

Motivation: What Drives Human Behavior Anyway?

One of my core values, both personally and professionally, is "**simplicity**." When thinking through human factors issues, it is always best to keep things simple and seek small changes that have the potential to make a big impact. When thinking about motivational issues, I encourage you to begin by keeping things simple; start by recognizing that one of the most powerful human motivators is recognition and "thanks" for a job well done.

Over the years, I have reviewed hundreds of articles on performance and motivation. Two patterns tend to emerge consistently:

1. Recognition is by far the greatest human motivator over any other rewards or incentives.

When employees are being compensated fairly for their efforts, recognition and thanks become powerful, positive reinforcers that drive high performance.

2. In the majority of work settings, employees, if surveyed, would indicate that their managers or supervisors rarely acknowledge their efforts and compliment their work. Negative performance rarely goes unnoticed, while positive performance frequently goes unnoticed.

By simply making positive recognition a regular part of your interaction with employees, you can have a tremendous impact on performance and your bottom line. I have spoken with business owners and managers who have openly refused to practice positive recognition, saying, "Why should I thank them for doing what they are paid to do?" Unfortunately, this mindset is not uncommon. It is always counterproductive. As an owner or supervisor, taking such an attitude will radically reduce the impact of your human resources. Such a mindset is generally a rationalization used to let oneself off the hook for personal responsibility.

If you manage people, you assume a responsibility for helping to bring out the best in them! This means you have to make the effort to acknowledge positive performance. Need help doing so? Call Vic!!!