

How to keep employees motivated in 10 minutes or less...

Whenever I teach a leadership workshop, whether in the North America, South America or overseas, I always ask the same question at the beginning of the session; **“If there was One Thing you’d like to take away from today’s workshop, that would help you as a manager, what would that be?”**

Aside from “more money”, there is a striking commonality in the answer: **“A way to motivate or inspire my employee(s).”**

I’d like to claim that the answer is very difficult and requires an in depth needs analysis of the organization, design of a complex model, followed by rigorous application and evaluation for which I (as a consultant) get paid handsomely. But the truth is there are many things we can do as leaders to help set the stage for employees to feel more motivated. And here is **one simple, easy way to help keep staff motivated.**

It’s called **“Drive Bye Feedback”** – a quick and easy way to provide meaningful feedback to an employee, colleague, or a boss, in **1-minute** or less.

Wait a minute you say. If it is that easy, why doesn’t everyone do it? I’ve found 3 common challenges managers say they face in providing effective feedback.

1/ don’t believe it is important

2/ don’t know how

3/ don’t have time

1/ it is important!

There is allot of talk these days about ‘employee engagement’¹ which attempts to measure the degree to which an employee will strive to do their best, stay with that organization, and recommend it’s products and services to others. There is a growing body of data that shows a direct correlation between organizations with high employee engagement, and higher revenues, customer loyalty, and employee loyalty.

In their book ‘First Break All The Rules’, (1999) Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman site their research with Gallup interviewing ‘over one million employees and eighty thousand managers’ that revealed a correlation between highly engaged employees and their willingness to say ‘yes I strongly agree’ with 12 specific questions². Questions like:

- **Do I know what is expected of me at work?**
- **In the last seven days, have I received recognition for doing good work**
- **Does my supervisor or someone at work seem to care about me**
- **Is there someone at work who encourages my development?**

Notice that these questions do not have anything to do with pay or benefits. Most employees do want to know what is expected, to feel appreciated, and that they feel supported by someone, in particular, their manager. That means **you!** In fact, with one piece of sincere and well structured feedback, you can impact all 4 of these questions.

¹ Melcrum & Associates, ‘Employee Engagement’, if you can’t measure it you can’t manager it. 2005

² First Break All The Rules, (1999), Buckingham and Coffman

2/ it is Easy to learn how – to deliver Drive By Feedback

It's seems pretty unlikely that someone would not know how to give feedback. We've all received and given feedback in some form our whole lives. Some of us have had training in providing feedback such as 'constructive criticism' or 'the feedback sandwich'.

But the most effective feedback providers incorporate some important nuances that increase the effectiveness of the feedback in a way that the receiver feels more motivated and more committed to take action as a result of that feedback.

But let's look at how feedback is *typically* provided in the work place.



If you said 'sincerity' - you're probably right, the character in this cartoon does look a little suspicious...But what else makes it seem insincere or ineffective?

Right! It's not **Specific** enough. When feedback is not specific, it can diminish the *impact* of the feedback in important ways, even when the boss *is* being sincere:

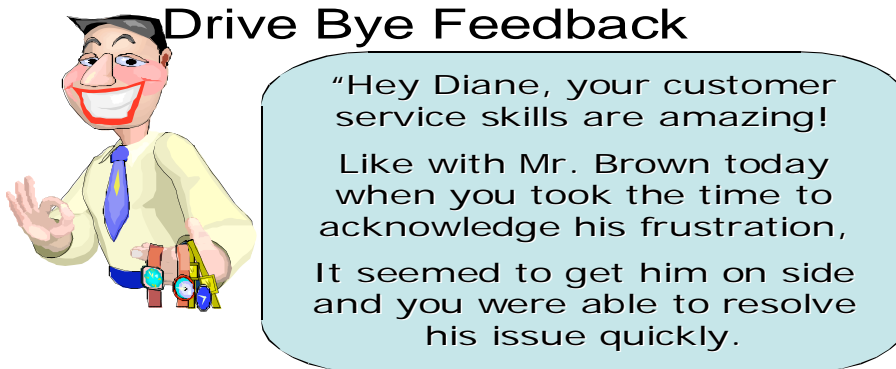
1/ If Diane does not have a high trust relationship with her manager, she may feel the boss is just 'ticking the feedback box'. Even if the boss meant it, Diane has some doubt as to the sincerity and therefore the feedback misses the mark.

2/ If Diane trusts that the boss is sincere, she may come away wondering; 'I wonder if he really knows what I actually do...' Even if the boss does know, Diane is left wondering and so the potential for her to feel motivated by it, is diminished.

3/ Diane may trust the feedback was sincere but comes away wondering 'of all the things I do, I wonder which part is making such a positive difference?' If the boss does have a specific behavior in mind, it's now left up to Diane to 'guess' which behavior.

A simple fix is to just add the **specifics** but let me share a model with you that will make it even more powerful, easy to deliver, and can be done in **one minute** or less.

It's called the **Drive Bye Feedback** model. .



What do you notice about the way this feedback is delivered?

You might say things like it seems more *sincere*, it's more *specific*, it points out the *result* of the interaction, and you might even say it's *longer*. These are accurate observations.

Let's break this feedback down into **3 easy steps**. It is the same model I learned from Andy Kimball, CEO of QB International³ who has used this model to train countless senior leaders, sales people, and professionals around the world:

Headline, Specific, and Value.

Step 1 – Headline – “Hey Diane, your customer service skills are amazing!”

Like the headline in a newspaper, it is used to get the receivers attention. It also lets them know what is coming. Words like ‘I really appreciate’, or ‘I’m thrilled with’, or ‘thanks for’ are all ways of letting them know the message will be good news.

Step 2 – Specific – “Like with Mr. Brown today when you took the time to acknowledge his frustration.” Here, the manager points out ‘specifically’ what he finds ‘amazing’. It's much more likely that; Diane will feel he is sincere, that he knows what she is doing day to day, and she now knows which behavior (of the many she does) is helping her provide ‘amazing customer service’. She is more likely to repeat that behavior.

Step 3 – Value – “It seemed to get him on side and you were able to resolve his issue quickly”. Often, the receiver may not realize which skill or behavior they are using, is leading to their success, it's unconscious. Your feedback can help remind them of why it's valuable, in this case, in resolving the customer issue quickly.

³ Andy Kimball, QB International, Headline-Specific-value, <http://www.qube.com/>

3/ It Quick and Easy (it does not take much time)

There is another question I always ask in those leadership workshops I mentioned; **“What is one thing you find most challenging as a manager day to day?”** The most common answer is **‘we don’t have enough time to coach employees’**.

These days more than ever, managers have more projects to deliver, accounts to manage, meetings to attend, emails to return and of course, diverse, multigenerational, intelligent employees to lead. Yet, I also know that:

Feedback can be delivered quickly, easily, and consistently, in one minute or less!

Try this – Take out your watch and look at the time - if you have a chronometer, even better. ‘Start your timer, then read the following phrase’. Ready? Go!

“Hey Diane, your customer service skills are amazing!
Like with Mr. Brown today, when
you took the time to acknowledge his frustration,
It seemed to get him on side and you were able to resolve his issue quickly.
Where did you learn to do that? ”
Stop! What did you get?... 1 minute?... 45 seconds?... Be honest.

I spoke very s-l-o-w-l-y, pausing between each sentence, and it was still only 45 seconds!
That is less than one minute. Now ask yourself honestly, do you have one minute to spare in your day to speak with an employee? Of course you do.

Did you notice I slipped in a ‘question’ at the end? Even if Diane has the audacity to answer my question, she’ll probably say something like, ‘shucks’ I don’t know, but thanks for noticing’ which could double your total time to something like 2 minutes. ☺

Try this – think of an employee or a colleague that you work with. What is *one thing* you appreciate about them or their skills? There is your headline. Now, what specifically do you like about what they do? Finally, what is the value to them for doing that?

Now go give them this feedback. Too scary?
Next time you’re about to send off an email saying ‘Sue great job’
Stop, and think, what specifically was great about what Sue did, and *just add that!*
You’ll increase the impact your feedback remarkably.

‘Sue, thanks for being such a team player.
I know you’re the one who quietly captures the meeting minutes and send them out to the team. You help the whole team stay clear on our priorities and feel connected. Thanks!’

Want to learn more about motivating performance in 10 minutes or less? Give us a call at **604 324-5900** or email us at matt@lidera.ca .