

Keeping motivation levels high and staff turnover low

It will come as no surprise that the main driver of workplace wellbeing and motivation for most employees is financial compensation along with the aspiration of job security. However, these are 2 things that the charity sector can struggle to offer due to lack of funding and limited resources. So: how can charities increase employee retention rate and motivation while grappling with limited financial security and job stability?

Types of Motivation

There are 2 main types of motivation that people generally think about when they discuss the topic:

Intrinsic: Motivation that comes from within, that can be driven by praise, a sense of accomplishment and meaningful work

Extrinsic: Motivation that comes from outside factors, such as money, rewards and gifts. Motivation that is driven by the need to avoid punishment can also be seen as extrinsic.

There are other types of motivation, but these are the two main ones we will focus on for simplicity.

Recognition

According to Harvard Business Review, the use of "symbolic awards such as congratulatory cards, public recognition, and certificates can significantly increase intrinsic motivation"¹. While much previous research has focused on the private sector, which may not fully reflect the dynamics of the charity sector, recent advancements in this field have led to the realisation that "employees in fields such as health care, social work, and education tend to be more motivated to do work that has a positive impact on others, to place a higher value on social recognition, and to be less motivated by salary than their private sector counterparts"². For those seeking to motivate staff, especially within the charity sector, it's worth starting with these insights. Implement strategies that surprise employees with rewards when they least expect them. This

not only demonstrates the importance, recognition, and value of their work but also contributes to an improved sense of workplace well-being.

Autonomy

Enabling individuals to take ownership of decision-making in their work produces a notable surge in intrinsic motivation. Conversely, a staggering 68% of individuals subjected to micromanagement experience a decline in morale³. Emphasising individual autonomy while fostering a climate of ownership can wield a profound influence on motivation levels.

Moreover, the charity sector offers a wealth of learning and development prospects. Creating a workplace that thrives on flexibility and autonomy serves as a catalyst for staff to refine and amplify their skill sets, effectively nurturing their professional growth.

Diverse Projects

Due to lack of resources, staff within the charity sector frequently have more involvement across teams and projects than they would in the private sector, and if done correctly, charities can turn use this to their advantage. Allowing staff the opportunity to work on different areas can reduce complacency as repetitive tasks over time can lead to reduced motivation.

Nurturing staff's mental wellbeing and having frequent check-ins and effective project management can allow staff to feel more fulfilled while gaining lots of specialist knowledge.

Workplace Wellbeing

Wellbeing in work is extremely important in all sectors to avoid burnout. Having a judgement free workplace to discuss employees mental and physical wellbeing is crucial, and this can be done in lots of ways that aren't resource heavy such as encouraging employees to interact with nature, offer flexible working, mentor support, frequent feedback, skill sharing and wellness challenges. Encourage open communication and offer support to promote wellbeing.

For more resources and worksheets visit
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¹ Harvard Business Review: <https://hbr.org/2021/03/research-a-little-recognition-can-provide-a-big-morale-boost>

² Ibid. 1

³ [Micromanagement: What Is It? Why Do People Do It? How Can You Spot It?](#) - Acuity Training