



Business English

Motivating the Workforce

Teachers: Faiza Derbal (coordinator), Fatma Belaid,
Béchir Bouaicha, Nadia Bouchhioua

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Unit 3: Motivating the Workforce

Objectives:

- Introduce language related to employer-employee relations
- Read to identify details (explanations and cause-effect) and arguments
- Refresh use of tenses
- Practice with alternative structures for expressing advice
- Listen for information about a business case
- Writing an argumentative paragraph and organize for discourse moves in a letter

Skills: reading/listening/writing/

I. PRE-READING

A/ Look at the picture and then reflect on this employee's situation on the job:



Select the statement which applies to the situation of this employee. More than one is possible.

1. He gives the impression that he needs a vacation.
2. He looks excited about starting those files on his desk.
3. He looks overworked because he has too much work.
4. The office where he works is too small and cramped.
5. He is not done with his work perhaps because he has to deal with incoming calls.

B/ ASSIGNMENT: Now read his letter addressed to the Human Resource Executive and respond to the situation by choosing an answer that represents your opinion. Pair with a classmate and write a dialogue where you play the role of the employee and your classmate the role of the employer. In this dialogue the goal is to clarify the perspective of each party and establish middle ground for a healthier employee-employer relationship.

Dear Evil HR Lady,

My boss is killing me. She constantly takes on more and more for our department.

We recently got impressive new titles, which elevated us to an exempt salary level (no more overtime), no raises, and a few more hours work per day for each of us.

Stress is so high, I dream about work at night (when I can sleep at all), my hair is falling out, and I'm having digestive issues and sometimes, when things are really bad, chest pains. I wake up every weekday morning with a headache.

I've been at this job for 14 years and can't go elsewhere because I won't be able to put in enough years for a decent retirement if I start over again somewhere else. We have tried to talk to our manager about her taking on more and more work and are accused of wearing our "negativity hats." I have been on the team the longest and know for a fact that I am the lowest paid, although I've always had excellent reviews. I keep trying to tell myself I don't care about sloppy work and missed deadlines that are now unavoidable, but I DO care. I am very angry most of the time. If I talk to HR, what can be done to help me (and my co-workers) without making our boss mad and our lives even more difficult? Thank you

II READING

Read the following text carefully then answer the questions:

One2One Promotion: The Importance of Employee Motivation



The Importance of Employee Motivation

- 1 Enthusiastic employees are not only more satisfied with their jobs; they also deliver better customer service and higher sales. When it comes to motivating employees, there is simply no downside. Empowering and encouraging staff members to do the best job they're capable of helps create job satisfaction, lowering turnover in an industry that has a reputation for burning through its employees. And a happy, stable workforce not only delivers better customer service, it is also more effective at building sales and attracting repeat business.

Training and Team Building

- 2 Setting high expectations and giving employees the tools they need to meet them is one of the most important facets of motivation. No matter how they are conducted—online, through special training shifts, or through shadowing more experienced co-workers—comprehensive new-employee orientation and training are crucial.
- 3 One independent operator, in an effort to stem a rising tide of turnover, instituted a four-day paid training program that covers every aspect of operations. The session begins with a discussion of the restaurant's mission statement, and moves on through a variety of different job skills—so employees also know what their colleagues are doing—menu tastings, information on recipes and ingredients, and even allows employees to look at their employer's books if they're interested. Within months of instituting the practice, service improved, tips increased, and ultimately annual turnover was reduced to just 20%.
 - Training is not a one-shot deal. An ongoing program not only makes for more valuable employees, it also helps with retention.
 - Employees who are always learning new skills are continuously challenged to grow, and consequently work better as both individuals and team members.

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- Many managers conduct regular weekly or even preshift meetings. In addition to keeping staff members up-to-date on specials and menu changes, regular meetings are a great vehicle for new skill building since they involve discussions of trends and are opportunities for sharing news about the business.

Contests and Promotions

4. Sales contests are a time-honored means for boosting the results of a promotion or lifting sales of specific items during slow times. Here are some rules to remember:
 - When selecting food or beverage items to promote, pick a good one—not just a “dog” you’re trying to clear out. Make sure everyone in the kitchen knows how to produce it, and that everyone on the service side gets to taste it.
 - Make sure contests are fun; too much emphasis on competition can backfire and foster negative relationships between employees.
 - Don’t forget the back-of-the-house in the execution of any sales promotions or contests—kitchen and bar staff will certainly be affected if a particular food or beverage item is promoted.

Rewards and Reinforcement

Perks and other rewards are an important part of any compensation package, especially in times of economic stress when monetary rewards may not be in the cards. According to the National Restaurant Association, positive reinforcement is actually one of the most effective ways to motivate employees. This includes such simple tools as Employee of the Month recognition, calling attention in a staff meeting to an employee’s job performance or recent achievement, and using and crediting staff members’ ideas when instituting changes or new policies.

Apart from these “soft” tactics, there are other ways to reward performance without actually increasing pay.

- Consider offering additional time off or a more flexible schedule option to top performers and other loyal employees.
 - Offer a chance to take additional training or attend an industry event.
 - Throw a party and give everyone the day off to attend—many operators bring in a crew from another location to cover the shifts.
 - Many employers offer discounts on everything from their own food and beverage items to spa memberships or admission to a nearby movie theatre.
- 6 You can also use Foodservice Rewards® to incent and reward employees. From digital cameras to sporting equipment to MP3 players, give them to staff members as bonus incentives for a job well done. Or create an end-of-the-year employee raffle for everyone, with the chance to win a great gift that they’ve earned by participating in Foodservice Rewards.

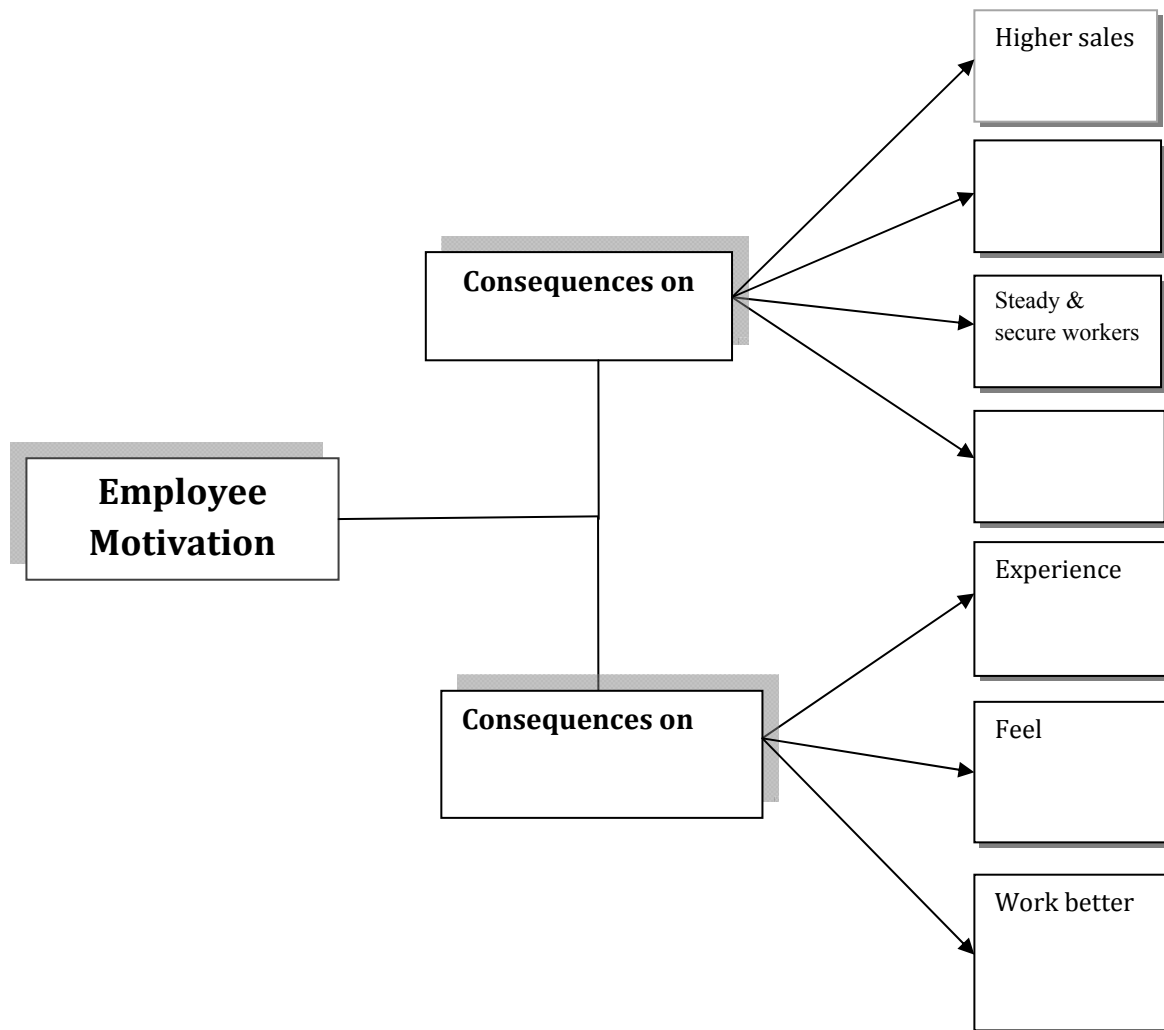
Source: Adapted from Nestlé Professional website: <http://www.nestleprofessional.com/united-states/en/SiteArticles/Pages/One2OnePromotionTheImportanceofEmployeeMotivation.aspx>

A/ Indicate whether sentence is true or false

- 1) Motivation encourages workers to be more willing to work, which will benefit the company where they work.
- 2) Using motivational tactics is essential for satisfying the workers' wishes and needs.
- 3) Involving co-workers in taking part in each other's job skills is one of the strategies which favoured better customer service in one company.
- 4) It is better to promote food or beverage items that need to be cleared out.
- 5) Competitive contests usually result in increasing friendship between co-workers.
- 6) Rewarding workers by increasing their pay is the only way to motivate them to be more efficient workers.

B/ Refer back to the text and complete the chart:

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C/ Match examples of motivating managerial decisions with probable effect on employees.

Benefits	Effect on employees
Paid training programs or shadowing	Reduce tension and dissipate financial concerns
Offering additional time off or discounts	build new skills and improve communication
Perks and other rewards as compensation	Service improvement and reduction in turnover
Regular meetings	Provide incentive to perform well on the job

D/ Find in the text the words which mean:

1. Enabling (paragraph one):
2. Aspect/ characteristic (paragraph two):
3. Following (paragraph two):

4. Stop/oppose (paragraph three):
5. Benefits/income (paragraph three):
6. Uninterrupted (paragraph three):

E/ What do the following words or expressions mean? Choose the right alternative:

1. Crucial (paragraph two): essential – useful - successful
2. Boosting (paragraph four): increasing – helping – rewarding
3. Backfire (paragraph four): explode – succeed - fail
4. Perk (paragraph five): improvement – bonus – satisfaction
5. May not be in the cards (paragraph five): inefficient – unavailable – within reach
6. Top (paragraph five): reward – satisfy – assist

III POST-READING

Vocabulary

A/ Complete the following table:

Verb	Noun	Adjective	Adverb
	Power		
Create			
		satisfactory	
Challenge			
			continuously
Produce			

B/ Choose the right modals:

1. When you want to promote food or beverage items, you - **may** – **can** – **must**- select a good one.
2. If contests are too competitive, employees - **cannot** – **must not** – **may not** – **should not** – enjoy them.

C/ Look at the following sentences paying particular attention to the underlined parts:

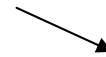
- The employee complained about his working conditions because his boss gave him too much work.
- The employee would not have complained about his working conditions if his boss had not given him too much work.
- If the employee had not had so much work to do, his health would not have deteriorated.

Conditional Type 3

IF + past perfect, conditional perfect

Have + past participle

would +have + past participle



Now fill in the blanks making the necessary changes:

If the operator **had not instituted** the practice, he (not benefit)
from it; service (not improve), tips (not increase)
....., and ultimately annual turnover (not be reduced)
.....

D/ Rewrite each sentence using the words given:

a. If staff members are not encouraged to do their utmost, they won't be satisfied with their jobs.

➤ Unless

_____.

b. A happy, stable workforce will deliver better customer service.

➤ Better customer service

_____.

c. One of the most important aspects of motivation is to give employees the tools they need to meet their expectations.

➤ One of the most important aspects of motivation for employees

_____.

d. In his struggle to stem a rising tide of turnover, one independent operator instituted a four-day paid training program that covers various operations.

➤ Because he

_____.

e. The session started with a discussion of the restaurant mission statement. Then it moved on through a variety of different job skills.

➤ After

f. The National Restaurant Association affirmed that: “Positive reinforcement is actually one of the most effective ways to motivate employees.”

➤ The National Restaurant Association affirmed that

Listening

Motivation POWER (<http://www.candogo.com/search/insight?i=10242>)

By Mark Sanborn

Watch the video and answer the questions below:

A/ According to Mark Sanborn, each letter in the acronym POWER stands for something. What does each letter represent?

P:
O:
W:
E:
R: and

B/ Indicate whether the statements are true or false:

1. Most employers have never personally asked their workforce about what motivates them.
2. Employers have very clear outcomes in general.
3. Employees need to clearly understand why they are asked to carry out particular tasks.
4. Employees will do their best regardless of the environment they are in.
5. In order to create a motivating environment, only two important things are necessary; they are trust and enjoyment.
6. Financial and non-financial rewards may be used in order to thank employees for their efforts and initiatives.

Pronunciation:

A/. Cross the odd man out:

a. clean – colleagues – recipes – ingredients – employees

- b. Turkey – effort – learning – service – burning
- c. comprehension – challenge – share – special – expectation

B/ Match the words with their phonetic transcription

Better	/ɪnfəˈmeɪʃən/
Covers	/vəˈraɪti/
Information	/ˈteɪstɪŋz/
Variety	/əˈlaʊz/
Tastings	/kəˈvəz/
Allows	/bətə/

Writing:

A/ Consider the pros and cons of linking pay to performance by drawing on the ideas in the following extract:

Linking Pay to Performance: Pros and Cons:

Some experts say that linking pay and performance is not a good idea, and that pay should not be used to motivate employees to do a better job because they stop focusing on things like quality of work and how to improve their performance and start focusing on money and how much the raise is.

Others feel that pay for performance pits employees against one another in competition for the highest raises. That's why some businesses give the same across-the-board raises to all employees. It eliminates competition and ensures that the whole workforce is working toward the same goal. But, if everyone gets the same raise, there is no motivation to exceed expectations and go the extra mile in the job. Only you can determine which approach will work best for your employees.

Indeed, it is your role as a manager to choose the approach that best suits your company if you decide to pay for performance. In a paragraph, then, write about the way you link pay to performance, starting with the following topic sentence.

Assignment: As a manager of (provide a name for your company) a company, you noticed that your employees were not excited about their job anymore and fear many will just leave to join other businesses in the area which are providing many benefits and incentives you are not giving your employees. You are debating whether to raise their wages across-the-board or whether to introduce an evaluation scheme to measure their performance and promise a reward according to the result of the evaluation.

B/ Reorder the sentences in the letter below. Unscramble them so that the letter makes sense. You do not need to add words.

Dear Mr Brown

This recycling process, which will be implemented in six to eight weeks from now, will result in direct savings to our firm. Your suggestion that we recycle the trims from our vinyl production has been analyzed and found to be an extremely viable idea. Please accept our congratulations on the adoption of your recommendation and our thanks for your enthusiastic attitude.

We commend you for your inventiveness!

Yours faithfully