

how to

maximise employee productivity



part of the "how to" online series by Robert Half

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START

PART 1. KNOW

PART 2. TALK

PART 3. TACT

PART 4. LEAD

PART 5. REWARD

PART 6. LEARN

IT DOESN'T END HERE

Have you noticed a sudden increase in the number of staff calling in sick? Are people complaining more than ever before? These are very clear signs your office is becoming unproductive.

Everyone knows how important productivity is to ensure business success, but how do you guarantee that your workforce will remain productive and morale high in these uncertain times?

This guide sets out six steps to ensure that your staff remain focused, enthusiastic and loyal to the company. Every member of your team is different so we can't hope to satisfy everybody. Instead, we've provided a more general look at ways to keep your staff happy and more productive.

How to maximise employee productivity

Part 1. The personal touch	3
Part 2. It's good to talk....	4
Part 3. ...but choose your words carefully	5
Part 4. Show them who's boss	6
Part 5. It's not just about the money	7
Part 6. Learn from the leavers	8
It doesn't end here	9

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PART 1: THE PERSONAL TOUCH

Remember: Get to know the people who work for you.

You spend the majority of your daylight hours together in the same office but how well do you really know your team? Here are some tips to help build a bridge between you and them:

- Without coming across like you are being nosy, ask about their hobbies and family life.
- Show compassion when an employee is going through a personal crisis.
- Note down birthdays and other important events in your team's lives so that you don't forget.

It's the little things like offering a team member time off when they are going through a personal crisis or simply arranging a birthday cake for them that make all the difference. Happy teams are productive teams.



“How well do you really know your team?”

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PART 2: IT'S GOOD TO TALK...

Remember: Open and honest communication is vital to motivate and inspire your team.

How often do you come across the word “transparency” these days? Chances are you hear it in the words of your corporate spokespeople, your CEO says it in his speeches, and your management team uses it in meetings and reports. It's important that you stand behind your support of “transparency” by maintaining an open, communicative environment among your employees. When you start hearing about a lack of transparency, you can be sure that a drop in productivity is in the offing. You can communicate in the following ways to maintain a high level of transparency:

- Publicise company goals – keep your team up to date on what your company's short and long term goals are. Let them feel involved.
- Keep that office door open – your team should be encouraged to know they can openly express their concerns, observations and suggestions to you.
- Be honest – no one likes to work in an atmosphere where there are lots of closed door meetings. That's how rumours and distrust start. Keep your team informed of any company issues that could affect them because they will find out – not in the manner of your choosing – through the rumour mill anyway.



“Keep that office door open.”

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PART 3: ...BUT CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY

Remember: How you communicate with your staff will have a big impact on how motivated they are.

While it's advantageous to be as transparent in your communication as possible, finding the right mix of straight talk, criticism, and praise will boost your team's productivity – and your reputation as a capable manager. Sometimes, the method is the message. When you speak with your staff, remember:

- Be liberal with praise – most people respond to praise by (believe it or not) working harder. Whereas people who work hard but feel under appreciated are likely to cut back on their efforts.
- Criticise in private – never criticise an employee in front of the team. Also, try to focus on the performance, not the person.
- Say 'no' tactfully – if you have to decline an employee's request whether it is for a pay rise or a day off, make sure that the way you refuse includes an explanation for your decision. Never make the employee feel embarrassed for asking.



“Never criticise an employee in front of the team.”

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PART 4: SHOW THEM WHO'S BOSS

Remember: If you don't give directions how can your team be expected to produce the results you want?

One of the most common reasons why jobs are not performed properly is that employees are not given the steer they need. Here are some tips on how to give your team clear direction, without coming across as heavy-handed:

- When you issue a project, spell out as many details as you can. Many employees won't ask for more detail in fear of appearing incompetent.
- Once you've delegated a task, don't interfere but let them run it the way they want.
- Every project must have a reasonable deadline so that your team know what they are working towards.



“Give as much detail as possible... employees don't want to appear incompetent.”

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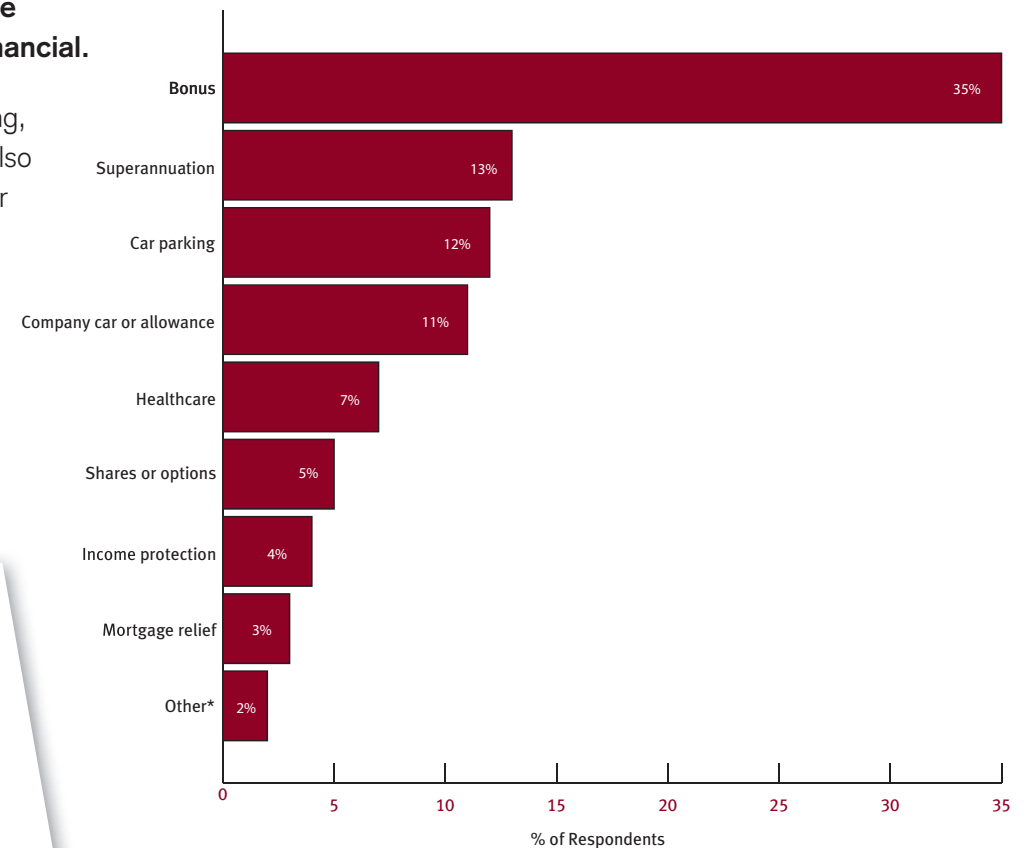
PART 5: IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE MONEY

Remember: Your team will undoubtedly perform better when they feel they are being rewarded for their efforts. But rewards do not necessarily have to be financial.

In our first eBook, How To Keep Your Best People, we wrote that salary isn't everything, but it helps. When it comes to productivity, it turns out that non-financial rewards are also quite effective. You can reward your people and keep productivity high with these other kinds of rewards:

- Training – don't underestimate the power of a training course or two in raising motivation levels.
- Promote from within – a culture of internal promotion builds morale and means your team members feel they have a future at your organisation.
- Be innovative – rewards can be relatively cost free. Extra days off and praise in the internal newsletter are two ways to show you value your staff.

We asked finance professionals “What do you consider to be your most important benefit?”



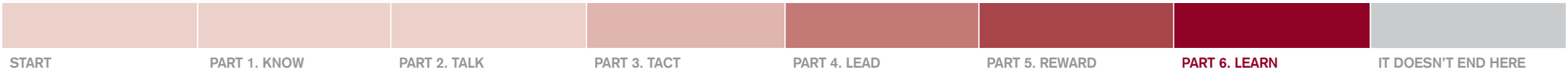
* Includes Leisure facilities/gym memberships, Life insurance, Cell/mobile phone, Laptop and Staff purchasing/discounts

“Rewards can be cost free... look for innovative ways to motivate your team.”

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PART 6: LEARN FROM THE LEAVERS

Remember: Don't let leavers leave without finding out why.

You can learn a lot from members of staff as they are walking out the door. They take with them a lot of knowledge and valuable insights into what your team are really thinking. Conducting an exit interview can often give you insight into company problems, which you may not be able to get elsewhere.

Here are some tips for getting the most from an exit interview:

- Prepare - Remember, an exit interview may be your last chance to get an appraisal of your firm from a soon-to-be ex-employee. Prepare your questions ahead of time or create a form that helps keep the interview on track.
- Leave your feelings at the door - Departing employees don't always have the nicest things to say. Be prepared to deal with answers you won't like to hear and don't take anything personally. Those who depart under less than optimal circumstances may take this opportunity to vent their pent-up anger at their interviewer.
- Listen - Keep your comments to a minimum. Simply ask the questions you've prepared and let the leaver do the rest. It's best to listen and distill what you hear into information you can use.



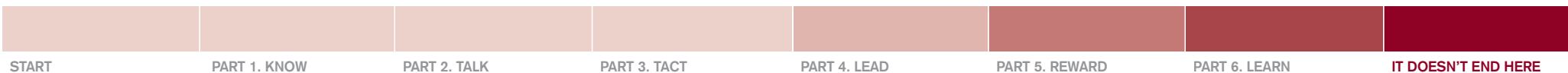
“Exit interviews give you insight into company problems.”

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This latest guide in our eBook series was designed to share our insights gleaned from years of working with clients and candidates across all kinds of industries. But it doesn't end here. We are always looking to learn more about managers who get the most from their teams. If you have any tips or nuggets of information to share, please do get in touch.

We're here to help you with your recruiting needs.

Contact the office nearest you for more information:

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