

Chapter 1

Why You Need Self-Motivated People

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My all-time favorite New York Giants Football coach is Bill Parcells. Aside from the fact that he won two Super Bowls, his players always seemed to be willing to go through a brick wall for the guy. He had a reputation as a great motivator.

One day, at a press conference, when asked “What makes you such a great motivator?” Parcells said, “What makes me such a great motivator is, I only keep self-motivated players. If you’re not self-motivated I cut you from the team.”

Any successful manager, leader, coach, or teacher will tell you that you cannot motivate others on a long-term basis. Heck, I'm a motivational speaker. I can get in front of an audience, deliver a fire and brimstone, and in no time I'd have them swinging from the chandeliers. But 24 hours later they're gonna wake up and say, "Who was that guy?" Because that's external motivation and external motivation is a short-term fix.

The only kind of motivation that has a shot to last long-term is internal motivation. As a speaker, what I try to do is give my audience the tools and techniques that will allow them to be better able to motivate themselves. As a business owner, manager, or executive, if you really want to develop high achieving self-starters, you need to give them those same tools.

I've actually had managers and business owners tell me, "I get my people going every day. I kick 'em in the ass. That gets 'em going." Unfortunately, kicking people in the ass is not motivation: It's movement! And the problem with movement is: It eventually stops, and then your people are

doing nothing, which means you constantly have to be around to keep kicking them. What important things are you not taking care of while you're running around kicking people in the ass?

Kicking people in the ass is called "external motivation," which is strictly a short-term fix. Internal motivation, the ability to motivate oneself, is a long-term solution.

As a manager or leader, there are three reasons you need self-motivated people.

1. You can't be around 24 hours a day making sure people are doing their jobs. First of all, you shouldn't be, because that means you're not doing your job. If you do not have self-motivated self-starters working for you, what is going on during the time you're not there? Probably not much. The question you need to ask yourself is: Do my people put forth as great an effort when I'm not there as they do when I'm around? If the answer to this is yes, you're doing your job as a leader.

2. It's critical to establishing extraordinary customer service. The delivery of extraordinary customer service requires a culture of excellence at every level, which is fostered by self-motivated workers with great attitudes. Remember, the people who report to you very often are the link between you and the customer. Their attitude toward the customer will be the customer's attitude toward your company.
3. Self-motivated people have the best attitudes.

Leadership Tip: Hire Attitude!

One of the questions I get most often from business owners and managers is: How do I find good people? What do I look for? I always say the same thing, "Hire attitude!"

Let's face it, you can probably teach someone everything they're going to need to know about the job and your company in what,

a matter of days? But it's a lot harder to teach someone a great attitude. And, if they don't have it coming into the job, what makes you think they're going to get it while they're on the job?

Sure, hiring people with great skills is nice. But without a great attitude those people won't use the skills, and if you don't use them you lose them. Conversely, someone with a great attitude and limited skills will not only run through a brick wall to acquire those skills, but they'll drive you crazy making sure you teach them the skills.

My best friend, Alan, whom you'll read about later, has a daughter named Sylvia. When Syl (that's what we call her) graduated from college, her goal was to be a corporate event planner and travel the world planning events and meetings. She had been in charge of putting on numerous events in college, was very good at it, and really loved it.

Of course, she knew she'd have to start at the bottom and work her way up. After a couple of

low-level jobs in the insurance industry, she landed a job in Boston as an office manager with McKinsey & Company, the world's biggest global management consulting firm.

Now, in this case, office manager is one of those polite titles. Syl was really a combination assistant, office grunt, clerk, and slave. Among her many duties, she made sure there was always plenty of office supplies, ran errands, and kept the kitchen clean and well stocked. Not exactly a highly skilled job. Without the opportunity to impress people with her skills, Sylvia went them one better: She impressed them with her attitude!

No job was too small, menial, or insignificant for Sylvia. In fact, what brought her to the attention of the higher-ups was her willingness to do the one thing nobody else was willing to do: empty the dishwasher.

To make a long story short, she was promoted; Sylvia now reports to one of the top people in the company and guess what she's doing?—traveling the world putting on events and meetings for McKinsey. In fact, she just recently returned from

trips to Poland, Paris, Germany, and Costa Rica. And she's done all this by the age of 28.

I wonder how many of you leaders out there have passed on hiring the Sylvias of the world because they didn't have the skills you were looking for.

Rant

To follow up on the Hire Attitude theme, I want to talk about a pet peeve of mine: people who look down on what others do for a living. They call jobs such as those at McDonald's, Wal-Mart—various nonskilled and even some skilled jobs—dead-end jobs. Fortunately, history has proven these white-collar snobs wrong, time and time again.

There is no such thing as a dead-end job, only people with dead-end attitudes. Put in the hands of a person with the right attitude, every

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job, no matter how big or small, regardless of pay or stature, is an opportunity on a number of different levels, whether to:

- Show your stuff.
- Create a favorable impression.
- Get much-needed work experience.
- Learn responsibility.
- Get your foot in the door.
- Be in the right place at the right time, which can only be accomplished if you're in a lot of places, because you never know when someone will say, "I could use someone with your attitude."

I wonder how many successful executives, professionals, and entrepreneurs got their start in one of those dead-end hamburger flipping jobs at McDonald's. A job, any job, if nothing else, teaches you responsibility: Show up on time, show up every day, and work hard. What's so

bad about that? Everybody has to start somewhere. It's up to the person, not the job, whether or not they stay there. That's why you hire attitude!

Creating a staff of self-motivated people is going to save you a tremendous amount of time to do the things you need to do in your job in order to achieve success for both you and your company. However, just like anything else that's going to benefit you in the long run, there's a certain amount of up-front work on your part that needs to be done.

The best way to get started is to remember one simple rule of thumb: Your staff, the people who report to you, are your customers. Your attitude toward them will be their attitude toward the customers and clients that buy from your company. What are you doing to develop this internal client base and instill in them the kind of attitude and spirit that customers want to deal with? Whether they work in customer service, sales, secretarial

support, accounting, installation, or the shipping department, each one of these people has the ability to make an impact on your company in either a positive or negative way. The choice is yours.

To start, let's go back to Sales 101. One of the first things salespeople are taught is: In order to develop high-quality long-term clients you need to talk to prospective clients, ask probing questions, uncover their needs, and then find a way to fill those needs on a consistent basis. It's the same way with your people—your internal clients. Probe for and uncover their needs. What are their goals and what would they like to achieve in their lives and careers? Once that's done, show them how they can use the job to achieve these goals.

The single biggest reason people are not self-motivated is: They themselves don't know what motivates them; they have no goals and no plan for either their life or career. I can't tell you how many times I've spoken at big corporate meetings where a CEO has gotten up in front of hundreds, if not thousands, of people and said something like, "If we put our noses to the grindstone and work real

hard this year, this company will do great!" Then I look out into this sea of faces and they're all thinking to themselves, "Who cares! What's in it for me?"

Now here's the problem. If I were to go to each one of these people and ask them, "What do you want to be in it for you?" I guarantee 97 percent of them couldn't tell me. You can't motivate someone like that. There are far too many managers who say, "If I could only find the right hot button to push on this person." But you can't push a hot button on someone who has no buttons. One of your many jobs as a leader is to help your people find their buttons; this is part coaching hat and part motivator hat.

Setting goals and developing action plans is not a hard thing to do, but because most people have never done it, they assume it's difficult. So what happens? They do nothing. As their leader/coach/mentor and motivator, it is up to you to develop a relationship built on trust with your staff. Sit down, individually, with each of your people and listen, challenge, and support them through the process of developing and achieving both

their life and career goals. Also schedule quarterly review meetings to see what kind of progress they're making toward their goals.

People are motivated by the things they most want to accomplish—their goals, dreams, or aspirations. If they have no idea what those are or how they're going to achieve them, there is not one thing you can do to motivate them. How can they get excited about the *company's* success if they don't see how it contributes to *their* success?

Once you have helped them find their buttons and figure out what it is they want to achieve, you can then give them examples of how to use the job as a vehicle towards getting them what they want out of their lives and careers.

Now you have people who come to work knowing that "Every day that I come here and do my job to the best of my ability, I'm getting that much closer to what I want." Not only do they want to come to work every day, they can't wait to get there, because they know what it means to them; they're working for themselves. They no longer need you for every trivial thing and they're far more proactive

than reactive. How much more productive do you think that will make you?

Once you've helped them find their buttons, there's still more work to do in order to install the self-starting generator in your people. Mostly, it's about how you communicate, and the kind of environment and culture you create in the workplace. So, as promised in the Introduction, the remaining chapters in this book will be dedicated to giving you "the 9 keys to creating self-motivated high achievers," allowing you to create a culture of excellence throughout your entire company.

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