

Shifting from Output to Impact

BY JUDY KAY MAUSOLF

I am often asked by dentists and managers “How can I get my team more motivated?” They are frustrated after trying a multitude of ideas, rewards and financial incentives without seeing any change in the team’s behavior.

Does this sound familiar to you?

We gave the team a bonus and they acted as if they were entitled to it.

We gave the team time off with pay and they didn’t show any appreciation.

We hosted a holiday party event for the entire team and their spouses and they complained.

We have the latest and greatest in technology, service and equipment and my team takes it for granted.

So if this is the norm...maybe it’s time to change motivators!

A controversial discussion among my colleagues in the dental industry is whether incentive plans/bonuses really work to motivate performance. Research supports that when it comes to producing lasting change in attitudes and

behavior, incentive rewards are very ineffective. Once the rewards run out, people revert to their old behaviors because they have not changed the attitudes that caused the behavior. Incentive rewards considered external rewards (extrinsic motivators) such as money, fame, and grades only temporarily change what we do.

However, motivation to improve performance from internal rewards (intrinsic motivators) such as pleasure from the task itself, sense of accomplishment, satisfaction in completion, or joy in the challenge have a long-term effect.

If a team member has a desire to excel, no external reward can ever match the power of internal moti-

vation. People who do exceptional work may be happy to be paid and even happier to be well paid, but they do not work for the paycheck. They work because they love what they do. If we know that we’re being paid a reasonable amount for our work, money is no longer even a temporary motivator.

The psychologist Fredrick Herzberg researched motivation and its relationship to job satisfaction in the 1950s and ‘60s. Herzberg’s findings revealed that certain characteristics of a job are consistently related to job satisfaction, while different factors are associated with job dissatisfaction.



Factors of Satisfaction:

- Achievement
- Recognition
- The work itself
- Responsibility
- Advancement
- Growth

Factors of Dissatisfaction:

- Company policies
- Supervision
- Relationship with supervisor and peers
- Work conditions
- Salary
- Status
- Security

The conclusion he drew is that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction do not offset each other.

For example, if you have a negative work environment, increasing someone's wage or giving them a promotion will not make him or her satisfied. If you create a healthy work environment but do not provide members of your team with any of the satisfaction factors such as recognition, advancement or growth, the work they're doing will still not be satisfying.

People are motivated by interesting work, challenge, and increasing responsibility. These internal motivators fulfill the need for growth and achievement. In a nutshell, dissatisfaction can demotivate but

removing the source of dissatisfaction will not motivate. It takes satisfaction to motivate someone to work harder or smarter.

Herzberg's work influenced a generation of doctors and managers yet his conclusions don't seem to have changed the American workplace. Compensation and incentive packages are still considered the number one way to motivate.

We can create job satisfaction when we shift the emphasis from output to impact. Instead of how many crowns have we done or how many patients have we seen today, how have we changed our patients' lives today? Motivation comes from the daily work itself,

a sense belonging, and constant reminders that what we do matters.

I love the acronym O.P.I. – No I am not referring to a brand of nail polish! O.P.I. stands for Opportunity for Positive Impact! O.P.I. gives us purpose and fulfillment. Purpose results in drive and a reason to do what we do and fulfillment creates satisfaction! Therefore, O.P.I. is an awesome way to increase job satisfaction to get motivated! We have oodles of opportunities to make a positive impact on our co-workers, colleagues, patients, neighbors, friends and family. Every day from the moment we wake up to the time we go to sleep we have O.P.I! It is always our choice. We can choose to impact others in a positive manner regardless of whether we feel the recipient is deserving of and regardless of the situation. Never give your O.P.I. power over to another person or a situation.

Here are some examples of O.P.I.

- Desire to be a leader in the industry.
- Believe their purpose is restoring health and wellness versus fixing teeth.
- Feel their opinions, suggestions and contributions matter.
- Feel pride in the work they do.

- Feel appreciated and respected by their team.

I think of motivation as the seat of a 3 legged stool. Here are the 3 legs to help you motivate your team.

THE FIRST LEG - Be a Lifter.

We can either empower or unpower! Help your team develop skill sets. Show your team that you believe in them by allowing them to continue to grow and learn by taking on new tasks, roles and challenges; EVEN if you can do it faster or better. Teach them by modeling the waddle of how to be a creator who creates versus a wallower who sees themselves as a victim. Let them know that what they think and what they do matters!

THE SECOND LEG - Be a Family.

Show appreciation and acceptance for each person as an individual. Celebrate uniqueness instead of comparing. Get to know each other on a deeper level. What else do they care about? Give them a sense of belonging. Don't we often claim we are all like a family? So treat each other like a caring, happy and healthy family would treat one another!

THE THIRD LEG - Be on Purpose.

Have a clear vision and mission that reinforces a larger purpose. Emphasize the positive impact of the work they do not just in the practice but in the lives of the patients. Clarify the main intention of your practice by defining priorities and it will help give the team a decision making strategy. As part of the daily huddle, mission and purpose can make even mundane tasks become significant!

People who are happy in their work are most often found in O.P.I. cultures.

Unfortunately, happiness at work is not prevalent. Numerous polls show low levels of work engagement, with over half of employees disengaged and dissatisfied. It is an end result of focus on external motivation such as compensation and benefits instead of internal motivation through creating more job satisfaction by the nature of the work itself.

Surprisingly, money is never one of the legs. Money is only a factor of dissatisfaction when compensation is not adequate or fair.

The bottom line is we all want to feel like we have a bigger purpose in life; that we make a difference; that we belong; that we matter!



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Judy Kay Mausolf is a dental practice management coach, speaker and author with expertise in helping others get happier and more successful! She coaches teams how to grow their practices by becoming better leaders, working together better and delivering service with more passion and fun. She provides teams with what they need to know on how to communicate positively, effectively and have a better attitude on a daily basis. She teaches teams how to get the re-engaged and accountable by building a culture based on happiness, trust and respect.

She is Past President of National Speakers Association (Minnesota Chapter), Director of Sponsoring Partners for the Speaking Consulting Network, and a member of the National Speakers Association and Academy of Dental Management Consultants. She is author of two books; "Ta-Dah! And "Rise & Shine!", and a contributing author for many dental magazines. She also publishes a monthly newsletter entitled "Show Your Shine".

Judy Kay lives in MN with her awesome husband Steve who makes her special coffee every morning and Zoe...it's all about me, 7 pound Yorkie!

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