

10 Simple Ways



To Motivate Your Team

Developing Emotionally Intelligent, High Performing
Managers and Teams

Key Skills Series for Managers

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“The shortest and best way
to make your fortune
is to let people see
that it is in their interests
to promote yours.”

*Jean de La Bruyere
17th century French Writer*

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Why do you need to get good at motivating others?

The present business climate is tough, and many businesses are affected by the current downturn. There are three common consequences in businesses when sales and growth slow down. As a manager, you may have experienced any or all three of these:

Some staff are made redundant, given reduced hours and bonus opportunities are often lost.

There is increased pressure on all staff to do more.

Tension, conflict, stress and apathy amongst staff increases, and motivation and engagement often decreases.

If you're a manager or supervisor, you'll feel the pressure too – possibly more – because your people's performance is seen by others as a reflection of your own ability to manage.

It's an irony that, at a time when you most need your staff to pull together, to be motivated, creative and productive, the environment often produces the exact opposite.

So how do you increase the engagement and morale of your people, reduce tension and conflict, and increase your chances of hitting targets?

This deliberately short, but practical report condenses the mass of information and research out there into workplace motivation into ten simple things you could apply immediately which will have a positive effect on the performance and motivation of your team.

The potential of your hard resources, such as your equipment and physical workspace and so on, is limited. The potential of your people is actually infinite. Study after study in recent years has shown far too many people at work do just what they need to do to keep out of trouble. They could do more, but they choose not to. They withhold what psychologists term “discretionary effort” – that is effort they could make which they do not have to do, which is not expected, and which, if they do not do, will have no negative consequences at all.

Understanding how to tap into and increase “discretionary effort” in your team, is a skill of the greatest managers, but you are time-pressed and under pressure. So, in the following pages I have tried to condense and crystallise the absolutely critical actions and behaviours of the world's greatest managers, so you can start applying some of these techniques immediately and see results.

Bill Hewlett, Co-founder of Hewlett-Packard said, **“Men and women want to do a good job, a creative job, and if they are provided the proper environment, they will do so.”**

One of the key criteria upon which you will be judged, is your ability to lead a team. This short e-book condenses some of the most critical skills and behaviours you'll need to execute that competence brilliantly.

Tip number 1

Show an interest in people and give them some time

There are now numerous studies which show money is not a key motivator for us at work. It's not that it's not important – it's just that it's not the most important thing we can do to motivate people. In fact, in one study, it came in tenth as a good recognition practice!

The top four most important recognition practices from one large HR study were:

- a) Support and involvement
- b) Personal praise
- c) Autonomy
- d) Authority

Money came in at number ten.

And these findings are replicated in study after study. Whilst the order may not be the same, the message, loud and clear is, **people want to be appreciated and valued at work**. They want to feel they count, and that they're supported.

What actions do you currently take as a manager to show your support and involvement with your staff? How often do you take these actions?

Do you take them consistently and regularly, with all your staff – or just those you get on easiest with?

What could you do more of?

What are you not doing, you could do?

These things don't have to take long – a few minutes conversation with a member of staff, showing **genuine** interest, and repeated at reasonably regular intervals, will build and strengthen a relationship which will repay you in spades. Think of this as an investment – you put something in – but you get interest in the form of loyalty and commitment in return.

Tip number 2

Find the right buttons to press for each of your employees

This point logically follows the first.

Do you actually know each of your employees well enough to be able to say with authority, what gets them excited? What turns them off? What aspirations do they have? What talents and skills do they think they have, and which would they like to develop?

If you've taken the trouble to spend some time with your employees, asked the right questions, and actually really listened to their answers, you have a gold-mine of information which can help you understand what motivates that employee the best. Once you know that, you can set about finding ways to support their needs.

OK – you're not going to be able to help every employee meet their every need, but by listening and where possible, demonstrating your commitment to an individual's needs and growth in the workplace, you will build up a store of goodwill which will increase employee motivation and loyalty and bolster you in tough times. By finding ways of allowing individuals to do more of what they're really good at they'll be happier, more productive individuals.

So, when you “touch base” with your staff, try asking them the following questions:

- What are you most enjoying about your job right now?
- Which tasks or parts of your job come easiest to you?
- What do you find least enjoyable or are you finding hard?
- How can we/I support you more?
- What would make your job better right now?
- What would be the perfect role for you?

Just ask those questions, then shut up and really listen! This is simply to help you get to know your staff; and give them a real sense someone actually does have an interest in what they do. And, wherever possible, once they've had their say, make a comment about how you see it too.

You don't have to make a big deal of it; no need for formality, and you're not writing down answers! However, if you're listening closely, you will find out what truly interests and motivates this person, which will help you work out all sorts of things. You'll have a better understanding of what sort of other roles/projects they might be really suited for and how you could incentivise them with something specifically relevant to them.

Believe me, this seemingly small action can have massive positive benefits, well worth the few minutes of your time it will take. You are building a relationship – and the stronger it becomes, the more it will stand you in good stead, particularly when things get tough.

Tip number 3

Train, train, train!

Training and development sends a powerful message to employees that they are valued. Find ways to give employees special learning opportunities, both inside and outside of the organisation. If you've implemented steps one and two, you'll be very clear about the aspirations and interests of your staff, and agreeing ways in which they can enhance their skills to support their own needs will show them you clearly feel they are worth the investment of time and money.

And this is **not** about simply ensuring they go on the mandatory induction course your organisation has in place. Nor is the end of year, or interim appraisal discussion the exclusive domain for talking about personal development.

Recent large scale studies by Gallup, have shown, managers who spend just 15 minutes a month having a structured, but very informal chat, with each of their employees, which "touches base", shows interest in their progress, asks about their needs, and demonstrates a willingness to find ways to support through training, are those with the highest performing teams in an organisation.

Fifteen minutes per month; worth the effort I'd say!

Budget tight? Cutting back on training? There are all sorts of ways you can support training at low cost. Some examples are below – but I bet you could think of some others!

◆Mentoring

Is there someone who might be able to mentor this individual? This helps not only the individual increase their confidence and expand their skills, but it does the same for the mentor too!

◆Shadowing

Let the member of staff just spend a couple of hours shadowing a top performer, or someone in another role.

◆Lunch and learn breaks

Set up some brief training sessions over a lunch break. There are a myriad of tools and resources which can help you with this. Try your own HR department, or look for on-line, low cost resources for support on a particular topic.

◆Using low-cost training support

One-day open programmes/workshops can usually be found in your local area, either at relatively low cost, and sometimes even free through organisations such as Business Link and Chambers of Commerce.

Tip number 4

Understand and use the power of praise

This is one of the simplest, easiest, most profoundly powerful yet most underused tactics in the world!

Everyone loves the feeling they get when someone shows appreciation for something they've done. As humans, no matter what race, creed or colour, we all have a need for recognition – something which validates us as human beings.

And yet, for many of us, it's almost as if it's rationed.

I could write a book on this one – and some people have! (If you're interested, one of the best I've read in a long time on the subject is: "Bringing out the Best in People" by Aubrey Daniels)

However, for the purposes of brevity let me just say this:

You should praise people at least 5 times more than you criticise.

Seek out the positive actions and behaviours you see your staff displaying and tell them they're doing a great job! This is almost the opposite of what I see in most organisations, where the focus is on what people's weaknesses are, then trying to fix them!

Try to be specific about what it is you feel they're doing so well – for example, if they've written a good report, avoid saying "that was a good report". What exactly was good about it? Was it concise? Accurate? Well presented? On time?

And how did that report help you and the organisation? Did it make a good impression on the customer, so helped you win a contract? Was it clear and concise, so you found it really helpful to find what you need to make your own report to the Managing Director? The clearer you are about what made it "good", the more likely that behaviour will be repeated when that individual does the report next time.

There are lots of tips to giving good feedback which we don't have time for here – but make a start now! Become more observant.

Notice what your people are doing right, and tell them!

Be honest, and genuine. This is not about "sucking up" or "fawning". They'll see through that straight away.

Every study shows this is the most effective way to ensure people continue the action or behaviour you are wanting, and it strengthens their sense of feeling appreciated and valued, which is one of the most basic, powerful human needs.

Praise, well given, will NOT create big heads!

So what can you do immediately – to start implementing this tip?

First, just start to notice how many times you praise any of your team. For one week, just make a mental or written note of any occasion where you praise someone. Also, make a note of when you criticise, or point out errors etc.

At the end of the week try the following checklist:

Tip 4 continued....

- 1) Have I praised everyone on my team at some time this week?
- 2) Was I specific about what they'd done well – or did I just say “well done” or good job” or something else equally vague?
- 3) Who did I not praise?
- 4) Are there some people I'm conscious I don't praise much at all?
- 5) Are there some people on my team I don't get on with so well, who I find myself feeling negative about, so I don't tend to praise them much?

Another suggestion, which I find is a fun way of approaching this, is to imagine you've put on a new pair of spectacles which only allow you to see good things. Take a walk round your office, or pay more attention as you interact with your staff.

Make a mental note of the good behaviours or attitudes you see – and then find time to feedback the good stuff to the relevant individual or team as soon as you can.

(Feedback only the positive stuff. Do not be tempted to say anything else in the same conversation! Otherwise, they'll come to learn you say something nice, but it's always followed with a “but”!)

I promise you, you will be amazed at the results.

And if you feel a little unsure about how to do this really effectively – get your learning and development department to allow you on a course which teaches you these critical skills!

Knowing how to give and receive feedback should be an absolute MUST in a manager's kit bag.

Tip number 5

Be clear, and consistent, about the goal posts

Does everyone in your organisation understand exactly what is expected of them?

People like to know exactly what is expected of them at work – both the ultimate goals you have, such as profit etc, and also the other, sometimes less explicit expectations in terms of behaviour and “how things get done around here”.

People don't like shifting goal posts. They don't like uncertainty. They like to know where they stand. You risk losing their respect and their desire to perform well if you don't make the goal posts clear, or you appear to be making things up as you go along.

I often hear managers tell me stories about staff who are not performing as they would like. Everything from staff who consistently turn up late, to staff whose attitude is undermining or threatening the profitability of the organisation. One manager I spoke with recently illustrated this really well I thought.

There was a small, but highly successful and growing company, manufacturing quality fixtures and fittings for lighting to trade organisations. They produced bespoke, unusual designs, using quality materials. Some of the pieces of glassware they used could cost as much as £80 for one small piece, which would be part of a whole fitting. Clearly, damage to these would cost the company dearly, and affect profitability.

Yet one member of staff seemed to show a lack of regard for the due care and attention required when handling these expensive components, and when that individual chipped one of these £80 pieces of glass, simply shrugged their shoulders, became defensive and dismissive, with the attitude of, “it's an accident. These things happen.”

Now sure – to a certain extent that's true – but what this company needs is to minimise that breakage, and this is where clear expectations are absolutely vital. In this case, there are expectations in terms of the practicalities of handling expensive components, (which might be addressed through training for example), but also expectations in terms of attitudes and behaviours of staff towards the importance of this training.

So – how clear are you about behaviours and attitudes you expect from your staff? How does your training ensure these specific outcomes are understood and accepted? How do you incentivise these actions or attitudes? **Can** you incentivise them for greater impact? (See tip 6 for more ideas.)

Tip number 6

Avoid changing goal posts

Following on from the last point, this is all too often a frequent source of frustration, de-motivation, anxiety and sometimes anger amongst employees who blame what they perceive as “constantly shifting goal-posts” for their apathy and resentment.

Again, there is much which can be written on this topic, but let's distill this down to some simple things for you to consider.

The goal posts themselves may not have changed – but how you play the game to win the match and score the most points, may well have to change. It's the equivalent of the half-time talk in the dressing room at a cup final.

You still want to win the game – score the most points; but **how** you play in the second half may need to change.

In my experience, it is actually rare for the ultimate outcomes of most organisations to change radically. Most organisations have the same basic requirements to survive; make a profit, customer satisfaction, etc, etc

It's the process or strategy which changes the most, and the behaviours required of their staff to cope with these changes, which may need to adapt.

So, imagine you're the manager of a football team at half time.

The team are 2-0 down, they look dispirited and talk of winning being “hopeless”, they're blaming the goalkeeper and as their manager you know something has to change if you're going to win the match.

The ultimate goal is to win the match. Fixed. Period.

But sure as eggs is eggs, unless the blame stops, unless the players' mindset moves from “can't” to “can do”, and the strategy alters, you're going to get hammered in the second half.

So it's the process, strategy, behaviours and priorities which might need to change.

And to the staff, these seem like shifting goal posts. But your main goal actually is the same – to win the match.

Remind your staff of the ultimate goal. Explain which current behaviours, processes or activities are holding back your chances of winning the game, invite comment or suggestions where possible, and set clear expectations about the strategy and behaviours you need to see if you're going to turn round the score. So set your expectations about these new behaviours and attitudes, and consistently find ways of reinforcing and incentivising these new tactics.

Changing **how** we do what we do is not actually changing the goal posts. It's the **only** way we learn, grow and improve our performance. Help your staff to see that.

Tip number 7

Allow your staff some opportunity for autonomy

(in other words, hone your delegation skills!)

Now this might sound almost in conflict with point 3. On the one hand you want to ensure your staff know what is expected of them – and so you have to set certain rules; there needs to be procedures and policies for some things – in particular, of course, things such as health and safety.

But you will strangle motivation and creativity in your staff if you strangle them with rigid policies and rules which never allow them to think for themselves.

You need to find ways in which you can allow individuals some scope for choosing how to perform a task. You need to find ways you can create opportunities for staff to make suggestions as to how to do something better – and if they come up with a good idea then you need to give recognition for that good idea, and implement it!

Selling is a good example here. Some sales training sets rigid expectations based around technique, completing call-reporting sheets and almost word-for-word scripting of what staff have to say in given situations. Research shows the best managers define very specifically the few outcomes they want, but realise that if one sales person closes through relationship building, another through sheer persuasiveness and another through technical competence and detail orientation, they don't have to interfere, as long as quality sales are being made.

We all have a tendency to think the way we do things is the best – (some of us more than others!)

If you want to motivate your staff, and encourage finding other, even better ways of doing things, then you need to be clear about the *what*, and let your staff have some leeway about the *how*.

Tip number 8

Encourage intelligent risk-taking

Following point seven, if you're going to allow some degree of autonomy, you need to create a culture which encourages employees to take intelligent risks and feel comfortable doing so.

Sometimes companies foster exactly the reverse. Employees may have tried something a little risky and things went wrong, and they were either disciplined or worse, fired. Sometimes they do get a pat on the back, but at the same time they may get reprimanded for taking the initiative, instead of following the "proper channels".

On the one hand companies say they want people to feel empowered and take risks, then in another breath tell them not to screw up!

Let's face it – everyone makes mistakes. Most outstandingly successful organisations have had a number of "failures".

The key is teaching people how to take calculated risks – how to evaluate the critical issues, assess the opportunities against objective criteria to determine potential return and how to minimise risk by testing new ideas small first, measuring results, then, if successful, rolling out on a wider scale.

Risk is the life-blood of every really successful company. The best managers are willing to take risks themselves, are willing to admit when they've made a mistake if it doesn't work out, and encourage, teach and support intelligent risk-taking behaviour.

How much do you allow your staff to take risks?

What is your attitude to someone making a mistake?

What could you do to encourage, train and support, **intelligent** risk-taking in your business?

Tip number 9

Get creative about how you incentivise your staff

In tip number five we talked about how you need to set clear expectations about the actions, behaviours and attitudes you want to see in your staff.

One thing I believe many organisations and managers could set up quite easily, and they're missing a trick if they don't, is a creative way of incentivising these behaviours you want to see. For far too many organisations or teams, bonus or incentive schemes are based around the usual stuff: sales, or activity or profit.

But actually – if that's all you're doing, you're missing a trick or two which can seriously improve the motivation of your staff and overall performance!

So – for example, earlier we heard the story of the manager who had a member of staff who showed indifference to taking care with really expensive components in the light fittings they were making. He just didn't really seem to care much if he damaged stock, nor was he linking in his mind, his behaviour with the potential damage to the profitability of the company. How could this manager incentivise the behaviour she wanted to see more of? What she wanted and expected was more due care and attention with expensive components which made up the light fittings.

How might she incentivise such behaviour?

One way, she could incentivise this behaviour would be through a monthly bonus scheme which rewarded staff with an additional sum of money if they had no breakages.

But it doesn't have to be money.

There are **loads** of other ways you can incentivise – many of them cost very little, but are actually perceived as really valuable to the member of staff, and some which don't have to cost anything at all!

Like what, I hear you ask?

Well – what about time off?

What about some recognition and visibility with senior management?

What about a good appraisal?

What about praise – either one to one (if that member of staff doesn't like public displays) or recognition within a team meeting (if they do)

What about some kind of voucher scheme? I know one manager who gave one member of staff, who he knew had a keen interest in racing, tickets to Donnington Park. If you know your people, you should at least know a little about their interests outside of work. What would they appreciate?

Another well-known company, Goldman Sachs, New York, sends employees who work late into the night, home in a limo at no cost.

Get creative about how you incentivise the behaviours and attitudes you want to see.

And stop incentivising behaviours you don't want!

Crazy? You think that's not possible? Who in their right mind would incentivise a behaviour or result they didn't want?

Actually, it's not so crazy at all. It really does happen. The organisation I worked in for over 15 years fell prey to this, and I still see it in many organisations today as a coach.

What was it?

The sales bonus scheme.

Bonus schemes which focus most of the incentive on individual sales can actually be losing a company thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of pounds in revenue.

Why?

When I was in sales, if I came up with a great idea which would enable me to make more sales, I kept it to myself. Why would I share? If I wanted the recognition and the bonus at the end of the year, I needed to keep quiet about what I was doing until my reward was in the bag!

Fine for me. I won lots of fancy trips, awards and extra money.

But if you're the manager of that team, or even the MD of the company – is that the behaviour you actually want to reinforce?

If I'd shared that great idea for making more money with everyone else on the team, how much more money would the team and organisation have made?

So think carefully about what you're incentivising.

In the last example, it would have made far more sense for the focus for the incentive to be based around team sales, rather than individual sales.

You can still give some kind of individual incentive – maybe even start an incentive which gives the individual who comes up with a great idea that subsequently goes on to make lots of money, a reward.

That way, everyone wins.

Take a look at your incentive schemes right now!

Tip number 10

Walk the walk

You know what? The bottom line is, the most outstanding managers are respected.

They don't always get it right. They do make mistakes – but they admit them and learn from them, as they'd expect their staff to do.

They act as a role model for what they expect in others.

They always convey enthusiasm, and remind people that problems can be overcome.

They recognise people who overcome obstacles and achieve results.

They focus on the positive side of new ideas.

They meet more frequently with people when morale is low. They express optimism and faith in their team.

They concentrate on not just the big successes, but the small wins too.

They make work fun, and they celebrate a lot!

Any manager who translates this into action will find that, when times are tough, they are still able to keep their team “on-side”. Staff will be more willing to listen, more tolerant of problems, and less inclined to cause you hassle.

And the best bit by far?

This doesn't actually take up much time at all. It's more about a way of “being” than “doing”. Consciously begin to apply some of these principles, and you'll not only create a high performing team, you'll get noticed for all the right reasons.

Enjoyed
reading
these tips?

There are currently three, one-day open workshops available, specifically designed to help managers hone their people skills.

How to be an outstanding manager

If you're new to managing others and want some key pointers to the most effective way of developing and maintaining a high performance team, **and** build your own credibility in the process, then this highly interactive, one-day session is just the kick start you need.

Go to: [Four Keys to Managerial Success](#)

How to handle conflict effectively in the workplace

This one-day workshop is jam-packed with proven tips and techniques to help any manager who wants to deal with existing conflict or tension, as well as sharing some simple strategies to ensure you maintain those good working relationships in future.

Go to: [Handling Conflict](#)

How to coach your team to better performance.

Learn how to motivate others, encourage ownership and responsibility, change the culture and attitudes of your staff and increase performance through some simple coaching techniques you'll learn on this highly interactive workshop.

Go to: [Manager as Coach](#)

About Shona Garner

Shona Garner is an Executive and Business Coach, specialising in dramatically improving team performance through developing strong, emotionally intelligent managers and highly productive working relationships within a team.

A qualified teacher, psychology graduate and accredited



coach, she and her associates have delivered and designed courses for thousands of people in companies such as M&S, Tesco, BT, Shell and HBOS, as well as working 1-1 with a wide range of managers and senior people across a wide range of public and private organisations.

Shona writes regularly on the subject of management, and is also

asked to give talks for small businesses through local Business Links, as well as being a speaker for the Academy of Chief Executives.

“An exceptional facilitator”

Ruth Sharpe,
University of Central Lancashire

“Shona’s enthusiasm is infectious.”

Steve Harrop, Business Unit Manager
Baxter Healthcare