

CHAPTER 48

HOW TO BUILD AND SUSTAIN TEAM MORALE

I. Wise King Solomon once said, 'When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice' (Prov. 29:2).

- A. When applied to a king ruling over his subjects, we all know what this verse means:
 - 1. His people are happy and feel secure because they know their king loves them.
 - 2. He puts their interests above his own.
 - 3. He will protect them from foreign invaders and will see that justice is fairly administered.
 - 4. Because he fears God, they know he will guide them in right paths, never abuse his office or power or rip them off in self-serving schemes.
- B. When applying this verse to you and me, as leaders or managers, the same principles should apply.
 - 1. If we're God-fearing and loving toward our employees, they will enjoy high morale and be happy and productive.
 - 2. They'll know we're solicitous of their well-being, are considerate of their feelings and have their personal welfare at heart.
 - 3. They'll be motivated to produce the finest quality of work.
 - 4. Our team members will support us willingly for they know from first-hand experience that we're honorable and trustworthy.

II. Today I would like to present a discussion on how to build team morale.

- A. In this limited time, it would be impossible to cover every aspect of this subject.
- B. Therefore, I plan to discuss only the most important aspects of effective leadership in building team morale.

C. FOURTEEN STEPS:

1. Good team morale starts with the boss.

- a. Whether or not employees within your division, department or section are motivated to produce and excel rests largely with you, the leader in charge.
- b. This involves being enthusiastic and positive-minded and possessing the ability to unite your team into a smooth-functioning, well-oiled machine.
- c. You have to be the motivator and spark plug inspiring your people into cohesive action.
- d. If there are conflicts and clashes in the workplace, you and I would do well to re-examine our leadership skills.
- e. Peace, goodwill and harmony among team members, as well as their productive output, are strong indications that you are a competent leader.

2. Use the Bible as your chief management textbook.

- a. The Bible is replete with hundreds of management principles.
- b. In fact, there are dozens of passages touching directly on employer-employee relationships:
 - (1) Ephesians 6:5-9
 - (2) Colossians 3:22-23
 - (3) Matthew 25:14-30
 - (4) Matthew 20:1-16
- c. Actually, all commandments dealing with everyday Christian living can — and should — be applied on the job.
- d. Whenever you, as a boss, conscientiously incorporate the Bible into your day-to-day management style, you will find that the spirit and morale of your team will soar.

3. Be the kind of leader your people can trust and respect.

- a. To build a strong and viable team, it's essential to reflect trustworthiness and steadfast character.
- b. Your employees need the assurance that your loyalty for them is true and feel confident you'll never let them down.

Examples:

- (1) Keeping your promises.
 - (2) Being dutifully fair to all and not showing favoritism.
 - (3) Being certain to get all the facts before administering discipline.
 - (4) Not using harsh threats which cause employees to feel their jobs are insecure.
- c. As to the matter of respect: This involves your skills and qualifications as a leader and how you measure up.

For example:

- (1) Maintaining high standards and values.
- (2) Being honest and ethical in your business practices as well as in your private life.
- (3) Keeping up-to-date with the state-of-the-art.
- (4) Looking for ways to improve the operation and innovate positive changes.
- (5) Projecting an image of sound-mindedness and good judgment and the ability to make intelligent decisions.

4. Realize that every person on the team is important.

- a. According to I Cor. 12:12-25, there is no insignificant member in the body of the Church.
- b. Every person counts, even the uncomely parts.
- c. How critically true and important this is in the workplace.
- d. If a job needs to be done — no matter how small or menial — then the person performing that task serves a useful purpose.
- e. Remember that a watch has both large and small cogs in order for it to function properly.
- f. Make each person under your charge feel needed and appreciated.

5. Encourage open communication and free interchange of ideas.

- a. First and foremost it is imperative that you, as the boss, communicate the desired goals of the Work to every rank and file member on the team.
- b. They need to be updated on the latest news, breakthroughs and plans for the future.
- c. This makes them feel like they are an important part of the team.
- d. Conversely, it's equally as important for your people to feel free to come to you with ideas and suggestions
- e. Although you may not be able to use every suggestion offered, your willingness to listen builds morale.
- f. Not only should you intently listen, but also (if possible) allow team members to participate in implementing approved changes.
- g. Be humble and approachable!
- h. Communicate — keep the team informed and hear them out!

6. Provide opportunities for job enrichment and employee growth.

- a. Employees will be motivated to push themselves and try even harder if they know there's room to grow.
- b. Thus in building morale it's vital to find ways to challenge them and to increase their usefulness.

Examples:

- (1) Cross-training.
 - (2) Promoting from within.
 - (3) Delegation.
 - (4) On-the-job training.
 - (5) Paying for classes or seminars to improve technical skills.
 - (6) Purchasing necessary books and training aids for an office library.
- c. Help build your people, and they will help build God's Work.

NOTE: *Mr. Graham Hawkins said in a lecture he gave in a management class for students that, 'The mark of a good manager is that if he must be gone for an extended period of time, his office will run smoothly and efficiently just as if he were there.'*

7. Give praise, recognition and rewards.

- a. Praise is a tonic that stimulates employee growth and productivity.
Areas of praise that a good boss should note frequently:
 - (1) Improvement in efficiency and error rate.

- (2) Increased production.
- (3) Being dependable, reliable and always coming through when needed.
- (4) Willingness to work overtime.
- (5) Being thrifty and cost-conscious.

b. Recognition is equally as important.

Examples:

- (1) Publicly recognizing a notable achievement.
- (2) Giving credit where credit is due. (Nothing is more demoralizing to the team than for the boss to take credit for their accomplishments and be a glory hog.)
- (3) Giving a plaque for 25-year service.

c. One of the most important ways of motivating the team is to reward them monetarily for a job well done.

Examples:

- (1) Regular raises.
- (2) Bonuses.
- (3) Raising to higher pay scale when qualified and deserving.

d. Remember the biblical injunction, '*The labourer is worthy of his reward*' (1 Tim. 5:18).

8. Show your employees you care for them as people, not just as workers.

- a. Team members should never be looked on as mere units, statistics or fishes in a pond.
- b. Make it a point to show your personal concern for them as individuals.

Some examples:

- (1) Phoning or visiting them when they are sick.
- (2) Sending flowers and get-well cards during prolonged illness.
- (3) Acknowledging a death in the family.

c. Also express concern for employees' comfort and well-being in the work environment.

Examples:

- (1) Comfortable temperature and lighting.
- (2) Safety.
- (3) Adequate equipment and furniture.
- (4) Keeping machinery in good repair.

d. Consider impact on families when transferring, laying-off or firing.

Examples:

- (1) Child may be a senior in high school.
- (2) Climate may be injurious to health.
- (3) Employee may be deeply in debt and severely strapped if laid-off without warning or sufficient time to prepare.
- (4) As to firing, has the employee been patiently worked with and given a chance to improve? Can he or she be moved elsewhere and salvaged?

e. Be thoughtful and sensitive to the feelings and needs of all who work for you.

9. Stress cooperation and teamwork.

- a. This not only involves interaction between employees within a section or department, but to all areas of the Work.
- b. Strive to be a peacemaker and a builder of bridges.
- c. Remind employees that as a worldwide Work, we must work together in harmony, each giving and sharing to help the other.
- d. Again, here's an area where good communication is so important.

10. Create a family atmosphere of closeness and fellowship.

- a. Try to inject a sense of family and togetherness in the work place.
- b. Have occasional office parties or pot-luck luncheons.
- c. If the staff is small enough, you might treat them to an occasional lunch or dinner on the house.
- d. Plan some activity where families can be invited.
- e. Have extended coffee breaks where employees can join you in informal rap sessions.
- f. Remember the importance of a warm family environment and the proper use of humor.

11. Infuse into each employee a 'quality' mode of thinking.

- a. In I Corinthians 10:31 we are commanded, '*... whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*'
- b. Matthew 5:48 tells us to become perfect.
- c. Ecclesiastes 9:10 exhorts us that, '*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might...*'
- d. These verses, among many others, most assuredly stress the importance of being quality conscious.
 - (1) Examples:
 - (a) Not allowing smudge marks or strike-overs on a letter.
 - (b) Being sure that printed material such as booklets are evenly trimmed.
 - (c) Require tidy housekeeping.
 - (d) Make sure employee reports are well-organized and accurate.
- e. It's a known psychological fact that, when people are encouraged to excel in their endeavors, their sense of quality improves proportionately.
- f. Thus enthusiasm and high-spirited morale are automatic spin-offs when employees are encouraged to attain excellence.

12. Use authority to lead and guide the team, not as a whip to drive them.

- a. People work much better in an atmosphere of love and encouragement than in one of anxiety and fear.
- b. Scare tactics and veiled threats may get the job done, but human beings innately resent this kind of treatment.
- c. The severe and heavy use of authority indicates that the leader lacks confidence in his ability to lead.
- d. Authority should be used as a tool for service, never as a means to exalt self.
- e. As a side note: a leader should never use his power or office to get special privileges.
- f. Sometimes authority may have to be strongly used, but only after kindness and love have been tried first.

13. Keep the team inspired and motivated by helping them see the big picture and how their jobs fit in.

- a. Boredom and routine can set in unless you as the leader keep the focus sharp and clear.
- b. Talk about the growth and plans of the Work and the hopes and dreams of Mr. Armstrong.
- c. Frequently remind employees how their jobs are fulfilling an intrinsic role in carrying the Gospel to all the world.
- d. Help them to realize the seriousness of their calling and that the way they carry out their duties will in part determine their reward.
- e. Stress the fact that we're working for the living God and not just a pay check.

14. Set a sterling example in all walks of life.

- a. This has to do with maintaining high morals, impeccable ethics and high values.
- b. It has to do with setting high standards for yourself and creating a tone of efficiency, hard work and excellence.
- c. Be circumspect in small matters such as:
 - 1) Paying for personal postage, long distance phone calls and xerox copies.
 - 2) Not allowing yourself to think you're above the law and that the rules don't apply to the boss.
 - 3) Watching your language and never telling shady jokes.
- d. Be everything you wish your employees to be and they will eventually absorb your desires, ideals and Godly way of thinking.

III. Good managers would do well to deeply reflect on and inculcate the principle found in Is. 40:11.

- A. Is. 40:11 — '*He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*'