How to Motivate Technical Employees

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What is this all about?
What is Motivation?

“Always code as if the person who ends up maintaining your code will be a violent psychopath who knows where you live.”
Would you work for yourself?
People Leave Bosses, Not Companies
Employee Engagement Facts

50% of Americans: Left a job to “get away from their manager at some point in their career.”

27% of employees who plan to leave within the first year cite feeling “disconnected” with the organization.

The manager accounts for at least 70% of the variance in employee engagement.

60% of employees said they’d work harder if they were better recognized at work.

69% of managers are just as afraid of communication as their teams.

Gallup’s study of managers

Employee engagement specialists Herd Wisdom report

Interact Studio and Harris Poll

Yast infographic
First type of boss
Second type of boss
Reasons for turnover usually point back to managers. This is due to the manager’s actions, or often, inaction, on what drives engagement and long term retention.
Hidden Impact of Managers

Managers impact so much of a workers work experience

Determine projects you work on

Determine who you work with

Determine when/if you get promoted

The person most likely to help when you have a problem
Five ways to motivate technical employees

By Sam Erskine & Steve Buchanan
1. Know & clearly communicate the mission

People need to believe in something.
Need to know what the team is working towards as a whole.

When people align to a mission they become engaged.
Mission should be related to company values.

This answers the questions
“Why are we doing this?”,
“Where are we going?”,
“Where do I fit in here?”
2. Know the tech your team works on...at least at a foundation level
3. Get to know your people

"NO ONE CARES HOW MUCH YOU KNOW UNTIL THEY FIRST KNOW HOW MUCH YOU CARE ABOUT THEM."
3. Get to know your people
4. Take the “Theory Y” approach not the “Theory X” approach to leadership

**Theory X:** Authoritative and traditional style of management. Managers assume that people are lazy. It is the job of the manager to force or coerce them to work. People are viewed as a “cost” that must be monitored and controlled.

**Theory Y:** Participative style of management which “assumes that people will exercise self-direction and self-control in the achievement of organizational objectives to the degree that they are committed to those objectives”
4. Take the “Theory Y” approach not the “Theory X” approach to leadership

- You hired very talented…very smart people. Let them be smart.

- When mistakes are made focus on correcting the situation, learn from it and move on.

- Communicate often! Regularly scheduled 1 on 1’s are a great way to ensure communication.

- Lead and manage to results not daily or hourly tasks.

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_74.htm

#oscon
5. Focus on Motivators over perks

- People value training and development
- #1 benefit according to Mary Meeker’s Internet Trends report.
- They want to grow!
5. Focus on Motivators over more perks

A Deloitte study on Millennials showed that 2 of the top 5 reasons people choose to work for a company are related to opportunities for growth and development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good work/life balance</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to progress/be leaders</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility i.e., remote working, flexible hours</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of meaning from my work</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development training programs</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The impact it has on society</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of its products/services</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong sense of purpose</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for international travel</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast growing/dynamic</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A leading company that people admire</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invests in and uses the latest technology</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reputation of its leaders</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: For each of the following groups of four, please indicate what would be the strongest reason for choosing to work for an organization and what would be the weakest.
5. Focus on Motivators over more perks

“Perks are great for attracting people, but they have little effect on retaining them.”

Pay the market rate
Pay on time
Fair Benefits

Beware the dark side of perks

Valued motivators are inexpensive but require time and commitment

Create and develop leaders
Create and maintain a culture in line with the company mission and vision
Build a team mentality but always remember “There is no “i” in Team.
But there is “me” in team
5. Focus on Motivators over more perks
5. Focus on Motivators over more perks

➢ Communication!
  ▪ Clearly communicate their Role and Goals.

➢ Give feedback good or bad.
  ▪ Give praise when it’s due. **Do this in public.**
  ▪ Communication when correction is needed. **Do it in private.**

- http://info.visibilitysoftware.com/blog/bid/103264/5-Reasons-Your-Employees-Stay
- https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/employees-stay-when-jason-harrell
Employees stay when they have these motivators:

- Paid Well
- Mentored
- Challenged
- Promoted
- Involved
- Appreciated
- Valued
- On a mission
- Empowered
- Trusted
BONUS: Culture is everything

Build a tribal environment.

Great culture is the secret sauce of successful teams.
Summary – Takeaway

Five ways to motivate technical employees

1. Know & clearly communicate the mission
2. Know the tech your team works on
3. Get to know who your people are
4. Take “Theory Y” approach not the “Theory X” approach to leadership
5. Focus on Motivators over perks

BONUS: Culture is everything
Thank You!

https://opensource.com/article/17/5/5-ways-to-motivate-technical-employees