

AUTHENTICITY KEY TO TEAM MOTIVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Leadership is often thought of as driving productivity and business growth. For many years, leadership has been focused on results, earnings and being competitive. For me, however, a primary characteristic of leadership is authenticity.

True, authentic leadership is not something that we can copy and paste or search through the internet – it is innate in us. There are well-established leadership principles and team motivation strategies and tactics but, when it comes down to it, I believe that true motivation comes from an authentic leader.

Team leaders are not superhuman and do not have all the answers. They motivate by being honest with their team and looking to others for potential solutions or new ideas. Motivation doesn't come from one senior person dictating a strategy to be delivered. Authentic leaders don't think of their team as 'worker bees', but rather value all equally, recognising that each person is important to the success of the team dynamic and the overall success of the company.

A team is like a large wheel with many different cogs representing the different roles within the team. If the cogs are broken, the wheel will not work effectively, and this is why it is so important that all members of the team feel valued and that their contribution is recognised by everyone. Whether it is the person who provides operations support, handles office administration or delivers the service to the client, we are all inter-dependent on each other.

So, what keeps a team motivated? This is perhaps best illustrated through an example, which occurred during the pandemic. In 2020

at the start of Covid, our delivery model had to change rapidly, as all non-essential visits to client sites were prohibited. To overcome this challenge, I drew on five key elements: inspiration, inclusion, innovation, integrity and individual recognition.

1. Inspiration

(common purpose) – As a team we discussed and explored different ways of working with our clients to help them through this uncertain time and to be part of the movement to bring compliant medicines to the market. We needed everyone to come together and believe in a common purpose. As a leader it was important that I instilled belief in my team that it remained possible to find a solution and that they were the people to do so.

2. Inclusion

It was extremely important that all of the team members were part of the solution and that we listened to everyone's contribution. Not only did this yield great ideas, it also really motivated team members as they saw themselves as part of the solution and wanted to contribute in any way possible. In addition to looking for new ways to connect with our clients, we also explored ways to connect with each other now that the 'water-cooler' conversations were no longer possible. We



set up a book club, coffee mornings, cocktail evenings and daily check-in calls – all to offer each other support and an outlet from work and family lock-down challenges. I have learnt over the years that it is better to have a happy, strong team than one high-flyer who can easily disrupt the status quo and leave a trail of destruction behind them.

3. Innovation

Given the global circumstances surrounding us, with most of the world in an enforced lock-down, innovation was key to delivery of our services. Our team quickly adapted to new technologies to allow us to continue to support our clients in a virtual environment and introduce new and innovative ways of working with those clients whilst adding quantifiable value. This also offered our team the opportunity to develop their creative thinking as well as their digital, communication and strategic skills and see the results of their contributions and learnings bear fruit.

4. Integrity

Like authenticity, I consider integrity to be of paramount importance. Trust across the team was, and continues to be, imperative for everyone's growth and development. We are as strong as our weakest link, and if part of our team is feeling undervalued and demotivated, then the team as a whole will suffer. We've created an open environment where sharing potential problems is welcome and appreciated. As a team we developed the mantra 'Go ugly early', by which we mean if we know about an issue, we can deal with it, rather than leaving problems to linger. We created an environment that encourages open dialogue and that accepts mistakes, as this is how we learn.

5. Individual recognition

Each person in the team has their own issues and goals. Being in tune with how they work, what motivates them and understanding and appreciating their personal circumstance at any given time is important. Promoting work/life balance is also key to keeping the team motivated, but what this looks like varies from one person to another. Therefore, being in tune with each member of the team and their individual needs is essential to keeping a team motivated. During Covid, some team members were home schooling or looking after elderly parents, so we were extremely flexible and continue to be so. The result is we have a committed, dedicated team of people.

Of equal importance is the commitment to each individual's personal development. There is no one-size-fits-all. Exploring each team member's ambitions and actively working with them to achieve these goals by putting training plans in place adds to the motivation of the team. Working with people to map out their career trajectory and acting as an advocate for them within the organisation has also helped to sustain a highly motivated team. It is vital to value all team members and their particular drivers – those that wish to reach the top of the corporate ladder and, equally, those that are very happy in their current role and have no wish to take on other responsibilities.

Ultimately, when employees feel motivated and are given the tools to grow, they become extremely valuable team members, and the impact of their contribution is immeasurable. I believe in putting people first, then processes. If both are done properly, profit will follow. Invest in your people. Take the lessons learnt from the restrictions imposed by Covid and keep building on them.



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