

**How do I motivate my people?** We are often asked this question by our people. We answer by saying, you can't! In our experience you can not motivate some body else. Motivation is an intrinsic thing, true motivation comes from within. That said there are some things that you can do as a leader to ensure the best motivational environment is created for your team.

As a leader you need to know two key things about motivation. Firstly, provide a supportive environment to allow motivation to flourish. Second, you must model appropriate motivational behaviours. The following nine tips will assist you to achieve this:

**1. Want More Innovation?** If you want more innovation from your people, let them know that their employment is secure, even if their job changes. People worried about losing their jobs tend to find ways to stretch out the work, not innovative ways to do it better.

**2. Don't Be A Demotivator** Your job as a leader is to get and keep your people motivated and working toward the common goal. Demeaning them, to their face or to others, erodes their motivation. So does dismissively telling them that their ideas "are stupid". Watch your own actions to be sure you aren't defeating your own efforts by demotivating your people.

**3. Your greatest resource is your people.** You can have the best, high tech, equipment available. But, without the people you have no business. Treat your people with the same, or greater, care as you do your equipment.

**4. Keep the flame alive.** When people join your organization they are all fired up and ready to do great things. Over time we all too often wear down that enthusiasm. Instead, do what you can to fan the flames of their enthusiasm and you will be amazed at their output.

**5. Listen to your employees.** It doesn't make any sense to spend all that time and effort to find and hire the best people if you are just going to ignore their input.

**6. People Aren't Mushrooms.** Mushrooms grow very well when kept in the dark and fed horse manure. People, on the other hand, function better when they are kept in the loop and given straight information.

**7. Get your people involved.** It's a lot easier to get employees to stand behind a company decision if they have the opportunity to participate in the discussion. Management still has to make the decision. But if they have had the opportunity to make their point of view known employees are more likely to stand behind the ultimate decision, even if they don't agree with it.

**8. Actively listen.** Listen to your customers, your employees, your suppliers, and anyone else who comes in contact with your business. Honestly evaluate what they have to say, without letting your ego get in the way, and you will probably learn something that benefits your business.

**9. Quality customer service is based on three essentials:** respect, value, and a human approach. When you first apply these to the way you manage your own staff, you will be able to apply them towards customers.