



A Job Is More than Just Work

WHAT IS IT THAT WE'RE PAYING FOR WHEN WE HIRE PEOPLE? THIS SEEMS LIKE SUCH A SIMPLE QUESTION, BUT THE ANSWER IS COMPLEX.

Advertising and marketing professionals know that people don't go to hardware stores when they have an intense desire to purchase a drill. Instead, they go to hardware stores when they need quarter-inch holes. When you hire someone, what is it that you're looking for? Accurately answering that question helps to define the qualities you're looking for.

But many of today's workers differ from those of previous generations. Factory managers provided the tools that their workers needed. In many cases, that is no longer the case today. Particularly for knowledge workers, the tools they need are internal. The primary tool used by software developers, for example, is *knowledge*. That knowledge can be used for your business or any other business. In other words, knowledge workers own their tools and will take those tools with them when they leave.

It's important for managers to provide jobs that workers will find fulfilling. Management consultant A. J. Stinnett identified five components that are essential. It's important to understand that one of these, compensation, rarely motivates employees. It is, in fact, demotivating if perceived as inequitable.

The other four components are essential: Success. Achievement. Results. Recognition.

Stinnett says that our ancestors were certainly motivated by success. If the hunters failed, they didn't eat. "Our instincts haven't changed much over the years," Stinnett says. So it's essential to build into the management process an opportunity for success for every employee.



Managing effectively enables people to perform superbly. It requires some creative thinking, it might create some objections, and it takes time to implement, but it almost always results in improved performance.

Managing Effectively

CONSIDER THE 4 KEY POINTS OTHER THAN COMPENSATION THAT ARE ESSENTIAL IN CREATING JOBS THAT ATTRACT THE BEST WORKERS. THEN WE'LL TAKE A LOOK AT ONE ADDITIONAL POINT.

First, make certain your employees have complete jobs. Review the work processes and change them so that employees produce a clearly identifiable output, result, or product. People want to see the results of their hard work and to know that what they accomplished has value and meets or exceeds your expectations.

Next, give employees a measure of autonomy. In other words, give them the right to make the

decisions needed to do the work. This may mean letting them decide how to do the work. In most cases, the people who do the work know how to do it efficiently. When employees are free to make these decisions, they will almost always make the right choices.

Be sure to identify each employee's client. That is the person or organization that directly benefits from

the employee's work. It may be the person in the next cubicle, in an adjacent building, at another company, or at a supplier's or customer's location. Employees need to know who uses their output, how it is used, and why. If possible, link the employee and client so they can communicate directly.

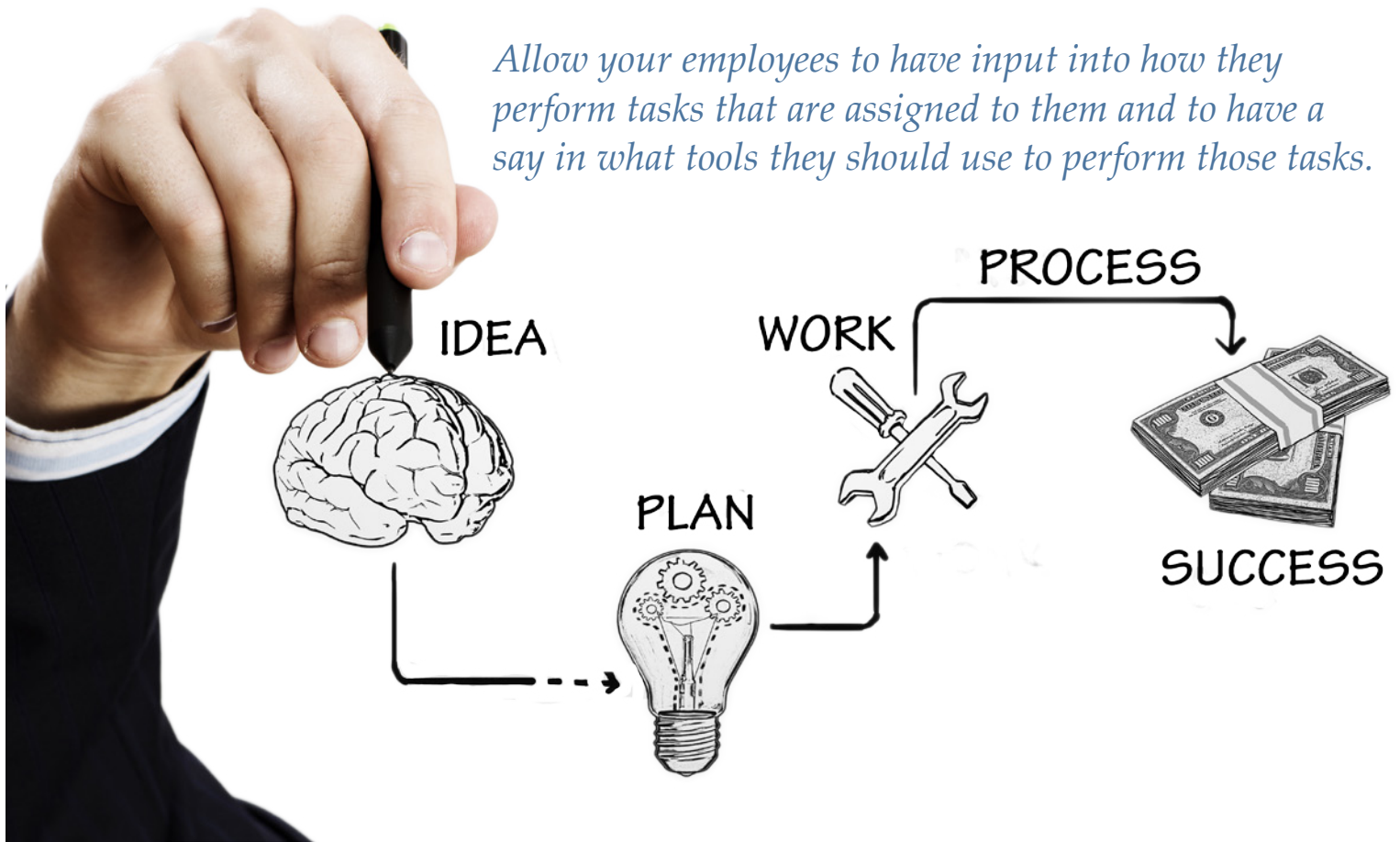
And finally, says Stinnett, "make certain employees get feedback about their performance soon after the work is finished and frequently during the process." They need to receive information from their manager, the work process itself, and from their client. Of these, the most valuable is feedback from their client.

Tools Are Important

STINNETT DIDN'T MENTION TOOLS IN HIS ARTICLE, BUT TOOLS ARE IMPORTANT.

Warehousing consultant Ken Ackerman notes that David Packard, founder of Hewlett-Packard,

Allow your employees to have input into how they perform tasks that are assigned to them and to have a say in what tools they should use to perform those tasks.



wrote about trust and tools in his book, *The HP Way*. Packard observed companies that were zealous about guarding tools and parts bins to prevent theft, but when he established his own company, he insisted that parts bins and store-rooms should always be open.

Ackerman cited an incident in which a warehouse strapped all outbound loads. “Hand strapping machines were used and management feared they would be stolen.” As a result, only a few tools were purchased and those who needed the tools stood in line waiting to use a \$40 tool.

The cost of wasted time was greater than the cost of providing additional tools.

Similarly, in a knowledge-based work environment, some organizations explicitly specify software that their employees will use. A software developer who is familiar with one application might be forced to use an application that the employee considers substandard. This is not a situation that prudent managers will encourage.

Listen to the people you hire and you’ll find that they often know the best ways to accomplish the tasks that you have assigned to them. Ω

Developing a Unique Selling Proposition for Success

WHAT ARE THE 3 MOST SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS OF YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE IN NO MORE THAN 4 TO 6 WORDS EACH? IF YOU CAN’T TELL ME, YOU NEED TO WORK ON YOUR UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION.

This is a variation on the *elevator speech*. How you explain your business to someone you meet on an elevator.

What problem do you solve? Before FedEx, people didn’t know that being unable to deliver a package overnight was a problem. Your USP will be harder to sell to the public if they don’t yet know they have a problem because your first efforts will have to be devoted to convincing them the problem exists.

The USP needs to be just a single sentence. Shorter is better. Condense your thoughts. Maybe you should hire a poet because poets know how to extract the maximum meaning from the fewest words.

Set whatever you create aside and look at it next week. How can you improve it? Take the time to get this right.

Then set it aside for another week or two and if it still makes sense when you return, the USP is ready.

Are you ready? Will your product or service carry out the USP’s promise? If FedEx managed to deliver only one third of its packages overnight, people wouldn’t believe the USP. In fact, the best way to kill a lousy product is to pair it with an outstanding USP, excellent marketing, and killer ads. If you can’t deliver what you promise, go back to the beginning and start over.

Now, Put it to Use

After creating the USP, it’s time to put it to work on your business card, your company’s letterhead, your website, and all advertising materials.

Be consistent. You’ve spent a lot of time working out the details of your USP so don’t use “When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight” on your business card, “We deliver really quick” on the letterhead, and “Guaranteed overnight delivery” on your website.

One message.

Repeated.

Consistently. Ω