

Morale matters: Building a positive workforce

4th Quarter 2014 Manager Newsletter



When it comes to high morale, everyone wins.

Employee morale is good for business. It's linked to loyalty, productivity and low turnover. When you've got high morale, staff members are less stressed. And less stress means your employees work harder, are more engaged and take fewer sick days. So what can you do to build morale?

Building morale doesn't have to be complex or expensive. Here are a few ideas to consider:

Say thank you. This one should be easy. But because it's easy, you can often forget the power of a "thank you." You might think your gratitude doesn't matter or it isn't enough. But this couldn't be farther from the truth.

Stop worrying about not giving enough. A well-earned "thanks a lot" can go a long way. It shows your staff you notice them and you value their contribution. It helps give meaning to their efforts.

Give attention. There are few things as rewarding as attention. By sitting down with your employees, you both benefit. You can get to know them better. You can learn about their goals, talents and hopes for advancement. And you can find out what is going well in your organization and what needs work.

You can come away from these talks knowing more about your team. And your staff can feel more valued.

Value personal time. Company potlucks are nice. But nothing helps your team unwind as much as time spent with family and friends. In fact, human resources experts say scheduled work events can feel like a burden for employees.¹ Many employees want flexible work schedules and the chance to take personal time as needed.

Encourage development. Many employees care about doing a good job. A sense of efficacy and accomplishment often boosts morale. You can foster this by offering training and development opportunities.

In addition to company training, check out the local community colleges and university-extension departments for affordable classes. Find out if your organization provides any money to help your staff pay for continuing education. Help your team explore new options.

Build trust. Trust matters. If your employees don't trust you, it hurts morale. Work to build trust by involving your team in discussions and encourage them to make decisions. Make sure you follow through with your promises. And if you make a mistake, be sure to own it.

Work towards being transparent and genuine with your staff. This kind of authentic leadership will pay off with a trusting workforce.

Have some fun. Try to infuse fun into your workplace. You don't have to throw fancy parties or spend a lot of money to have fun. Instead, try to think outside the box. Laser tag, games and team builders can help your staff bond.

And make sure to have a sense of humor around the office. Share funny quotes and crack a few jokes – all within good taste, of course. And don't forget to smile and laugh at yourself from time to time.

Staff morale doesn't have to cost you a lot of money to build. But the lack of it can cost your organization in the long run. Get creative, show appreciation and let your employees know they matter. Because with good morale, everyone wins.

¹forbes.com