

STAY ON TARGET

Andrew Hallam outlines the key to keeping security staff motivated



According to the Cambridge Dictionary ‘motivation’ means an enthusiasm for doing something, and for any security company building such an inspired workforce can shape loyalty, performance and success. Achieving high levels of motivation does not always happen overnight, however, and once someone is motivated into doing a great job, it is not a given that this state of mind will remain forever, as becoming demotivated can be an insipid, creeping process. So how do you create an atmosphere where people want to work well, remain committed, and are motivated to do their very best and are happy to tell their friends that: “this is a wonderful place to work”.

Motivation is like planting a flower and watching it bloom, with its roots firmly set in recruitment. Finding people who align with your mission and values is the first step towards having a highly motivated team of

like-minded, hard-working people who care about what they do and want the company to succeed. Therefore, understanding your applicant is key and an internal guide that looks at the recruitment process can put the spotlight on an applicant’s perspective and help to secure highly qualified security personnel.

A bespoke recruitment process can be created for all roles, no matter what level, and recruitment forms can be completed by hiring managers to ensure the operation is streamlined. Job openings can also be promoted internally, allowing people to progress. Taking time to get to know your candidate is important, especially in ensuring the right cultural fit. It will also help new hires settle in more smoothly. One way of promoting this is to provide new employees with a clear understanding of the company culture and ethos; who you are, what you do and how you work.

Once hired, a strong onboarding process therefore helps to reduce the stress of starting a new role and spells out the opportunities that are available for

talented people who go the extra mile. Samsic UK has an onboarding presentation about the journey of the company so that new employees know that if they believe in the journey, then they too can progress. Internships are another way of helping people understand a company and how different departments work and can show that, one day, if they get their qualifications, the opportunities are there.

A company’s reputation also has a part to play in recruitment. Being a company that is highly rated within the industry will attract the right people. They may have long dreamt of working for you, and are proud when they land a job. Having staff who speak highly of you, almost acting like business ambassadors, is therefore vital as word of mouth creates a positive image.

Community engagement can also enhance people’s understanding of your company and put you on their radar. This can include charity work in line with your ESG policies, which can engage both employees and the local community, and help to promote a greater sense of belonging. It is hoped that by showing your company ethos and how you relate to the local community, business partners and employees, that you will, in turn, attract a high standard of job applicants.

Once you have hired the right people, the next step in maintaining a highly motivated team is training and career progression. It is essential to empower people by giving them the opportunity to learn and grow. There is a difference between a job and a career, and making people believe that advancement is attainable, with clear pathways to progression, is important in maintaining motivation. Investing in comprehensive training programs for entry-level employees can also help to ensure they acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for their roles. Investment in people therefore plays a crucial role and having processes in place so that people can be identified and progressed is important.

Harnessing talent management systems for the entire employee lifecycle is a way of ensuring upskilling and development for staff at all levels. A robust appraisal process is important as it not only fosters communication, but can help to nurture existing and upcoming talent. Progression does not have to be linear either. It can be sideways, as people’s strengths may mean they wish to move across to another department in order to realise their ambitions.

Site-specific training has a role to play and not only helps personnel feel comfortable in their roles, but will benefit the customer as well. A learning management system can support this. Samsic has developed site-specific training as well as having two BICSc accredited training centres, plus a Learning Management System that provides bespoke site-based, contract specific, training courses for staff to complete at their desk or on mobile devices. There are around 900 individual courses, which can also be turned into training or management development plans.

Mentorship programmes are also key and new hires can learn an enormous amount from experienced employees who can give vital guidance, support and insights as well as camaraderie.

Robust career support can provide access to upskilling programmes, step-up programmes, training and management programmes so that people can join

as front-line operatives but use the support and training on offer to enjoy career progression. It means talent can be grown from the bottom up.

As well as training, strong HR processes and systems are also needed – such as supporting equal opportunities, salary access schemes, for example Wigestream, and being an Accredited Living Wage Employer. Promoting a strong work/life balance, which can include flexible working, is also important. COVID-19 had a major impact on working patterns and many companies are embracing hybrid working, giving their people more autonomy over their working week.

IT’S VITAL TO PROVIDE NEW EMPLOYEES WITH A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMPANY CULTURE

Wellness programs, including initiatives to promote mental health and well-being, help to provide further support for staff and, together, such actions can increase morale, performance and retention, while reducing absenteeism. While appraisals play a role in mentoring as well, performance recognition is a good way of boosting individual morale as people respond to incentives.

Therefore, a reward structure, which can include staff nomination rewards, will mean people know there is a good chance they will be recognised if they go above and beyond. Feeling that you are being seen and appreciated can be a major driver for being highly motivated and performing well. Long service awards are also powerful as they emphasise that people can enjoy lengthy, fruitful and rewarding careers with your company and that, in turn, you value their loyalty.

However, while it is important to be seen, being heard is also equally essential for a well-rounded and happy team. Therefore, at the heart of motivation is strong communication.

Employee surveys can provide great insight and help you understand your people and react if something needs to change. One such exercise for Samsic UK highlighted a need for improved communication at all levels, which led to the creation of Samsic One, an app which allows two-way talk. It helps to promote best practice and encourages people to become invested in the business as they are being heard and respected.

Employees that feel engaged are much more likely to be motivated to contribute their best. And so, creating a sense of connection through open and consistent communication, especially about the company’s goals and values, can help not only to inspire motivation, but cement it as well. This is also true after a contract win, especially if employees are being brought across to your organisation through the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) or TUPE process.

This is a delicate transition for any employee, and staff morale and positivity can be deeply affected, which in turn can have a negative impact on productivity and service. The TUPE process

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can trigger a lot of apprehension, with particular concerns around potential alterations in working hours, pay structures, overall job satisfaction, and adjustments to working processes and conditions.

Keeping operational standards high while managing compliance and due diligence are essential, but alleviating fears and establishing a connection with the team that is being transferred are equally important if they are to remain motivated.

EXPERIENCED EMPLOYEES CAN GIVE VITAL SUPPORT, GUIDANCE AND INSIGHTS AS WELL AS CAMARADERIE

Therefore, creating a culture of engagement through complete transparency is critical early on in the relationship as it helps build a rapport, with the main priority being the well-being of team members. Comprehensive welcome packs, again that promote cultural fit and the possibility of career progression – can be provided for transferring staff – regular meetings should be held that accommodate all shift patterns and a ‘drop-in surgery’ for equipment and uniforms can also provide an opportunity to address staff concerns.

Individual consultations can also be factored in along with access to an HR helpline. On the official transfer date, a welcome induction can also be carried out followed by an employee engagement survey to establish a baseline at the start of the contract. The aim is to promote a smooth transition where all staff are happy to move to the new company that has taken over the contract and remain committed and motivated in providing their best work. It also helps to promote the feeling that they are joining a family where individuals at all levels are respected.

Valuing collaboration, strengthening teamwork and encouraging shared responsibility are all highly important stepping stones to creating a family atmosphere where people can feel confident, thrive and achieve their full potential. People also want a company that offers stability. Leadership style is intrinsic in creating such an atmosphere as it is important to put people and culture at the heart of an organisation. In doing so, it promotes a feeling of connection, that everyone is part of a team. It means colleagues are supported, people are encouraged to achieve their ambitions and feel they are being listened to. In turn, they understand that they can add real value to, not only the company’s success, but to their own by being highly motivated to do their very best ●

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