



## **Motivating Employees: Focus on the Doughnut Not the Hole©**

**By Dave Guenther, President BSM Executive Advisor**

Last week I had lunch with Art, a CEO friend of mine. Art was lamenting the fact that he just couldn't seem to motivate his team to get the job done. He listed the bonuses, trips, and other incentives that he offered his team for exceptional performance. While a handful of people seemed to get it and were doing a great job, most were stuck and some just didn't seem to care.

To turn things around, Art brought in a motivational speaker. The speaker was great and fired the team up. When the speaker was done the entire team was ready to run through the door and conquer the world. However, in a couple of weeks the world was gone and it was back to business as usual.

After listening to Art, I said "Art, your focusing on the hole, not the doughnut. You don't have a motivation problem, you have a hiring problem."

"What do you mean a hiring problem?" Art replied.

"Art," I asked, " who or what motivates you to get out of bed in the morning, go to the office and do the best you can to make the company successful."

Art shot back, "I don't need anyone to motivate me. I love going in and talking to our customers, vendors and employees and thinking about how we improve the company."

"Exactly", I said. "No one motivates you, you motivate yourself. The environment and culture you have created at the company fits you perfectly."

"Art", I said, "the fact of life is that no one person can motivate anyone else for a long period of time. People have to motivate themselves. All the coaching, incentives or bonuses in the world won't guarantee that everyone will be successful at your company. It doesn't mean they aren't fine talented people, it just means that the environment at your company is not the environment they need to be successful."

"What would you do?", Art asked.

I told Art I would do 5 things.

1. I would group my team into A, B, and C. The A's are those who are succeeding today. The B's are those that are close and feel like they can be brought along and the "C's" are those that just don't seem to get it.
2. Next, I would evaluate the A group and figure out what was making them successful. What about the culture, job or environment really drives them to succeed?



3. I would evaluate the B group and try and figure out what little things I could change that might help them. Then I would team them with a member of the A group to help guide them through the process of becoming a stronger performer.
4. I would get rid of the “C” group as fast as possible. This is unfortunate, but they need to be given a chance to go somewhere where they can be successful and you need to free up dollars for your own business and the people working hard within it.
5. Finally, I would start looking for people with group A characteristics in my hiring. Find them and hire them as soon as possible, because what you have today at your business will already motivate them to be successful and help grow your business.

As CEO, your job is to create the best culture and environment to insure company success. Your next job is to create a staff that fits that culture and can work successfully in the environment you created. That’s the doughnut. Know what you have and what works and stay focused on that, not on what is missing. Do this and your company will succeed.

*Dave Guenther is President of BSM Executive Advisors. Dave is an executive advisor, consultant and speaker that has been where you are, where you are going and beyond. Dave co-founded and grew a company from an idea into a Five billion dollar Fortune 500 company. Dave used the same principles to help the owners of RTG Medical grow their Company, in less than five years, from a \$3 million dollar revenue company with 39 employees into a Company with revenue over \$30 million dollars and in excess of 250 employees. Visit Dave @ <http://www.bsmexecutiveadvisor.com/>*