

CLIP OF EPISODE

INTRO

DISCUSSION

Welcome to another episode of *The Workforce Link Podcast*, where we're offering forward thinking conversations for the workforce, linking employers and job seekers to a brighter tomorrow. I'm your host Sundi Jo Graham, with the Central Workforce Development Region, and I'm excited to be back with you for another episode of the podcast.

Motivating your team might not be as easy as it once was, especially with the big elephant in the room going on all around us - the employee shortage. Maybe your employees just don't have their heads in the game for whatever reason. When your employees aren't all in, your business suffers. That's why, as a leader, you should be making motivating your team high on the list of your priorities.

In today's episode, we're going to discuss some ways you can help motivate your team right away.

Before we dive in, though, I'd love for you to share this podcast with others. Whether you're sharing with another business owner, or a team member who needs a little help pushing through, let them know about this podcast. We want to help as many people as possible win in the workforce, and word of mouth is the best way to make that happen.

You and your friends can listen to The Workforce Link Podcast on pretty much any platform: Apple, Spotify, or right on our website at theworkforcelink.com. We're everywhere so it's easy for you to spread the word. And thanks so much for being willing to tell others about it.

Without further ado, let's dive into today's episode on how to keep your team motivated.

1) HAVE FUN

I made this number one on the list, and some might disagree with me. *Sundi Jo, we have jobs to do. There's no time for playing around.* Well.. let me ask this? Struggling to keep team members? This could be why.

If you want to keep people, you're going to have to think outside-of-the-box. You can't keep doing what you've always done. It doesn't work anymore.

Make time for fun no matter what industry you're working in. Here are some ideas:

- Offer weekly team lunches on YOUR dime. And I'm not just talking about bologna sandwiches and a bag of chips. Offer your team a meal they will enjoy. Take an hour each week and sit down with your team over lunch. Ask questions. Get to know them. If you're the leader of a large organization and can't possibly get to know everyone, delegate this to your leadership team. Make sure they're getting to know their team members. But.. I'll also say.. Figure out a way to get to know your people, no matter how large the organization. That speaks volumes to your people.
- Come up with some creative games to play at those lunches, perhaps with some prizes for the winners. If you have both in-person and virtually teams, find games that suit both. Get some fun competition going.
- Think of a fun office prank. Show people you're not all work and no play.
- In the summertime, offer a family day for your organization. Barbecue in the parking lot. Get a bounce house. Show your people you appreciate them. It goes a long way.

Those are just a few ideas, but I'm sure you can come up with some more great ones. I would suggest having an intentional planning meeting about how you can provide fun for your team. If you have a large HR team, bring them in with some ideas. If it's just you, tell some of your team members you're thinking about doing this and get their input. Send out a company wide survey and ask everyone.

Having fun at work creates bonds between your team and will build stronger relationships.

2) CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

To piggyback off of building stronger relationships amongst your team with fun, doing so can build a supportive team, which leads us to this point.

Letting your employees know you support them changes attitudes quickly and encourages them to work together. If they feel they are supported by you and their fellow team

members, they'll go to each other when they need some help with a project they may be stuck on. They'll ask for extra input on ideas.

Creating a supportive environment is an excellent motivator for getting results you want because it tells your team that you care.

3) ENCOURAGE OWNERSHIP

Make sure people feel like they have some ownership over projects. Give them clarity on a specific responsibility they have. Allow them to take a project on themselves, where they have to manage it and track the results for what they've been assigned. Sometimes getting that extra responsibility motivates them to go above and beyond.

Also.. let me share with you what **NOT** to do. Don't encourage ownership, then not stand by what you've entrusted to your team.

In a previous episode I briefly shared my story of being the Assistant General Manager. at a fast food chain. Did I mention it was the worst job ever and I'm so glad that season of my life is over? Anyway.. Here's why I'm sharing that.

The company's motto for all employees was to "act like an owner." They wanted you to think about that in situations you were faced with. If you were the owner, how would you handle that situation? It really is a great motto, if you follow through with it.

On more than one occasion, the management above me wouldn't show up for work, leaving me to run the restaurant. We had crazy hours and had to cover all the shifts - days, evenings, nights.

One particular night, when I was closing, I showed up to work and there were only two employees, me and one other person. The GM was nowhere to be found and there were multiple call-ins. Store policy was that you were supposed to have at least 3 people on a shift, which is crazy in itself. Hello, it was fast food!

It was 1 a.m. We had worked like crazy for hours trying to keep up with the demand. We were running out of dishes, food, and everything you can imagine. We still had 4 hours to go before we could close. I had tried to get a hold of upper management and no one would answer the phone.

So, I went back to what I'd been taught as a leader. "Act like an owner." I stopped for a second and evaluated the situation. If I owned this restaurant, how would I handle this situation?

PROMO - EMPLOYER SERVICES

Hey friend! Just want to interrupt for a quick second to tell you about something really amazing that's happening in the Central Region of Missouri right now.

Are you a business owner who needs assistance increasing your profit margin and building a strong workforce? Well.. now is the time to take advantage of our employer services. The Central Region Missouri Job Centers are ready to help!

Available at NO cost to you, we offer a variety of employer services, including job matching, consulting, work opportunity tax credits, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transition assistance, and more.

Get all the details at cwdregion.com/employerservices or email cwdrbusiness@cwib.us. Again, that's cwdregion.com/employerservices or email cwdrbusiness@cwib.us.

We look forward to assisting you with all your employer needs today!

And now... back to the show.

DISCUSSION CONTINUED..

First of all, I would answer the phone when someone is trying to get a hold of me to tell me my restaurant isn't properly staffed.

Second of all, I would not expect two people to run a multi-million dollar restaurant with a drive-thru line that runs non-stop all day long. As an owner, I wouldn't put my people in that position, because I value them too much.

Thirdly, I wouldn't make my profit more important than my people.

So, at 1:00 a.m. I decided to close the restaurant down. It took us 4 hours to clean the place after we closed because I wasn't about to leave it that way for the next shift. We cleaned, did dishes, scrubbed, and I don't know about my co-worker, but I cried a few times. We were exhausted.

But I went home feeling good about my decision. I “Acted like an owner.”

Are you ready for this? The next morning while I’m trying to sleep from working a 12-hour shift, I get a call from upper management, who didn’t bother to answer the night before, threatening me with my job because I closed the restaurant and cost them money.

Now.. I’m all about respecting leadership, but let me tell you.. By the end of the phone call, I wasn’t all that calm. I let him know that I did exactly what I was trained to do and would not apologize for it. I also let him know that if he ever put me in that position again, he wouldn’t have to worry about firing me. I would walk out and not look back.

Did I mention that was the worst job I’ve ever had in my life? Moral of the story is, as a leader of your organization, if you encourage your team to take some ownership, make sure you allow them to do so.

4) ALLOW YOUR TEAM TO SHARE THEIR IDEAS

Consider hosting regular brainstorming sessions with your team. Allow everyone to offer their creative input regarding projects, processes, and more. I can’t stress how important this is.

Is something not working in your office, the factory you’re running, the construction project you’re managing, whatever the case? Ask the people in the grind. Ask those working on the line. Ask those in the cubicles. Don’t just get input from the “top team”. Get ideas from those in the grind.

This not only gets your team excited about your projects and company goals, it once again says, “Hey, I value what you have to say.”

This encourages your team to think creatively, aim higher, and work more efficiently. And.. I would also add to this.. If you can make changes to where you have these brainstorming sessions, that would be great. Don’t just have it in the same space every time. Shake things up a bit.

5) TELL YOUR TEAM YOU APPRECIATE THEM

Creating a fun environment shows your team you care about them. Building a supportive environment does too. Allowing your team to take some ownership shows that you trust them. Allowing them to share ideas does too.

But... make sure you **tell** your team how much you appreciate them. Don't just show them. Words matter. We actually did a whole episode last season on why words matter. I'll share the link in the show notes.

Tell them both publicly and privately that you appreciate them. Make sure you tell them what they're doing matters. Let them know what they've done right and how it's impacted your organization for the good.

- Maybe give them a gift card with a hand-written note.
- Write them a short email.
- Present them with a certificate for a specific achievement.

Whatever it is, make sure you **tell** them that you value them. One of the key motivators for people enjoying their job is to know what they're doing matters, and for you to tell them, means everything.

RECAP

So, let's do a quick recap of what we went over today in order to keep your team motivated.

1. Have fun.
2. Create a supportive environment.
3. Encourage ownership.
4. Allow your team to share their ideas.
5. Tell your team you appreciate them.

We are in a strange season of life right now. Our economy is wonky. The way people work isn't the same as it was even two years ago. Every employer everywhere is hiring and competing with one another more than ever?

If you want to keep your people and keep them happy, you're going to have to do something different.

Make an effort to get to know your people. Connect with them. Show them that they matter. Make it a priority, starting today!

Want a productive, profitable company? Get your team on board with you!

CLOSING

I hope this episode was helpful for you today, and if so, please share with others, oh.. And if you haven't already, don't forget to go leave us a review... preferably 5-star.

Have a great week and we'll meet again in the next episode. Until then.. Remember this... There's always a brighter tomorrow if you're willing to find it.

LINKS:

[Why Our Words Matter](#)

[Employer Services](#)