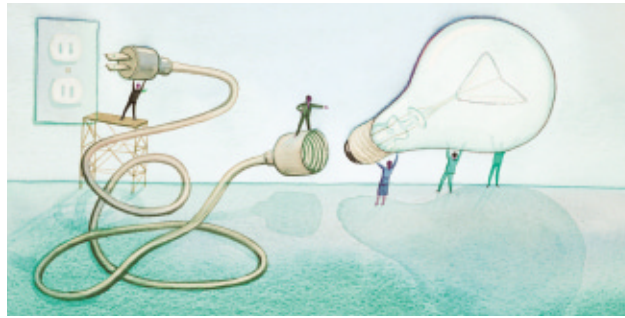


Energize Their Work, Energize Your Employees



BY BEVERLY KAYE AND SHARON JORDAN-EVANS

During economic downturns, our employees' job EKG can go flat. With an upturn in business, you need to energize your employees.

If your good workers find their jobs no longer provide a challenge, not to mention opportunity for advancement, some may physically leave and others may psychologically leave. Either way, departure or disengagement, you lose talented people vital to your unit and your company.

What can you do? If the job provides good pay and appropriate benefits, then you may need to do something about the work itself. The day-to-day elements of getting the work done may not provide the stimulation, growth, future possibilities or current sense of achievement that make an employee want to stay and to contribute wholeheartedly.

Get Enriched Quick

Job enrichment means structuring ways for employees to get the growth, challenge and renewal they seek without leaving their current jobs or organizations. Change in what your employees do (content) or how they do it (process) is the key. An enriched job:

- Gives employees room to initiate, create and implement new ideas
- Promotes setting and achieving personal and group goals
- Challenges employees to expand their knowledge and capabilities

Involve your employees. Have them evaluate their jobs and discover ideas for enrichment. Be prepared for requests and discussions that center on:

Greater autonomy: Opportunities for self-direction, responsibility for independence and discretion in determining work procedures.

Participation in decisions: It may be involvement in work processes or how tasks should be completed.

Increased variety in tasks: This could include new challenges and opportunities for on-the-job learning as well as more opportunities to affect the organization or colleagues' work.

Increased teamwork: Employees could be given the opportunity to work with people from other departments as well as their own.

It's in Your Control

You may be concerned that too much job enrichment might mean loss of control of the workplace. Here are some techniques that will make employees feel energized yet be realistic, first steps for you to take:

Combine tasks: An employee doing a single, small repetitive task will not be as challenged and motivated as an employee involved in a related set of tasks.

Rotate assignments: New assignments can help an employee feel challenged and valued.

Build in feedback: Do more than annual reviews. Find ways to develop peer review and client review opportunities. Employees want to know about their performance, and continual feedback allows them to be their own quality-control agents.

Nurture creativity: If employees rarely think for themselves, they lose the ability to contribute their best ideas.

Excerpted, with permission, from *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: Getting Good People to Stay* by Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans (Berrett-Koehler, 2001). Beverly Kaye is president and founder of Career Systems International. Sharon Jordan-Evans is president of The Jordan Evans Group. For more information, visit www.KeepEm.com.

To find out more about energizing your employees, check out AMA's management and leadership seminars at www.amanet.org.

Taking the Lead

All managers have some leadership responsibility. In his book *What Every New Manager Needs to Know: Making a Successful Transition to Management*, author Gerard H. Gaynor lists these attributes of leadership, as applicable to entry-level managers as to any manager:

Accept responsibility and accountability. There can be no scapegoats—you are the manager and you are accountable.

Don't kill the messenger. Bad news will arrive and you will need to deal with it. Keep in mind that bad news, if accepted immediately, will have a minimum negative effect.

Make judgments based on an acceptable level of facts. You can't wait until all the facts have been accumulated, but some minimum amount of information is required. The remainder is judgment.

Make the complex simple. Yes, this is easier said than done, but any issue that cannot be drawn down to the simplest essentials probably won't be understood.

Follow through with clear decisions. There is a relationship between acceptance and clarity. Acceptance depends on understanding the impact of the decision on operations.

Challenge the so-called experts. Be cautious of single-issue experts who promote their panaceas.

Develop a proactive philosophy. Anticipate future problems. Don't wait to be told what to do.

Promote a positive attitude. Focus on solving the problem.



What Every New Manager Needs to Know by Gerard H. Gaynor is published by AMACOM. To find out about this book and other AMACOM titles, visit www.amanet.org. Also, find out about, and register for, AMA's management seminars by visiting www.amanet.org.