

# 8 WAYS TO INSPIRE EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOUR THAT YOU CAN IMPLEMENT TODAY

BY BILL HOGG

Leaders create the vision, set company goals, and develop strategies -- but it is front line employees that execute the plan. They are the ones that carry out the daily tasks and initiatives that help make a leaders vision become a reality. They are the ones that interact daily with the customers who are the life blood of any successful organization.

Poor employee behaviour and performance will severely limit an organizations ability to grow and will have a negative impact on your organizational culture. One rotten employee can spoil a whole team or department. This is why incentive programs have become a popular tool. They provide a set of goals and performance standards for employees to strive for, and reward them accordingly.

## Reward Based Incentives

One of the most popular and widely used ways to encourage desirable employee behaviour and get results is by offering some form of monetary or financial reward. Some of the most common types of rewards include:

- Money
- Performance bonuses
- Raises and pay increases
- Company swag
- Extra vacation time

While on the surface rewards may seem like an effective way to incent employee behaviour, they often do not produce the intended effect. Rewards based incentives yield short term gains and are transactional in nature. Your employees perform a desired action and you reward them for it.

But, when a reward is not offered, it often creates a negative response by employees. Reward based incentives often create a sense of entitlement and if a reward is not offered, you will have a tough time getting your employees to perform to their full potential.

Most importantly, financial rewards don't touch the emotional aspect of engagement. To truly inspire engaged employees, we must touch them emotionally so they consider the value of their contributions to the organization -- not just to their pocket book.

## 8 Incentives That Work

To inspire your employees and create a high quality organizational culture, you need to offer incentives that are transformational in nature, touch your employees emotionally, and focus on long term behavioural change.

Here are 8 effective ways to inspire employee behaviour that you can implement today:

1. **Build Pride in the Organization:** Ensure your employees see tangible reasons to have pride in their work and their organization so they know the job they do matters to the organization and to the

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communities you serve. Share your vision for the organization so everyone understands how the organization contributes -- both through business and external activities. What is your purpose versus your tasks? How does your organization contribute to the community? Is it through community events or charity work? How can employees get involved and support their community through the organization?

2. **Provide Recognition:** Recognize a job well done. A simple thank you can go a long way. Every employee, no matter what position they hold, loves to be recognized for their efforts. Thank employees for doing things outside their job description, for working an extra shift, or for picking up the slack during busy time. Do you have a performance based program that gives employees companywide recognition based on activities and behaviours that align with your core values. People like to be appreciated!
3. **Keep your Employees Stimulated.** Give your good performers the opportunity to take on additional responsibilities and offer challenging assignments regularly. This can be as simple as assigning a special project or offering extra responsibilities that recognize their efforts.
4. **Provide Opportunities for Personal Growth:** Employees want to move up from their current position. So, give them the chance by offering growth opportunities for employees that put in the effort and are great performers. Consider offering a leadership or management program. A lack of opportunities to grow is an emotional letdown for most people.
5. **Promote Clarity:** Clearly lay out expectations, roles, and responsibilities. It is emotionally taxing when employees are constantly faced with uncertain circumstances and unclear direction. Being clear and consistent when communicating expectations and evaluating performance will create an environment where employees feel confident when they are doing a good job.
6. **Create a Positive Work Environment:** Establish a clear well-defined vision of what your ideal work environment should feel like -- and then take the necessary steps to work towards that environment. How will people interact with each other? Will there be flexibility in work schedule? What behaviours are unacceptable and will not be tolerated? Work towards a positive work environment that your employees will embrace. A negative work environment is emotionally taxing and will impact employee performance directly.
7. **Relationship with manager:** Great managers take the time to build positive relationships with their employees. When emotional connections are built between employees, their managers and their role in the company, employees will perform at a higher level.
8. **Give your employees a voice:** Offer employees the opportunity to provide feedback on their position or department. Let them sit in on a manager meeting or treat them to a lunch with a company leader where they can offer their insights and ideas. Not having a voice can be very frustrating.

Employee incentives that are transformational in nature have a long term impact and are more effective than simple rewards based incentives that must be repeated time and time again to get consistent results.

### **Leadership Expert | Professional Speaker | Performance Excelsior™**

*Bill is the "just do it" guy who has walked in your shoes. Senior leaders at organizations like Anheuser-Busch/InBev, the Bay, RBH and ServiceOntario hire Bill to navigate change and influence and inspire higher performing teams that deliver exceptional customer service, higher productivity and improve profits.*

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