



5 ways to motivate & reward your team that doesn't involve cash

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Money is important to a lot of people. But contrary to belief, it's not always our biggest motivator.

Think about it... What REALLY drives you to get out of bed every morning?

Obviously, none of us work for nothing. Money is nice. And as business owners of course it's a big part of what we do. But it's not our driving force.

And believe it or not, the same goes for the people who work for you.

A monetary bonus can actually have completely the opposite effect if done in the wrong way. That measly 2% bonus can be hugely demotivating.

So, if you're wanting to motivate and reward your team for doing a great job, there are more effective ways of doing so that doesn't involve cash.

And in economic times like these, that's pretty great news.

What REALLY motivates your people?

It boils down to three intrinsic motivations: purpose, autonomy, and mastery. That's according to Daniel Pink in his book, Drive (if you haven't read this, I highly recommend ordering it as soon as you finish reading this!). That's why your people do what they do, how they do it, and how good they are at it.

If you can tap into these motivations, your team will be happier, more successful and you'll cut your risk of losing your best people to competitors who could probably pay them more.

In this guide, I'm going to cover the best 5 ways to reward your team that doesn't involve cash. The idea is that you'll be able to take away these suggestions and adapt them to not only your business, but the individuals working for you too. Remember, not every reward will work for every employee. But at least one of these will appeal to every member of your team, I have no doubt.



1 Recognition and attention

I've started with this one because it feels like a winner for most people.

Everyone likes to know they're doing a good job. Whether they've learnt a new skill, impressed a client, or caught up with a demanding workload, letting your employee know you've noticed their effort can go a long way.

How do you do that?

Well, there are a number of ways you can show your appreciation. But start by telling them! It's as simple as that. Say that you've noticed they've been working really hard this week. Let them know your client has sung their praises. Congratulate them on learning that new skill.

If you want to take it a step further, send an email to the whole team that highlights this great work or announce it in a meeting. But make sure that won't have the opposite impact if an employee is on the shy side!

You still want more? Surprise them with a little gift to say thank you. A box of chocolates. A voucher for their favourite shop. A bottle of wine.



Not sure what they might like? That brings me on to the point of attention.

As a business owner, you're busy. Everyone knows that. So, when you give your time to your team, they really appreciate it. Take the time to have a chat with people. Learn about what they're working on right now. Ask them what they're doing at the weekend. Learn about their hobbies. These things can all demonstrate that you really value them.

Take things a step further and offer one-on-one training and development sessions to some of your employees if there's something valuable you can impart - which of course there is! It may be half an hour every fortnight or month for you, but to them it's a demonstration that you're invested in their progress in your business.



2 Responsibility

Feels a bit of a contradiction to reward your superstars with more work, doesn't it? Actually, it's not.

Your best people are the best because they want to do well in your business. They want to progress and develop and move into better roles. And you know what that means? More responsibility.

By assigning them extra responsibility you're demonstrating your trust in them, as well as your commitment to their growth within your business.

Of course, there are right and wrong ways to do this. You can't just pile on the work with no conversation or explanation of what you're doing. Imagine that. It would definitely result in grumpy, stressed-out staff.

As with everything else, communication is vital.

The right approach will have you sitting down to discuss what role they'd like to move into, what they'd like to learn, and what responsibilities they'd like to take on. Then you can tailor their new responsibilities to fit in with their goals and ambitions, as well as the skills they already have.

The result? Motivated, excited employees who are raring to sink their teeth into their new challenge.

3 Learning opportunities

Good employees are happiest when they're learning and developing new skills.

It's true.

So, if you're not investing in continuous learning and development for your people, you're missing a trick. A big one.

What does that look like?

Learning and development doesn't have to involve course after course, additional work, and a huge time commitment. It comes in all shapes and sizes and depends on the amount of time your people have available and their individual goals and ambitions.

For example, while one employee may need a short course to learn a new skill, another may benefit from an online seminar and some practical experience in the workplace.

Perhaps you (or one of your managers) may dedicate an hour a week to coaching an employee to help them build on the skills they already have.

Alternatively, an employee might take on a new responsibility by shadowing a colleague for a while to help them learn the task.

Once again, the key here is good communication. If you can understand your employees' goals and ambitions, you can help them identify the skills they'll need to develop and set objectives to help them on their journey.

4 Perks

Everyone loves a perk. It can be a really good way of rewarding people for a job well done or for reaching a goal.

And it doesn't have to cost you the earth either.

Again, this kind of reward can be dependent on the recipient, or you can structure rewards based on achievements if you think the perks are something with a wider appeal.

Take some time to think about perks you can offer that could make your people feel valued. It doesn't have to be a grand gesture - often little things can make a very big difference.

We're talking anything from reserved parking spaces (if you're short on parking this could be something that goes to a different employee each week or month, and could be very appealing indeed!), random treats in the break room, surprise lunches, discounts at supermarkets, health benefits, or gym memberships. Your options are limitless - and if you take the time to get to know your team you can make these little perks highly personalised too.

5 Time off

No matter how much we love our jobs, we all love a little time off. And unexpected time off that doesn't take away from our annual leave is even better!

Try offering paid time off as a reward and see what a difference it can make to your people.

It doesn't have to be a whole day. Simply telling someone to leave an hour or two early unexpectedly can be a nice surprise and be really motivational. You could even offer paid hours off and allow your people to bank these hours to use as and when they like.

Obviously, you can't have everyone taking time off all at once, so you will need to work out a system to make this one work effectively for everyone, but that shouldn't be any more difficult than handling annual leave requests anyway.

Of course, there are loads of other ways you can reward your people that I haven't included here. These are simply some of the ideas I've seen to be the most effective.

When you take the time to properly communicate with your team and get to know them, you'll be able to identify other effective ways of rewarding them that doesn't involve cold hard cash. You may be surprised at just how many ideas you do have when you understand everyone's motivations.

The main takeaway from this guide should be that money isn't always the answer. Putting in a little time with your employees can work out to be a good way of creating a more cohesive, motivated, and loyal team.

And, of course, if you need any help getting started, get in touch!

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