

A MOTIVATION BULLSEYE

FIND WHAT DRIVES YOUR EMPLOYEES TO PRODUCE

BY CHRIS “CHUBBY” FREDERICK | CONTRIBUTOR

IT IS getting harder to find good people. So if you have employees who are not producing the way you want, you need to determine why. I was listening to Steve Privette, an ATI coach, explain how he helps shop owners with different motivational challenges.

Steve explained that typically there are three causes: they lack the ability, lack the training or lack the motivation. Let's talk about lack of motivation. It's a big problem. When we do find good people, some lack motivation and drive. That service writer may have great customer service skills, nice phone skills and good administration skills. That tech may fix it right the first time, be willing to help other techs and have a good attitude. The problem is that skills alone are not enough.

Many times these people are primarily punching the clock, doing their job, surviving the day and going home — with no real motivation or drive to improve their quality of life. They are living day to day and appear comfortable doing just enough to get by. You are likely visualizing one or more of your employees right now, aren't you?

As an owner, you need to find your employee's motivation and utilize that knowledge to get them to produce more. First things first, what can you do to help find what motivates them? Start by having each of your employees create their own goal poster. The goals should be based on personal and professional achievements. They should be short- and long-term based, covering things to accomplish in the next 12 months and longer. These goal posters will help to give you the information you need to find their motivations. Also, have directed conversations with them and get to know their personal situation (home, spouse, kids, hobbies, etc.).



People are motivated by many different things. Often, they fall into one of these four categories: money; time; material items; or family.

Second, now you have to find out which category (or categories) each of your employees falls under. An employee may be motivated or driven by more than one or even all four categories. You need to have those one-on-ones with them to find out what's important to them.

I am going to give you successful examples from each category that helped me and a few of my shop owners find and use an employee's motivation to get them to produce more.

Money

This is the easy one, and we have done countless motivational pay plans for clients. Many employees are motivated by money, which is great. We

need to make sure their pay plan is set up to allow them to have control over their income by production. You expect your employees to produce, and every employee should be — in one form or another — paid depending on their production. And I know this is more difficult in some states than others. How many of you have employees being paid hourly or salary only? Many of you are already aware and may be using the flat-rate system for techs and salary/commission system for writers and managers. Then there are weekly or monthly bonuses in addition that you can create to motivate.

If you believe your employee is motivated by money and they are on a similar plan as above yet still not producing, then they are either too comfortable financially or are really not motivated by money, but by something else.

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“WHAT IS THE BIGGEST MOTIVATOR YOU SEE THESE DAYS IN TECHNICIANS AND SERVICE WRITERS? IT DEPENDS ON THEIR AGE; HOWEVER, MOST ARE MOTIVATED MORE BY FREE TIME THAN MONEY!”

CHRIS “CHUBBY” FREDERICK [ATI CEO]

Time

Not everyone is money motivated. For many, their time is more valuable to them than the money.

The last shop I ran before coming to ATI was a Monday to Friday dealership. I had a tech there who was solid all around. Fixed it right the first time, could beat flat rate (which, by the way, was how he was paid) on most jobs, had a good attitude and was always on time. Here's the problem: he worked 40 hours per week, but rarely produced even 30 billable hours. He worked at a rather slow pace. I sat him down one day and told him, “I need you to produce more hours. Plus, you would make more money!” He replied that he did not care about making more money and he would prefer to work at his stress-free pace. You see, his wife was the breadwinner in his household, so he was not motivated by money. I needed to find a way to get him to produce more for me. I asked him “What is important to you?” He answered, “My free time!”

I found his motivation. So keeping in mind this was a Monday to Friday shop, I said to him, “Give me 40 billable hours by end of day Thursday and you can have Friday off for a three-day weekend.”

He did just that and rarely ever worked another Friday again!

I was fine with that because I was getting 40 billable hours a week from him in four days, instead of maybe 30 billable hours a week from him in five days. Sure, I had to move the schedule around a bit here and there, and schedule more appointments Monday through Thursday, but I got what I needed from him by finding his motivation.

Material items

I have a current client who has a tech who wasn't motivated by money or time. He was a good employee! He wasn't really money motivated because no matter how much he made each week, the money was going to his ex-wife and kids. He had a wage garnishment going on, so he would never reap the benefits of it personally. How many of us have one of these techs?

So I told the owner to find his motivation. It turns out this tech was NASCAR crazy — he loved everything about NASCAR.

So the owner developed monthly billable hour goals he needed to produce. We calculated how much more money reaching those goals would put in the owner's pocket, to make sure we could afford to give the tech the appropriate incentive. We determined two monthly levels of billable hours reached for the tech to hit.

If he hit the lower level, the owner would buy him a NASCAR die-cast scale car of his choice. If he hit the higher level, the owner would buy him NASCAR tickets to the next upcoming race. The tech would have to pay to get himself there, but could afford to do that by billing those extra flat-rate hours. The tech has reached one of those levels many times. Not always, but often.

You can use this format for any material items for any employee who is motivated by this.

The bottom line is we found his motivation and used it to benefit both the owner and the tech.


Family

Another shop owner of mine had a service writer who he really liked, but this service writer wasn't hungry. Customers loved him; he had great phone skills, good organizational skills, was good with the techs and dependable. We even paid him salary plus commission based on weekly gross profit dollars. It just seemed that money wasn't really motivating him to

produce more and grow. So you can probably guess what I told the owner to do. “You need to sit down with him and find his motivation. You need to ask him what's important to him.”

The owner did so and determined that the most important thing in the world to this service writer was his nine-year-old daughter. He was a single dad, and his world revolved around her — understandably so. He knew that earning more money would allow him to provide more for her, but he wasn't a saver and really wasn't good with his money, like many. How many of you have employees who get paid on Friday and are broke by Monday?

The owner and I decided to open up a savings account in his daughter's name, and every month the service writer hit a monthly gross profit dollar goal, the owner would deposit money into her account. It turned out to be incredible, as this service writer just took off producing, month in and month out. We found his motivation!

Find their motivation and you will find production! If you want to learn how we manage an employee's performance monthly with rewards and recognition, we have an outline we give our clients called Managing Performance with Monthly Goal Setting, and for a limited time you can download it by going to www.ationlinetraining.com/2015-06. 



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Chris “Chubby” Frederick is the CEO and founder of the Automotive Training Institute. ATI's 108 associates train and coach more than 1,250 shop owners every week across North America to drive profits and dreams home to their families. Our associates love helping shop owners who are having the same struggle as many of them have had, and who are looking for the same answers — and in some cases looking for a lifeline. This month's article was written with the help of ATI Coach Brian Hunnicut.

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