

Small Business Success

May 2014



Community
Futures Newsask



Motivate Your Team to Greatness – Part 2

Last month we discussed how important it is to get the very best out of your team, and that motivation can play a major part in how well your employees work together and how effective they are at their jobs. We talked about the fact that you have to be awesome and that being awesome is contagious. We also considered the importance of understanding that personality styles play an important part in how we manage individuals. Learning which battles to fight and which to step away from is another important element in motivation as was the reverse - deciding when to hold people accountable.

This month we're going to look at four more things we can do to help motivate our employees and maximize the effectiveness of our teams.

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Appreciate Good Work

I am sure you appreciate the work your employees do for you, but do you always remember, or have time, to thank them properly? Simply recognizing effort can have a huge motivational impact. One of the biggest complaints employees have is that they do not feel appreciated or valued. It doesn't take more than a minute to drop someone an email, or clap them on the back and say thanks. Employees who feel valued are far more likely to be loyal and that will show in their productivity and attitude toward others in the workplace.

Build relationships

The more you sincerely concern yourself about your employees wellbeing the more motivated they will be to support you, your company, and your customers. People respond to care and concern. Take time out to ask them what's going on in their lives, find out and talk about their hobbies and what they are passionate about. Learn a little about their families, their worries, and their concerns. Many years ago when I was in a senior management position responsible for business development of a fairly modest business, my boss asked me what would make me happiest, what would take the most pressure off my shoulders? I replied, "owning my own home" to which he said, "What's stopping you?" When I replied that my wife and I had been saving for some years but were still about \$15,000 short of having a deposit, he took his cheque book out of his pocket and wrote me a cheque for that amount. He told me that this was an advance on commission he knew I would earn over the next year. I was flabbergasted; it was like I had

won the lottery. Of course I earned it back and then some - I was so dedicated to the company that I increased sales by 80% that year; the company enjoyed its best year ever. In the end the owner of the company didn't actually GIVE me anything, but it sure felt like it!

Establish healthy competition

Competition can be healthy when directed positively. Bring your team together and talk about how you want your company to be better than the other companies competing in your market place - more than that you want your employees to be seen to be better than those of the competition. There are many customer review sites out there that publish reviews of products, services and companies. Check out what people are saying about you and use that as a way to incentivize your employees to provide better service and get more stars, or whatever way good service is rewarded. www.yelp.ca is the most popular site in Canada, unless of course you are in the hotel, or attractions industry when you should visit www.tripadvisor.ca

Great teams are great because together, they have a shared vision of being better than the other team! Tap into that and get your team fired up about how you can be better than your competition. Set goals that will give them benchmarks to strive for, and victories to celebrate.

Reward Success

I'm not talking about bonuses here, although they do have their place in motivating employees, I'm talking about celebrating success in simple terms at various stages of a project. Sometimes a box of donuts, or some specialty coffees can bring so many smiles, and create such a positive attitude that it will outweigh the cost and effort a hundred times over!

Rewarding success is about boosting morale - everyone loves surprises and what could be better than the boss going out of his, or her, way to bring treats? It shows your team that you were thinking of them, that you care.

A word of warning: with this motivational technique, a little goes a long way. You don't want it to become an expectation and you don't want the team to feel you are trying to buy their hard work and loyalty.

You know you've got a great team. Now step up your leadership and motivate them to even greater heights. It's good for business!

Flooring

Here's a first, I don't think we've ever talked about infrastructure items before. But, it occurred to us that flooring is actually quite important and these days there is a wide range of flooring possibilities and all can impact your specific office or work environment.

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Here are some things to consider when choosing new flooring:

- Durability
- Stain resistance
- Low maintenance
- Visual appeal
- Cost
- How environmentally friendly
- Comfort/cushioning
- Insulation
- Acoustic properties
- Waterproof/moisture proof
- Hygiene

Types of flooring you might consider:

Carpet

Effective, functional, but easily stained - carpet needs to be chosen carefully for quality, durability and suitability for the space. Carpet is an inexpensive option, but you get what you pay for, so consider how long you are likely to be occupying your current space and choose quality accordingly. Ensure you buy commercial quality and not be tempted to buy a domestic product. With carpet, you must always have it professionally installed.

Carpet tile

There are many reasons to use carpet tile when replacing your existing office flooring, not least the fact that it's easy to install and can be installed section by section when your office is closed. This will involve less disruption, as you don't need to remove furniture from large areas all at once. Carpet tiles are versatile and easier to install and replace than carpet, they are available in many colours and qualities. Tiles can be used creatively to create unique designs. Stained tiles can be easily and quickly replaced with no cutting or measuring. On the downside they can become disjointed and look less aesthetically pleasing. They are also less durable than some other flooring choices.

Vinyl

The big plus is that Vinyl is inexpensive, quite durable (although can be dented and torn if mistreated) and easy to install. It also comes in 12-foot wide sheets which minimizes the need for joins. It is especially good in kitchens and bathrooms and is low maintenance. One downside is that it can be slippery when wet. Although fairly durable, it can go dull over time if not re-waxed regularly. Vinyl is not as environmentally friendly as some other choice as it is made from petroleum, which as we know is a non-renewable resource.

Linoleum

Cost effective (although more expensive than vinyl), with lots of design choice, this is not to be confused with the lino of the 1950s - the modern version lasts longer (up to 40 years), is biodegradable (making it environmentally friendly) and easy to clean. It isn't as waterproof as vinyl so care should be taken around water, and it will need waxing or polishing occasionally. It is difficult to install and requires a high level of expertise.



Concrete floors

Concrete floors are extremely tough and resilient, durable and long lasting. They are environmentally friendly if you already have concrete floors that need treating, but not so friendly if new floors need to be laid. These floors are hard and unforgiving if someone falls, if something fragile is dropped, or if someone has to stand for long periods of time.

Concrete floors don't retain heat well and need to be properly treated to minimize moisture issues. Almost unlimited design finishes - in the case of new floors colour is mixed into the concrete before pouring. Existing floors can either be acid stained, dyed, or painted.

Hardwood

Aesthetically superior, and has a timeless appeal, however it scratches easier than laminate but single planks can be sanded, or replaced. It is quieter than laminate, and engineered wood and comes in a wide

variety of woods. On the downside it has to be installed over a sub-floor so if your current floor is not suitable it can be costly. Maintenance and cleaning is harder than with many other types of flooring and the floors will need refinishing about every seven years.

Laminate

The number one reason for choosing laminate over hardwood is price of course, but it's also far harder wearing when you have a lot of people walking on it, and or dragging things over it. There's no doubt that hardwood looks great but it is easily scratched and needs more maintenance.

So, when it comes to flooring you have a lot to consider. First, what sort of environment are you putting it in? If it's in your office, or boardroom, where you entertain clients, you might want to splash out and buy something more expensive and comfortable. But if it's a high traffic area that's going to see a huge amount of traffic then look at something harder wearing and less expensive. For offices, think about the acoustics; you don't want to create an echo chamber where people are trying to concentrate so something softer might be in order. If you move desks, and other office furniture around occasionally, carpet tiles might be just the thing as you can move them around, or replace individual tiles to even out wear or repair damaged areas.

A little bit of thought could save you a lot of money and headaches down the line.

4 Quick Marketing Tips

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Invest In Being Real

Are you more concerned with your image, or your identity? An image can be fake - it can simply be a mask. There are many brands that talk-the-talk, but don't walk-the-walk. I'm sure some of your competition fall into the category.

Work on your identity - the real you beneath all the branding and hype. I'm talking about your corporate belief system, your organization's culture - what you really stand for and believe in.

Customers are becoming increasingly sophisticated and knowledgeable - they respect integrity, and can spot a fraud in a heartbeat.

Don't Be a Copycat

Good ideas are commonplace and companies jump on the bandwagon with great alacrity. For every good idea, there are thousands of imitators. By all means learn from other companies but also learn to adopt, adapt and innovate. Real success is born out of originality. Find your own niche and capitalize on it - find your own way and stand out from the crowd, rather than ride the coat tails of others.

Love Your Customers - Even When They're A Pain

Someone once said, "This business would be great, if it wasn't for the customers" and I think we've all thought that on occasion. But, the reality is obvious, we need our customers and we need them to keep coming back time and time again.



So, make friendliness part of your value system not just something you ask your employees to be. Be that company that is known for its friendliness to all customers. I'm sure you regularly frequent a store, or a business, where all the staff are just so darn happy and pleasant. I'll give you a clue as to which one it is - it's the one you keep going back to!

And remember, your products and services should be customer-friendly too. Easy to use, easy to set up, come with user-friendly instructions, a help-line number - these are the things that make what you sell friendly.

Be Brave

Paulo Coelho said, "Be brave. Take risks. Nothing can substitute experience." Don't get stuck in a marketing rut because it feels safe and comfortable. Be courageous, try something new - the worst-case scenario is that you will learn from it if it's not successful. We all have to pay for experience and failures can be worth every cent! You know that if you carry on doing the same old things, you'll carry on getting the same old results. If your current marketing strategy is working that's all well and good, but if it isn't then bite the bullet and try something new.

News from the General Manger – Judy Childs

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13th ANNUAL YOUTH BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2014

Hosted and partially sponsored by

Community Futures Newsask

WHAT **YBEX – YOUTH BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

WHEN **Saturday, May 3, 2014**

WHERE **Nipawin Evergreen Centre – Nipawin, SK**

WHY To recognize and encourage the outstanding achievements of young people in Northeast Saskatchewan and encourage Entrepreneurship as a Career Option. YBEX is a project that engages youth with the community in ways that increase their own self-esteem and level of competency. It showcases what youth have to offer to their communities. Even though some students will not start a business in rural Saskatchewan immediately, some may consider the option after attending post-secondary education and return to the northeast. A hypothetical, academic perspective, combined with local grass-roots insight is a powerful mechanism for creating new businesses and knowledge!

WHO **Winners are outlined**

Community Futures Newsask hosted their 13th Annual Youth Business Excellence Awards (YBEX) in Northeast Saskatchewan. There were 153 people in attendance for the YBEX Awards Dinner, which was **held May 3, 2014 at the Nipawin Evergreen Centre, Nipawin, SK.** This event has grown significantly over the past thirteen years. Since inception over 580 students from grade six to twelve and youth out of school, under the age of 30 within the Northeast region have participated. **This year there were 37 submissions involving 79 youth.**

Awards were provided for the creation of a business idea and development of a **BUSINESS PLAN**. Submissions clearly described and developed a business idea and demonstrated ingenuity and effort. Cash prizes for first place (\$350.00), second place (\$250.00) and third place (\$150.00) were awarded to both individual and group categories. Cash prizes were also awarded to the school or association equal to half of the prize value of the winning student.

Awards provided for an **OPERATING BUSINESS VENTURE** category clearly evaluated the operations of their business including problem solving, target setting and goal accomplishment. A cash prize for first place (\$350.00) was awarded to an individual in grades 6-9. Cash prizes were also awarded to the school or association equal to half of the prize value linked to the winning submission.

Special Achievement awards were presented to submissions, which demonstrated exceptional effort and outstanding achievement in one or more areas.

Students qualifying for the **six** special achievement awards received a \$50.00 cash award.

Agricultural Business Awards sponsored by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture were chosen for demonstrated effort and outstanding achievement in producing a Business Plan in an Agricultural business or a business with Agricultural Value Added potential. A submission in the Grade 6 - 9 Business Plan Category was awarded \$100, and a submission in the Grade 10 – 12 Business Plan Category was awarded \$100.

The Newsask Memorial Award is in memory of past Board members who are no longer with us but were dedicated to their communities. The criteria for this award is: commitment to community; passion for a chosen field; and quality of work. The recipient receives a \$100.00 cash award.



CATEGORIES AND WINNERS:

Business Plan Award

To compete in this category, applicants created and developed an imaginary business that they would like to own and operate. The business could:

- Sell a product or provide a service that already exists
- Change an existing product or service
- Invent a new product or service

Applicants described their imaginary business, what motivated them to choose their product or service, why their product or service was needed in the community, and described the customers that would support their business. Points were allocated for including monthly and yearly sales and expense estimates, a marketing plan to sell the product or service, and a plan to address any problems that may occur in operating the business. The applicants of the Business Plan Category were judged on the description of their business and customers, their operation/advertising strategy, creativity, business viability, organization, and problem solving skills.

- **Business Plan Individual Category Winners**

Grades 6–9

- 1st place winner** – Clark Aylward, “Clark’s Local Lawn Care Services”, Carrot River Senior/Junior High School
- 2nd place winner** – Tessa Thomas, “Tessa’s Farm Fresh Vegetables”, St. Brioux School
- 3rd place winner** – Jessica James, “WFI Dyno Tread Climber”, LP Miller Comprehensive School

Grades 10-12

- 1st place winner** – Kennedy Maier, “Kennedy Maier’s Farrier Services”, Carrot River Senior/Junior High School
- 2nd place winner** – Natasha Larson, “Pet & Vet”, Carrot River Senior/Junior High School
- 3rd place winner** – Kennedy Quiring, “North East Crop Consulting”, Carrot River Senior/Junior High School

- **Business Plan Group Category Winners**

Grades 6–9



- 1st place winner** – Taelyn Natrass, Libbie Frisk & Haileigh Schmidt, “Simply Sweet”, LP Miller Comprehensive School
- 2nd place winner** – Tyson Ziolkoski, Klyer Opp & Kolton Burke, “KTK Snowplowing”, LP Miller Comprehensive School
- 3rd place winner** – Kali Burton & Danyelle McKinnon “Shining Creative Cakes!!”, LP Miller Comprehensive School

Grades 10-12

- 1st place winner** – Jade Letendre & Tyson Bokinac “Living Skies Outfitting”, Carrot River Senior/Junior High School
- 2nd place winner** – Blaine Matyjanka & Dylan Wlaz, “B & D Spraying”, Carrot River Senior/Junior High School

- 3rd place winner** – TMSS Business Club, “Pass the Hat, Make the Call, Inspire Others”, Tisdale Middle & Secondary School

- **Business Venture Individual Category Winner**

- 1st place winner** – Elena Serecal, “Radical Records”, St. Brioux School

- **Special Achievement Awards**

Special achievement awards were presented to those submissions that demonstrated exceptional effort and outstanding achievement in one or more areas. Students qualifying for the three special achievement awards received a \$50.00 cash award.

- 1st Special Achievement – Ashley Lewis & Cassidy Miller, “Ash n’ Cass Bracelets”, Carrot River Senior/Junior High School
- 2nd Special Achievement – Joel Harder, “Joel’s Trampoline”, LP Miller Comprehensive School
- 3rd Special Achievement – Olivia Pannell, “No Smudge Eye Glass Cloth and Cleaner”, LP Miller Comprehensive School
- 4th Special Achievement – Gabriel Mak & Gideon Mak, “Mak’s Movie Theater”, LP Miller Comprehensive School
- 5th Special Achievement – Dana Engele & Talana Arneson, “New Life Organic Temptations”, Carrot River Senior/Junior High School
- 6th Special Achievement – Callie Hiebert, “Royal Tree Photography”, Carrot River Senior/Junior High School

- **Agricultural Business Award**

- Business Plan Grades 6 – 9 – Tessa Thomas, “Tessa’s Farm Fresh Vegetables”, St. Brieux School
- Business Plan Grades 10 – 12 – Blaine Matyjanka & Dylan Wlaz, “B & D Spraying”, Carrot River Senior/Junior High School

- **Newsask Memorial Award**

- Newsask Memorial Award – Andie Hildebaugh & Samara Peters, “Megacase”, LP Miller Comprehensive School

This project is funded by many community minded businesses. Community Futures Newsask is committed to working in the north east to achieve development in business and communities. This project is partially funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada



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