



## FEELING APPRECIATED MOTIVATES EMPLOYEES MORE THAN BIG BUCKS

**Memo: Quality at Work**

**Edition: Final**

Considerable effort and energy is spent on trying to identify and eliminate the barriers to employee motivation. Organizations that are institutionalizing quality as a business strategy are having more success with this endeavor than others.

Quality practitioners recognize that there is a dimension pertaining to employee efforts that money can't buy. Frederick W. Smith, chairman and chief executive officer at Federal Express, refers to this dimension as the domain of "discretionary efforts." These efforts are strictly voluntary and cannot be mandated.

With discretionary efforts, employees go beyond what the job description calls for to do what is needed to get the job done. Mediocrity and complacency have no place. Perfection and continuous improvement of all job related activities are the norm.

All of us are gifted with the ability to apply discretionary efforts. It could happen when you decide to answer the phone even though it is not in your job description. It might mean coming early or staying late to complete a task. It could be when you take the time to help a customer who is in need of directions. In the community it could mean taking the time to let a motorist know that a door is ajar. The list could go on and on.

One of the obstacles to unleashing these efforts is thinking that it is a financial matter. Abraham H. Maslow and other behavioralists have shown that above a certain point, money is not a motivator. What seems to be more significant is the company culture, the work environment and the treatment received.

It is important to understand and believe that it is innate to want to improve the output of one's work. Holding at a level of accomplishment is a position of boredom. No employee wants to be bored and it is the responsibility of those in charge to reduce the chances of this happening.

Purveyors of quality understand that developing a culture that fosters teamwork, creativity, risk-taking and innovation is the best way to tap discretionary efforts. As coaches and facilitators, their focus is on the importance of the intrinsic rewards involved in employees making incremental improvements.

Leaders of quality recognize the importance of the activities associated with continuous improvement as a way to prevent boredom and to promote a sense of usefulness. After all, looking for ways to improve things is a lot more interesting and less stressful than fixing things gone wrong.

Zealots of quality believe that it is human nature to want to satisfy and even excite those being served - the customer. They believe that if an organization can internalize and develop systems to support this belief, it will have motivated employees who will exercise discretionary efforts routinely.



The company that can institutionalize continuous improvement to support the belief that doing a good job is desired by all will have a good chance of becoming a world class organization. This can only happen through having highly motivated employees.

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