

Why you cannot manage people

Motivation is the art of getting people to do what you want them to do because they want to do it.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

You will have read different books and articles that tell you how to motivate your collaborators, but is it really possible to do that?

Is it not true that perhaps, in the end, we alone are the only people able to motivate ourselves?

Isn't motivation an internal drive? Doesn't every individual have different needs and different ways of satisfying them?

It's true that we can create a series of superstructures able to "push" a person in the direction that we want (money, recognitions, appreciation, etc.) but we have said that HPCs want not "directed" but "passionate" people. There is a big difference.

Considering that we don't want to speak of theories "living on air", let's begin immediately by saying that the best way to have motivated people in a firm, is to hire motivated people!

Indeed, they are McGregor's Y people i.e. people who spontaneously tend to take responsibility, who by nature have an attitude of loyalty and commitment, who identify with the firm with its objectives and with the profession.

Therefore, HPLs devote a lot of time to the selection of people, because they know that this is the key to success!

If who you have on board is so important, the process of selection becomes indeed one of the most important processes of an HPL.

Experience shows that it is very difficult in an interview to reach the certainty that the person that we want to climb on our bus is really the right one, but we can do something to move closer to this result. In this sense much more important than the interview is in my opinion preparation of the very same interview. Many managers approach selection with not very clear ideas on the position or on the profile desired to cover it. It's necessary to have clear in your mind:

- ✓ the main tasks and responsibilities of the position;
- ✓ the technical-professional characteristics;
- ✓ the personal characteristics;

and finally, it is fundamental to remember that the person that you select must work in your organisation and must work with you! **So evaluations in the interview phase of your business culture and of your managerial style are fundamental for an effective performance! So first and foremost clarify what you need!**

I have a motto that I always tell my collaborators in the selection phase, that is perhaps a little exaggerated but reflects the way in which I see things, and it is that every technical competence can be learned in two weeks but motivation and attitude, those no, cannot be learned!

Think about it, with training you can teach almost all technical skills, but you can hardly teach motivation!

Finally a last recommendation: don't fall into the trap of selecting people similar to you, you need not only people better than you but also complementary to you!

People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing - that's why we recommend it daily.

Zig Ziglar

That said, there are in my opinion some simple criteria that must be taken into consideration, the first of which is to **realise that we cannot manage people but only agreements.**

We must make sure that the people are motivated alone, not strive to be the ones to motivate them!

A HPL wants a mature relationship with his/her people, (s)he doesn't manipulate them, (s)he doesn't exploit them or try to manage feelings.

A HPL creates agreements with the members of his/her team and manages them on the basis of an adult relationship.

So a HPL talks to his/her collaborators and creates agreements on the basis of the most important objectives that must be reached: "I want this thing to be done, and I want us to reach an agreement on how to do it best", the HPL says to collaborators. When the agreement has been reached, the HPL asks his/her collaborator: "Can I count on you 100% for the thing to be done?"

However, after having managed an agreement the HPL concentrates, as said before, on the results and not on the justifications!

Here the secret is not to be stuck in an analysis of the processes (why a thing has been done or not), **but to focus on the results!** HPLs don't swallow all the excuses that mediocre collaborators put forward for why they have not reached their objectives.

Other things that all of us see happen every day, which in the end lead to poor results and very low motivation are:

- ✓ Creating an environment full of stress. People work badly if they have too much pressure from the outside; to get results one needs to be relaxed but highly concentrated;
- ✓ Complicating too much. If you want to be a HPL you must **simplify, simplify, simplify**. Concentrate yourself and your collaborators on just a few clear objectives;
- ✓ **Focus on efforts.** Your mediocre collaborators will always concentrate on discussing with you how to get certain results, your excellent collaborators will get them and that's all. When there is too much discussion about how, in reality they still don't want to get the result. **When we give too much importance to efforts, we divert it away from the results!**
- ✓ Too much delicacy. People are motivated "toward" something (pleasure), but also "away from" (pain). You must learn to be at the same time a good person, but also **intransigent and determined**. At times people need to be brought back onto the straight and narrow, even by someone that "scolds" them;
- ✓ To try to be liked, rather than trying to be respected;
- ✓ Too many words and too little action;
- ✓ "Let's arm ourselves and set off!"

A HPL does not see him/herself as a babysitter who has to put out fires.

Anyone who babysit in the end does nothing but create organisations and collaborators who behave like children in need of help!

Good management, as Steve Chandler and Scott Richardson say, consists of **outcome management not activity management!** Often mediocre managers convince themselves that their collaborators are already doing their best and they stop growth condemning the firm to mediocrity.

Management based on activities confuses the end with the means, the processes with the results and this is an error to avoid absolutely!