



**INNOVEST SME**

Accelerating Small Business

# How to motivate *Your* Sales Team

Rick Chisholm and Tala Chisholm

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30/192A Kingsgrove Rd  
Kingsgrove, NSW 2208  
Australia

Phone: +61 2 8007 2907

E-mail: [admin@innovestsme.com.au](mailto:admin@innovestsme.com.au)

Website: [www.innovestsme.com.au](http://www.innovestsme.com.au)

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

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

# PREFACE

Sales can be a tough job, and it can be hard to keep your sales team motivated to pursue leads and close deals day after day. Rejection is sometimes part of the job in sales, and that can make some days more difficult than others. Developing a solid set of strategies for motivating your sales team will not only increase your bottom line, but will increase team member satisfaction and retention. Taking the time to figure out how best to prepare and motivate your sales team is one of the best investments you can make in your organization.

*Enthusiasm is excitement  
with inspiration,  
motivation, and a pinch  
of creativity.*

BO BENNETT



# CREATE A MOTIVATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Motivation isn't just an intrinsic drive, nor is it the application of an external force at specific times. Motivation is something that exists in our environments. An environment that is not motivational promotes stagnation, procrastination, and poor morale. On the other hand, creating a motivational environment leads to team members who are excited about what they do, are fire up to work towards shared and individual goals, and who are eager to do their best for their own personal success and the organization overall success.

## CONDUCT FREQUENT TEAM CHECK-INS

One of the simplest, yet most powerful, things you can do to create a motivational environment is conduct frequent check-ins with your sales team. While part of these check-ins should be asking about progress, leads, and other essential parts of the sales teams job, the goal is also to check-in with your *people as people*. Ask them what they need, what ideas they have for maximizing opportunities, what's working, and what can be improved. Let your people know that these check-ins are a time to discuss ideas, voice concerns, and generally get the sales team

and management on the same page. They are not punitive or a type of evaluation – they are so that you are all working together, and so that everyone has what they need to succeed. You can use these check-ins as a time to voice your confidence in your team and pump them up, which is key to motivation. You might conduct weekly check-ins, or schedule them less frequently depending on what your team needs. Ask your sales team how often they'd like to check in, as well as whether they prefer to meet in person or to check-in via phone or conference call.

## **TRAIN YOUR TEAM**

Team members who are not properly trained cannot be expected to succeed! Invest time and resources in training your sales team in your organizations' best sales practices. And training should not end with the onboarding process. Offer frequent trainings, whether internal or external, on new sales practices, new technology, and new skills that can help your sales team members maximize their skills and succeed. An environment in which people are given continuous opportunities to grow and develop in one in which people are motivated. Because your team sees the organization investing in them through training and skill building, they are likely to be more invested in their roles and in the organization. Find ways to continuously offer new and exciting trainings to keep your sales team engaged.

## **EMULATE BEST PRACTICES**

Emulating the best practices of industry leaders is another key way to motivate your sales team. Look to organizations that have successful, engaged sales teams. What are they doing? How do they motivate their teams? How do they reward them? Spending time reading about these organizations and even asking management within them can help you home in on a handful of best practices to implement in your organization. Some best practices might include:

- Frequent communication
- Personalized rewards
- Recognition of successes
- Incentives for individuals
- Incentives for groups
- Continuous training and development

## **ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL!**

Not all people are motivated by the same things, nor are all teams motivated by the same things. It is vital to keep this in mind as you seek to motivate your team. Get to know them, as a team and as individual team members. Talk to them about what motivates them, what their goals are, and what excites them. To properly motivate your team, you will likely need to come up with a variety of strategies. A best practice many organizations use when motivating employees is to tailor the motivation or

reward to the individual – that way you can tap into what motivates him or her rather than offering a motivation that really doesn't inspire or excite.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Helen had just taken over management of the sales team, and was going over the last quarter's reports. Sales were steady, but they hadn't grown much over the last year. Even existing clients were placing orders of about the same size, not purchasing more. She decided to call a meeting with the sales team to talk about what was happening and what they might do to increase sales in the next quarter. Paul, the lead sales rep, told Helen that their previous manager had been satisfied as long as they didn't lose sales from quarter to quarter. So people mostly kept to their client lists and were satisfied with making their quotas. "What would get you excited about sales again?" Helen asked. The team members said that they wished they could see some appreciation for bringing in a new client or increasing sales. They got commissions, but those checks only came once a quarter. Helen spent time talking to the team about what would motivate them. She also agreed to meet with them once a week to check in, to see what they needed and how she could help.

*An employee's motivation  
is the direct result of the  
sum of interactions with  
his or her manager.*

BOB NELSON



# COMMUNICATE TO MOTIVATE

Studies show that organizations with open, frequent communication between management and employees tend to foster motivation. Communicate with your sales team often to help keep the motivation flowing. Also encourage your team members to communicate with you. By keeping the lines of communication open, you are better able to head off problems, learn what the team needs, and understand what will motivate both the whole team and individual team members.

### REGULAR GROUP MEETINGS

Along with frequent check-ins, regular group meetings are a key channel of communication. While email and phone calls are vital tools in today's workplace, face-to-face meetings are invaluable for creating a sense of shared goals and connection. Schedule regular meetings with the entire sales team. These might be weekly, monthly, or quarterly depending on the set up of your organization. However often you decide to conduct them, keep to a regular schedule so that there is consistency. Use regular meetings to discuss successes and setbacks, challenges, and needs. Also use them as a time to simply check in with each other, build relationships, and otherwise establish or reinforce shared goals and

values. Ensure that meetings are not just management giving orders, but are instead composed of two-way communication with team members.

## **REGULAR ONE ON ONE MEETINGS**

In addition to regular meetings with the entire team, it is key to take the time to meet one on one with individual team members as well. Individual meetings offer you a chance to get to know each team member and what motivates him or her. They are also a place to discuss issues or needs that individual team members might not feel comfortable bringing up in a group setting. Depending on the size of your team and the structure of your organization, the frequency of these meetings will vary. What is important is that they occur on a regular basis and that they serve as a setting for two-way communication between you and individual members of your sales team. Use this time to explore motivations, goals, needs, successes, and challenges with each team member in a setting where he or she has your undivided attention.

## **FOCUS ON STRENGTHS AND DEVELOPMENT AREAS**

A key to using meetings – team and one-on-one – to motivate is focusing on both strengths and development areas. These meetings should neither be wholly about what is going “wrong” nor entirely about praising success. Take the time to recognize the team or individual’s strengths first, reinforcing how valuable they are. Also take time to point out areas where the team or individual can grow and improve, and use part of the meeting time for creating next steps or a development plan. Never

call out an individual team member's development needs in front of the whole team – save that feedback for your individual meeting. Use team meetings to focus on strengths and development needs for the team as a whole, and focus on individual strengths and development needs in the one on one meetings. Also use the team meetings to reinforce shared goals and the mutually interdependent nature of the team.

## **ASK FOR FEEDBACK**

A major feature of motivational environments is that the communication is two-way. You will provide a great deal of feedback in the regular meetings with your sales team. Be sure to ask them for feedback as well, in both the team meetings and individual meetings. It may be necessary to offer training in how to give useful feedback, if your sales team is not used to be asked to provide feedback to management. Model good feedback behaviors as well, by not personalizing feedback and by focusing on shared values and goals. Encourage your team members to give you regular feedback in between meetings as well. Reinforce that their feedback is how you will know what they need, how they are doing, and how you can support them. Asking for feedback shows team members that you and the organization value them, which can motivate them and lead to increased investment in the work.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

As part of her efforts to motivate the sales team, Helen began holding a Monday morning breakfast meeting with the whole team. This was a

time for her to check in and see how the previous week had gone, and to see what the team's plans were for the week. She also asked the team to let her know how she could better support them – what tools they needed, what challenges they were facing. At first, the team was reluctant to make suggestions or offer ideas. They seemed nervous and uncomfortable. Helen encouraged them to be honest and let her know what they thought. Annie, a junior salesperson, offered, “We are used to be ignored or punished for offering suggestions. It's hard for us. And it's also sometimes difficult to speak up in front of the entire group.” Helen decided she would meet with each sales team member one on one to help them feel more comfortable.

*Your number one  
customers are your people.  
Look after employees first  
and then customers last.*

IAN HUTCHINSON



# TRAIN YOUR TEAM

One of the best investments you can make in your team is training! We often think of training as something that happens at onboarding, or something that only needs to take place when procedures or technology changes. However, continuously offering training to your sales team helps keep them motivated, invested in their work, and in a mindset of continuous improvement. Find ways to offer training and growth opportunities to your sales team, and you will find them fired up and ready to take on new challenges.

## FOCUS ON TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Organizations that foster a continuous improvement mindset by focusing on training and developing their people tend to have higher employee morale and higher employee retention. Happier employees that invest in the organization for the long term also lead to healthier bottom lines. Create an environment in which your people are challenged to continuously learn, build new skills, and grow in new directions. Work with your team to find the areas in which they would like more training, and focus on providing these growth experiences. Make regular training and development an integral part of what your sales team does. Also encourage team members to seek out opportunities for training and development, and support them in these efforts. When possible, the organization should subsidize outside

training. Also make sure that your sales team is given time to focus on their training and development.

## **PEER TRAINING**

Not all training needs to be formal, as in workshops or classes. Encourage peer training among your sales team. Have senior members train junior members. Also have team members that are strong in a given area provide training for those who can develop in that same area. Create opportunities for peers to train each other one on one and in group settings. Learning from peers can also be done on the job, as when sales team members visit clients in pairs or otherwise work together. Your sales team is a rich source of talent, and peer training is one way to leverage this. Use your assessments of team members' strengths and development areas to create peer training experiences. Peer training does not just benefit those receiving the training – facilitating peer training can help the trainers develop presentation and teaching skills as well as providing the opportunity to share their expertise and strengths.

## **MENTORING**

Mentoring is a powerful source of training and development. Pair new sales team members with mentors, and encourage mentoring relationships across the career. Mentors provide a model for success, as well as being sources of one on one attention and training. Numerous studies have shown the benefits of mentoring. Being paired with a mentor demonstrates organizational investment in each individual employee.

Mentors also serve as models for what is possible within the organization, and within an industry or field. Mentors also benefit from the mentoring process, as they are able to share their knowledge and expertise and feel invested in the future of the organization. This sense of organizational investment helps to motivate sales team members to achieve their goals.

## **KEEP THE FOCUS POSITIVE!**

When fostering an environment of continuous training and development, it is key to keep the focus positive. Reinforce that training is done to offer chances to grow and build skills, rather than being a punishment for not being “good enough.” Training is an opportunity for your sales team members to be their best selves and to make their greatest contributions. When introducing training into an environment that has not been training focused, you may experience pushback if team members perceive the training as punitive. Keep the focus on the positive outcomes that will accrue to the organization, the team, and to individual team members from going through training. Encourage team members to find useful takeaways from each training session they go through, whether it is a formal workshop or informal peer trainings.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

The sales team groaned when they got the memo that they would be undergoing monthly training workshops. “I wonder who screwed up this time?” John, a senior sales rep, asked his colleagues. “You know they only do this when something’s gone wrong. Great.” Lorna, his

colleague, wasn't so sure. "You know that Helen's been trying to fire us up lately. Maybe it's not that we're in trouble, but that she wants us to learn something new." John was not convinced. In their weekly meeting with Helen, their manager, John asked why they had to go through all this training. "I want you to be the best you can be," Helen said. "There's always so much to learn, and you all have so much to teach each other. But it's hard to fit that in to your busy schedules, so we're going to make it part of our routine." She asked the team to think about areas they would be interested in learning more about, or skills they would like to expand. "Let's also think about all the expertise we have right here on this team. If you'd be willing to teach your colleagues, or share your tips with them, I think it'd be wonderful," Helen concluded.

*The secret of joy in  
work is contained in one  
word – excellence. To know  
how to do something well  
is to enjoy it.*

PEARL S. BUCK



# EMULATE BEST PRACTICES

When looking for ways to motivate your sales team, there's no need to reinvent the wheel. There are a number of best practices that have been proven to motivate sales team members – seek them out and emulate them! Look to industry leaders, and even across industries, for examples of motivated and successful sales teams. Figure out what these organizations are doing right, and then find ways to bring those practices to your own organization.

### LOOK TO INDUSTRY LEADERS

If you want to be the best, look to what the best are already doing. Emulating the best practices in your industry is one powerful way to motivate your sales team. Look to see what industry leaders are doing in terms of recruiting, hiring, retaining, training, and motivating their sales forces. Adopt the practices that you can, and adapt those that need some tweaking. Look to the organizations that have not only the highest-earning, but the happiest and most energetic sales teams, and you'll find the organizations to emulate. Spend time reading industry literature, following blogs, and otherwise investigating what these organizations are doing right. Draw on your own professional network and ask colleagues

in other organizations how they fire up the sales force. Find ways to apply their practices and principles to your organization.

## **SOLICIT TEAM MEMBER SUGGESTIONS**

If you want to motivate your people, sometimes the most powerful thing you can do is ask! Solicit suggestions from your sales team, both as a group and one on one, as to what would motivate them or excite them about their work. Explore with them what may have worked for them in previous jobs, or what they learn from their colleagues in other organizations. Your people know themselves best, after all. Find out what makes them tick, what gets them excited, and – just as importantly – what they find demotivating. Work to find ways to implement their suggestions. Keep this an ongoing process, as what people find motivating may change over time, and you will want to get suggestions from new team members as they come on board as well.

## **TAKE A FIELD TRIP!**

Part of seeking to emulate best practices is to determine what those practices are. And one of the best ways to do this is to go to where these practices are implemented. Take your team on a field trip! This might be a visit to an industry leader's site, where your team can watch and learn from their sales team. (Always arrange this well ahead of time, of course.) Other field trips that might provide ideas for motivating your sales team might include:

- A visit to an organization known for a robust sales force, even if it's outside your industry
- An industry conference where industry leaders are presenting
- A sales conference where leaders in many different industries are presenting
- Trade shows

## **LEVERAGE OUTSIDE EXPERTISE**

Don't hesitate to leverage outside expertise as you seek to emulate best practices. Draw on industry literature, sales literature more broadly, and business publications for information on what great practices are being implemented. An outside consultant or expert in people management might also be a worthwhile investment, as these people can see your organization and your team with a fresh eye. Seek out advice from your own professional network and mentors about what they do in their organizations to keep their sales teams motivated and excited about their work. Be willing to think creatively. While industry leaders are an important source of best practices, sometimes the best ideas come from outside our comfort zone. Look outside your industry – even far outside – to see what people are doing that is creative, innovative, and motivational.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

When he took over supervising the sales team, Randy was struck by how plodding their process seemed. They made healthy enough sales, but

their numbers didn't really grow and none of the team seemed especially enthusiastic about their job. He knew that to really build sales, people had to be more invested. He spent some time reading about what other people in their industry were doing. He called his colleague, Anna, who managed a sales team in an industry very different than his own. She told him that it was a common practice at her firm to incorporate friendly competitions into each quarter. He decided to try this with his team. She suggested he offer a fun prize, and include things like a progress board in the conference room. Randy wasn't too sure, because his organization was pretty buttoned-down, but decided to try it. The team loved it! The prize was a silly trophy that he'd found at a sporting goods store, but the idea of there being a competition really fired the team up. Randy was surprised – he'd never have thought to try something so simple.

*Efficiency is doing things  
right. Effectiveness is doing  
the right things.*

PETER DRUCKER



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# PROVIDE TOOLS

No matter how talented and motivated he or she might be, no one can succeed without the right tools. Taking time to determine which tools your sales team members need, and then to provide those tools, is vital to motivation. A team that is continually deprived of the tools necessary to do their job effectively is a team that will lose motivation and investment in the work. On the other hand, a team that is supplied with the best tools at the right time is one that is excited about and invested in their work. Providing your team with the tools they need demonstrates organizational investment in their success, and your team will recognize and reward this investment by doing their best work.

## THE RIGHT TOOLS

It's important to provide the right tools for the job. After all, a hammer and saw are wonderful tools, but they are little use to you if what you need to do is change a car tire! Take the time to be sure that the tools you're providing are the tools your team needs. Your regular meetings with your team become an invaluable source of information here, as these meetings allow you to check in with team members about what they need, what they have access to, and what they have but do not find helpful. Providing more technology, for instance, will not help your team if what they really need is an administrative support person.

## **ASK TEAM MEMBERS WHAT TOOLS THEY NEED**

The best way to find out what tools your team needs is to ask. Be sure to take time to ask the team as a whole, as well as to check in with individual team members. There are tools that can benefit the entire team, such as an administrative support person or streamlined communication technology. Individual team members may have specific needs. What will enable one team member to work most effectively will not necessarily be the right tool for the rest of his or her team. Know that you will very likely have to tailor the tools to the individual team member, as well as providing tools that the entire team accesses and uses as a group. Reinforce that your team members should feel empowered to ask for what they need, even if a request seems silly or trivial. For instance, if a team member with a back condition can work more effectively by having a lumbar support in her chair, and that increased comfort means she is more motivated to complete tasks, then that tool is worth investing in! Check in regularly with the team and its members, as needs may change over time.

## **PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY TOOLS**

When you provide tools for your team, provide the highest quality tools possible. While it may be tempting to economize, providing tools that are poor quality or that don't *quite* do what your team needs them to do will result in frustration. This frustration is not likely to produce the motivated, energized team you're seeking. Poor quality tools – whether it be paper schedulers or poorly facilitated training – end up costing you more money than you save many times, because they must be worked

around, accommodated for, or replaced. Don't simply find something that will "work" – take the time to find the tool that will best meet your team's needs. This is not always necessarily the most expensive tool! Input from your team members is vital here, as they can help you assess options and decide what will best meet their needs.

## **ALLOW FOR TRAINING**

Even the best tool is of no use if you do not know how to use it properly. When providing new tools to your team, or to individual team members, remember to allow time and resources for training. Some tools will have a steep learning curve, while others will integrate seamlessly into your team's work. Be sure to account for overlap between old and new tools, especially when upgrading technology. Also be sure to provide structured training if needed, whether through workshops or one on one instruction. Expect for there to be some bumps in the road while the team or team member gets used to the new tool. Don't expect miracle results overnight! When budgeting for tools for your sales team, include funds for training and support.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

At their weekly meeting, Randy mentioned to his sales team that several messages to members of the team had gone unanswered the previous week, though they were urgent. He asked if they knew what had happened, and how they could prevent the same issue. "It's these stupid phones," Sarah told him. "They don't have enough data, and so we run

out of message space. If you have to travel to a rural client, you can't get service at all most of the time. I know we got a good deal from the provider, but I cannot do my job right if I don't get my messages." There were nods of agreement around the table. Randy asked if Louis would take charge of researching new phone plans and providers, and the team then brainstormed a list of requirements for their new phones and phone plans. Within two weeks, Louis had found them a plan with three times as much data, and better phones, for just a little more money. There were no more missed messages that quarter.

*The question isn't who  
is going to let me. It's who  
is going to stop me.*

AYN RAND



# FIND OUT WHAT MOTIVATES EMPLOYEES

Each person is motivated by something different. The simplest, and perhaps most overlooked, step in motivating employees is to find out from *them* what would be motivating! Before investing time and resources into a plan to motivate your sales team, you should take the time to discover what would be most motivating to the actual people in question. This way you can know from the outset that you are providing resources, tools, and incentives that will actually provide the motivation you seek.

## **ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL!**

When it comes to motivation, you can't assume that all people will respond to the same things. Even strategies that have worked in the past may not be as effective if the make-up of the team, the culture of the organization, or other factors have changed. Some people fear that not offering everyone the same motivational techniques means a lack of fairness. However, as long as people are treated equably, there is no unfairness in recognizing that different people will be motivated by different things. Failing to take into account that people value and are motivated by a variety of things almost guarantees that at least some

portion of your team will not be motivated and energized by even the most well thought out motivational plan.

## **FIND OUT WHAT MOTIVATES INDIVIDUALS**

Take time to check in with each individual on your sales team and discover what motivates him or her. Find ways to offer these motivations. While one employee might be motivated by the idea of extra paid time off, another might be more motivated by a longer lunch or a closer parking space. Be clear about what the organization can and cannot offer in terms of motivation and incentive, but hear each individual out. Find out 1-3 things that motivate each individual, and keep note of these in his or her file. Check in periodically as well, as what people value can change over time.

## **DISCOVER WHAT MOTIVATES THE TEAM**

Although it is made up of individuals, the team also has shared goals. Find out what motivates the team as a whole. A team may be motivated by the idea of recognition, of financial reward, or of winning a competition over other teams. All of these are acceptable motivations, but each needs to be considered and implemented differently. In your regular team meetings, ask your team what would motivate them *as a team* to work toward goals. Emphasize that this does not mean that each member is not also working toward his or her individual goals, but that team goals are also important. This is also a good time to reinforce team values and goals, and to evaluate plans for working toward those goals.

## **TAILOR REWARDS TO EMPLOYEES**

Once you've discovered what motivates individuals and the whole team, work to find ways to provide those things. Tailor rewards to employees and teams. A "reward" that is not valued by the person or team it's given to is no reward at all! It is important to ensure fairness and equity, but this does not mean that every person and team has to be offered the same motivators and rewards. Find a way to keep things fair while also tailoring rewards to the people they're meant for. This might mean setting a price cap on financial rewards, for instance. Tailoring rewards to employees shows people that the organization genuinely cares about them and wants to reward them with things or experiences they value. This increases employee investment, and this in itself can be a powerful motivator!

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Helen was really pleased with the way her sales team was stepping up to the new training and pulling together. In their weekly meeting, she asked them, "What would motivate you to work toward a new sales goal next quarter? What would get you excited about adding to your quotas?" The team thought about it for a while. "A really good team lunch!" Rhona suggested. "So often we don't get to sit down and just catch up with each other. And we're on the road so much, we eat a lot of fast food. A great lunch at a steakhouse." Heads nodded around the table. "Yes," Stephan said. "I mean, our last manager printed up little certificates for

us, which was nice of him, but....” Helen agreed that if they team made their new sales goal, the company would treat them all to an extended lunch at the steakhouse of their choice.

*Every brand isn't for  
everybody, and everybody  
isn't for every brand.*

LIZ LANGE



# TAILOR REWARDS TO THE EMPLOYEE

A team at its best is a unit, working toward shared goals. However, we cannot forget that teams are made up of individuals. And however much team members are working towards shared goals and visions, they also have their own goals and motivations. Take time to tailor rewards to the individual members of your team, and you will motivate not only the team as a whole, but each individual component – creating a healthier overall team.

## **MOTIVATION IS PERSONAL!**

Motivation is deeply personal. While different people may be motivated by the same or similar things, we cannot say that all humans are motivated by the same basic things. Taking the time to discover what each person on your team finds valuable and motivating is a worthwhile investment. It helps you to tailor rewards to each team member's personal goals and values. This demonstrates that the organization values team members as people, not simply parts of a team or unit. Take time to get to know what motivates each of your team members. This may be a useful exercise as part of annual reviews or other self-evaluations. Refrain from judging what

an individual finds motivating, and do your best to find ways to use each person's individual motivations as rewards.

## **CHOOSE 1-3 MOTIVATORS**

As you work to discover what each employee finds motivational, ask him or her to list 1-3 things that are the most motivating. This helps the team member get clear about what will best motivate him or her, and gives you some options when planning motivations and rewards. It may be difficult for an individual to narrow the list down to just 3 items, but this is a good number to shoot for. Ask the person to reflect on his or her goals and values when coming up with these items. Common items may include

- Tangible rewards, such as certificates or trophies
- Recognition
- Financial rewards such as raises or bonuses
- Time off or other rewards of free time

## **EMPLOYEE'S PERSONAL GOALS**

When discussing motivation with individual team members, tie it to the employee's personal goals. You will address team goals with the whole team. It is important to help an employee set personal goals so that he or she is invested in personal growth and success as well as that of the team. Have the employee set short and long term goals. Then decide together on a reward or other motivator that will be used to provide the energy for him or her to work toward each goal. Set time tables and benchmarks

and agree upon appropriate reward, recognition, or incentive for meeting each goal. Keep the focus positive – there is to be no punishment for not reaching a goal, just reward or incentive for achieving the goal. Link the employee’s top 1-3 motivators with his or her top goals.

## **REWARD ACHIEVEMENTS**

A motivational culture is one in which achievements are regularly recognizes. One reason it is key to discover what motivates individual employees is so that achievements can be properly recognized. In addition to the goals that you and the employee set together, take time to recognize achievements throughout the quarter or year. Provide rewards that are in line with the things that the employee has told you motivate him or her. Some achievements worth recognizing among your sales team might be:

- Landing a new client
- Exceeding a sales goal
- Completing a training
- Giving a presentation to peers
- Presenting at a conference

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

James didn’t know what to say when Helen asked him what his top three motivators were. “I’ve never really thought about it. I mean, I get paid. I

like that sometimes we get recognized in the company newsletter. But what I'd really like is one weekend a month where I didn't have to travel. I miss out on a lot of my daughter's dance recitals. I know it's part of the job, but it's still hard." After he thought about it a while longer, James said "My top motivator is having time to spend with my family." Helen and James agreed that if he were able to increase his client load by 3 new clients this quarter, he would earn one weekend the next month where he didn't have to travel. For each month he met this goal, he would earn another travel-free weekend.

*There are no shortcuts to  
any place worth going.*

BEVERLY SILLS



# CREATE TEAM INCENTIVES

Teams have to work together to achieve shared goals. One way to keep everyone motivated to work toward common goals is to create team incentives. Your knowledge of what individual team members find motivating will be helpful here. Taking time to discover what would motivate the entire team is also useful. Providing incentives for the whole team helps create another shared goal, rather than having people working for their own personal rewards.

## INCENTIVES FOSTER TEAMWORK

Incentives foster teamwork. There is an extensive literature on the value of shared goals in creating collaborative environments. When you create team incentives, you foster a sense that each member of the team is working *for the good of the team* rather than his or her own personal gain. Because the team incentive is only awarded if the team *as a whole* achieves a goal, each member is invested in success. This means people are much more likely to pull together, collaborate, and help each other out than they might be if they are working for individual goals and rewards. Victories are shared when the incentive is for the whole team, which also further fosters investment and a sense of team identity.

## TEAM GOALS

Team incentives provide a way to establish and reinforce team goals. Team goals can sometimes seem more nebulous or distant than individual goals. Tying team incentives to team goals brings them into the present and helps to reinforce their shared nature. Having an incentive in sight also increases investment in team goals and values. You should tie specific incentives for the team to specific team goals, in the same way that you tied individual goals and rewards when working one on one with team members. Having an incentive in sight, no matter what it is, makes the goal more tangible. And if the incentive is properly chosen – that is, one that the members of the team find motivating – they will work more steadily toward that goal than if they had no incentive to look forward to.

## CHOOSE 1-3 MOTIVATORS

Just as you did with individual team members, take the time to determine your team's top 1-3 motivators. It is important that these be things that will motivate the entire team, not just specific members of the team. There may be significant overlap with individual motivators, or there may be great difference. Common team motivators might be:

- Bonuses
- Recognition by the organization
- Satisfaction of beating another team

As you work with your sales team to set team goals, keep these motivators in mind. Work with the team to find ways in which you can offer their top motivators as incentives. Be clear about what the organization can and cannot do, but work to find ways to tailor incentives to the team.

## **REWARD ACHIEVEMENTS**

Just as when working with individual team members, it is important to reward team achievements regularly. Sales teams are often working towards very long-term goals, and without benchmarks and regular recognition of achievement, it can be easy to lose sight of the end goal. With the knowledge you've gained of team motivators, build in times to recognize team achievements. Some team achievements you might recognize include:

- Increased sales
- Bringing in a new client as part of a team effort
- Beating target sales for the period
- Bringing in a sales project under budget or ahead of schedule

Regularly recognizing and rewarding team achievements helps to reinforce the importance of teamwork. It also helps to keep the team motivated towards a goal which may be a long way off – and the reward for which may also seem quite distant.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Randy's sales team had been working hard to increase their sales. While they hadn't brought in many new clients, they had managed to get some existing clients to increase their purchases. But they were starting to get fatigued. "What would get you guys fired up again?" Randy asked in their weekly meeting. "You know what?" Ralph, the team lead, said. "I would LOVE to just once beat the guys from Sydney. It seems like they always come out ahead." Randy asked the team what they thought. Yes, they agreed, let's try to beat the team from the Sydney office this year. Randy agreed that he would update them each day with a chart with their numbers and the Sydney numbers. If his team won, he would create a special certificate recognizing them for besting Sydney. The team agreed this was a great idea!

*You don't close a sale; you  
open a relationship if you  
want to build a long-term  
successful enterprise.*

PATRICIA FRIPP



# IMPLEMENT INCENTIVES

When you've determined what will motivate both the entire team and its individual members, it's time to implement incentives. Incentives should be implemented in a way that is understandable, regular, and consistent. If employees don't have faith in the incentive system, it will do little to motivate them. Create an incentive system that works for your organization and which will be motivational to your team.

## REGULAR INCENTIVES

Part of your incentive system should be regular incentives. How your organization defines "regular" may vary, but there should be a regular schedule that is communicated to and understood by your team. Regular incentives are those that can be expected for meeting set goals or targets. These are incentives that are not so much special recognition as recognition of meeting one's goals for the organization. These might include:

- Annual bonuses
- Quarterly commission checks
- Monthly recognition lunches

The type of regular incentives your organization chooses will depend on many factors. What is most important is that employees understand how these incentives are earned and distributed. If incentives are haphazard, they are not particularly motivating, as employees do not know whether or not their efforts will be rewarded.

## **MARK MILESTONES**

In addition to regular incentives, it is key to mark milestones. When you mark milestones with an employee or team, it shows that the organization is paying attention to and is invested in its people. Milestones should be marked with special incentives above and beyond the regular incentives. This reinforces that these are special incentives or rewards to mark special occasions or benchmarks. Some milestones you may wish to mark with incentives include:

- Anniversaries of employment (5, 10, 20 years)
- Promotions
- Breaking sales records
- Significant life events such as milestone birthdays, if this is part of organizational culture
- Setting sales records
- Surpassing sales goals

## **ENCOURAGE FRIENDLY COMPETITION**

A little friendly competition can be quite motivating. The key word here is *friendly*. Encourage your team to compete with other teams in your office or in your organization's other offices. You can use some level of friendly competition within a team to motivate the team, but it is important to keep this at a level that does not inhibit team cohesion. Encouraging teams to compete against each other can provide the spark of motivation that other types of incentives might not. Providing an incentive that both teams find motivating can encourage each team to bring their best to the work. If you decide to use friendly competition, be attuned to organizational culture and personal politics. Friendly competition will not necessarily work well with all teams, but it can be an excellent motivator if you determine that it is appropriate.

## **KEEP THE VALUE REASONABLE**

When offering incentives, it's important to keep the value reasonable. This is especially important when using an element of friendly competition to motivate your team. Offering incentives that are of too high a value (monetary or otherwise) risks encouraging sabotage or other unsportsmanlike conduct. Reasonably valued incentives help keep everyone grounded in what is truly important, which is achieving the goal. Be careful of offering incentives of too low a value, as people may not care enough to compete for these. When creating incentives, especially those for which people will compete, keep in mind the size of the goal, the people in question, and what would be appropriate reward for meeting the goal. The last thing

you want is for your incentive to become a cause for long-lasting discord between people who have to work together long after the competition is over!

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Once Randy's team determined to beat the Sydney team, it wasn't long until the Sydney team heard about it. Their manager, Rachel, called Randy. "I'll tell you what," she said. "If your team wins, my team will take a picture with us all wearing your city's football team's jersey, and we'll send you a basket of treats you can only get in Sydney. And if we win, you guys have to pose in *our* jersey and send us a basket of local goodies." Randy thought it sounded great. He posed it to the team who laughed and agreed. "Now we *have* to win," Ralph said. "I look horrible in that shade of orange!" The competition lasted for 6 weeks, and each team raised their sales. They started having a weekly conference call, where there was a lot of good natured teasing, but also some great networking.

*Make a customer,  
not a sale.*

KATHERINE BARCHETTI'



# RECOGNIZE ACHIEVEMENTS

One of the most motivating things for most people is recognition. People want to know that what they do is noticed and matters. This can be especially true in team environments, where it sometimes feels as though individual get lost. In large organizations with broad goals, individual teams may also feel lost in the shuffle. Take the time to recognize achievements by both individual employees and whole teams, and you will find your people more motivated and invested in their work.

## **RECOGNITION MOTIVATES!**

People want to be recognized for what they do, and especially when they reach a goal or accomplish an achievement. While people may want to be recognized in different ways – some prefer public accolade while others want a private pat on the back – no one wants to feel as though his or her work is invisible. Find ways to recognize your people's achievements. When your sales team knows that their work is seen, appreciated, and recognized, they are more likely to be motivated to continue to do excellent work. Note every recognition needs to be public or made with a formal incentive. Figure out what motivates your people, and find ways to recognize achievements that align with this. A culture in which

achievements both large and small are acknowledged is a motivational one.

## **RECOGNIZE ACHIEVEMENTS REGULARLY**

It is important to recognize achievements regularly. This helps to establish a culture of recognition. There are many ways to do this. Some organizations have a yearly awards banquet or celebration. Others recognize achievements weekly or monthly in a newsletter or company-wide email. You may choose a few moments during weekly or monthly meetings to recognize those who have reached goals or had other achievements. The frequency is not as important as the regularity. If your people have the sense that achievements are sometimes recognized and sometimes not, they are not likely to find such recognition motivating. Even if you do not choose frequent public acknowledgement of achievements, be sure to schedule regular time with your team and its members to recognize recent achievements.

## **RECOGNIZE ACHIEVEMENTS PUBLICALLY**

Not every achievement needs to be recognized publically, but ideally there should be some way of acknowledging achievement to the organization. You might choose regular announcements at meetings, an annual awards ceremony, or simply a congratulatory email. Recognizing achievements publically helps to reinforce the culture of recognition. When employees know that others are being recognized, they are motivated to achieve so that they might be recognized as well. If there is a culture of silence around

achievements, even if they are acknowledged privately, employees may feel that what they accomplish doesn't really matter. Certificates, trophies, and other items that employees and teams can display are also a way of publically recognizing achievements.

## **DOCUMENT ACHIEVEMENTS**

It is important to document team and individual achievements. On a practical level, this information is useful when it comes time for annual review, promotions, and raises. Individual employees and teams may also wish to document achievements as a way of demonstrating a track record of excellence – what some experts call a “Go You!” file, which can be turned to when evaluating strengths or accomplishments over the last year. Documenting achievements also contributes to a sense of organizational history and can be useful when orienting new team members or otherwise establishing the history of a team or initiative. Documentation may be informal, as simple as a folder or a document on the server. Other organizations choose to have more formal archives which document achievements. Choose a method that fits with your organization culture, but be sure to document!

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

At the end of each year, as part of their holiday celebration, the sales team held an awards ceremony. They gave silly awards, like “Worst Tie” but also recognized people who had met goals, been promoted, retired, or otherwise had accomplishments during the year. It was a nice time to

recognize people's achievements. Since she had started working on the team just two weeks before the end of the year, Randy didn't expect to receive anything. She had only just landed her first client, and was still pretty unsure of herself. So she was surprised when she was called up to accept the award for "Landing the Last Client of the Year." She hadn't even though the team would notice, but her mentor gave a nice speech and welcomed her to the team, and then gave her a certificate for her office. In her previous company, where she'd been for 5 years, Randy had never won an award even though she consistently did well at her job. She felt very much part of her new team.

*Don't wish it were easier,  
wish you were better.*

JIM ROHN

# CLOSING THOUGHTS

- **Zig Ziglar:** For every sale you miss because you're too enthusiastic, you'll miss a hundred because you're not enthusiastic enough.
- **Aristotle:** We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.
- **John Maxwell:** Successful and unsuccessful people do not vary greatly in their abilities. They vary in their desire to reach their potential.
- **Elbert Hubbard:** The greatest mistake you can make in life is to continually be afraid that you will make one.



**Rick Chisholm** made history when he single-handedly changed the professional Audio Visual industry by breaking all the rules and capitalised over 50% market share in Australia with very little capital, no partners, mergers or lenders and set up the first franchise operation of its kind in the world in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

As a 7x founder of companies and 30x businesses such as Innovest, AI Machine, Lightsounds, LSW, Light Emotion with revenue in excess of \$300 million and having employed more than 1,000 staff over the last 35 years. Rick is known as the Start-Up and SME Guru and is Author of a number of books including Business Success for Life. Unlike many mentors, he actually walks the talk and has a number of businesses under management in such areas as Automation, Events management, Importing, Distribution, Retailing and E-commerce.

His BIG passion is Business Education empowering Businesses Owners through knowledge and skills. Whilst Rick has experienced great success, he has also endured many failures. Rick has faced and overcome the exact same challenges you are facing now.



**Tala Chisholm** is an SME specialist who has owned and managed several small to medium sized businesses in the last 20 years, several of which were eventually sold. She has extensive experience in the fields of retail, franchising, licensing, dealerships, education, importing, distribution and consulting.

Her expertise lies in building and implementing customised cross-platform database and software solutions for businesses, automation, IT, web marketing, advertising, graphic design, business administration, process refinement and implementation. Her business experience ranges from bricks-and-mortar Giftware retailing to highly technical fields such as Security, CCTV, Entertainment Lighting and Audio sales, hire and installations as well as e-commerce.

Throughout her career she also trained and mentored Franchise business owners as well as internal division managers. Some areas of training included retail operations, management practices, business strategy, accounting, cash-flow, marketing, customer service and IT. She has also headed up the drafting of Operating Compliance Manuals for Franchise operations and implementation of all the elements involved.

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Phone: +61 2 8007 2907  
E-mail: [admin@innovestsmc.com.au](mailto:admin@innovestsmc.com.au)  
Website: [www.innovestsmc.com.au](http://www.innovestsmc.com.au)