

TIP SHEET: Myths about Motivating People

From *Motivating People*

By **Clark Reed and his associates at Netgain Partners Inc.**

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When it comes to motivating people, we share certain myths. Clark Reed offers good advice to address some frequently-heard misunderstandings.

Myth 1:

“I can motivate people”

No, people have to motivate themselves. You can't motivate people any more than you can empower them. People or employees have to motivate and empower themselves. However, you can set up an environment where they can best do that. The key is knowing how to manage the environment for each of your employees.

Myth 2:

“Money is a good motivator”

Not really. Certain things like money or an attractive working environment can help people from becoming *less* motivated, but they usually don't help them to become more motivated - at least not in the long term.

Many organizations have learned this the hard way. They have increased salary levels in response to employee requests, in an attempt to improve poor motivation and morale, only to discover six months later that motivation and morale had returned to its previous low level.

Myth 3:

“Concern about losing one's job is a very good motivator”

Possibly - but only for a very short time. That's why prolonged criticism and urgings to improve performance don't seem to “light a spark under” someone for very long.

Myth 4:

“I'm motivated by my love for the arts. My staff are too.”

Don't count on it. Different people are motivated by different things. Many young people in the cultural workforce today are not necessarily committed to a career in the arts (although you may be able to initiate or nurture that interest). Some may be greatly motivated by getting time away from their work to spend more time with their friends or family. Others might be motivated more by recognition of a job well done. People are not motivated by the same things. Again a key goal is to understand what motivates each of your employees.

Myth 5:

“Increased job satisfaction means improved job performance”

Research shows this isn't necessarily true. Increased job satisfaction does not necessarily mean improved job performance. If the values and objectives of employees aren't in sync with those of the organization, then employees may not be working effectively *towards achieving the results you want*, although they may be enjoying their work.

Myth 6:

“I can't understand employee motivation – it needs a psychology degree”

Not true. There are some very basic steps you can take that will greatly support your employees in motivating themselves to improve and sustain a high level of job performance.