

What Employees Need and Value

by Will Phillips and John Durel

The Basics

Once you have the right people, you must keep them or it becomes a never ending recruiting and training game. Here are the basics:

1. Pay them well. Even more than you, if they are super.
2. Praise them frequently, and sincerely.
3. Give them work that means something to them.
4. Provide them with opportunities to learn and grow on the job.
5. Enable them to exercise appropriate autonomy and control in their own jobs.
6. Instill a sense of community and belonging.
7. Allow them to develop their pet ideas and projects.
8. Increase their authority and challenge them with new and larger responsibilities.

Beyond the Basics

People are different. They need and value different things. You should not treat all employees the same. For a marginal employee, you need to determine what specifically she needs to improve performance. For a Star, you need to discover what specifically she would value as a reward for a job well done.

One way to assess the needs and values of individual employees is to consider four distinct work styles. What an employee needs and values will depend on her own work style, which will be some combination of the four.

Producers

These employees focus on getting the work done. They eagerly put in long hours to complete a project or task. They value work that is challenging, and get immense satisfaction from accomplishing a project successfully.

An appropriate reward for a Star Producer would be an opportunity to take charge of an important but well-defined project, which when completed will be viewed as a major accomplishment for the organization. Since producers tend to work long hours, it may be tempting to reward them with additional time off at the end of a project. Such a reward may mean little, since the person probably did not think of the long hours as a sacrifice. Indeed, producers tend to enjoy working late. However, if the producer's family felt a sacrifice, then a paid family getaway might be worthwhile.

Marginal Producers may be experiencing difficulties often found in this work style. Because they focus so much on getting things done quickly, they sometimes disregard policies and established procedures. They also tend to be impatient and in their haste may offend fellow workers. Appropriate training might entail assignment to a project team which will be evaluated not only by the quality of the product but also by how well the team functions.

Administrators

These employees focus on getting things done according to established procedures and policies. They value work that is predictable and consistent. They get great satisfaction when a job is done correctly.

Because administrators notice the little things, it is important to treat them fairly. When they do a good job they want to be recognized for it. If they perceive that their work is not valued, they can become discouraged. Hence, an appropriate reward for a Star Administrator might be public recognition at a meeting of the museum Board.

Marginal Administrators may be so caught up in the details, or so rigid about policies, that it becomes impossible for others to work with them. In this case, such a person might benefit from training that would expose him to the larger issues of operating a museum.

Entrepreneurs

These employees focus on coming up with new programs and services. They like to lead and persuade others. They get great satisfaction by making a difference and having an impact on the organization and its constituents.

For a reward, a Star Entrepreneur should get an opportunity to lead an important planning effort, one that will have significant impact on the museum, such as coming up with ways to attract and serve a new audience. If the task is to include implementation as well as planning, make sure the entrepreneur has some producers and administrators on the team.

A Marginal Entrepreneur is likely someone who is not focused on the mission of the museum, and is off creating new programs or products that are of little value to the institution. She may need coaching to help her understand and commit to the mission, so that she can channel her talents in the right direction. Don't tell her what to do. Once she understands the purpose and goals of the museum, give her the freedom to create new ways of achieving those ends.

Integrators

These employees focus on the people in the organization. They are good at facilitating teamwork and building consensus. They get satisfaction when they are able to help others do good work.

Integrators value recognition, not so much from the director or the institution, but from the staff. They like to be liked. To reward a Star Integrator, the museum director might ask the staff to come up with something appropriate.

Marginal Integrators are probably too nice. They have a hard time saying no. They make decisions based on feelings for individuals rather than the needs of the museum. In such cases the integrator may need to be coached in order to see the negative impact of such behavior, not only on the institution but also on the very people he is trying to help.

Give them what they need and value

These work styles—producer, administrator, entrepreneur, integrator—provide a model for understanding the people in an organization. Rarely is an individual completely one style, with none of the other traits. However, usually one or two styles dominate in an individual. Qm² has a simple instrument that can be used to gauge the degree to which an employee fits the styles. With this understanding the manager can then devise a reward or remedy that will work for the individual.