

Motivate Without Money - 20 Steps To Success

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It is important to understand that the following steps to a more positive productive atmosphere are not theoretical and do not fall in to the category "try them, they might work."

From my experience each of these recommendations has proved successful and continue to have a positive impact on employee retention and the overall performance. While some of the ideas may not seem revolutionary, others may have already been successfully implemented in your area. For those that fall into these categories, I encourage you to ask yourself questions such as "do I do this enough?" or "have I looked at all possible ways to use this to enhance my environment?"

For those ideas that are new...use them, they work. If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten. Break out of the paradigm that says, "That's the way we've always done it."

Use these steps to take your telemarketing areas to the next level and beyond. Buckle your seat belt, here we go.

1) Recognition/Attention

Although these 20 steps to success are not in any specific order, I can't think of anything more important than employee recognition and attention. How often do we recognize our employees for their achievements? I think if we all had to answer that question, the answer in most cases would be not enough, or not nearly enough. When your employees accomplish something they have achieved something. Your recognition is appreciation for that achievement. I believe that most telemarketing managers don't give enough recognition because they don't get enough. Therefore, it doesn't come natural to do it. If this applies to you, you need to drop this excuse like a bad habit! Become a giver! Look at the price, recognition is free!

Verbal recognition is so easy yet means so much. A simple "thank you" for a productive day or a specific job means a great deal to most people. And when you give this verbal recognition, make sure it's in front of other employees. These "Public Strokes" become the instant envy of others encouraging them to earn some of this verbal recognition.

Voice mail is also a great resource for verbally recognizing your people. Leave "recognition" messages for employees while sending a copy of the same message to your boss. This gives additional motivation value to the message. It's stimulating for an employee to go into their voice mailbox for the usual messages and unexpectedly listen to a message of recognition from their supervisor or manager.

Written recognition produces powerful and lasting stimulation yet it is used so little. When was the last time you reviewed a letter from your boss recognizing any of your accomplishments? In the last week, month, year, ever? If you have received one, how did it make you feel? A short memo expressing your appreciation for any accomplishment will become stimulation. Most employees will display these memos in visible areas after proudly showing it to family, friends, and most importantly, co-workers.

If your company publishes one, a newsletter is an excellent tool for employee recognition. Put their name in lights and watch them eagerly await the release of that "special" issue.

The old saying "no news is good news", is just that, old and outdated. Recognize your people and do it often, both verbally and in writing.

2) Applause

A form of recognition yes, but a very specific form. Physically applaud your people by giving them a round of applause for specific achievements. Where? When?

The answer to where is wherever. At meetings or company sponsored social gatherings, a luncheon, or in the office. For maximum impact make sure as many people as possible are involved both physically and within listening distance. The same answer holds true to the question...when? Whenever. At the end of a shift, before a shift, and whenever possible in the middle of a shift. If you can ever stop the phones for a moment to give an individual or a group a round of applause for positive performance you will gain additional distance from your gesture. And although shyness or embarrassments seem to be the natural reactions to a round of applause for most people, don't be fooled. I think most of us would agree that a round of applause scores, a bulls-eye when the objective is to make someone feel appreciated or proud for something they have accomplished. Using plaques or trophies is another effective way of applauding your people. Although "wooden applause" is often successfully used in the form of Employee of the Month plaques more creative ideas are sorely under utilized. Take the time to be creative, matching special accomplishments with unique awards. This, like the written recognition becomes an everlasting motivational tool as it remains forever visible to the person who earns it.

3) One on One Coaching

Coaching is employee development. Your only cost is time. Time means you care, and remember your people don't care how much you know...until they know how much you care.

If you monitor calls, this becomes the perfect opportunity for coaching sessions with your employees. AS you listen to people's introductions, presentation, closing skills, and other call activity, coaching becomes a natural follow-up.

Whenever the emphasis is on positive feedback, I make sure to do this coaching in "public." Whenever you recognize and encourage people in "public", it acts as a natural stimulant for others that are close enough to see or hear what's taking place.

Monthly or quarterly sessions with your employees are another excellent way to help maintain a positive atmosphere in your telemarketing environment.

CAUTION: good intentions are not enough here. Many of us are guilty of making a "mental commitment" to have these one on one meetings with our employees only to let it slip away because of our own busy schedules. Set documented dates with your people and see them through! Although periodical spontaneous times together are effective, consistent, established sessions are critical for maximum impact.

4) Training

Is training ever finished? Can you possibly overtrain your telephone professionals? NO and NO. For whatever reasons, too many people feel "My TSRs have already been trained" or "I've got good people...they only need a little training." These false perceptions will cost you dearly. Sure you have given them initial training including product/service knowledge, company orientation and maybe even some training on telephone techniques. But training never ends. Even the finest automobile in the world needs tune-ups! It is no different with your people. Schedule "tune-up" sessions for these topics among others:

- Telephone Techniques
- Communication Skills
- Sales Skills
- Listening Skills
- Closing Techniques
- Updated product/service knowledge

Once again I know these take time but these types of sessions will continually enhance the performance of your people and productivity of your business. They should be led by you or a supervisor with help from specific employees that show a particular strength in those skills.

Outside seminars are a great resource for an ongoing training program. If the expense of outside seminars is too costly, have someone in-house speak on specific subjects. The in-house seminars that I present have increased 150% since 1991. The biggest advantage to this interval approach is the ability to structure something to exactly match your needs. There is more flexibility getting someone to present something for your company than to attend an outside

function hoping some piece of the material will be applicable to your situation. Trade publications, magazine and newspaper articles and newsletters can be extremely valuable tools in helping your employees enhance their performance while keeping up with the industry standards and news as well. The use of audio and video tapes for training purposes has increased dramatically in the last year giving employees one more way to proactively polish their skills.

Give your people the resources they need to do the job you're asking them to do. Your "library" will play a major role helping to increase performance levels as well as overall ongoing employee development.

Remember...you can't over-train your telephone professionals.

5) Career Path

Do your people know where they are going after this? Do they know if there are further opportunities for them in your department or company? Are there other opportunities? These questions need to be answered and those answers need to be clearly communicated to your employees. Remember everyone's perception is his or her reality. Don't give your employees the opportunity to perceive a negative situation that might not even exist. They need to know what is potentially ahead for them, what opportunities there are for growth. This issue is a sometimes forgotten ingredient as to the importance it plays in the overall motivation of people.

Set a career path within your organization. Do you promote from within? I hope you can answer yes to that. Although specific circumstances require you to look for talent outside your company you should always first consider internal personnel. If you do this you are sending a very positive message to everyone that there are indeed further career opportunities within your organization. You must also ask yourself "Am I developing my people for potential future positions?" If yes, continue to do it. If no, get busy because your current staff represents your best source for future promotions. It's your job, managers, to make them capable to fill those positions. A career path draws career minded professionals. Isn't that the type of person you want?

6) Job Titles

What's in a title you ask? Plenty! When you talk about job titles you are tapping the self-esteem of people. How someone feels about the way they are perceived in the workforce is a critical component to overall attitude and moral. Picture a social gathering that includes some of your staff, the subject of work inevitably comes up. Will your people be proud, or embarrassed to share their title and workplace? The importance of feeling proud of who you are and what you do is monumental. Unfortunately, in our industry, the word "telemarketing" often carries a negative connotation with it. Many of your people will hesitate to announce they are a telemarketing rep. Look at some alternatives for rep such as Telemarketing Sales Associate, Sales Consultant, Account Executive or even

Account Specialist. These are only examples. Be creative as you think of possibilities. Have your staff come up with ideas giving them input into the changes. Many companies are changing "telemarketing" to telesales and other similar ideas. Bottom line, you are dealing with pride...and pride enhances a positive attitude...and a positive attitude is the foundation for continuing success.

7) Good Work Environment

What really motivates people? Too often managers tend to think they know exactly what motivates their people without really knowing them, spending time with them or better yet, asking them. I promise you this can become a dart throw, a guessing game. A recent industry study shows just how inaccurate your results can be. Employers were asked to rank what they thought motivated their people and then employees were asked to rank what really did motivate them. Employers felt working conditions was a nine (or next to last) in terms of importance. What did the employees say? Number two! Working conditions are very important to the way employees feel about where they work.

Cosmetically does your office look nice? Are there pictures on the walls, plants, and fresh paint among other features that generally make people feel good about their environment? Does their work space have enough room or are they cramped in a "sardine can?" What about furniture? Is the desk the right size, chair comfortable? Is there file space and do they have the miscellaneous office supplies needed for maximum performance? Is the temperature regulated properly so they don't feel they're in the Amazon jungle one minute and the North Pole the next? Is it important for your people to be comfortable, have the space and supplies they need and feel good about where they work? I guess only if you're interested in positive results, maximum performance and retaining good employees.

8) On the Spot Raise

This too is affiliated with recognition but the key here is timing. When there is a reason for praising someone, don't put it off for any reason! Promptness equals effectiveness. Praise people when the achievement is fresh on everyone's minds. How many of you have been guilty of this? You are monitoring and you hear a great presentation or perhaps a sale, something very positive. Either out of tiredness or business, you think to yourself... "I'll have to make sure I say great job to them before they leave today."

What will inevitably happen is you may not see that day and days may pass due to weekends or travel and by the time you see them again you either forgot to say anything or everyone involved forgets the exact phone call or circumstances that took place.

What is effective is for us to get off our keister right then and go out and tell whoever it is what a great presentation it was or applaud them for the sale...praise them promptly for what they accomplished or achieved! Don't allow

time to creep in and snatch away any ounce of the positive impact that praise can have when it is delivered promptly.

9) Leadership Roles

Give your people leadership roles to reward their performance and also to help you identify future promotable people. Most people are stimulated by leadership roles even in spot appearances. When someone comes to visit your center use this opportunity to allow someone to assume the role of visitors guide.

A great place to hand out leadership roles is to allow your people to lead brief meetings. Utilize your employee's strengths and skills by setting up "tune up" training sessions and let one of your employees lead the training. The best time to do this is when new people start. Use your best telephone pros to assist you in the initial training phase.

Or, assign a meeting leader after someone has attended an outside seminar or workshop. Have them lead a post show briefing the other employees regarding seminar content and highlights.

Have people help you with scripting or lead a project team to improve internal processes. Stimulate your staff...give them chances to show leadership qualities.

10) Team Spirit

It is typical to hear most everyone say, "I'm a team player." As the old saying goes...talk is cheap. It has almost become a canned phrase. But the importance of establishing a true "team" environment is enormous.

People naturally like to belong. There is too much selfishness and egotistical roadblocks that seem to keep many departments, centers, and even companies from the wonderful results that "teamwork" will bring an environment.

Posters and banners and other material promoting teamwork should be very visible throughout your area as a constant reminder. These can be purchased inexpensively or run on a PC system. If possible, have a picture taken of your entire staff (including you!), have it enlarged and hang it in a visible spot. Most people like to physically see themselves as part of a group or team.

When running contests in your area, try to create contests and affiliated activity that are team driven. People driving to reach goals together definitely enhance team spirit solely because they must lean upon others and be prepared to be leaned on. This is very healthy for your people and your overall department. One idea that has been very effective for me has been building a collage of creative ideas with the "Theme of Team". I have implemented a plan where all employees are responsible for a phrase referring to TEAM on a weekly rotation. Each of these ideas such as TEAM: Total Enthusiasm of All Members or There is

no I in TEAM is placed on a wall to create a collage of Team oriented phrases. Don't have one person responsible for this...do it as a team.

Most important is the role we play as managers. Do you set a positive example for your people to follow? Instantly I'm sure you said yes! Now reflect on the question further and determine ways that you can further set an example that constantly reflects the importance and positive impact of people, thinking and working as a team. Remember, less "I" and "ME" and more of "US" and "WE."

11) Executive Recognition

This in my opinion is the secret weapon. And like any secret weapon, timing is most critical. If this is used too often the value is diminished. And if it is used only for special occasions and rare achievements the value is escalated. We talked earlier about general recognition and the positive impact that has on your people. That will go up a few notches when it comes from an executive. Some of the same vehicles can be used here such as memos and voice mail. And to add yet another level of stimulation, have an executive either personally call to congratulate someone (group) or even show up in person to shake hands and express their appreciation. What a great feeling it is to suddenly receive recognition from a company executive for a job well done! We as managers are responsible for getting executives more involved with our daily activities and understanding the lasting motivation that goes along with their recognition of employee accomplishments. If you are a company executive, are you involved enough? If yes...Great! If no...Get involved. If you are a manager or supervisor again your mission is to make sure you get executive level staff to recognize your employee's achievements. It's so easy to do and your return on investment will be tremendous.

12) Social Gatherings

Getting together with co-workers away from the workplace will in turn enhance the atmosphere back at the workplace. Scheduled offsite events enhance bonding, which in turn helps team spirit, which ultimately impacts your positive work environments. Does your company have parties at Christmas or perhaps put together a family picnic in the summer? If not, you should. The more you know about who people really are the better chance you have to push the right motivational buttons along the way. Plus these types of events are simply flat out fun! Halloween costume parties, picnic on July 4th, Memorial Day or Labor Day, and Christmas parties are only some of the ideas that successfully bring people together for an enjoyable time. Some others that I've used with equal success are softball games (against other companies or among employees depending on staff size), groups going putt-putt golfing or movie madness. As you learn more about each other as people you will find it easier to work together as a team on the job. And anyway, what's wrong with a little fun? Nothing!

13) Casual Dress Day

This will apply more to the Business-to-Business world based on the difference in normal dress codes from the Business-to-Consumer arena. For those of you required to "dress business" every day a casual day becomes a popular desire. Use holidays as a springboard for casual dress days. Use holidays to create theme color casual days such as red and green before Christmas or red, white, and blue before July 4th, or black and orange prior to Halloween. This will add to the impact you're trying to have by calling a casual day in the first place. Establish pre-vacation casual days for each individual employee to enjoy on the day before his or her vacation.

Major sports events are a perfect opportunity for casual dress days to support your local or favorite team with appropriate colors, buttons, and logo wear. Spontaneous casual days produce a lot of stimulation based on the element of surprise. Announce a casual dress day for the following workday "just because." Use individual or team casual dress days as contest prizes or awards for specific accomplishments. People will fight hard to win the right to be casually different for a day. And to those companies who have always hesitated to allow a casual dress day, I encourage you to consider changing your position. Don't get caught in the false theory of thought that says "If they dress casually for a day their work performance will reflect casual effort." Experience proves the opposite. The change from the daily norm and the freedom sparked by casual clothing will produce motivation for higher than normal performance in most cases. Once again managers, it may fall on your shoulders to educate company executives that casual dress days mean a great deal to employees.

14) Time Off

In an industry where burnout and turnover are waiting to happen, time off in my opinion is the biggest motivator in telemarketing environments. Right away I know some of you just turned white with panic or red with rage. When I talk about time off I am not referring to huge chunks of time away from the office. During recent consulting projects company executives contested that those people are paid to be on the phone...why should I give them time off? Fortunately, I was able to educate these executives in how to utilize time off as an advantage to the employee and the company creating a win-win situation. Once again in an industry where burnout is very evident, time off becomes a very valuable and desired commodity. Any amount of time. And those of you that have spent time on the phone know this is true!

Implement contests that earn time off. People will compete for 15 minutes or 1/2 hour off just as hard as they will for a cash reward. And in many cases, I have had people pick time off over cash when given the choice. Put goals in place (padded of course) and when these goals are reached by individuals, teams or the entire staff, reward them with time off. Allow early dismissals, late arrivals, and extended lunch periods or additional breaks.

Holidays are a perfect opportunity for a spontaneous gesture on your part as managers. Jump in your time capsule for a few minutes and go back to past holidays and the day of work prior to that holiday vacation. Around 1/2 hour prior to shifts end, what happens? Holiday excitement takes over and very little work gets done, that's what. So many times I will let everyone go 15-20 minutes early. The motivational payback you get from this will far outweigh the production you get in the last 15-20 minutes of the day.

Time off can become one of your most valuable tools for motivation if used properly and in the proper increments.

15) Outside Seminars

Outside seminars are a stimulating break and act as training above and beyond that which comes from management. And isn't it amazing that sometimes a suggestion of recommendation for improvement that an employee hears someone other than management say is suddenly the best idea since toilet paper. Even though you as their manager have told them the exact same thing! Sometimes they need to hear ideas from a neutral source as opposed to always from management. Because outside seminars are not always cost efficient for most people, consider on site seminars or workshops for your staff.

Once again, use outside seminars as a contest prize for one or two people. Then set up a structured plan for those seminar attendees to briefly recreate the seminar to the rest of your people when they return. Now everyone gets educated for the price of one.

16) Additional Responsibility

There are definitely employees in your organization that are begging for and can handle additional responsibility. Don't cringe...I don't mean everybody. But there are some. Our job as managers is to identify who they are and if possible match responsibilities to their strengths and desires. We're back to leadership roles. Help with reports or form a scripting team that develops call guides that must come through you for approval. If you're like me there are probably many things on your plate as well as the plates of other management members that you could use help with. Why not begin to use some of the hidden talents of your telephone professionals to help you accomplish some of these tasks? This will provide triple stimulation, as the additional responsibility is a natural stimulus to the person, that person is stimulated in front of his or her peers, and the peers are stimulated to want additional responsibility like their colleague. And now to add the icing to the cake...by doing this you will also be helping yourself determine potential future promotion.

17) Theme Contests

My belief in the power that contests have in telemarketing environments is certainly no secret. So why do contests have such a positive effect? Because they spark the competitive nature in people and add fun at the same time. That is

a winning combination, and contrary to some unfortunate business opinions, what is wrong with a little fun in the workplace? Nothing. Especially when productivity will increase during a well-implemented contest. Over the years my contests have produced up to 170% increase in performance but equally as important helped maintain positive environments that have reduced employee turnover by 400%.

Overall, the most successful contests seem to be those affiliated with different themes. Rather than simply most sales wins, or highest connect time is the winner, associate your contests with different themes. Holiday, anniversaries, sports, and culture are examples of ideas to base contests on. I have used dates such as the July anniversary of Neil Armstrong's moonwalk to create a contest breaking my TSR's into teams of astronauts attempting to be the first to safely land on the moon. Sports, without a doubt, provide the largest opportunity for a wide variety of contests. Even culture can be used to create theme contests. My favorite is using the '50s and '60s as a theme for a contest that I run at least once a year.

The key to successful contests is variation and most of all creativity. Contests create enthusiasm and enthusiasm is contagious. Use contests to create an epidemic of enthusiasm in your call environments. As it spreads, turnover will go down and performance will go up.

18) Stress Management

Stress, according to Webster is tension or strain. The telemarketing industry is one that lends itself to an enormous amount of stress based on the redundancy of the call activity.

There are many articles and books available on the subject. Make this reference material available to your people. Make sure they know it is available and encourage them to use it.

If possible, have an in-house seminar on stress management techniques. So that production time is not lost, you might consider having a brown bag luncheon with a guest speaker on this subject. Because stress is an ongoing concern, anytime is a good time for a seminar like this to take place.

Be as flexible as you can with breaks during the course of the day. If possible, in your environment, don't have scheduled breaks for two reasons: 1) how do we as managers know when the best time is for our employees to take a break? and 2) when scheduled breaks are in place, people have a tendency to not take a chance of cutting into that break time so no more phone calls will be made for fear of taking away break time.

The secret to stress management in your telemarketing arena is this: If all the other steps to non-monetary motivation are active in your environment, stress

management will be less needed. It will never go away, but it will be dramatically diminished.

We as managers must make sure our eyes and ears are open to recognize when our people have reached negative stress levels. Don't think things such as, "it will pass," or "They better get it together." Make sure that you take the time to listen to your people and understand what they are feeling. Only then will you be able to potentially help resolve the issue at hand.

19) Pizza/Popcorn/Cookie Days

Just what we need, another reason to eat, right? Exactly right! Every now and then pizza/popcorn/or cookie days will help break up that everyday routine and help people stay motivated. Because it is a natural tendency for people to get excited in anticipation of something, structure some of these days in advance. Then buy some pizzas or different cookies or even whip out some different types of popcorn. As many of the other previous steps to non-monetary motivation, this one is easy to implement and will add more ingredients to that magic formula that will help your people enjoy where they work.

20) Gags and Gimmicks

We already established that cash is not always the only motivator and in many cases not the best one. Use different gimmicks as awards to help inspire performance increases from your people. Take a close look at the photo picturing many of the following awards that I've created to recognize people's achievements. The key to these awards is establishing the perception of priceless value that is associated with them. They should be recognized as status symbols in your environment. Here are some of my ideas:

- Plastic/rubber whale for a "whale" of a performance.
- Pillsbury doughboy for the person "raisin" the most dough.
- Cardboard stars for star studded performance.
- Plastic phonograph records for setting a new record for dials, sales, appointments, etc.
- California raisin for those with the highest percentage of "raisin" their productivity.
- Special parking space for the person who drives the hardest.
- Toy cymbals for those "symbolizing" total effort.
- Special Mountain Dew can for the person who exemplifies the "can do" attitude.
- A figure of E.T. for out of this world performance.
- The Energizer Bunny for those that keep going, and going and going.
- Large Tootsie Roll replica for those on a "roll."
- A drum for the person that "drums" up the most business.

These represent only a portion of the ideas that have been and continue to be highly effective in my environments. Some of these awards can be presented on

a rotating plan. This way, only one purchase is necessary. Others should be handed out on an ongoing basis according to performance.

You can also use negative awards to create positive stimulation:

- A ketchup bottle for the person who needs to play "catch-up" in their productivity.
- A toy dragon for those whose performance is "draggin."

These create instant energy to improve as no one wants either of these to be seen in his or her area for long. Don't be surprised to see someone go from the dragon or ketchup to the raisin or doughboy within a very short time. Ralph Waldo Emerson was quoted as saying, "Nothing great was ever accomplished without enthusiasm." Some of these ideas will help you create the epidemic of enthusiasm that is needed for maximum performance in telemarketing environments everywhere.

In an age where budgets are dropping while performance expectations remain the same it becomes imperative that we find ways to maximize the productivity of our people with the most cost efficient methods. Remember, that motivation according to Webster is "something from within, not without that prompts or invites an action." Motivation comes from within our people. We as managers cannot motivate our people. Our job is to create an atmosphere that promotes self-motivation from our employees. Implementing any combination of these 20 steps will help you with the constant challenge of creating, and more importantly, maintaining that atmosphere in your telemarketing environment.