

## Inspire your employees by walking your own talk

by **Connie Brubaker**

**M**any of you know that I once owned a chain of KFC restaurants in Central Texas. Now, I really don't miss working nights and weekends. I don't miss the equipment that managed to break at the exact worst moment. And I don't miss the continual pressure to grow sales, to deliver outstanding customer service, and to keep employees engaged — and to do it on a shoe-string budget.



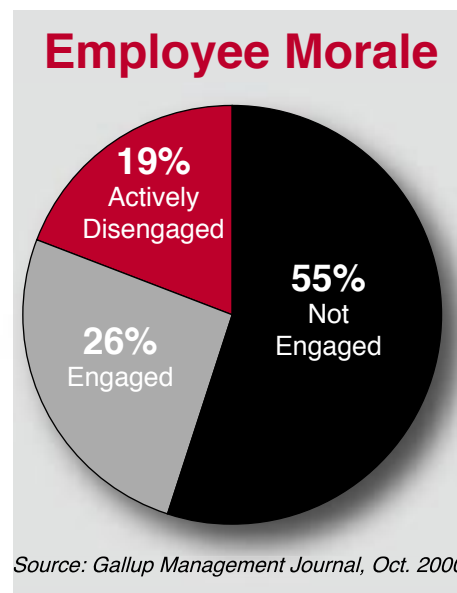
*Connie's Comments*

I don't miss it, but I sure learned a lot from it. I especially learned what really motivates employees. Contrary to what so many of us have been taught over the years, raises and financial incentives — by themselves — are very short-lived. Employee of the month awards and training certificates are nice (in some cases, even necessary) but still not enough.

Pizza parties and birthday cakes and informal company gatherings can help create a positive, successful environment, as do employee contests and special "caught in the act" kudos. But these fun and games, although worthwhile, still aren't enough.

The best way to keep your employees actively engaged doesn't cost a thing. It doesn't require any special planning. What it really boils down to is this: employees aren't a faceless mass, they're unique individuals. To be a good manager, you first have to know

the people working for you. Only then can you tailor expectations, rewards and recognition according to the individual.



Ask yourself: do you know 10 things about each of your employees? Do you know their hobbies, their backgrounds, their families? Do you know what's important in their lives? A terrific example of this kind of awareness was the Best Buy manager who gave the winner of a sales contest a gift certificate to a home décor store — because he knew the employee was moving into his first apartment.

Employees find the greatest motivation when they receive trust, respect and appreciation. I was reminded of this just the other day while watching the Donald Trump reality show,

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## What demotivates your employees?

by **Dean Spitzer**

1. Office politics
2. Unclear expectations
3. Unnecessary rules
4. Poor work processes
5. Unproductive meetings
6. Lack of follow-up
7. Internal competition
8. Dishonesty
9. Hypocrisy
10. Withholding information
11. Criticism
12. Underutilization
13. Being taken for granted
14. Over-control
15. Unfairness
16. Being forced to provide poor quality work



"So . . . who wants permission to stay late all next month? Anyone? Anyone?"

In this issue of SOLUTIONS:

- The high cost of employee disengagement
- Top employee demotivators
- A coaching success story

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Building People, Productivity and Profits through Integrity

## Why coaching matters: giving success a push

Boxing great Muhammad Ali, when asked about the most important life lesson he had learned, remembered his epic match against Sonny Liston in January 1964.

"Liston was the strongest man I'd ever fought," Ali said. "Every time I hit him, it hurt me worse than him. I gave him everything I had. When the sixth round ended, I was completely spent. I couldn't even raise my arms. I couldn't even stand up to go back into the ring. 'I'm goin' home!' I told (trainer) Angelo Dundee. 'I'm not goin' back in there!'"

Dundee became angry at Ali's defeatism. And when the bell rang and Ali still didn't stand up, Dundee really lost his cool. He pushed and pulled Ali, shouting, "Get in there and don't come out until you're the heavy-weight champion of the world."

Ali wearily struggled to his feet. Liston didn't. Ali won the title.

Years later, Muhammad Ali reflected on the importance of coaching. "The best lesson I learned," he said, "is to have someone pushin' you and makin' you do things you don't think you can do."

### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

**"Most leaders are like gardeners standing over their plants, imploring them: 'Grow! Try harder! You can do it!' But if a seedling has not room to grow, no soil and no water, it will never become a tree."**

— Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*

## De-motivated employees prove costly

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"The Apprentice." The two competing teams showed exactly what works and what doesn't. One team leader was positive, encouraging and respectful. His team rallied around him, overcame the obstacles in their path and made a profit on their venture. The other team leader was negative and belittling. His team quickly became discouraged, lost focus and actually lost money on their venture. Not surprisingly, Trump fired him.

In case you're wondering, the cost of employee disengagement is high: over \$79 billion of lost productivity each year among U.S. businesses. Think about your business. Is the employee who's just going through the motions,

punching a time card and collecting a paycheck, really motivated to sell more or provide great customer service? Is this the person you want as the face of your company?

To effectively motivate, managers must walk their talk, leading by example and providing opportunities for meaningful employee participation. They must individually reward and encourage their employees. And don't neglect training and continuing education. Remember that employees consistently list improving their skill set as one of their top job goals.

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