



MAKING MOTIVATING WORK

Creating meaning in what you do

Integra Leadership Inc

By Sue McKee
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New research suggests that employees are unhappy at work. Gallup found that 55% of employees in Canada are not engaged in their occupations. One third of them are intensely negative according to Towers Perrin. It is significant that more and more people are unmotivated in their work.

Why does this matter? Studies show a conclusive link between employee attitude and the financial performance of their companies. Recruitment and training costs sky rocket as an unmotivated labour force turns over. And, unmotivated employees can become stressed, unhappy, unhealthy, or depressed as a result of their state at work.

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It is the individual's responsibility to know what fosters their satisfaction and productivity and to be creative and resourceful in getting it. By foregoing that responsibility, employees miss out on wonderful opportunities to improve their situation.

It is managements' responsibility to provide support and resources to enable staff to create a career plan. Providing opportunities for learning and growth, and fostering a culture that is open to employees seeking greater fulfillment, are keys to empowering people to improve their work situation.

If you have found yourself in a disengaged and unmotivated state at work, the first thing to do is look at yourself thoroughly. There are 4 basic areas to focus on to identify what YOU need and want in your job:

1. **Meaningful Work Elements** are aspects of a job that make the work meaningful to you. Be sure to focus on those that you want fulfilled at work. *What are your personal values? ...your passions? ...your unique talents and gifts? How do you want to be making a difference in your company?*
2. **Growth Work Elements** are your professional or personal development areas. *What is the vision that you're working toward for your career? ...for your company? What kinds of challenges do you want to be working on? Who do you want to become? What kind of environment do you flourish in?*
3. **Reward Work Elements** are both the tangible and intangible benefits of working. *What salary, benefits, and bonuses do you realistically want right now? How important are recognition, respect, and feedback, and how do you prefer to receive them?*
4. **Relationship Work Elements** are the aspects of work relationships that fuel you. *Do you prefer working alone or in teams? How much do you enjoy leading teams? What kinds of working relationships are important to you? How well do you handle difficult coworkers or bosses?*
2. Uncover the **meaning in what you already do**. It can be as simple as shifting your perspective. Try this: follow the trail of impact from an activity that you do regularly, for example, an email you just sent. Project its final impact. Perhaps it supported a respectful response to a customer, or contributed to a new design idea that will help thousands of people.
3. Reassess **how you spend your discretionary time** at work. Shift your activities toward those that will get you more of what you want. For example, if you're feeling isolated, don't use your lunch break to run errands. Instead, ask a coworker out to lunch to nurture strategic relationships in the office.
4. Initiate **changes to your work surroundings** in order to enhance any of the element areas. Perhaps it's a "wall of fame" recognition board, or more plants around the office, or a gathering area with a few chairs and inspiring reading material.
5. **Ask your boss and supporters for what you want**. Be sure to have a solution that offers a win for both sides. A "no" the first time may mean you have to find creative ways to try again. Your tenacity will be rewarded.

You will now have a long list of your ideal work elements. Review it and rate each element on a scale of 1-5 for your current job situation. Make note of the most significant gaps. Sharon Jordan-Evans and Beverly Kaye, authors of *Love It, Don't Leave It: 26 Ways to Get What You Want at Work*, call these *Satisfaction Gaps*. Choose the top 4 or 5 satisfaction gaps and do something to improve them.

Here are 5 ways you can reduce your satisfaction gaps:

1. Find ways to **add more meaning elements** into your job responsibilities and remove things that are not important to you. For example, be creative in proposing a shift in responsibilities within your team or be proactive in choosing projects to become involved in.

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There are things you can do today to become more motivated at work. If it seems like a lot of effort to do this, consider that many people change jobs only to find that they haven't improved their situation or are worse off than before. Creating satisfying and fulfilling work is possible, and the rewards far outweigh the effort.

Author:

Sue McKee, BSc, MBA, CPCC

Sue is co-founder and Co-Managing Director of Integra Leadership Inc

Integra Leadership Inc.

Integra Leadership was established in 2006 as a result of the market's need for a global coaching organization. With a focus on North America, Integra is a global market leader in delivering enterprise-grade coaching solutions to its clients worldwide. Integra sources the world's finest coaches and ensures seamless and effective delivery of a diverse spectrum of coaching services.

Contact:

416-488-1313

contact@integra-leadership.com

www.integra-leadership.com



North American Regional Partner for



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