



Motivating Employees to Achieve the Strategic Plan

Most motivational theorists state that one person cannot motivate another. Motivation is internal. There has to truly be an internal need to accomplish an objective. While this may be true, leaders can, by communicating effectively, create a culture that will inspire others to take action.

The days of authoritarian power oriented and fear driven leadership are over. Employees just won't put up with it. They will simply quit because in today's economy they can find other work. Leaders must fully engage employees in their vision and create the conditions where they are truly self-motivated; there is an internal desire to take action.

There are some simple yet powerful approaches that a leader can take that will inspire and motivate employees to achieve. Exceptional Leaders:

- Declare the Future
- Show Up
- Encourage Employees
- Express Appreciation
- Celebrate Successes

Exceptional Leaders Declare the Future

Our Founding Fathers "declared" our independence. Exceptional Leaders know that to create the future they want, they must declare it. This then creates the space, energy and enthusiasm for them and for others to make it a reality.

Bill Gates's declaration was "a computer on every desk running Microsoft software". That has pretty much been realized and now Microsoft is struggling to find the next declaration that will propel them into the future.

Google's mission "is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful." This declaration certainly seems to be working for them.

A few decades ago, Jimmy Carter declared that our country was in a malaise and got into big trouble for it. Negative declarations can create negative outcomes.

Reagan came along and made positive declarations about American's future and was re-elected.

Making declarations, even with a shorter term perspective, can be powerful. Examples are: "we will increase sales by 20% this next year" and "we will launch this product by March 1st."

Encouraging employees also means giving them a stake in the outcome. Leaders must communicate the personal payoffs for employees to take action. This may include financial rewards and/or personal recognition.

Strategic plans are declarations of the future. They should be used to motivate employees to create a future that supports them and the organization.

Exceptional Leaders Show Up

For employees to be fully engaged and committed, leaders have to be engaged with employees. This means showing up.

Exceptional Leaders are visible and interested in how the people in the organization are doing. They take the time to insure that they have face time with individuals and small groups to carry their message. They express interest. They encourage others. They show appreciation. They celebrate accomplishments. These are all aspects of an inspiring others to meet strategic plans.

Leaders of large organizations show up personally at least two levels down. They use other means to be visible throughout the organization.

Exceptional Leaders Encourage Others

Exceptional Leaders know that how and what they communicate impacts employee performance. Knowing this, leaders encourage others in their work. To encourage means to express enthusiastic confidence in another's ability to accomplish something or prevail under difficult circumstances.

This seems like a simple idea, and it is. It is also extraordinarily effective in getting the best out of others. By saying to someone "you can do it!" or "I believe in you", it declares the future for them and provides a catalyst for the energy to accomplish and to overcome.

When you look at any great sports team you will see players, team leaders and coaches encouraging each other to excel. They give each other "high fives" for great plays. They keep each others' passion and mood upbeat even in the face of setbacks by encouraging each other.

Parents encourage children in their endeavors; leaders encourage employees. It works.

Exceptional Leaders Express Appreciation

Research has consistently shown that lack of appreciation from organizational leadership as one of the key dis-satisfiers at work. Lack of appreciation is also consistently reported when leaders use multi-rater feedback instruments to measure others perceptions of their leadership capabilities.

What this means is that if a leader wants to motivate employees to achieve that declare future, they must express appreciation for their efforts. Expressing appreciation demonstrates that a leader is leading rather than just using employees.

Expressing appreciation also means insuring that reward systems are set up which demonstrate that the employee is valued and incentivized for their efforts.

Exceptional Leaders Celebrate Successes

Highly ambitious and energized leaders can overlook the need for others to celebrate and acknowledge success. Everyone has exhausted themselves to get to the top of the mountain and the leader instantly points to the next mountain to climb. This can be de-motivating, causing employees to be less than enthusiastic about working on the next big thing.

Exceptional Leaders know that to keep others consistently motivated they must take the time to celebrate?

We have found in our coaching practice that leaders who practice these five simply approaches to motivating employees have a significant impact on the achievement of the strategic plan.

Thinking Partners, Inc. a leadership coaching company. We provide coaching services to leaders in both public and privately held businesses throughout the United States. Our services include:

- **Leadership Coaching**
- **Team Development**
- **Strategic Planning**

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