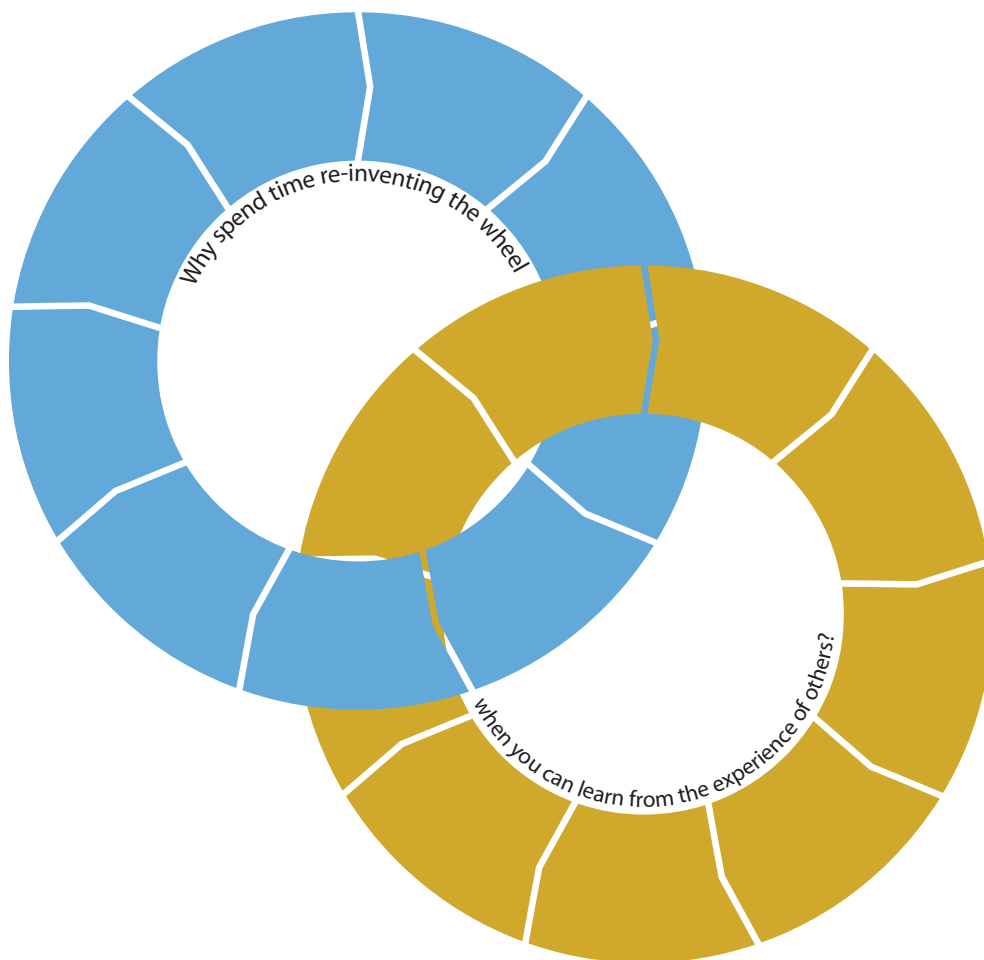


Management Brief

Employee Motivation





The BPIR Improvement Cycle

- ***Identify/Select an Area for Improvement***

- ***Measure Performance***

- ***Benchmark Performance***

- ***Identify a Relevant Improvement Approach or Strategy***

- ***Learn How to Implement***

- ***Identify Best Practice Organisations***

- ***Research Further Information***

- ***Implement a Best Practice Approach***

- ***Review and Calibrate***



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Employee Motivation: The Definition

Employee motivation refers to the factors that energize, direct and sustain employee behaviour.

The Stage

Employee motivation provides the impetus for staff to commit with enthusiasm to the achievement of an organisation's goals and objectives. By creating an environment that fosters employee motivation and engagement, a win-win situation is created for both the organisation and its employees. An excellent workplace environment will attract talented workers, who will invariably reward the organisation with superior performance, excellent customer service, and top products.

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Employee Motivation

Low employee morale leads to lower productivity, substandard work, and high staff turnover, all of which contribute to revenue losses. *Writing in Aftermarket Business* magazine, Tim Sramcik outlines the following five misconceptions associated with improving low employee morale:

1. That a quick fix is possible: One-day team exercises are an ineffective way of addressing low employee morale. Ongoing management intervention is needed to create an enduring positive attitude among employees. Morale building requires day-to-day interactions, which bind together both the well-being of the organisation and of its employees. Morale-building programmes need to be maintained over the long term, and need to communicate each employee's individual significance within the organisation.
2. That money motivates: Money is not an effective motivator; employees are more interested in career development, success, learning, recognition, and praise. They do not like being viewed merely as a resource, or a simple cog in a machine.
3. That fear motivates: Fear is a poor motivator and is, at best, only a short-term solution. Creating an environment of fear may even send workplace morale into a steeper decline. No employee wants to work for an organisation that exerts pressure over the future of his/her job.
4. That job satisfaction equates with job performance: Some very happy and satisfied workers may also be the least productive ones. Sramcik suggests that in order to develop high morale in the work place, it is necessary to align the organisation's business goals with the employee's personal goals. Ideally, employees should be motivated to work in a way that satisfies them and also benefits the organisation they serve.
5. That morale issues can be solved from outside an organisation: While consultants and case studies are useful for solving morale problems, the ultimate solution invariably rests with the

organisation's employees. Employees know what they are looking for in a job; therefore, it is vital to collect feedback from them about their key motivational drivers. Once management has this feedback, it must then find ways to promptly respond in practice. An effective morale programme leads to the creation of a place of work that employees look forward to visiting each day. By creating a good workplace environment, organisations can attract talented workers that will invariably reward the organisation with superior products and services. ^[1]

Creating a Positive Environment

When workers are laid off during an economic downturn, the remaining staff may develop what has been called a "survivor" mentality. This creates a challenge for management, who have to ensure that morale remains high and effective team building is maintained. Cary Cooper, writing in the *British Director* magazine, suggests the following steps for maintaining a positive workplace environment:

1. Help people to feel part of something bigger and use praise and rewards to reinforce individual and organisational success.
2. Use carefully crafted incentives to reward team performance, while minimising individual self-protective behaviour.
3. Be perceptive when an employee is under too much pressure, and ensure that support is provided.
4. Be open, understanding that trust and communication is required to motivate employees.^[2]

A positive employee outlook can turn an entire organisation around. Writing in the American publication *SuperVision Magazine*, T. L. Stanley writes that a positive motivation plan will improve overall productivity. He suggests that motivated employees are equipped to:

- reach their personal goals
- maximise productivity
- generate positivity
- be empowered to navigate change
- grow in self-esteem, and
- participate in setting organisational goals. ^[3]

Stanley also provides the following guidelines for creating a motivated workplace:

- recognise a job well done
- keep work interesting
- encourage input from employees
- ensure that supervisors/managers are well organised
- develop excellent training programmes
- treat each employee with respect
- maintain good information flows with employees
- provide ongoing opportunities for advancement
- maintain confidentiality
- keep technology up to date. ^[3]

Meaningful and Measurable Work

Patrick Lencioni, author of *The Three Signs of a Miserable Job*, writes that three out of four people hate their jobs, and this misery costs US employers \$350 billion per year in lost productivity. Writing in the magazine *Leadership Excellence*, Lencioni states that a miserable job can make people cynical, frustrated, and demoralised. It drains them of energy, enthusiasm, and self-esteem. People who are miserable in their jobs dread going to work; they come home frustrated, defeated, and weary – a situation that affects both their families and their friends. Three key factors that underpin a de-motivating job are:

1. Anonymity: This is what employees feel when their manager shows little or no interest in them as human beings, and does not appear to care about their aspirations or interests. Regardless of the money they might earn or how much they like the type of work they do, employees are unlikely to be fulfilled by their work if their manager does not care about them as unique individuals.
2. Irrelevance: If employees do not appreciate how their job makes a difference in the lives of others, they may feel their work is irrelevant. Employees need to understand the impact that their work has on the lives of customers, co-workers, and their supervisor.
3. Immeasurable performance: When employees have no way of measuring their daily or weekly performance, they are totally reliant upon feedback from their supervisor to get a sense

of the progress they have made with their contributions. Managers need to take a genuine interest in their staff; they need to remind them of the impact that their work has on others, and establish effective ways of measuring and assessing performance. ^[4]

A workplace with high morale translates into increased business gains. In America's *Women in Business* magazine, Mia Katz cites Dr. David Sirota, chairman emeritus of Sirota Survey Intelligence: "Morale is a direct consequence of being treated well by a company and employees return the 'gift' of good treatment with higher productivity and work quality, lower turnover (which reduces recruiting and training costs), a decrease in workers shirking their duties, and a superior pool of job applicants." ^[5] ^[6] Sirota believed that organisations with high morale provide their employees with the following three things; all of which matter a great deal to employees:

- fair treatment
- a sense of achievement in their work, and pride in their employer
- good and productive relationships with fellow employees.

Surveys revealed that employees working for organisations missing just one of these three factors were much less enthusiastic—and less productive—than those working for organisations in which all three elements were present. Satisfied employees led to satisfied customers and higher sales; this in turn resulted in more satisfied employees, who enjoyed the sense of achievement and material benefits associated with working for a successful organisation. This, of course, is a virtuous circle, providing the best of all worlds.

Employee Engagement

Melissa Wilkinson writes in Australia's *Charter* magazine that "employees are engaged when they consistently say they don't want to work anywhere else, they are willing to go the extra mile, and they regularly shower your customers with love." ^[7] The case for employee engagement is based on the premise that highly engaged employees produce better results; and that these results have a direct impact on an organisation's bottom line. There is a wide range of data supporting the contention that organisations with highly motivated employees tend to be more profitable. These organisations also experience lower staff turnover, deliver better quality customer service, have higher levels

of productivity, and more innovation. Organisations often focus on extrinsic motivators (such as pay, bonuses, and flexible work practices) at the expense of intrinsic motivators. However, it is these intrinsic motivators that lead to feelings of fulfilment, satisfaction, purpose, and achievement. They help employees to feel valued and important and include such things as career development, training, and regular feedback. Communication is an important factor for encouraging engagement. Employees want to know about the organisation's goals, and how they can individually contribute to achieving these goals.

Key Drivers of Employee Engagement

Benjamin Schneider, a senior research fellow at Valtera Corporation and professor emeritus at the University of Maryland in the United States, writes that the key drivers of employee engagement are motivational and behavioural:

1. Motivational drivers:

- believing one's skills and abilities are being fully utilised
- appreciating the link between one's work and an organisation's objectives
- being encouraged to innovate.

2. Behavioural drivers:

- the quality of relationships with co-workers
- feeling trusted and respected
- the credibility of supervisory personnel. ^[8]

Schneider points out that the drivers associated with employee engagement are different from those associated with job satisfaction. The drivers of job satisfaction (i.e. job security, benefits, etc.) are mostly beyond the direct control of first line supervisors; however, the drivers of engagement, described above, *are* controllable by supervisors. Employee engagement can be achieved by those organisations that view their employees as a source of competitive advantage, and understand that the drivers of employee engagement require attention to issues of trust, fairness, excellence in recruitment, and leadership.

Employee Engagement and Retention

Dr. Joanne Sujansky, who was a professional speaker and founder of KEYGroup® in the United States, wrote that it is vital for organisations to retain engaged employees; these employees are creative, productive, motivated, and

brimming with good ideas. Writing in *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, she stated that these employees understand the finer details of the organisation's operations; they also train new employees, and instil in them the company culture. The cost of replacing an engaged employee is estimated as being from 70 to 200 per cent of his/her annual salary. Sujansky suggested the following steps towards ensuring employee retention:

1. Culture: Always represent your organisation's culture truthfully.
2. Engagement: Develop a culture of engagement by introducing challenging assignments and opportunities that enable employees to grow and develop.
3. Corporate citizenship: Good employees usually want to work for organisations that take seriously the environment, health, and safety.
4. Recognition: Give praise where praise is due.
5. Benefits: In addition to standard benefit packages, provide creative and inexpensive perks that will be greatly appreciated by employees.
6. Employee's changing needs: Allow for changes to an employee's home environment with children, aging parents, etc.
7. Leadership: Great employees thrive under great leadership.
8. Stay interviews: Interview top employees, and while complimenting them on their work, ask what improvements are needed in the organisation.
9. Work/life balance: Make this a priority for all employees.
10. Trust: Create an employee/employer environment of trust.
11. Poor performers: Deal with negativity and poor performance, which affects the entire team.
12. Internships: Use internships and mentoring to nurture new talent. ^[9]

Feedback

Compliments, positive feedback, and encouragement all help to build self-esteem. Alan Rossiter, president of Rossiter & Associates, a chemical engineering and

management consulting company in the United States, quotes Mark Twain, who said that “he could live for months on a good compliment.”^[10] This comment is a testimony to the power of affirmation.

Affirmation helps people to feel good about themselves and about the individual contributions they make. Affirmation is an expression of consideration and respect for others; this helps to build a spirit of cooperation. However, negative comments and correction are sometimes necessary. At these times, it is important to talk to people privately rather than in public; it is also important to outweigh negative comments with positive ones. It is said that relationships can survive with 20 per cent negative content, provided the other 80 per cent is positive. If an employer is generally positive and affirming towards employees, they are more likely to respond well should correction become necessary.

Employee Motivation – Feeling Burned Out

According to a 2009 CareerBuilder survey of 4,400 workers, stress and workload strains presented very real challenges (see Figure 1, below). Workers reported that they were:

- taking on greater responsibility due to layoffs within their organisation (47%)
- handling the work of two people (37%)
- spending more time at the office (34%)
- feeling burned out (30%)
- putting in at least ten hours per day (22%)
- working more weekends (22%).

CareerBuilder commented that it was important for managers and employees to agree upon realistic expectations, and that work demands should not be overwhelming.^[11]

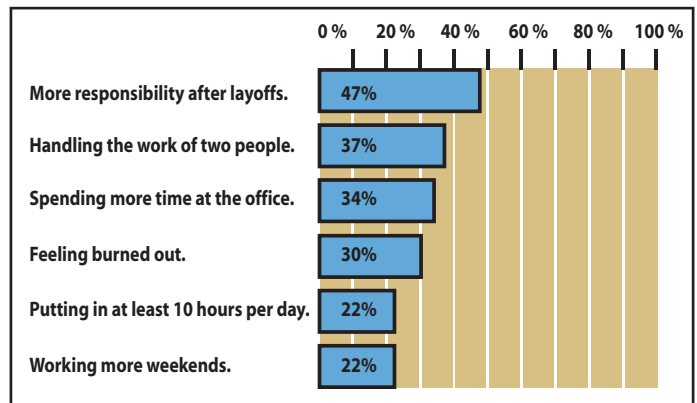


Figure 1: Causes of Stress and Workload Strain for Workers

Meaningful Work a Critical Component of Engagement

Canadian consultant and CEO Paul Fairlie states that the availability of meaningful work is a critical component of employee engagement. Fairlie’s research, which involved 800 Canadians, identified these five key factors as being necessary components of meaningful work:

1. Variety, being able to learn and to use a wide range of skills in a job.
2. Control, being able to have an input into how work is carried out.

3. Constructive feedback, receiving clear feedback about performance.
4. Recognition, receiving encouragement for work that is well done.
5. Significant impact, doing meaningful work that has impact upon the greater scheme of things.

Significantly these factors were found to be the drivers behind every employee outcome measured, including depression, burnout, overall satisfaction, commitment, and the desire to find another job. ^[12]

Outsourcing Research Work Offshore

In 2008, eleven British and American organisations, including global financial institutions, large consulting firms, and global accounting firms, were surveyed about their use of offshore researchers. When outsourcing research work offshore, it was found to be necessary to:

- thoroughly investigate the levels of research that can/cannot be outsourced
- establish effective workflow management tools
- understand the difficulties associated with measuring the quality of work done
- provide more American and British management time than anticipated
- provide initial and ongoing training, which was found to be critical to success
- handle staff attrition – this was a major ongoing problem
- judiciously negotiate separate agreements with all information suppliers
- carry out cost/benefit and return on investment analysis on what was realistically achievable. ^[11]

Engaged Employees Improve Bottom-Line Performance

Several leading research firms have concluded that engaged employees dramatically improve an organisation’s bottom-line performance. Conversely, the same studies revealed that disengaged employees caused significant damage to an organisation’s performance. These findings are depicted in Figure 2, see opposite.

Impact of Employee Engagement, % Change over 12-Month Period Source Tower & Perrin			
	Operating Income	Net Income	Earnings per Share
High employee engagement	18%	12%	26%
Low employee engagement	-32%	-	12%

Figure 2: Effect on an Organisation’s Bottom-Line Caused by Employee Engagement. ^[13]

Employee Engagement Best Practices

Research undertaken by the Hay Group in 2009 revealed that high employee engagement alone did not necessarily guarantee organisational effectiveness; employee enablement was also required. Organisations in the top quartile for employee engagement demonstrated revenue growth 2.5 times greater than those in the bottom quartile; however, for organisations in the top quartile for both engagement and enablement, revenue growth was some 4.5 times greater. The Hay Group analysis revealed the following steps for motivating employees:

1. Clearly communicate the links between performance and rewards.
2. Ensure that staff performance ratings reflect true performance levels.
3. Eliminate all unnecessary work/duplication that can adversely affect employee enablement.
4. Strive for the right fit between people and jobs by focusing on job sizing and role definitions.
5. Monitor and improve the workplace climate by ensuring that leaders have appropriate competencies/management styles for motivating employees.
6. Focus on non-monetary rewards such as career-growth opportunities, development, and recognition programmes. ^[14]

Engagement and Motivation Key Objectives for Reward Policies

In 2008, the British research company Business Intelligence undertook a survey on employee morale, rewards, and recognition. 771 respondents (mainly from small and medium-sized enterprises) reported the following objectives for their reward policies:

- staff motivation and engagement (86%)
- promotion of staff loyalty (78%)
- achievement of specific business goals (68%)
- teamwork and collaboration (64%)
- positive workplace behaviours (64%)
- support for market and business strategy (59%)
- marketplace competitiveness in reward packages (50%)
- employer of choice (34%).
- 67% would focus more on improving the ability of their line managers to effectively manage overall pay-for-performance relationships with employees.
- 57% would increase their focus on managing pay holistically at a total remuneration level. ^[16]

The impact of rewards policies were measured by respondents as follows:

- performance/productivity (65%)
- corporate profitability (59%)
- staff engagement (47%)
- customer service (30%). ^[15]

Employee Motivation Focuses on Reward Systems

A 2009 survey of 763 organisations in 66 countries examined how organisations intended to motivate and engage employees during a global downturn. The study found that the erosion of financial capital had led to a renewed focus on the value of human capital. Of the respondents:

- 71% used financial performance measurements and 40% used employee engagement measures. Other performance standards such as customer satisfaction, innovation, and talent management were used by fewer than 40% of the organisations.
- In the next two years, respondents reported their intention to give greater focus to leveraging non-financial rewards such as career and development opportunities, improving work climate (53%) and non-financial recognition (52%).
- 57% planned to focus on regularly measuring the return on their total reward investment (currently only 20% were doing so).
- 44% planned to increase their future focus on using rewards to reinforce a culture of creativity and innovation (currently 25% were doing so).

Example Cases

Valuable lessons can be learned from the following organisations:



first direct (FD), United Kingdom *Employee engagement reduces staff turnover*

FD based its brand on customer perception and experience; therefore, employee engagement was critical to its success. At the heart of FD was a pledge to treat its employees as individuals in order to help them exude friendliness, confidence, and competence. The following factors contributed to FD's engaged workforce:

- leadership: staff felt that senior management took their opinions seriously
- recruitment was tightly controlled
- induction took seven weeks, and mentors worked with recruits until they were confident to take calls alone
- more than 1,000 different shift patterns were available to staff
- call lengths were never measured
- staff turnover at FD was 14%, well below the industry norm, and
- in 2009, FD won the Your Money award for best online bank. ^[17]



Best Buy, USA *Employees motivated by freedom*

Best Buy in the United States implemented a Results-Only Work Environment model in its corporate statement; as a result, office productivity increased by 41 per cent, and voluntary turnover rates decreased by 90 per cent. Using this model, employees were free to do whatever they wanted, whenever they liked, as long as the necessary work was done. Managers trusted employees to accomplish duties, and evaluation was based on results rather than how much time employees sat at their desks. There was no need for schedules; reportedly, nobody felt overworked or stressed, and nobody talked about the number of hours they worked. People at all levels sought to avoid wasting the organisation's time and money. In this environment, teamwork, morale, and engagement soared. ^[18]



Philips Electronics, USA *Employee engagement lifted by video game*

When a 2006 internal survey revealed that employees at Philips Electronics North America, an electronics manufacturer, felt neglected, the company's communications department developed a video game that set departments across North America against each other to build teamwork and camaraderie among employees and managers. The game tested employees about their knowledge of the company, as well as of its management agenda and culture. The game met and surpassed its objectives of getting managers to engage with employees, and encouraged the employees to rely on teamwork to drive the organisation forward. As a result, when the next employee engagement survey was taken, it was revealed that:

- 72% of managers were seen as active role models for company values, as compared to 50% in 2005
- 82% of employees believed Philips had an outstanding future, up from 66% in 2005
- 65% of employees trusted Philips leadership, compared to 49% in 2005. ^[19]



Deloitte LLP, USA *Employee motivation via film making*

In search of a unique recruitment tool, Deloitte invited members of its global workforce to make three-minute amateur films that answered the question: "What's your Deloitte?" A non-traditional approach was sought, which aimed to connect with the organisation's diverse audience. Deloitte wanted to deliver breakthrough communication that would boost morale and drive participation (whether film making or viewing/voting) among all Deloitte professionals. A "film festival" was promoted, using Deloitte intranet services; three weeks were allocated to attract registrants, and a further three weeks for the film makers to submit their entries. 372 films were posted to an internal YouTube-style site where employees voted on the winners. The project was a great success with 75 per cent of personnel participating via film making, viewing, rating, and/or voting. The films were used widely at recruiting events, CEO speeches, professional industry events, and on online recruitment sites. ^[20]



Southwest Airlines, USA
Web blog boosts employee engagement

In order to give customers an opportunity to voice their opinions, Southwest Airlines in the United States hosted a blog on which both customers and employees were able to freely comment on their experiences, and also post videos. One passenger posted footage of an employee entertaining cheering passengers by playing a ukulele during a flight delay. The clip was later posted on YouTube. The blog created many customer and employee evangelists; this helped Southwest to maintain its ranking among top corporations in connection with its reputation and brand. ^[21]

Measure and Evaluate

The following provide some simple ideas on how employee motivation might be assessed:

Employee Commitment and Motivation: This measures the percentage of employees committed to the organisation's goals and objectives or the percentage of employees considered to be "highly motivated". This measure can also be an indicator of employee satisfaction levels.

Employee Involvement – Planning: How frequently are non-managerial employees consulted for planning? What is the percentage of employees involved in the planning process? This measure provides an indication of the importance placed upon the opinions of the workforce. Involving employees in planning processes helps to improve the commitment and alignment of the workforce.

Employee – Bradford Factor: i.e. $D (S \times S)$, where D is the total number of days of absence over a set period, and S is the number of spells (or instances) of absence over the same period. (Example: one instance of absence with a duration of ten days results in $(1 \times 1 \times 10) = 10$ points; 10 instances of absence; each of 1 day $(10 \times 10 \times 10) = 1000$ points.) This measure focuses on short-term, frequent, unplanned absences, which are seen to be disruptive and affect the morale of other staff.

Employee – Recognition: The percentage of employees that are recognised; or the percentage of employees recognised through formal recognition systems; or the percentage of employees recognised through informal recognition systems; or the number of recognition events held per period. This measure monitors the activity of recognition system.

Employee Alignment: The percentage of employees given personal objectives that align with organisational goals. This measure provides an indication of the level of alignment of the workforce to achieve organisational goals.

Employee Development: The percentage of employees that—given the opportunity—enrol or use training and development programmes/facilities. This measure provides an indication of the willingness and/or interest of the workforce towards improving/adding to their work skills.

Employee Targets Met: The percentage of targets met (i.e. personal, group/team, project). This measure provides an indication of the overall success of motivation strategies.

Self-Assessments

Self-assessments can be used to find out how effective organisations are at implementing various strategies, tools, and techniques.

Figure 3, see below, is a self-assessment tool for evaluating the degree of engagement felt by employees within an organisation (the full self-assessment may be found in the member's area of the BPIR.com). The questionnaire may be completed by ranking each of the questions from 1 to 5 as indicated.

<i>Employee Engagement Self-Assessment Questions</i>	<i>Ranking</i>				
	1 = Poor	2 = Below Par	3 = Good	4 = Very Good	5 = Excellent
1. Rate how clearly you understand what is expected of you in your day-to-day duties.					
2. How do you rate the availability of the resources that are needed to do your job well?					
3. Indicate your impression of how you believe your manager (or supervisor) cares about you as a person.					
4. Rate the level of motivation or encouragement received with respect to your personal development.					
5. How committed are your colleagues towards producing quality work?					
6. How much do you enjoy the company of your colleagues?					
7. Rate the frequency and degree of interest shown in your personal progress.					
8. Rate the opportunities provided for you to learn and develop.					

Figure 3: How Engaged Are Your Employees? (Adapted from Dernovsek) ^[22]

Scoring

Any items ranked from 1 to 3 highlight potential areas for follow up in order to improve employee engagement.

Summary of Best Practices

The following is a summary of the best practices and/or insights found within this Management Brief:

1. Understand that organisations with highly motivated employees tend to be more profitable, experience lower staff turnover, deliver higher levels of customer service and productivity, and benefit from greater innovation.
2. Develop strongly motivated employees that are equipped to:
 - reach their personal goals
 - maximise productivity
 - grow in self-esteem
 - navigate change.
3. Develop morale-building programmes to create an environment in which employees look forward to working each day.
4. Build an organisation with high morale in which employees:
 - experience fair treatment
 - have a sense of achievement in their work, and pride in their employer
 - enjoy good, productive relationships with fellow employees
 - understand that trust and communication are paramount
 - are recognised as individuals
 - have carefully crafted incentives that reward team performance and minimise individual self-protective behaviour
 - are aware of the impact their work has on the life of customers, co-workers, and the organisation itself.
5. Consider implementing the following practices to improve employee motivation:
 - clearly communicate the links between performance and rewards
 - ensure that performance ratings truly reflect actual performance levels
 - eliminate all unnecessary duplication of tasks
 - find the right fit between people and jobs through job sizing and role definitions
6. Develop engaged employees with an energy/passion for their job and their employer. Implement the following key drivers of employee engagement:
 - ensure that leaders have the appropriate competencies/management styles for motivating employees
 - focus on non-monetary rewards in particular, such as career-growth opportunities, development, and recognition programmes.
 - ensure that employees have variety in the work they do
 - ensure that employees have some control over how work is done
 - provide clear feedback about personal performance
 - provide recognition for work well done
 - ensure that employees can see how their work has an impact on the organisation's performance
 - develop an environment of personal respect.

Conclusion

Creating a workplace with excellent morale and motivated employees is a long-term project, and needs to be embedded within the fabric of an organisation's daily operations. Highly motivated and engaged personnel are a tremendous asset to any organisation. While money is an important foundational consideration, the main factors that attract and maintain "talent" within an organisation include:

- recognition
- having interesting work to do
- being heard by management
- having skilled managers
- having good communication flows
- being provided with opportunities for advancement.

Developing well-motivated employees leads to more satisfied customers and higher sales; this in turn leads to greater employee motivation and creates a virtuous circle. Highly motivated employees are likely to be engaged employees, willing to go the extra mile with customers, and to reward their employers with loyalty, high levels of productivity, and greater innovation.

Note

The techniques and case studies mentioned or summarised in this article may be found in greater detail at BPIR.com, together with the full text of most of the articles and reports cited in the following reference list.

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These articles and reports can be found in full at www.bpir.com.

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