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## **Be Motivated for Success** by **Tony Atkins, Director of Advanced Training**

Working all hours just to keep afloat? Like your people to be more willing and to have more get-up-and-go? Want to replace coasting through the day with focused energy to achieve real results?

Then we need to take seriously how we motivate both our teams and ourselves each and every day. As leaders it is our responsibility to do, and lead, the motivating.

It is easy to forget that people are all different. They have different reasons for working and, therefore, vary in their needs and how they should be treated. To be continually successful we need to recognise that all employees have five basic needs.

1. They need to know what is expected of them. They need to contribute to, and agree, this and their performance objectives.
2. They need to be given responsibility and authority to act within clear and agreed boundaries.
3. They need appropriate support and guidance as - and when - they need it.
4. They need to be able to see how they are progressing, with clear measures to help them to properly assess their achievement.
5. They need to be recognised for their effort and contribution - continually, not just when the sun shines for us!

In addition, to achieve outstanding results people need a motivated leader they can respect.

### **A motivated leader:**

- smiles and shows they are pleased to be there
- uses positive language, giving the expectation of success
- is stable and not prone to mood swings
- continually helps their people to maintain their motivation
- provides direction, challenging objectives that can be achieved and the opportunity to succeed
- involves their people in the day-to-day running decisions
- makes sure that progress is visible and recognises people for their effort and achievement
- provides a feeling of group belonging.

We need to recognise that it is the responsibility of leaders to ensure that these needs are properly and fully met for the people in their team. Otherwise, their absence will surely result in mundane performance and limited success.

### **All this and run the business! How?**

We can all do the things we know to be right when everything is going well. It is when the pressure is really on that this becomes hard. Then we often need to operate on "auto-pilot" and that is when our habits become critically important.

As the leader we need to develop fundamental habits that prompt our desired behaviour and performance when we are under pressure. We will then automatically do the productive things and results will follow.

The good news is - if we cultivate productive habits, others will follow our lead and do the same.

1. Look for the good

As the quotation says, "Out of every adversity lies the seed of an equivalent or greater benefit". So when things go wrong, somewhere there will be a benefit.

Most people go to pieces when adversity hits them. They wallow in self-pity and seek sympathy. So when things go wrong, we need to develop the habit of thinking, "How can I turn this to my advantage?"

## 2. Compliment your people

Make sure the compliment is sincere. This habit helps people to feel good and perform better, plus it is catching. Before long, others will follow our lead and the whole environment will be more positive, helping everyone to become more productive - including us.

## 3. Treat each customer as the only one

We need to treat everyone as though they truly matter. Every customer wishes to be treated as special and very important to us. Achieve this and our customers will not only remain loyal to us, they will tell others how good we are.

Of course, this also applies to our internal customers - our people.

## 4. Eliminate negative language

Never think of what might have been, we need to concentrate on building on what we have now. There are many *experts* who can tell us it will not work, or it has been tried before and failed. Remember the a-b-c success cycle and use it:

- a What we tell ourselves about our strengths and abilities reinforces what we think we can do.
- b This becomes our auto-pilot, which controls our performance, particularly when we are under pressure.
- c Our performance stimulates - either positively or negatively - what we tell ourselves about our strengths and abilities.

## 5. Look for the common success denominator

Mix with successful people, they think about life differently. Listen and learn from them. If in doubt think what a failure would do and do the opposite.

## 6. See the Oak tree in every acorn

Not all people are like Oak trees, but every acorn can become an Oak tree. Look for opportunities to use the potential in people. Support and help people to grow. If we restrict their growth we will get Bonsai trees, not Oak trees.

## 7. Develop into a how-can-I-do-it-better person

Whenever we do something badly we should ask ourselves, "How can I do it better?" Equally important is to ask the question when we do something well.

## 8. Paint positive pictures

Everybody, including us, thinks in pictures. Use words that help people to see the desired end result.

Talk up situations - not down. Imagine going to your team and saying:

- "Whether you like it or not we have a job to do." Instead of:
- "Everyone, we are facing a tremendous opportunity."

We can all see which approach paints the more positive picture and is more likely to motivate others to achieve.

## **9. Recognise the danger of negatives to ourselves**

Potentially, one of the biggest causes of failure is allowing negative people to influence us adversely with their attitudes.

We need to recognise that we are vulnerable and refuse to listen to such people. We all know that a bad apple in a basket will quickly infect all the other apples.

10. Keep a personal balance sheet

If we are serious about improving our performance and results, we should regularly audit our strengths and weaknesses. This is personal information just for us and not for sharing with others.

We list all our strengths and our weaknesses. We then select a weakness that we most wish to improve and actively study and/or seek help to turn it into one of our strengths.

Once successful or on the way to success, we return to our audit and select another area for improvement.

11. Smile

**It has been said that smiling is the shortest distance between two people. Smiling helps us to build rapport and working relationships. This in turn helps us to be optimistic and achieve better results.**

**Medical research has also shown that being optimistic and smiling boosts our immune system and helps us to fight disease. It helps us to produce in our blood more T-cells and "killer cells". Both types of cells are vital for fighting infection.**

People who are optimistic and smile a lot frequently feel better and work much more effectively than people who are pessimistic and do not smile.

## **12. Have purpose in everything we do**

We need to set ourselves goals and targets to focus our effort, activity and achievement. We should always expect to achieve. Achieving then becomes a habit in itself.

This article has only scratched the surface. Tony Atkins will welcome the opportunity to discuss any views or thoughts it may have prompted. He can be contacted on his direct line number 0118 979 2533, or by email at [tony.atkins@a-t.co.uk](mailto:tony.atkins@a-t.co.uk).

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