



The Exact Expertise to
Ignite and Sustain Performance™

LSA Global | White Paper



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Seven Techniques for Creating a Motivating Workplace

Creating a motivating environment for each agent is one of the supervisor's most important jobs. It is important to remember that everyone can be motivated, but they are motivated by individual reasons. There are seven techniques for creating a motivating environment:

1. Guidance and Support
2. Recognition
3. Rewards
4. Sense of Belonging
5. Development and Challenge
6. Fun!
7. Employee Satisfaction

Guidance and Support

The key components of motivation include being a role model, providing coaching on a regular basis, "listening" to the agents, clarifying expectations, and providing objective feedback. Agents need to know what is expected of them and how they are performing. Without coaching and feedback, they have no way of knowing if they are on-target or missing the mark. It is also key to remember to provide feedback to the agents who are performing at or above standards, and not spend all of the time with those who are under-performing.

Recognition

Recognition is one of the most effective ways to reinforce the call center's culture, support its objectives, and retain top performers. The supervisor should provide recognition for improvements along the way, for initiatives, as well as recognition for results. The goal is to recognize desired behavior so it will be repeated. Recognition can be given for perfect attendance, volunteering for a tough assignment, helping others meet their goals, cost or time-saving suggestions, or going above and beyond for a customer.

Recognition should be provided "on the spot" and should be in verbal and written form. The supervisor should create a mix of both public and "one-on-one" recognition strategies and encourage agents to recognize their peers. One way to do this might be to create a recognition box and fill it with sticky notes, smiley faces, gold stars, and other stickers for all employees to use. Or, write the word "recognition" on a calendar and make this a trigger word to quickly think of people who deserve recognition.





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Look at these excuses listed below and see if any of them sound familiar.

Top 10 Excuses for Not Giving Recognition	
I don't know how.	It becomes meaningless if done too much.
I don't have time.	I'm very limited in what I can do.
People don't care about it all that much.	Sometimes it's awkward and uncomfortable.
It's not my job.	People will think they've "made it" and stop working hard.
I don't believe in rewarding people for just doing their job.	I don't get it. Why should I give it?

Take a moment and make a list of all the people who work with or for you. When was the last time you gave recognition to each person for a job well done? If you can't remember the last time you recognized or praised most of the people on your list, you're probably not doing it enough.

Rewards

Rewards should be unique and relevant to the participants to fulfill their need for acceptance, recognition and personal esteem. When using rewards, it is important to remember that if an employee expects it, it may no longer be viewed as a reward. Also, rewards need to match the employee's needs and wants and should be used for specific accomplishments or efforts. It is common for call center managers to use lack of budget as an excuse for having no reward system, but the universal reward is praise, and it's free.

Cash, or a monetary reward, has the advantage of being easy to administer and simple to handle. Cash is understood by everyone, it is desirable, and can provide an extra boost to a long-term program. The drawbacks to using cash include the fact that there isn't a "trophy" or lasting memorial of the award, it's not considered exotic, can't be enhanced, and tends to become an expected reward. Cash is typically confused with other compensation and is therefore easily forgotten. A non-cash reward is memorable and reinforces the relationship between the reward earner and the reward provider.

In defining a reward and recognition program it is important to create excitement at the program launch. Make sure the objectives are clearly defined, take time to explain the rules, awards, and provide ongoing communication. The program should encourage continuous improved performance by providing ongoing measurement and feedback. Progress reports should be distributed in a timely and consistent manner.

The reward and recognition program should provide a wide range of positive consequences, encourage recognition by management and peers, and include rewards that have value, choice, and are easy to administer. Providing positive consequences using a reward and recognition program help call centers achieve business results. In order to change behavior, participants must understand what it is the management team wants them to do and what they will receive for doing it. Participants must also receive constant feedback to know where they stand in relation to the goal.

Sense of Belonging

The best way to create a sense of belonging is to use teams. With a team structure, the team members assume responsibility, creativity and potential are recognized and fostered, and trust and camaraderie develop.

Most supervisors use competition between teams to build effectiveness and efficiency. Competition should be positive, free of ridicule, and non-threatening. The competition should optimize the number of





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rewards by providing rewards for both outstanding and improved performance. The criteria and standards used for competition should be based on the performance goals each team is expected to meet.

When designing the competition, involve the agents in the evaluation process. Have them play a key role in establishing the competition and rules. Be sure to set up individual and team challenges and to give awards to the winning team and individuals. Competition brings team members together for a common goal, provides a sense of belonging, and creates a spirit of cooperation. If the competition is not carefully designed, it can reinforce the “end justifies the means” thinking, limit learning/sharing between teams, and can shift the focus away from performance to “winning.”

Development and Challenge

One of the ways to provide growth to agents is to create a learning environment. This can be achieved by combining tasks, forming teams, and rotating assignments. Regardless of the method selected, the goal is to build in feedback, to encourage widespread participation, and to nurture creativity.

Employees should have a career plan and know what they need to do to progress toward their goals. This may require outside education, a chance to work in different areas of the call center, or a training class. But as long as the steps to achieve the career goal are well defined, the employees can move at their own pace toward realizing them.

Fun

Which of the following statements are false?

1. Professionalism and fun are incompatible.
2. You need toys and money to have fun.
3. Fun means laughter.
4. You have to plan for fun.
5. Fun time at work will compromise results.

The answer is that all of the above statements are false! You can have fun and still maintain a professional work environment. Also, you don't have to have a good sense of humor to have fun – you can support rather than create fun.

Using games is one way to have fun in the call center. Most games are meant to involve every employee. Games can soften the rough edges of trying to work together in unfamiliar ways and can engage the employee in some kind of action, or by leading the employee to an intellectual revelation or change of attitude. Games can help boost morale, generate a positive atmosphere, and create enthusiasm.

Events and themes can also be used as a way to have fun. Some events and themes include asking agents to create a holiday mural on large sheets of white table paper that is taped to a central wall in the call centers. Another event or theme is to promote a physical fitness week with all of the agents coming to work in their exercise outfits and bringing healthy snacks.

To recognize diversity in the call center, some call centers celebrate an International Day. Agents are asked to bring food (morning/afternoon snacks) from their country or region by assigning theme countries/regions by queue type. During this celebration, agents decorate their cubicles with regional/international photographs and dress according to the theme. Another event is to celebrate Customer Service Week by creating a different theme for each day of the week.





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Other types of themes include a poetry contest, back to childhood day, crazy hat day, and a sports day for the agent's favorite professional sport team (football, basketball, hockey, soccer).

Employee Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction is tied closely to motivation. It is important to find out if employees are happy or not, because a satisfied employee will remain with the call center longer than a dissatisfied employee. Lack of motivation is one of the major reasons why employees leave. To find out if employees are happy, ASK! An employee satisfaction survey can be created and distributed to find out what employees think about their jobs. The survey should include questions related to what they like about their jobs, what they don't like, and what motivates them.

In summary, supervisors can create a motivating environment by providing guidance and support to the agents so they will know how they are doing and by providing feedback through coaching. A motivating environment includes recognition since it not only builds self-esteem, but also fosters job satisfaction and reinforces the desired performance. The universal reward is praise. It doesn't cost anything, so use it!

Teams help create a sense of belonging in the call center. When competition is used, it can bring team members together to create a spirit of cooperation. Supervisors should strive to create a learning environment to encourage agent development and to provide growth opportunities for agents. Keep in mind that a fun-loving workplace generates enthusiasm among the agents and teams, and the end result is increased productivity, lower turnover, and better service for the customer. And finally, if you don't know what your agents think about your call center, be sure to ask.

About LSA Global

Since 1995, LSA has helped organizations create and maintain competitive advantages through people. Over 85% of our business comes from repeat clients and our customer satisfaction rating is 97.5%. Our clients tell us that we are different. Our clients tell us that we save them both time and money. Our clients tell us that they appreciate access to experts across many areas

Our Leadership and Management clients report that we decrease their costs by up to 50%, while helping increase speed-to-productivity by 60% and decrease unwanted attrition by up to 40%.

Our Sales clients confirm that they have grown sales by 40%, increased units sold by 42%, increased average pricing by 12%, and closed over 50% of their pipeline.

Our Project Management clients inform us that, by regularly completing projects that meet or exceed expectations, they have become an anomaly in the world where most projects disappoint or fail.

Our clients succeed in the marketplace through increased revenue, decreased costs, and higher productivity. They maintain that our rigorous assessment, implementation, and measurement capabilities bring them tangible results. As an organization, we are fiercely devoted to supporting their success.

