

## How to Keep Employees Happily Working

By Ruth Schwartz



*There have been many studies about what motivates people. Many managers have asked the question, “How do I motivate the people who work with me?” It is important to throw away that thinking. You cannot motivate people, just as you cannot make the horse drink. Fact: people are motivated by their feeling of contribution and being valued. If keeping good people is your issue, remember—people love to contribute, but most of the time, they hate their jobs.*

**To be happy at work, employees need to be valued.** They need to feel that their contribution matters. Employees thrive in a workplace where they know what is expected of them, what their responsibilities are, and how their output will be measured. They want to know how much authority they have, when projects are due, and who to go to when they are having problems. They want their skills and knowledge to be put to good use. If they don’t have the required skills and knowledge, they want an opportunity to acquire them. They want all the information they need to do a good job and the tools, equipment, reports, and money required to get the job done. They want to be able to talk about and solve work-related issues and problems so that they can come up with viable solutions.

**The ability to solve problems is an important key to employee happiness,** but many employees don’t even try because their bosses won’t let them. When employees were asked why they don’t solve problems, here are some of the answers.

I don’t solve problems because my boss:

- Has all the answers.
- Does it himself anyway.
- Micromanages.
- Mandates arbitrary goals.
- Always knows better than I do.

- Never thinks I do it right.
- Will punish my mistakes.
- Is protecting his turf.
- Relies on detailed policies that I don't understand.

**One of the best ways to support people is to use the best and brightest part of each person,** let them know their contribution is truly valued, and involve them in making decisions that impact them and your business. Even if you are not insecure about making decisions or trusting yourself, resist the urge to do it alone. This is especially true for big-picture strategic decisions that are usually handled by management. Even if this challenges your current beliefs, it's important to start engaging others in the strategic process. The payoff is huge. Handing strategic planning items and systems over to the team will not only release you of the heavy lifting, it will create a better result in terms of outcome and participation.

**Use meetings as an opportunity** for time together with people to review, plan, discuss, understand, and truly communicate with each other. There is no other time as valuable or profitable as meeting time. When they're well done, everyone knows what to expect and even saves up topics, ideas and issues. To have a successful meeting, it's important to follow a few basic rules:

1. Everyone is invited.
2. Meetings are for big-picture topics,
3. The team leader is never in charge of meetings
4. You have to have an agenda,
5. You need meeting minutes
6. Assign, delegate, or rotate the role of facilitator, recorder, and moderator
7. Evaluate your meetings,
8. Have your team create meeting norms.

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Ruth Schwartz started Mordam Records in 1983. By the time Nirvana hit the pop charts and Green Day went platinum, Schwartz was running a ten million-dollar company. In 2012 Schwartz chronicles her success in *The Key to the Golden Handcuffs – Stop Being a Slave to Your Business*. Published by Outskirts Press, and based on Schwartz' business experience, the book gives entrepreneurs and business executives insight into shifts that can be made to create a transparent, open-book company. Today, Schwartz is an internationally certified business coach, motivational speaker, and the facilitator of business peer advisory boards. She owns High Performance Advocates, a management development and marketing company. Contact Ruth through [www.highperformanceadvocates.com](http://www.highperformanceadvocates.com) or by calling 530-288-0180.

