

How to jump-start employee motivation

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80% of employees at top technology firms report feeling demotivated at work. 71% suffered from burnout last year. No doubt, when employees aren't motivated, work productivity and quality go down, and employee turnover and absenteeism go up.

As a leader, you need to jump-start employee motivation. My latest video describes three powerful levers you can use:

1. Your company's purpose
2. Rewards and recognition
3. Employee resource groups

Learn about each of these ways to get your employees motivated and engaged.

To learn more from Denise Lee Yohn or to book her to speak to your organization, see her [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

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Transcript

Let's face it. If your workforce is like most, your employees are burnt out, stressed out and bored. And this lack of motivation clearly negatively impacts work productivity and quality – not to mention the employee turnover it produces.

So, what can you do to jumpstart employee motivation?

No. 1: Use your purpose. I've shared before about how you need a clear, differentiated purpose for your organization. I want to emphasize here that connecting employees to your purpose is key to motivating them.

According to [Asana](#), employees want to know how their work contributes to the overall company mission – but [Strategy&](#) finds that only 28% feel fully connected to their company's purpose.

To make the pathway to purpose clear for employees, make it a regular topic of discussion. When giving an assignment, explain how it supports the organization's purpose. Talk about how the purpose motivates you personally. Start staff meetings with a story about how your group recently contributed to the purpose -- or better yet, ask one of your employees to do so.

Also connect employees directly with customers. Share with them customer feedback and testimonials. Show them how your company makes a difference in customers' lives. If possible, enable them to observe customers or even interact with them so they better understand the impact they can have.

And set goals for employees that are linked to your organization's purpose -- goals at the company, department or group, and individual level.

No. 2: Another boost to employee motivation is rewards and recognition. Now, this might seem like a no-brainer, but I've heard from many business leaders who don't know where to start, or they feel constrained without the money they think they need. So here are some insights that will help.

First, your rewards and recognition efforts should link employee achievements to your company purpose and core values. So, identify milestones that support your purpose or behaviors that demonstrate your core values, and then reward employees when they accomplish them. And when you give positive feedback or express gratitude, don't simply tell someone they did a good job -- specifically show them the difference they made.

Also, rewards don't have to be monetary to be motivating. Many employees feel inspired when asked to lead a special project or to give input to bigger decisions, or even when they simply get more exposure to upper management. Other employees value development opportunities such as attending classes or conferences, or getting a mentor who invests in their career and guides their development.

Peer-to-peer recognition can be particularly meaningful -- and it promotes interpersonal connections between employees which in itself fosters motivation. So, consider establishing a program that allows employees to recognize each other.

No. 3: A third way to jump-start employee motivation is through ERGs -- employee resource groups. ERGs bring together employees who share an identity, such as race, gender, age or experience. Sometimes they are formed to provide underrepresented employees a safe and inclusive space -- and, usually, they promote greater diversity and inclusion across your workforce.

ERGs motivate employees because they facilitate and formalize connections between them and they sanction time for more personal and social interaction, which is so important in this time of remote work. Depending on the scope and purpose of the ERG, they can enable employees to raise issues and work on causes that are personally motivating to them. And simply getting exposure to colleagues in different departments, regions or even business units can be refreshing and inspiring.

But here's the important point: ERGs need time, money, dedicated leadership and administrative support, and recognition and visibility. The Great Place To Work organization reports that while 100% of executive sponsors of ERGs say company leadership encourages participation across ERGs, only 52% of ERG leaders think that's true. So, for your ERGs to be effective, they need real support.

Employee motivation is really about engagement -- engaging employees to your company's purpose, engaging their achievements and aspirations, and engaging them with each other.