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Employee Motivation

Lance L. Cummins-Brown

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Cornhusker Economics

Cooperative Extension

Institute of Agriculture & Natural Resources
Department of Agricultural Economics
University of Nebraska – Lincoln

Employee Motivation

Market Report	Yr Ago	4 Wks Ago	9/15/00
<u>Livestock and Products,</u>			
<u>Average Prices for Week Ending</u>			
Slaughter Steers, Ch. 204, 1100-1300 lb Omaha, cwt.	\$66.41	\$65.33	\$64.80
Feeder Steers, Med. Frame, 600-650 lb Dodge City, KS, cwt.	86.65	84.00	88.23
Feeder Steers, Med. Frame 600-650 lb, Nebraska Auction Wght. Avg.	89.54	105.92	93.85
Carcass Price, Ch. 1-3, 550-700 lb Cent. US, Equiv. Index Value, cwt.	105.03	101.41	98.60
Hogs, US 1-2, 220-230 lb Sioux Falls, SD, cwt.	32.25	44.50	43.50
Feeder Pigs, US 1-2, 40-45 lb Sioux Falls, SD, hd.	20.22	*	37.00
Vacuum Packed Pork Loins, Wholesale, 13-19 lb, 1/4" Trim, Cent. US, cwt.	100.25	120.70	118.90
Slaughter Lambs, Ch. & Pr., 115-125 lb Sioux Falls, SD, cwt.	72.88	*	68.50
Carcass Lambs, Ch. & Pr., 1-4, 55-65 lb FOB Midwest, cwt.	169.00	168.00	163.00
<u>Crops,</u>			
<u>Cash Truck Prices for Date Shown</u>			
Wheat, No. 1, H.W. Omaha, bu.	2.90	2.82	2.89
Corn, No. 2, Yellow Omaha, bu.	1.64	1.47	1.46
Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Omaha, bu.	4.47	4.36	4.47
Grain Sorghum, No. 2, Yellow Kansas City, cwt.	2.80	2.75	2.57
Oats, No. 2, Heavy Sioux City, IA, bu.	1.07	1.18	1.20
<u>Hay,</u>			
<u>First Day of Week Pile Prices</u>			
Alfalfa, Sm. Square, RFV 150 or better Platte Valley, ton.	92.50	115.00	105.00
Alfalfa, Lg. Round, Good Northeast Nebraska, ton.	32.50	77.50	67.50
Prairie, Sm. Square, Good Northeast Nebraska, ton.	*	77.50	82.50
* No market.			

Currently in the state of Nebraska, there is a shortage of agricultural workers. As Nebraska's population continues to move east, and the size of grain and livestock operations continue to increase, finding and retaining employees will become a necessity for more agricultural producers. Research is being conducted at the University of Nebraska to improve the leadership skills of producers. Even though there are many skills successful leaders need to have, one of the most important is being able to motivate your employees. A recent study looked at the relationship between an employee's source of motivation and the type of behaviors they demonstrate while at work. This study has helped us to better understand what motivates agricultural workers in the state of Nebraska and allows us to make suggestions to employers on how to effectively motivate their employees. In the following paragraphs the results of this study and the implications for producers will be discussed.

Dr. John E. Barbuto, a professor in the Agricultural Leadership Education and Communication Department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has developed a test to measure an employee's source of motivation. There are five sources of motivation, and it is important as you read about these sources of motivation to understand that each exists in various proportions in each of us, but in varying degrees. No person is motivated exclusively by just one source.

Intrinsic process (fun) motivation is characterized by task pleasure and sheer enjoyment of the work. Behavior that suggests an employee is motivated by intrinsic process include being easily taken off tasks when one doesn't enjoy the tasks assigned, talking about how much one likes or dislikes the tasks assigned, volunteering freely for the activities that one enjoys most and not being very good at a job, if one doesn't enjoy doing it.



Instrumental (\$\$\$) motivation is characterized by a concern for tangible incentives (e.g. pay, bonus or leave allowances). Behavior that suggests an employee is instrumentally motivated include asking "What's in it for me?", expecting compensation for any and all extra work performed, talking about how much money one makes or should make and frequently talking about the relative wealth of others.

Self-concept external (reputation) motivation is characterized by a concern for others' opinions. An employee motivated this way is very interested in preserving and enhancing his or her reputation among peers and supervisors. Behavior that suggests an employee is motivated by self-concept external include frequently asking for feedback, seeking praise and recognition for work performed, bragging or telling stories about accomplishments and being attentive to who gets the credit when work is finished.

Self-concept internal (achievement) motivation is characterized by a concern for meeting one's personal standards of job performance. An employee motivated this way is not concerned with feedback and tends to be self-driven. Behaviors that suggest an employee is motivated by self-concept-internal include seeking to perform the most difficult tasks at work, working best when one's skills are needed for the tasks, being interested in developing one's range of skills and performing the most important tasks with little supervision or direction.

Goal internalization (principles) motivation is characterized by a need to believe in the cause at work. An employee motivated this way uses value-based principles to guide decisions and actions. Behaviors that suggest an employee is motivated by goal internalization include asking about the purpose of tasks ("Why are we doing this?"), commenting on the strategic focus of the operation, working hard when one believes in the cause and not at all if one doesn't and living a professional life guided by a strict set of principles and values.

Once you discover the sources of your employees' motivation, it is important to understand how to motivate your employees. Remember that each of these five sources of motivation exists in all people, but in varying degrees. The key to motivating others is being able to tap into the right sources of motivation for each worker. Here are some tips for motivating each source.

To motivate individuals that are **(Fun) Intrinsic Process** stress the fun at work, find out which tasks an employee likes best and assign those tasks to the employee, let employees have their fun in the workplace and create an enjoyable work atmosphere (laugh, have fun).

For **(\$\$\$) Instrumental Motivation** individuals, make

expectations clear to employees, let workers know what compensation they will get for their efforts, create incentive-laden pay scales, make all bonuses and incentives contingent on performance outcomes and develop non-monetary rewards for employees to pursue (extra days off, leave early, etc.).

(Reputation) Self-Concept External individuals need to be given public praise and recognition for their achievements, criticize these employees behind closed doors (never in public), assign projects that are highly visible and articulate the operation's prestigious reputation in the community to your workers.

To motivate **(Achievement) Self-Concept Internal** individuals, give challenging work that requires worker's expertise, create opportunities for workers to further develop their skills, emphasize the importance of worker's skills towards the success of the operation and avoid assigning menial or mundane tasks to these individuals.

Finally, for **(Principles) Goal Internalization** individuals, communicate the organization's vision, communicate desirable end-goals, articulate optimism for reaching these goals and communicate how tasks being performed help to achieve these goals.

Research has repeatedly shown that Nebraska's agricultural workers are predominantly **Self-concept Internal** motivated (almost 40%). This type of motivation leads to the hard work ethic and helping nature of many employees in this state. It may also lead to conflict, as individuals who are motivated in this way may expect their employees and co-workers to have the same dedication and helping nature. That is why leaders and managers must also know how they are motivated, so they can describe the work environment, their leadership style and their expectations to employees. In general, the dominance of **Self-concept Internal** individuals in the leadership and management positions of many agricultural operations explains why working hard, helping other employees and performing quality work are expected and not extra role behaviors in Nebraska.

For further information on leadership and motivation please contact:

Lance L. Cummins-Brown , (402) 770-0852
Assistant Extension Educator
Lancaster and Saunders Counties