



Did you remember to say "thank you" to your security personnel

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Not too long ago, I was being interviewed for a new position. Just about the very first question put to me was not about my qualifications or background, but "How do you motivate your employees?" "That's easy," I replied. "Money." "Money's not an option," was the counter. "What's your next idea?" Today I was reading a promotions magazine where one of the articles was about gifts given to outstanding employees to say "thank you."

Yes, we expect our employees to do their jobs, and do them properly, and some of us are quick to discipline, if not punish, when our subordinates don't measure up - but how many of us recognize and, more importantly, acknowledge or communicate when our employees do well? "I shouldn't have to give my employees a pat on the back just for doing their jobs," some of you might be grumbling, but a little positive reinforcement never hurts and, in many cases may encourage or prompt more of the same.

Why do people leave their jobs for other employment? Two main reasons: money and job satisfaction. And money may not be as important as you may think.

In Douglas McGregor's Theory X & Theory Y attitudes toward workforce motivation, Theory X assumes employees are inherently lazy, inherently dislike work and will avoid work if they can; therefore, theory X managers rely heavily on threat or coercion to ensure compliance. A Theory Y manager believes that, given the right conditions, most people will want to do well at work, and believe that the satisfaction of doing a good job is a strong motivation.

Liz Martinez, author of "The Retail Manager's Guide to Crime and Loss Prevention" (Looseleaf Law, 2004), says, "Showing appreciation for your employees is one of the best ways to ensure their satisfaction and loyalty, and showing them appreciation in a personal way makes much more of an impact than simply giving them money. Taking out your staff for pizza - spending a couple of hours of your time with them - means a lot more to the employees than if you were to hand them a \$20 bill. Spending time with them lets them know that you value them as people - which is one of the most important factors in job satisfaction. By spending time with staff members and getting to know them on a personal level, managers will also have a better sense of when an employee's behavior changes - which can be a tip-off that the employee may begin causing problems on the job. If an employee's behavior alters for a negative reason, it's important to know that as soon as possible so that damage control measures can be taken to protect the company. And if an employee was lucky enough to hit the lottery, you need to know that as soon as possible too, so you can start looking for a replacement. It all comes back to treating your staff members as valued individuals and taking the time to get to know them a bit."

Some years back (before cell phones), I was working out of town one weekend on a special investigative assignment. I needed to communicate with the vice president of the agency that had

contracted the job to me, and found I didn't have his home phone number with me. I called the agency's 24 hour communications number, identified myself to the operator on duty and asked him for my VP's number. He advised that he wasn't allowed to give it out. I told him where my name was on the communications list, identified myself, my (home) contact number, and other info that only I would have, with the same result - polite, firm, but no. Finally, he suggested that he call the VP and give him a number where I could be reached. When my VP called me, I complimented him on his operator. The next time I had to call in, I got a very warm response from this operator - my VP had obviously commended him.

Many times, we forget that our security officers are the first line of defense, and the company cop - the bad guy (or gal) who enforces the company policies and prevents people from doing whatever they want. They sometimes take a lot of flak, and are on the receiving end of complaints, or are the subject of complaints.

How many times have you fielded a complaint from a client or a client's employee, investigated, and found that your officer did exactly what he/she was supposed to do, and backed him up? Now, how many times did you go back to that officer and compliment him on a job well done?

So, how do you motivate your people? Like Liz Martinez said, "It all comes back to treating your staff members as valued individuals."

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