



CLI Whitepaper

How to Boost Morale Through Motivation

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Executive Summary

Employee morale is an essential part of what drives productivity, idea generation, and loyalty within companies. A common reason morale is low in particular organizations is because their employees lack motivation. This paper discusses how motivation is tied to employee morale, and how it can be increased.

White Paper

For a company to run at peak performance, the employees working for that company need to have good morale. If the employee morale in the company is high, it can generate new ideas, boost productivity on current projects, and help create strong loyalty towards your company. However, low morale can do just the opposite, and sometimes can happen without management even realizing it. If your company has low employee morale, it is paramount that management works on improving it as soon as possible. However, even if you have excellent morale in your company, it is also important to keep boosting employee morale so that you can continue to achieve the best results from your employees.

A main source for the lacking morale in companies is the fact that the employees are not motivated. According to current research, Americans are said to waste up to two hours a day while at work. The two main reasons stated for the slack is that employees feel they do not have enough work to do, and that they are underpaid (Salary.com, Retrieved March 6, 2009). This decrease in motivation can lead to poor morale. A way to boost employee morale is to understand what motivates them. Not having enough to do can be tied to the leadership in an organization and can point to a need for leaders, supervisors and manager to delegate more effectively. When employees feel that they are underpaid, motivation Guru Frederick Herzberg (1959) calls this a hygiene factor, one of the basic needs that workers have to sustain productivity at work. This need is tied to providing adequate levels of salary to ensure an effective return of work.

Employee motivation can be a difficult thing to accomplish, especially when morale is low. However, if you can understand their desires, it may be possible to develop a system that increases employee motivation and morale at the same time. To do this, you need to find out whether their motivations are intrinsic, from within themselves, or extrinsic, from the outside world. Knowing this will enable you to develop motivators, and rewards, which will make your employees want to work, and dramatically increase morale. It is also important to carefully balance extrinsic and intrinsic rewards when motivating your employees. Too much of either one can lead to arguments and more dissatisfaction than when you first started. For a systems-wide approach to motivation, consider reading Fredrick Herzberg's *The Motivation to Work* (1959).

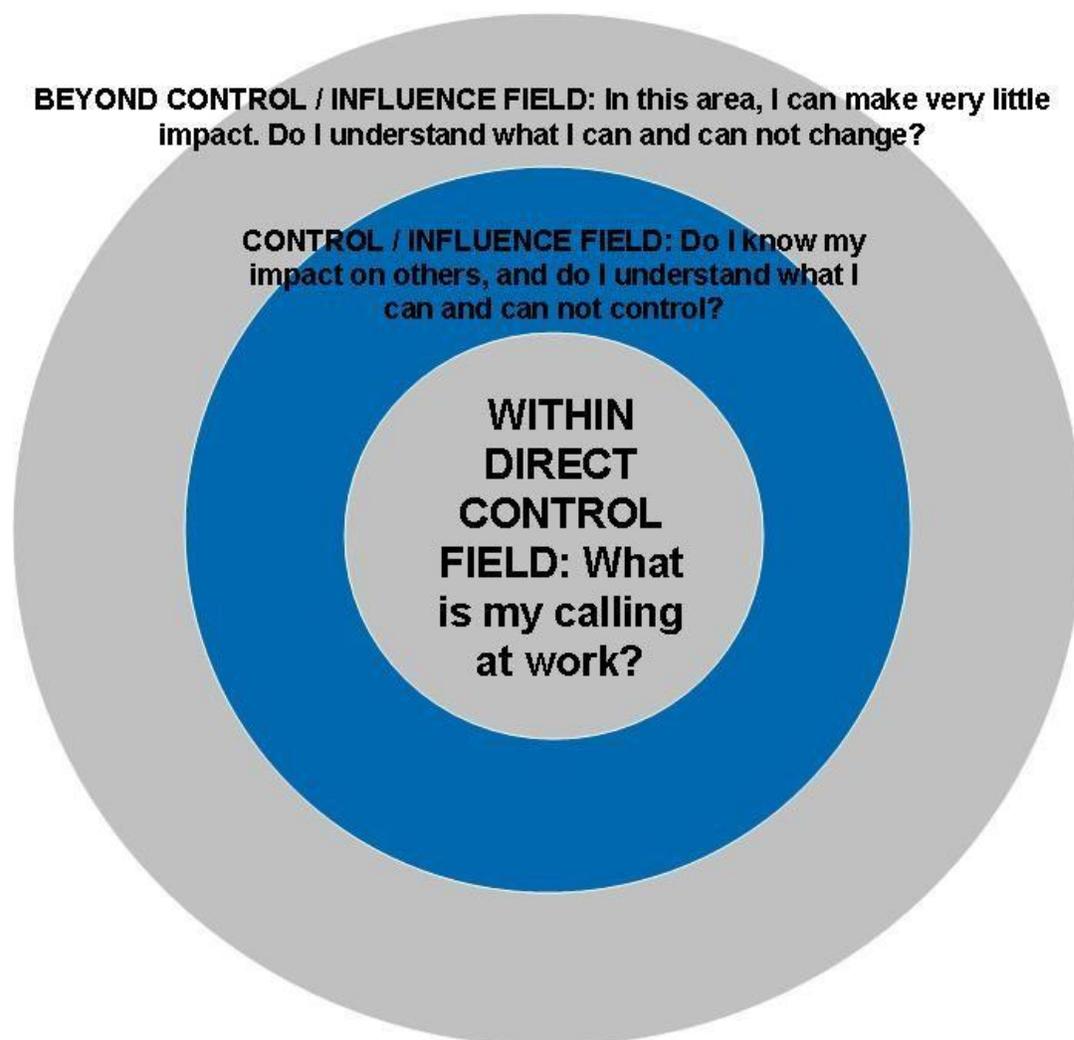
The Motivational Influence Model

Dr.'s Susan Cain and Tim Buividas, partners at The Corporate Learning Institute, have developed a morale defining model based on Stephen Covey's "Circle of Influence Model" (1989, pgs. 81-91). Their model, called "The Motivational Influence Model" (pictured below), touches on this topic. The model begins with the employee in the center of a circle, taking note of what exactly is in their control to achieve at work. The next layer, called the "influence/control field", contains what influences from others affect the employee at work, and what influences the employee has over others at work. The last outer layer of the circle is areas in which the employee has no control over. What the model proposes is that an employee can consider both what they can and cannot control, and how they can take steps to improve both their impact and influence. In addition, it asks the employee to look into how they affect others, and how they are affected as well, and how that can be improved.

When looking at what an employee can control, the model asks the following questions: What is your specific and special calling at work? How vital is it? What about your impact is irreplaceable? By starting with the employee and working outward, motivation will increase as the individual first responds to their own needs, then by focusing on how that interacts with others. As far as the work context, what Cain and Buividas propose is that motivation will be boosted by

three factors: Digging deep to find meaning in work, looking for the small pleasures gained through work, and employees need to utilize their strengths as often as the job allows. Even if an employee struggles to find meaning, pleasures, or ways to best use their strengths in their work, Cain and Buividas ask, "What would these situations look like if you did have it the way you wanted it?" By identifying the ideal situation, an employee can work on improving from there.

The Motivational Influence Model



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Employees that can gain meaning from their work will have a boost in morale, because they will feel more accomplished in their work. An employee who feels more accomplished will be more dedicated to their job and responsibilities, and will be more productive.

These are just some of the many ideas that can be used if you are attempting to improve, or boost, employee morale. By utilizing these techniques, you will be able to dramatically improve your employees' morale and increase the productivity of your company. Motivation is key when increasing employee morale, because in turn, the employee will feel accomplished in their work, and will be more likely to dedicate the time necessary to make the company they work for more productive. The important part to remember is that improving morale is an opportunity, not a problem, and can lead to a company with high productivity and a prosperous future.

Key Takeaways

- Find out and understand what motivates your employees.
- Motivation is everyone's responsibility.
- Employees can first work on what is in their own control at work, and branch outward from there.
- Motivation will increase through finding meaning and small pleasures in daily work, and utilizing strengths as often as possible.
- Morale will be increased through an employee's discovery of their own meaning in their work
- The chance to improve morale is an opportunity, not a problem.

This paper has addressed the importance of motivation and how to develop it within your organization. For more information about The Corporate Learning Institute, visit us at www.corplearning.com.

References & Further Readings

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