

Ask the Career Coach: Recharging Your Work Environment

When your colleagues aren't motivated, how do you help motivate them?

By [Lisa Chenofsky Singer](#)

As appeared in MillburnPatch.com on August 3, 2010 (www.MillburnPatch.com)

Dear Career Coach Lisa,

I am frustrated at work with colleagues that are just doing the minimum to get by. The team is not delivering all that we can. How do I motivate my colleagues?

ST
Millburn

What is the atmosphere within the company? What is the manager's attitude? Where are you in the organizational structure? I ask this to identify what ability you have to pump energy into your work environment. Motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Does your team work towards goal oriented behavior or is all of your work independent of one another? Are you looking to create a different workflow or camaraderie among your colleagues?

If one's motivation is intrinsic, you will probably not influence them but rather set an example to guide them on a new standard of delivery. If their motivation is extrinsic, then you may be able to influence them through positive reinforcement and encouragement.

The activation of goal-orientated behavior is usually driven by basic or specific needs such as the need to earn a salary for survival (food and shelter) or to improve a situation, create a new approach or product, provide a service or improve the environment.

From a management perspective, most organizations invest in developing a mission statement and getting buy-in from the organization. There is nothing to stop a small group of people from developing their own statement of purpose that can help focus on the contributions the group values. A personal mission statement is also a useful thing to write to maintain individual goals.

Whether a formal mission statement is written or a general consensus of purpose is reached, there are basic needs that should be defined. These basic needs should foster personal growth, professional growth, physical improvement and what contributions are possible. The quality of product or service is also an important motivation.

The respect and engagement among colleagues and external contacts can be powerful as well. The development of a learning environment with a sense of shared values can be a grass roots effort as well as a management function. Try creating such an environment by engaging others in open ended questions. Generate informal connections at the water cooler, coffee station or at lunch.

About this column: "Ask the Career Coach" is a column dedicated to those who may be in transition or wrestling with a career dilemma by providing a forum for advice. We welcome your questions. Please send them to CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com. Lisa Chenofsky Singer is a Millburn-Short Hills resident and the founder of Chenofsky Singer & Associates LLC. She offers Executive and Career Management Coaching and Human Resources Consulting, writes and speaks on job search and career-related topics. Her web site is www.ChenofskySinger.com.