



MISSION STATEMENT:
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Business leaders must learn to delegate, motivate

Your business is flourishing and you wisely recognize it's impossible to continue wearing all the hats. It's time to hire staff so your company can maintain growth and continue its level of excellence. But how can you get the most from your human resources?

Start with the company's mission statement and your vision for the business.

"In order to maximize the goals and objectives for the organization, define and articulate exactly what you expect and need from human resources," says Sue Fredericks, president of On Purpose, a management consultancy in Westbury. "Let staff know how important their role is in the organization."

By **ADINA
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Barry Laub likens sharing a company's mission and vision to scoring a soccer goal. "Otherwise, you're just kicking the ball," said Laub, president of Infinite Resources, a Woodbury company that includes executive coaching as a specialty.

Ideally, staff should compensate for the entrepreneur's flaws. "Be very clear about your own skills and talents and surround yourself with extraordinary people that can handle areas where you're weak."

When hiring, "take into account the qualities you're looking for and then plug [that person] into a position that makes sense," Laub said.

But what if the staff roster is filled?

"Make assessments throughout the company and reposition people without firing. You're using what you have. It's more effective than starting all over again," Laub said. Staffers can readily meet goals in an envi-

ronment conducive to productivity.

"Give employees the direction, skills, tools, feedback and recognition for a job well done," Fredericks said. "When you let them know what you expect, keep them on track and give recognition; that's when you maximize" your human resources.

Devote time to planning even if it seems there aren't enough hours in the day. It's an investment. To those that say, "I can't afford to take the time," Laub asks: "Can you afford not to?"

It's difficult to delegate, Fredericks conceded, especially for those accustomed to handling responsibilities themselves. At some point, "you need to train others," she said. Owners must ask: "What should I do myself, and what should I delegate?"

"Let go," Laub said. "Show faith and trust in that person and allow them to make mistakes. Without mistakes, they wouldn't learn."

Set standards of behavior, activities, goals and communication, Fredericks added. This way employees know when to

make decisions on their own and when to ask the owner. When the employer and employees' judgment are in sync, a trust develops and staffers treat the company as though it were their own, Frederick said.

When there's trust, employees perform better than when there's fear or no direction, Laub noted.

But a good leader does far more than communicate goals and visions. A good leader motivates effectively.

"What really motivates them is acknowledgement," Laub said.

A quick fix can be something as simple as "Thank you for a great job this week," Fredericks said. Or, "ask them to do tasks that challenge their thinking and creativity."

Motivation isn't always derived through financial incentives. Instead, consider what the staff values, Fredericks said. It could be "money, recognition, time off, career development, flexible schedules."

Consider including staffers in sales calls,

letting them meet customers, offering incentives, and celebrating success with an end-of-week picnic or gift certificates—so long as it's something employees value, she said.

Laub said, "If you're going for the quick fix, choose one that everybody likes. If management knows this, they know how to motivate. Why guess?" Laub uses assessment tools to help clients understand what motivates staff.

Owners that motivate employees realize tangible benefits, including low turn over, few sick days and latenesses, and new customers and prospects, Fredericks said.

"Employees make suggestions to improve the company that owners never think of," Laub said. "It could be the most profitable thing in your business."

Make employee motivation a regular part of operations. Review it quarterly, just as you would the company financials. It's a sure way to keep the tactics energized, Fredericks said.

"Owners are spending all this money on human resources," she said, "Why not spend the time to influence it?"

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— Barry Laub