

Human Resources Edition

Human Resources Inspiring Employees to Think like Owners

By Tracy Powell
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With the economy in a downward spiral, many companies are trying to cut costs while maintaining employee morale. We know that employees are our most valuable asset—they contain a wealth of knowledge and passion. But we must understand that their thirst for knowledge goes well beyond a project they are working on. The key to ongoing success for any company lies in its ability to tap into employees' energy during the down times, as well when business is flourishing.

At Gongos Research, we've created a culture that fosters open communication and ownership at every level. We recently added a new home page component to our company's Intranet. On it, we all are free to post tips and day-to-day successes, as well as send our colleagues kudos or "shout outs." In a growing company where pats on the back and individual successes can sometimes be forgotten in the midst of lengthy to-do lists and overbooked schedules, this constant stream of positive "voices" goes a long way.

Also on the company Intranet, employees have access to our target revenue goal as well as our actual revenue-to-date. We feel it's important to have transparency within the organization, especially in an economic downturn when employees can feel nervous. Opening the books to the company instills a sense of trust and loyalty among its employees, as well as a sense of responsibility and shared success.

Another way that our company empowers its employees is by granting them participation in our annual performance review process. We conduct 360-degree performance reviews where each employee is evaluated by several colleagues from various departments and levels within the company. The process allows each employee to give and receive feedback from their managers, direct reports, and peers. This increases employee self-awareness of how they are perceived throughout the company and can more efficiently aid in accessing their strengths and areas for development. This process allows our employees to hold each other to the same standards they hold themselves. Giving a voice to employees at all levels of the company enables them to contribute to each others' well-being, growth and success.

Employees are also empowered to bring fresh ideas that contribute to the company's overall mission. With a structure that encourages and supports interdepartmental teams to achieve goals, employees continually find avenues to step outside their primary roles. Through internal task force teams, employees gain new opportunities to become involved in areas that they are passionate about.

One example of this in our company is a recently formed Green Team. This team is charged with identifying and initiating environmentally friendly, cost-saving opportunities. Some of their initiatives include setting laser printer defaults to black and white, two-sided printing; posting signs to help employees remember to turn off lights and overheads in meeting rooms; optimizing the use of natural light; setting thermostats to maximize efficiency; eliminating use of disposable cups; and using eco-friendly soaps and paper products whenever possible.

These are just a few examples of how embracing a culture of pride and personal ownership can inspire employees to think like company leaders. Encouraging involvement, communication and passion among each and every employee will not only help aid the company through challenging times, but catapult it into its future.

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