



Leading, Developing and Motivating your Millennials

by Harban Singh

Talent management includes attracting, developing and retaining good productive employees. However, it is one of the major challenges faced by managers. The task is more formidable in the case of the new generation of employees, who exhibit unique traits and characteristics. Many of them have the brainpower and come with lots of energy and initiative. But then this new breed needs a genuine level of motivation to excel. How do we connect and harness their full potential? How do we assimilate them faster?

Unlike the Generation X or Baby Boomers, the millennials joining the workforce now (employees born after 1981) have developed work characteristics and tendencies from doting parents, structured lives, and contact with diverse people. Millennials are used to working in teams and want to make friends with people at work. Millennials work well with diverse coworkers. Hence, to motivate this group (whose numbers are increasing), a new paradigm alongside the basic tenets of good management

is needed. As prescribed by Peter Drucker: "Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things." Interestingly, what we see currently the problems of Manchester United soccer manager Mourinho with his players stems from the perspective of being able to understand millennials better. We often take things for granted but there are genuine concerns in being able to motivate this younger group.

BELOW ARE SOME CURRENT DISCERNING "BEST PRACTICES" IN MOTIVATING YOUR STAFF AND THIS GROUP:

TAKE AN ACTIVE INTEREST

As a manager, it is vital to know your subordinate's values, how they react in interpersonal situations, what their goals and aspirations are, their inclinations, audacities and problems (obstacles) that affect them. By being aware of their situations and being around when they need you speaks a lot about your concern towards them, building trust. Remember, your employees are human and they need attention as many come from small families where they have had all the

attention. They also need our direct interest in supporting their work. Such win-win reciprocation gives you the edge as a leader and motivator, especially in the early days after graduation.

BEING A GOOD COACH AND ROLE MODEL

Recognise that each employee is talented, and distinctive and requires a different approach. Your ability as a manager is always needed, especially in coaching them. If counseling is correcting an undesirable habit, coaching is a proactive step to help your employees realise and perform. Being a role model and mentoring your staff is crucial as young vibrant employees look upon their bosses as their gurus and mentors. Essentially, good communication skills here is vital and you should be able to win your employees' support when they believe in your forward-looking coaching.

APPLY POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT AND CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

Together, with feedback, give positive reinforcement and constructive criticism. Positive reinforcement is the giving of

affirmative feedback and instilling confidence for the next assignment. An example would be: "Ricky, your sales in the new accounts are right on target (affirmative feedback). I know that your work on the quarterly report will be just as encouraging." (Instilling confidence in future effort.)

Feedback coupled with positive reinforcement will lead your staff to a positive direction and disposition. Do not wait for the annual performance appraisal to speak the truth.

Constructive criticism involves giving negative feedback in an educational way. E.g.: "Klopp, your figures in this month's report appear to be on the downside because your number of calls and manpower coverage was not as planned."

If used appropriately, positive reinforcement and constructive criticism can be a harbinger to better performance. Critical thinking when rightly applied with emotional intelligence works wonders!! As Jack Welch advocates: "Be candid with everyone."

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