

## Kick-start Your Positive Performance Culture

It's common knowledge that motivated and engaged employees are key to a company's performance and bottom line. Yet many places search to find that ONE solution that will improve their people's performance and their company's culture. Instead, let's take a look at the science behind motivation.

### What Motivates Us?

If we look at data and research reported by Rochester experimental psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, research summarized by author Daniel Pink in his book *Drive*, and research in Positive Psychology, we find five main areas that impact our motivation.

- Autonomy (feelings of control and being heard)
- Mastery (feelings of growing and using strengths)
- Purpose (feelings of alignment and meaning)
- Belonging (feelings of shared values and connection)
- Positive Work Environment (positive energy and attitudes of others)



Although there are many “guaranteed” systems in books and programs that claim to have the answer to motivating your staff and improving engagement, there is no “one size fits all” formula that works in every company or industry. Each organization is unique in its personality and people so it's important to find what works for yours. However, using the above areas as guides can make it easier to think about ways to create a culture that promotes positive performance.

The first step is to understand the current situation. What is your organization already doing well in each of these areas? What areas could use some help? Here are some questions to get you started.

- *How would you describe the current culture of the company?*
- *How do you communicate and uphold your company vision?*
- *How do you get people involved in making decisions that affect the company and their work?*
- *How do you make sure people understand the reasons behind company goals, rules and policies?*
- *Are people comfortable sharing their feedback and ideas with management?*
- *What practices does your company use to help people succeed?*
- *What are the top 3 reasons people like working at your company? Which area do most of the top reasons fall into? (Autonomy, Mastery, Purpose, Belonging, Positive Environment)*

As you consider how well you can answer the questions above, also think about sharing them with a few select staff in various departments and levels for their feedback. Getting input from others is the best way to truly understand your company's current work environment.

Have you identified any areas that need some attention? The section below includes different ideas listed by area to get you and your people started brainstorming about what changes can be made at your company that will be a good fit. Remember, they are just starting points and not necessarily appropriate for your situation.

## **AUTONOMY**

- Hold strategy and/or brainstorming meetings that include all levels of people related to the topic (solve problems or improve processes or new ideas)
- Create a comfortable environment to share ideas with management
- Organize small group lunches or "walking meetings" with staff and 1 or 2 management leaders
- Encourage leaders to walk through the company at least 1 or 2 times per week and ask several people what they are working on or what their excited about
- List people's favorite business/life books in a newsletter or intranet

- Create a committee including people at all levels who plan and implement strategies for addressing these four concepts of motivation
- Have clear roles and job descriptions so people know what's expected. Make sure quarterly goals are clearly defined with specific outcomes.

## **MASTERY**

- Match people's job activities with their strengths
  - Everything DiSC®
  - Strength's Finder
  - VIA Character Strengths
- Celebrate failure/risk taking
- Reward people for asking questions or offering ideas – ie. \$5 starbucks certificates
- Cross train people so they can help each other and feel more involved
- Offer TED talks during lunch breaks
- Provide personal and professional development training and programs
- Recognize people's achievements and efforts. Learn about the 5 Languages of Appreciation by Dr. Gary Chapman and Paul White

## **PURPOSE**

- Encourage managers and supervisors to hold one on one meetings with their reports that emphasizes how their jobs support the company's purpose
- Let groups of employees interview executives to ask questions – for example, what is their personal vision
- Have a clear vision and purpose that is communicated and reinforced by management
- Highlight company and employee “wins” before discussing financials at company meetings

## **BELONGING**

- Provide sources of inspiration – surroundings, books, posters, presentations, etc.
- Have enjoyable spaces for employee breaks and lunches
- Help nurture a “family” culture by helping people get to know each other

- Create a database of everyone’s bio (including leadership) – where they live, kids, interests, hobbies, expertise
  - Hold networking lunches with small groups from different departments
  - Organize “new faces” events to help people get to know new people and vice versa
  - Share info/interests about an employee or group of the week (or month) by newsletter or posting on a board or on a video screen
  - Encourage after work events – decided by employees (not the company)
  - Have a favorite employee movies or books section in a newsletter or intranet site
- Provide a welcoming environment for new employees by having an orientation that includes common acronyms, organizational structure, info on technologies and products, summary of customer or markets served

## **POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT**

Studies from Positive Psychology have indicated that having a positive work environment can make it easier for people to maintain a positive attitude. In addition, research has demonstrated that increased positivity drives motivation, creativity, better decision-making, better focus, and collaboration. Here are some ideas to improve positivity in your workplace.

- Start meetings by asking people to share something positive.
- Take advantage of emotional contagion by encouraging (and training) your leaders to maintain a more positive mindset
- Apply the principles of Appreciative Inquiry – rebuilding organizations around what works, rather than trying to fix what doesn't.

The best ideas will come from your people. They know the work, the challenges, and the dynamics of your company. The ideas listed here are simply seeds to get conversations flowing. Remember, there are no bad ideas. Some suggestions that seem impossible or irrelevant can often lead to surprising possibilities.

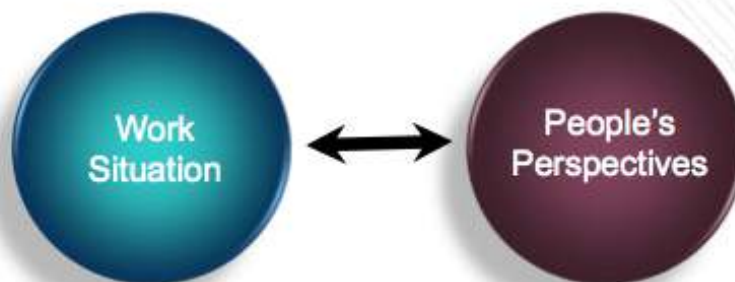
# Promoting a Positive Work Situation



## PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES

In addition to the work situation people experience, another major factor that influences their positivity and engagement at work is their perspective. The great news is that people can shift their perspective and this is teachable. We can provide employees with trainings and information that help make this shift easier. Not only that, we can help them understand how creating a more positive perspective can help them succeed. For more details, please refer to the article, "[Why Positivity Matters for Your Career & 7 Ways to Get More.](#)"

# Major Influences on Workplace Positivity



*Tina Hallis, Ph.D., is a professional speaker and founder of [The Positive Edge](#), a company dedicated to helping people and organizations increase their positivity to improve the quality of people's work lives and the quality of company cultures. She is certified in Positive Psychology through the WholeBeing Institute, an Authorized Partner for Everything DiSC®, and a Professional Member of the National Speaker's Association.*