

# Maximising Your Assets

by Michele Keighley AIPFM  
and Trish Springsteen AIPFM

What's wrong with workers today? Have you ever heard someone say that? Have **you** ever said that?

In a time where it is becoming more necessary to work together as a team, when we need to work harder to hold on to market position it seems that the workforce is becoming less and less motivated to perform.

Well, that's if I take the word of one company CEO!

We've all heard the hype about "*What really motivates employees*" and there have been oodles of discussion about the differences between the Baby Boomers and Gen X and Gen Y. And we have considered, discussed, disagreed and have been baffled by the myriads of opinions out there.

But at the core of the problem are people – and people, regardless of age or gender or society fashions, are at heart very similar. We are actually motivated to perform to our best by some very simple factors.

While a company's assets have long been obvious, and often incorporated into the balance sheet; the really smart employer is now beginning to realise that their one true asset is not the buildings, stock or supplies but their workforce. Smart, committed and motivated employees are the greatest asset that any company has. But what are you doing to maximise your assets?

## First, do the Maths

First, can you do the maths?; if your investment in your workforce is calculated by the formula :

**Investment** = Number of Employees x Number of Hours Paid

And your return from that investment:

**Return** = Number of Employees x Number of Hours of Productive Work

Then what would be your result? The difference between the return and investment is as real as any other investment plan; so what can be done to tap into unrealised potential in your workforce? The answer, while simple, opens up a whole new discussion – because the obvious answer is to find out what your employees want and then give it to them.



## What is it That Employees Really Want?

Ah! But what do employees want?

Sometimes we just try to re-invent the wheel. In 1983 The Public Agenda Foundation in the US did a very in-depth study of the ten qualities that workers wanted from their jobs – and it really hasn't changed that much. They are:

1. To work for efficient managers
2. To be allowed to think for themselves
3. To be able to see the end result of their work
4. To undertake interesting work
5. To be kept informed of policy and progress
6. To have their concerns and ideas listened to
7. To be respected
8. To have their efforts recognised
9. To be challenged, and
10. To have opportunities to increase their skill level.

I don't believe that there are many workers today who would disagree with those qualities; many would still say "*If only!*"

What, unfortunately, also may not have changed is the inability or the inflexibility of management to incorporate these qualities into their workplace. What it needs is not necessarily a different type of workforce but a different style of management.

And while lip service has been given to many of these qualities, and the need to incorporate them is recognised; many organisations have failed to properly prepare their management systems to deliver any real change.

To give the workforce what they want, requires a new kind of management system that focuses on the individual talent to be able to:

1. Coach the workforce
2. Connect with the workforce
3. Challenge the workforce and
4. Communicate with the workforce.

If we say this quickly – it doesn't seem too bad, but to actually do it and put into place the systems that address all the ten qualities that workers want is a very difficult thing to do.

So if we are to maximise our return from our major asset – we need to be totally aware of what it is that they expect from us. And that hasn't changed much either, over the years.

