to organizational success
- Supervisors and employees jointly develop employee performance expectations that are linked to the department's mission and strategic goals
- Performance measures are developed and information system capture performance data
- Training is available for all levels of personnel
- Performance is formally evaluated at least annually
- Exceptional performance is recognized and rewarded
- Poor performance is immediately addressed and remedial efforts are initiated
- Supply the resources needed to support programs
- Develop feedback systems for evaluating the programs