

Ways Leaders Can Motivate Employees Beyond Money

Most successful entrepreneurs will tell you that their primary motivation is to “change the world” and to build something lasting, not to make a lot of money. But the conventional wisdom is that employees work for money, above all else. Yet my own experience, and a recent [McKinsey survey](#), leads me to believe that non-cash motivators may be more effective in the long term than financial incentives.

I agree with Charles P. Garcia, who ties motivation most strongly to leadership, in his book “[Leadership Lessons of the White House Fellows](#),” based on this group of more than 600 prominent leaders from every sector of American society. They assert that employees value having strong leaders, who incent them to do their best, just as much if not more than money.

For action, he provides a list of principles for entrepreneurs and managers alike, derived from his first-hand discussions with some of the nation’s greatest leaders. We all need to learn from these as we rebuild employee morale following tough economic times, with limited budgets:

- 1 **Energize your team.** Instead of being the type of leader who sucks the energy away from others, resolve to be the kind of leader who strives to bring passion and positive energy to the workplace every day. Your employees have just helped you pull your company through one of the nation’s worst economic periods. It’s time they had a source of positive energy.
- 2 **There’s more to life than work.** Great leaders have deep reserves of physical, spiritual, and emotional energy, and that energy is usually fueled by a strong and supportive relationship with the people they love, regular exercise, a healthy lifestyle, and setting aside time for reflection.
- 3 **Put your people first.** No organization is better than the people who run it. The fact is that you are in the people business—the business of hiring, training, and managing people to deliver the product or service you provide. If the people are the engine of your success, to be a great leader you need to attend to your people with a laser-like focus.

4 **Act with integrity.** In a time when news reports are filled with the stories of private and public leaders who've acted inappropriately and have gone against the best interests of their employees or constituents, showing your employees that you value integrity can help motivate them and create a sense of pride for your organization.

5 **Be a great communicator.** Leadership is influencing others, and this cannot be achieved without effective communication. If you're struggling with communicating to your employees, first work on your ability to influence individuals by choosing words that are impactful to carry your message. Then you need to figure out how to communicate to a larger audience.

6 **Be a great listener.** The most effective leaders are the ones who take the time to listen not just to their team members' words but to the priceless hidden meaning beneath them. Remember that during good times and bad, sometimes your employees just need someone to talk to. Communicate to them that you are always waiting with open ears.

7 **Be a problem solver.** Post a sign above your office door that reads, "Don't Bring Me Problems. Bring Me Solutions." Then set about the task of guiding each person on your team toward the goal of becoming a top-notch problem solver during this crucial period.

8 **Lead through experience and competence, not through title or position.** Mentor your employees, encourage them, make partners out of them, and your organization is sure to benefit. If you want to survive the tough economy, that's exactly the kind of leadership motif you need for your organization.

The fundamentals of leadership don't change between good times and bad. But when money is in short supply, these principles can be the difference between success and failure. Now is the time to start motivating your employees by applying these principles, and your team will lead you through the hard times.