

The logo features the words "Brass Tacks" in orange and "Tip List" in yellow, both in a bold, sans-serif font. The text is set against a blue, tilted rectangular background that resembles a metal plate or a sign.

Motivating and keeping good employees

Get more tips at: <http://BrassTacksTips.com>

Sponsored by The Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership, SUNY at Buffalo

Check us out at <http://mgt.buffalo.edu/ced/cel/coreprog.shtm>

Years ago, sociologist Frederick Herzberg postulated the “Hygiene/Motivation Theory” when analyzing what could be done in a company’s internal environment to motivate and keep talented employees.

The hygiene part of his approach involved “cleansing” the workplace of negatives that were clear turnoffs to workers, thus allowing them to feel, at best, neutral about their circumstances. He claimed that this was accomplished by providing adequate supervision, a good, “clean” working environment, maintaining effective interpersonal relations, and offering competitive salaries, status, and security. However, these “essentials” will only get you to ground zero, a state in which you have “conditioned” the workplace to eliminate dissatisfaction. While these elements are necessary in every situation, in order to truly motivate – and *keep* – the best employees, Herzberg’s theory suggests you have to go much further. Here is where your abilities as a motivator come into play.

You must continually strive to enhance that which your employees do in order to increase their sense of personal achievement. This will, in turn, enhance their proclivity to stay where that invaluable feeling of personal accomplishment is ever-present. Effective leaders – I call them *MetaManagers* – have to enable their followers to gain a sense of achievement by structuring their responsibilities in a way that presents a meaningful challenge and a true sense of personal and professional accomplishment. This means giving them increasingly expanded responsibilities and the freedom and authority to execute them independently. The best way to keep a crewmember on board is to let him or her enjoy a sense of personal growth and advancement and to personally recognize them for that accomplishment.

Here are a few additional **Brass Tacks Tips** for creating this kind of rewarding and, very importantly, “retentive” environment:

- 1) **Hire the right workers in the first place.** You want a workforce that shares your entrepreneurial zeal and penchant for hard work. These predispositions can be determined through simple tests administered as part of the pre-hiring interview process. Continually work to build your knowledge of every employee after they are hired, too. Your personal leadership activities must be tailored to the many unique facets of the special workforce you build.
- 2) **Create a culture that ambitious people can buy into.** Ensure that your business model promises success, both collectively and individually. The environment you maintain should support the values, ethics and aspirations of your colleagues. Work diligently to promulgate an understanding of this culture.
- 3) **Make sure each team member has meaningful work to do.** This means you have to be creative in structuring the nature of the work each person does. Boredom or a sense that an employee is

Find more Brass Tacks Tip Lists at <http://www.BrassTacksTips.com>

© Electromedia Technologies LLC

doing something beneath his or her abilities is a “turn off” that is sure to “turn out” talent. A good job description will stipulate what must be done to ensure adequate company performance, but it must also take into consideration what the worker implementing it needs in order to gain a sense of personal performance. This means that a job must be continually enlarged, enhanced and embellished in order to keep an employee satisfactorily engaged.

- 4) **Delegate and empower.** Don't knit-pick and hover over your charges. Trust them to do a good job. This will be tough for a hands-on entrepreneur like you, but really talented employees need a mentor, not a boss. They should feel like they work “with” you, not “for” you. Of course, to make this work, they have to understand the goals of your firm and, ideally, participate in formulating them.
- 5) **Provide the tools, technology and personal example necessary** for them to do a good job. Your team must know you are committed to winning. Set the example. “Walk the walk” and they will follow.
- 6) **Show each team member that he or she makes a big, unique difference.** Public approbation and recognition are essential. (Consider what generals accomplish with colored ribbon!) Offer immediate, positive, personal feedback when a job is done well.
- 7) **Compensate creatively.** Competitive salaries and benefits are merely hygiene factors that keep an employee from harboring negative feelings. To bring out the “gusto,” you will have to consider benefits that recognize a follower’s “specialness.” This requires a thorough understanding of each employee’s hot buttons. Consider a “cafeteria” type benefit plan that covers everything from flextime options to stock options (although I prefer “virtual equity” to actual equity ownership in small businesses). Think about “golden handcuffs” – benefits that kick in over time – to continually reward loyalty and promote tenure.
- 8) **Conduct exit interviews with departing workers.** The best maintenance policies are predicated on an understanding of why things break. Also, make sure to give special attention to those who remain when an employee leaves, nurturing an accurate appreciation of the reasons why the co-worker has departed. Work quickly to diffuse any temptation to follow.
- 9) **Give everyone a chance to grow, learn and enhance his or her personal value.** On-the-job training and off-site educational opportunity increase an employee’s sense of self-esteem and self-worth. Most workers know that 70 percent of the jobs they will be doing in ten years are unknown today. Help them get ready for the future and you have a good chance of keeping them with you as it unfolds.

All materials offered through the auspices of BrainFoodToGo.com,[™] including content submitted by third parties, are being provided with the understanding that its authors, contributors, sponsors or hosts are not rendering career, management, investment, legal, tax or other personal or professional advice, guidance or direction. Nor are they offering counsel on specific facts or situations. Therefore, they assume no liability in connection with the use of this content. BrainFoodToGo.com and Electromedia Technologies LLC do not attest or warrant, directly or by implication or inference, that the insights or opinions offered here will generate the results desired by content users. While this information has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable, the authors, editors, publishers, hosts or sponsors of this Content cannot guarantee its accuracy or completeness.