

Motivate Your Team

Figuring out how to motivate your team can be a difficult task. However, through encouragement and inspiring engagements, you (the leader) can create a successful and productive work environment. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can directly influence employee morale, satisfaction, and performance.

Here are some tips on how to motivate your team:

- **Give positive feedback in addition to negative.** Nothing kills morale quicker than only giving negative feedback. If you want your team to walk-on-eggshells around you and fear making mistakes, remain hands-off and focus on the negatives. Remember that learning and innovation oftentimes blooms from mistakes. Assume that your team has good intentions and is committed to mission success. Offer genuine praise for work ethic, performance, and talent. People like to know that their work is recognized and positive feedback from a leader can boost overall morale and commitment.
- **Connect and show your team that you care.** It is important to really get to know your team members. Get to know about their families, hobbies, what motivates them, and their strengths and weaknesses. If possible, make a connection with each team member. Showing that you care, helps create an atmosphere of respect.
- **Assign meaningful work and communicate the "why."** Discuss your units strategic plan and vision with your team often. Help them understand how what they do matters and how it ties into the larger mission. When your team members connect meaning to their work, they're more likely to be more engaged in their daily tasks.
- **Encourage Autonomy, but don't be absent.** Trust your team to work independently and make important decisions. Help them learn from mistakes and do not threaten them with removal or demotion when they make them. Foster respect between team members and be willing to engage and be present when your needed.
- **Ask for input from the team.** Don't just ask your team for input when problems arise, ask them for their ideas about process improvements and when important decisions need to be made. This creates support and buy-in.
- **Mentor.** Lead by example and make the development of your team members a priority. Foster a continuous learning mindset by looking for opportunities that can help them shine. Embolden the team to reach their full potential.
- **Establish expectations and make work fun.** Communicate your expectations with your team and ensure all team members understand the standards. As a leader, help them meet these expectations by listening to their needs and concerns. This requires accessibility and open communication. Lastly, encourage your team to have fun at work. When teams have shared common experiences (oftentimes fun), they are more likely to connect with each other, build trust, get to know each other's strengths, and are more productive.

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