



## p-TIPS

## Spread the enthusiasm (Stop demotivating your employees)

After surveys of about 1.2 million employees in the USA, David Sirota, Louis A. Mischkind, and Michael Irwin concluded that: "Most companies have it all wrong. They don't have to motivate their employees. They have to stop demotivating them." In their report "Stop demotivating your employees!" in the January 2006 *Harvard Business Review Management Update*, the blame is laid on management, since most workers are enthusiastic when first hired. But unless the three goals of equity, achievement, and camaraderie on the job are met, morale soon declines. The authors identified eight practices to maintain employees' enthusiasm and keep productivity high.

- 1) Instill an inspiring purpose. Managers should develop a clear purpose statement for their unit, communicate it, and follow it all the time.
- 2) Provide recognition. Surveyed employees repeatedly said how much compliments meant and how few there were. A note, word of thanks, or extra day of leave for a job well done are never amiss.
- 3) Be an expediter for your employees. Ask what they need to get their jobs done and then liaise with other units or outside elements to help them get it.
- 4) Coach your employees for improvement. Give both positive and negative feedback in factual, unemotional terms directly relevant to an individual's role.
- 5) Communicate fully. Schedule meetings for two-way communication and follow up to ensure that messages have been understood. Full and open communication is a strong sign of respect.
- 6) Face up to poor performance. A few people are simply "allergic to work." Disciplinary measures, including dismissal, may be the only way to manage them. However, the morale of others may increase if a barrier to their own productivity is gone.
- 7) Promote teamwork. Form teams with opportunities for cross-learning, set clear goals, and then let them manage themselves. People are motivated by working in teams, and group problem-solving efforts are usually superior to those of individuals working alone.
- 8) Listen and involve. Managers should solicit suggestions on how to get the job done from employees and recognize their innovativeness. Once the task has been defined, let them operate freely. That freedom to do the job as one thinks best is another strong motivator.