

Note that the title page header includes the words

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Positively Affecting Employee Motivation

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Title, writer's name, and date, centered on page.
Company name centered at bottom.

Introduction

All firms strive to maximize performance. Such performance is typically defined by one or more tangible measurements such as total sales, earnings per share, return on assets, and so on. The performance of a firm is created and delivered by its employees. Employees, however, are not necessarily motivated to do their part to maximize a firm's performance. Factors that motivate employees can be much more complex than corporate goals. This proposal will define the problem of employee motivation on OIASYS and propose a solution.

Per APA format, the heading "Introduction" is not in bold.

Current Situation

OAISYS (2016) is a small business based in Tempe, Arizona, that manufactures business call recording products. Currently OASYS employs 27 people. The business has been notably successful, generating annual compound sales of over 20% during the last three years (R. McIntyre, personal communication, March 31, 2116). The company's management and board of directors expect revenue growth to accelerate over the coming three years to an annual compound rate of over 35% (R. McIntyre, personal communication, March 31, 2116). This ambitious corporate goal will require maximum productivity and effectiveness from all employees.

Background of Current Human Resources Program

OAISYS (2016) is currently structured departmentally by function. It has teams for research and development, sales, marketing, operations, and administration. Every employee has access to the same employment benefits, consisting of medical insurance a 401(k) plan, flexible spending accounts, short- and long-term disability insurance, and the like (OASYS, 2016).

Members of the sales team receive a yearly salary, quarterly commissions tied to sales quotas, quarterly bonuses tied to the performance of specific tasks (A. Robbins, personal

communication, April 5, 2016). These tasks can change quarterly to maintain alignment with strategic initiatives (A. Robbins, personal communication, April 5, 2016). All employees not in the sales department receive a yearly salary and profit sharing at the end of the year (A. Robbins, personal communication, April 5, 2016). The formula for profit sharing is not known by employees, and specific information about profits is infrequently communicated (R. McIntyre, personal communication, March 31, 2016). When profitability is discussed, it is only in general terms. Key employees, as determined by the management, are given stock option grants periodically (R. McIntyre, personal communication, March 31, 2016). This process is informal and very confidential.

Author presents evidence from personal communication and internal company documents.

Disconnect Between Company and Employees

One common assumption is that a human resource program should be the platform for motivation. But monetary compensation is not the only driver of employee motivation (Dickson, 1973). In fact, the Accel TEAM (2005) has found that other factors are actually the primary drivers of employee motivation. Security, career advancement, the type of work, and pride in one's company are actually the highest-rated factors in employee satisfaction (Accel TEAM, 2005).

These conclusions drawn from the empirical research of others are supported by interviews conducted with current OAISYS employees. Justin Crandall, a current design engineer, stated that his primary motivation is the opportunity to work with leading-edge developmental tools to pursue results of the highest quality (personal communication, March 1, 2016). Crandall's strongest sense of frustration comes from a cluttered organizational structure because it restricts his ability to pursue innovative, high-quality results (personal communication, March 1, 2016).

Author provides evidence from interviews with current employees.

Todd Lindburg, the most senior design engineer on staff, had similar sentiments. His greatest motivator is the opportunity to create something lasting and important to the long-term success of the business (personal communication, March 2, 2016). Jack Wikeselaar, vice president of sales, said he receives his strongest motivation from providing fulfilling job opportunities for others (personal communication, March 3, 2016).

Interviews are considered personal communication in APA style. They are cited in the text of the paper but not given in the reference list.

These findings of what motivates employees tell only half the story. Other research (Motivating, 2006) suggests that businesses can actually demotivate employees through certain behaviors, such as the following:

When information like this is taken verbatim from the source, a page or paragraph number would be required. In this case, the information is not verbatim.

- Company politics
- Unclear expectations
- Unnecessary rules and procedures
- Unproductive meetings
- Poor communication
- Tolerance of poor performance

Lists draw readers' attention to important information.

Doug Ames, manager of operations for OAISYS, note that some of these issues keep the company from outperforming expectations: "Communication is not timely or uniform, expectations are not clear and consistent, and some employees do not contribute significantly yet nothing is done" (personal communication, February 28, 2016).

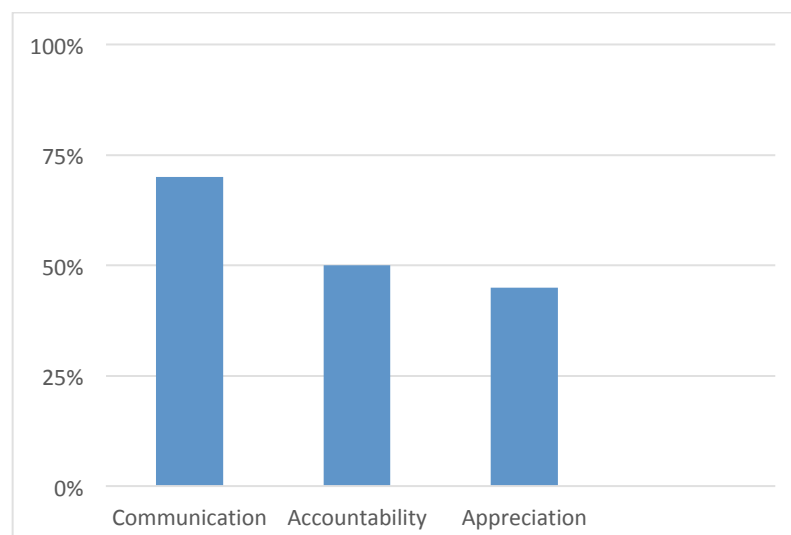
Project Plan

A combination of steps is recommended to unlock greater performance for OAISYS employees. Most important, steps need to be taken to strengthen the corporate culture in key areas such as communication, appreciation, and accountability (Schein, 2010). Employee

feedback indicates that these are areas of weakness or motivators can be improved (Annual Survey, 2015). See Figure 1 for a summary of this feedback.

To address these areas, training is recommended to all managers on communication skills, specifically how to set expectations, share results in a timely fashion, and publicly offer appreciation to specific contributors. Once the training has been completed, processes need to be established to put these skills into practice. This can be done as part of a more formal annual review process that includes quarterly check-in meetings for all employees with their managers.

Holding employees accountable for results will bring parity to the workplace (Sorenson, 2002). It is recommended that compensation and bonuses be based not just on corporate profit but also on specific employee responsibilities. Those who do what is expected to achieve desired results will be rewarded. Those who miss the mark will be required to address the reasons behind their performance and will not receive an increase in compensation. They will also be placed on a performance improvement plan and possibly be asked to take on a different role within the organization. Professor of organization behavior, Jesper Sorenson (2002), has noted that “quantitative analyses have shown that firms with strong cultures outperform firms with weak cultures and that clear accountability is a definite sign of a strong culture” (p. 70).



Graphic illustrates support for the proposal's key recommendation.

Figure 1. Areas of greatest need for improvements in motivation (Annual Survey, 2015).

Qualifications and Experience

The human resources manager, Jane Smith, has the qualifications and experience to oversee this initiative. She will provide the following services:

- Engage the services of a management training firm to provide manager training on communicating and providing effective feedback to all managers and schedule the training sessions.
- Work with the executive team to revise and formalize the compensation, bonus, and stock option plan.
- Contract with the current Human Resources Information System (HRIS) vendor to reconfigure the performance approval processes within the system to align with these proposed recommendations.

Estimated Budget

Training program (5 managers)	\$	15,000
HRIS configuration	\$	<u>10,000</u>
Total Direct Costs	\$	25,000

Conclusion

Corporate goals such as sales quotas, or increases in market share, do not always take into account employee motivation. Employees, however, are not necessarily motivated to do their part to maximize a firm's performance. For OAISYS to achieve its goals, its employees must be motivated appropriately to perform effectively.

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(Adapted from: Hacker Handbooks [Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011, 2007]).