

How to Motivate an Under Performer

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Offering reward/consequence proposals are a terrific way to get under performers to step up to the plate. Giving people a choice between reward and negative consequence allows them to make decisions that benefit everyone. Here are **5 Cool Ideas** for motivating an under performer.

1. Use “I” statements to establish an undeniable agenda.

“I have a problem” and “I’m uncomfortable” are examples of “I” statements. “I” statements invite responses like “What is it?” and “How can I help?” On the other hand, “you” statements like “You have a problem” can trigger anger and aggression.

2. Documentation is your friend.

When setting up a reward/consequence scenario, confront the under performer by referencing documentation such as a report or an official study. Documentation will strengthen your case and help the under performer understand that the issue is not simply your word against his.

3. Use the “call back” technique to secure your agenda.

When confronted, under performers will sometimes try to distract you from the topic at hand. When an under performer tries to move the discussion off center, simply say, “You may be right and I still have a problem.” A firm return to the initial “I” statement allows very little sway in the conversation.

4. The reward/consequence proposal is good for everyone.

Use a reward/consequence proposal when both of the options allow you to achieve your goal. Present the other person with their two choices and say, “Whatever you decide is OK with me.” If you’re thinking ahead, you can be sure that whatever option is chosen, things will work out for everyone.

5. You never get to win this game; you just get to keep playing.

Follow up is important when you use the reward/consequence scenario. Use language like “Let’s meet again in two weeks” and “I see you’ve made a decision.” Refer to “progress updates,” not “deadlines.” Above all, never use your persuasive powers for evil.

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