

9 Things That Motivate Employees More Than Money

Here are nine better ways to boost morale other than money, By [Ilya Pozin](#)

The ability to motivate employees is one of the greatest skills an entrepreneur can possess. Two years ago, I realized I didn't have this skill. So I hired a CEO who did.

Josh had 12 years in the corporate world, which included running a major department at Comcast. I knew he was seasoned, but I was still skeptical at first. We were going through some tough growing pains, and I thought that a lack of cash would make it extremely difficult to improve the company morale.

I was wrong.

With his help and the help of the great team leaders he put in place, Josh not only rebuilt the culture, but also created a passionate, hard-working team that is as committed to growing and improving the company as I am.

Here are nine things I learned from him:

1. **Be generous with praise.** Everyone wants it and it's one of the easiest things to give. Plus, praise from the CEO goes a lot farther than you might think. Praise every improvement that you see your team members make. Once you're comfortable delivering praise one-on-one to an employee, try praising them in front of others.
2. **Get rid of the managers.** Projects without project managers? That doesn't seem right! Try it. Removing the project lead or supervisor and empowering your staff to work together as a team rather than everyone reporting to one individual can do wonders. Think about it. What's worse than letting your supervisor down? Letting your team down! Allowing people to work together as a team, on an equal level with their co-workers, will often produce better projects faster. People will come in early, stay late, and devote more of their energy to solving problems.
3. **Make your ideas theirs.** People hate being told what to do. Instead of telling people what you want done; ask them in a way that will make them feel like they came up with the idea. "I'd like you to do it this way" turns into "Do you think it's a good idea if we do it this way?"
4. **Never criticize or correct.** No one, and I mean no one, wants to hear that they did something wrong. If you're looking for a de-motivator, this is it. Try an indirect approach to get people to improve, learn from their mistakes, and fix them. Ask, "Was that the best way to approach the problem? Why not? Have any ideas on what you could have done differently?" Then you're having a conversation and talking through solutions, not pointing a finger.

5. **Make everyone a leader.** Highlight your top performers' strengths and let them know that because of their excellence, you want them to be the example for others. You'll set the bar high and they'll be motivated to live up to their reputation as a leader.
6. **Take an employee to lunch once a week.** Surprise them. Don't make an announcement that you're establishing a new policy. Literally walk up to one of your employees, and invite them to lunch with you. It's an easy way to remind them that you notice and appreciate their work.
7. **Give recognition and small rewards.** These two things come in many forms: Give a shout out to someone in a company meeting for what she has accomplished. Run contests or internal games and keep track of the results on a whiteboard that everyone can see. Tangible awards that don't break the bank can work too. Try things like dinner, trophies, spa services, and plaques.
8. **Throw company parties.** Doing things as a group can go a long way. Have a company picnic. Organize birthday parties. Hold a happy hour. Don't just wait until the holidays to do a company activity; organize events throughout the year to remind your staff that you're all in it together.
9. **Share the rewards—and the pain.** When your company does well, celebrate. This is the best time to let everyone know that you're thankful for their hard work. Go out of your way to show how far you will go when people help your company succeed. If there are disappointments, share those too. If you expect high performance, your team deserves to know where the company stands. Be honest and transparent.