

PATHWAYS TO PROFIT

Getting your employees to care

Time and again, I hear business owners say their employees are only there for the paycheck. It's true that no one may care as much about your business as you, but



BY LEAH THISS

there are some things that you can do to get your employees to "care."

First, stop being so cynical. Your employees may actually care more than you think. After all, they directly benefit from the success of the company - whether through bonuses or profit sharing or by simply being employed.

However, they may not know what they could be doing differently or may

not feel empowered to make suggestions or changes.

Start with meeting one on one with each of your employees. Understand how they spend their day and brainstorm ways they may be more efficient. Clearly outline their responsibilities and set goals that can be monitored and measured.

► Be open to change. This may include changing existing processes and procedures that may have become outdated or are contributing to inefficiencies. It might even require taking a hard look at your own management style. Provide a safe and anonymous opportunity for each employee to offer feedback on both what works well and ideas for improvement.

► Remember that knowledge is power. Determine what kind of information your employees need in order to make more informed and timely

decisions. Then implement a plan to deliver that information to them on a consistent, perhaps daily basis. Part of the success of this will be the employees' understanding of how their efforts affect other departments as well as the company as a whole. Be sure to grant them access to any metrics they may need from other departments. This will encourage a team effort and decision making with overall company goals, not just department concerns, in mind.

► Give your employees the tools they need to be successful. Avoiding some expenditures may end up costing you more in reduced productivity or lost revenue. There is also an element of motivation that is created when you make an investment in your employees' work environment.

► Reward results. If you are implementing significant changes, establish goals that can be met quickly

so that you can celebrate! Small wins and a feeling of success will feed the fire to accomplish more.

Goals that take too long or are too difficult to achieve will have the opposite effect. Keep moving the target and have them constantly reaching for more, but be sure the small wins along the way are acknowledged.

If your employees have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. If they feel important and are keenly aware of how their actions contribute to the success of the company. Then you may just see a difference in how much they "care" and it will probably show up in the bottom line.

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