

Do your staff KPIs depress or motivate?

A Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is something you measure to see how your staff or business is performing. Clever KPIs bring staff and customers closer to you, creating fulfilled and passionate brand ambassadors. Crazy ones push them *away* and cause stress, frustration and brand damage. KPIs are a great tool, but they are easy to get wrong.



If your KPIs set staff up to feel like failures, they won't stick around long, making the money spent on training a waste and annual recruiting costs expensive. Creating a culture to hide crazy KPIs behind won't fool anyone - especially customers who sense flat, pushy staff a mile off.

How to depress staff with KPIs:

- 1** Have a named Results Board. These can embarrass the underachievers, give a strong dose of worthlessness and in some cases be perceived as a 'threat'.
- 2** Single people out in meetings. Tell them to 'lift their game' or assign a buddy to 'help' them.
- 3** Set sales targets so high you won't have to pay any bonuses.
- 4** Raise sales targets significantly every year without a pay rise or explanation. (N.B. Prepare a 'queue here' sign for your 'pushy service' complaints office; consider putting out seats too.)
- 5** Test how many times staff can be stretched and stretched before being pushed over the edge.
- 6** Tell staff how much you value and care for them, even though their KPIs prove that is not true. (Behavior speaks louder than words.)

How to motivate staff with KPIs:

Unless you've been living under a rock, you will have heard about work/life balance and flexible work arrangements modernising the workplace. Key Performance Indicators need to be updated too.

Success is not achieving a million goals.

When considering KPIs, you need to be clear about what your goal with your staff is. Every single one of them has different backgrounds, skills, circumstances, dreams, goals, motivators and measurements of success. No wonder modernising the workplace is a priority these days. One size doesn't fit all!

Success is not achieving a million goals. It is living the vision you have for your life.

What is each and every one of your staff's life visions? If you've got 6000 staff, I bet you think that is the silliest question you've ever heard! But if they aren't fulfilled in their work, then their vision probably won't include working for you. They may do an average job, give average service and cost you money!

ReGeneration (theregeneration.com.au) surveyed Australians and found a staggering 94% feel their skills are undervalued, not utilised, not growing, not recognised or don't suit their current working environment. These statistics show that people *do* want to grow, learn and achieve, but their current KPIs aren't facilitating this. They definitely won't be living their life vision.

If you let staff help set the KPIs, it doesn't mean they'll vote for an easy ride. Tell them the business goals and ask what they'll commit to so they are achieved. They may have solutions you have not thought of. The KPIs will then be things they are passionate about achieving, and weekly progress meetings will have more meaning, since they were part of the decision process. By valuing their ideas, a better team environment will be created and staff will be comfortable sharing them.

Having KPIs that staff are happy with also means better customer care. 'Customers want to know how much you care before they care how much you know' - that's what gains the sale. So also consider what your customers want when setting KPIs. This can vary enormously depending on your industry. For example:

- **Supermarket** customers want clear and stocked isles, great prices and fast queues.
- **Bank** customers want speed of service, fast answers, low fees and not being pressured to buy life insurance!
- **Clothing store** customers want to browse - no "can I help?" barked as you approach the entrance; they want quality products and personalised staff advice.

Key Performance Indicators can be part of your brand personality. Be unique; make them fun - silly even, anything to express what your brands USP (Unique Selling Point) is. Don't be afraid to step away from the norm when setting KPIs. You can trial first and tweak if necessary. Just because you don't set a KPI of 'selling 1000 policies, toothbrushes or shoes this year' doesn't mean you will go broke. In fact, taking such a KPI away will probably make you more money as consumers notice a better atmosphere and become less afraid to step inside your door!

By Allison Toner



Ideas Architect, Allison Toner runs her own company, Niche Forecasting, who deal in brand personality and loyalty, emotional marketing, motivating KPIs, USPs, staff fulfillment and brand culture. For more information visit: www.nicheforecasting.co.nz

It is living the vision you have for your life.