

Good morning, everybody Dennis Engelbrecht with The Family Business Institute, Digging Deeper. Thanks for tuning in today.

Today, I want to talk about motivation. It's been a really tough last year, probably for a lot of us and certainly for a lot of our people. Motivation of course, is a day-to-day issue. Trying to get the most from our people, trying to make sure people are thinking about the right things, doing the right things.

So just wanted to talk a little bit about how to best motivate folks. I guess I'd be remiss if I didn't start out by saying, of course the first thing you want to do is have motivated people. That sounds easy, but if everybody you have working for you needs a kickstart every day to go off and do their job and do what's expected of them, it's going to be a pretty miserable existence for you. So do try to upgrade your team and look for people that are self-starters, that are self-motivated. When you put a few of those or seed more of those in your company that tends to spread to the others as well. Likewise, if you have some people that are de-motivators out there, one of the best ways to improve motivation is to eliminate them. All right? There is a book that talked about detractors and multipliers, multipliers and detractors. You want multipliers out there not detractors.

All right. So now you do have the team of people though, that you have and what do you do every day to keep them motivated, and keep them going in the right direction? Well, we've talked about this a little bit before, but think about what people really want, what makes them happy? Many years ago, they had what they called Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, I believe I have the name right. But they talked about the basic needs that people have. That's really the sort of the base or the floor for motivating people is do they have to have their basic needs met. To the extent you can, that usually means by paying them enough salary, that they don't have to worry about, how much money they're making, can they feed their family, and a lot of those distractions.

Because as long as people are still trying to meet their basic needs, they are distracted, and they'll be looking for different ways to meet those. So, if you can in your business, pay enough to take that off of the table. All right? Then once you take that off the table, you get to the sort of the higher level of needs or things that motivate people. I had one presentation that I read and saw that really crystallized it into three things: mastery, autonomy, and purpose. So, what do those three things need mean? Mastery, people want to be good at what they do. They want to feel good at the end of the day that they've accomplished things, that they've done them well. If their day has been filled with mistakes and failures and seeing other people doing better than they are, that that doesn't leave them with a good feeling.

So, mastery, to the extent that you support training, employee development, help people be their best, that's motivating. Autonomy, that means basically getting out of their hair and letting them do what they need to do. Now that usually doesn't mean that you just... you roll out all the things that have to be done and say, "Okay, go do it." People do need direction, and they do need guidance, and they do need coaching, and they need those things. But what they really don't like and what de-motivates them is somebody looking over their shoulder or criticizing them all the time. So, you've got to be able to give direction and give guidance without giving them that feeling, that you're looking over their shoulder all the time. They want to be able to make some decisions, use their creative juices. They're going to be more motivated if they have enough room to do that. Also, to do that it helps them understand their goals.

That brings us to the third item there, which is purpose. Is your company purpose clear to the employees? Even driving that down a little bit. So, let's go to our project that people are working on out in the field. Is it clear what your purpose is in terms of timeliness, finishing different phases on time, cleanliness, safety, quality? Quality is one of those real question marks because everybody has a different idea of what quality is. So, if you're trying to produce a quality product to quality installation, have you made it clear what quality looks like, feels like, and is everybody on board with that? So again purpose, if your purpose is clear in your company, that helps to just drive people day-to-day because they see that there's

more to this than just earning my paycheck, or getting my supervisor out of my hair, or doing what I was told so I can check it off the list.

So finally, last thing I want to talk about motivation is let's assume you do have mostly self-motivated people and then pretty much what you got to do is don't mess it up. All right? Don't, de-motivate your people. What de-motivates your people? Well, rules, too many rules, or changing the rules. So, they know how to do this. And then you come in tomorrow, "Oh we have a new rule. We have a new policy. We have a new procedure." Oftentimes that demotivates people.

We're in a time where we've had an economic recession here, and you might not have the flow of work in front of you or the profitability of work that you're used to. Well, don't take your people's pay away. If you really want to de-motivate people give them a pay cut. That'll do it about as quickly as you can. Now it may be that you can't keep up bonuses at the same level. It may be that, in some ways you have to share the pain. Maybe, alternating days off or something like that. There may be some areas, but try not to cut people's pay, or take their pay away, or best you can take any benefits away.

Now, extras that are shared people understand the shared pain of not participating in those extras. But probably more so than money though. It really does come down to those de-motivators. You can come in and then you can criticize. I hate to say this but, "Look at my marriage, my relationship." If there's any one thing that de-motivates me, it's criticism.

So, a lot of times people need correction, or they need guidance, but you have to be careful to veil your criticism in a way that people can take it away and not leave team motivated. So again, motivation four things. Number one, get motivated people that makes it a lot easy for you. Number two, work on providing your people with mastery, autonomy, and purpose. Number three, make sure you're paying enough to meet their basic needs. And number four, don't mess it up by demotivating your folks.

All right, Dennis Engelbrecht on motivation. Thanks for tuning in.