

MOTIVATION

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Greetings from Pigeon Forge TN! Blame Milan Levett for this intrusion. I first met Milan at an Allis-Chalmers meeting in Milwaukee. He was a dealer of ours at the time, in Plymouth. We were standing in front of the Pfister, waiting for the bus to take us out to the plant. When the bus came in, there was a gal in a miniskirt ahead of us and she had trouble getting her leg cocked up on that first step of the bus because her dress was so tight. She reached around to unfasten her zipper to give herself a little more leg room. It was just zero and Milan was froze. He picks her up and plunks her in the bus. She looked around angrily and pointing her finger at Milan, said, "I only let my nearest friends and dearest relatives handle me." Milan replied, "I thought that maybe I was your nearest friend. That was my zipper you were working on."

Milan was a good dealer of ours, and then he went into the road business. He hired one of those Dutchmen from Bremen to help him out. He told Heine to paint white lines in the middle of the road. The first day Heine painted three miles of white lines. Milan said that was a new world's record. The next day, though, it was only a mile and the third day only a half mile. Milan asked what was wrong. Heine replied, "I'm gettin' farder and farder from da bucket all da time."

Milan told me to talk about motivation...how to motivate road workers. Right off the bat, I can tell you how NOT to motivate workers. A slave-driving son of a gun is not going to develop much motivation. And the opposite won't either. Henry Kaiser was the fair haired boy in World War II who made a Liberty ship a day. When the war ended and there wasn't much call for Liberty ships, he took to making cars in Henry Ford's old bomber plant at Willow Run. Henry was an enlightened employer, sensitive, politically correct. And about every third car that came off the end of the line was pulled to one side because it was missing a door, or windshield or truck lid or something. As soon as people could buy all of the Fords, Chevys, and Plymouths they wanted, they bought no more Kaiser-Frazer cars.

FOOD PRODUCTION MIRACLE

I suspect the most basic of all motivation comes from pride...pride in work being done. I spent a lifetime in the farm equipment business. Food and water are the only indispensables that mankind has. I'm proud of the fact that I was a part of the huge team that put a food production miracle together in my lifetime that was so monumentally successful that Uncle Sam has, for 60 years, bribed farmers to raise LESS food. I had a book come off the press last year, called

PLOW PEDDLER, that tells the story of the big shots and little shots that invented, produced, sold, serviced, financed, and used the changing equipment. First Henry Ford's Fordson and Bert Benjamin's Farmall kicked out-burning horsepower off the farm. Then Harry Merritt's All-Crop Harvester ended a 100-year reign of threshing machines. Then George Delp came with a pickup baler that ended the need for large barns full of loose hay. Finally, Maynard Walberg's no-till coulter changed tillage forever. I'm proud to have been a part of this great effort.

"I'M PROUD TO BE IN THE ROAD BUSINESS"

If food is #1, what's #2? Clothes? Shelter? Roads maybe? Each year FORBES and FORTUNE publish a list of America's top 500 corporations. Always the first five have something to do with roads...General Motors...Exxon...Ford...Mobil...names like that. Does that tell you something about the importance of roads?

The Bible talks about the road to Emmaus, the road to Golgotha, the road from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Moses built an unusual road in the bottom of the Red Sea. It didn't meet federal standards and the shoulders were water instead of clay. There was the Silk Road of China. Roman emperors built great roads all over the empire to check on the populace. We saw the leavings of one of those roads when we were in Italy. Few people are hermits. Show me two houses and I'll show you a path between the two. Show me ten houses and I'll show you a road into the settlement. Roads are to the body politic or body economic what arteries are to the human body. Can you convey your pride in your work as a road builder to your people? At some coffee break, ask, "What would the country be like without roads?" That will get the conversation started.

Show me a healthy economy and I'll show you good roads. Show me good roads and I'll show you road inspectors. One bawled out the contractor. He found fault with the crown, the surface, the shoulders. Finally the contractor said in desperation, "Charley, how is she for length?" Speaking of length, last September in Washington the guys at DOT were wondering how to spend the last of the budget. They had to spend it all or get a budget cut the next year. A guy from Delaware suggested, "How about building another bridge over the Mississippi?" A second bureaucrat said, "There are already a lot of bridges over the Mississippi." The first man asked, "Lengthways?"

TYPES OF ROADS

The country once had water roads. Mules pulled towboats. Then Robert Fulton came with a steamboat. The people on the bank said, "He'll never get it started." After it started, they said, "He'll never get it stopped." Then we built railroads all over the country. Not because we had run out of mules or steamboats or towboats, but because we found something better.

For a time there were rails into every little burg in the country. We went from Bremen to South Bend by taking the B&O to LaPaz, six miles away. Then we waited for the Pennsy to come up from Indianapolis and we would go the other thirteen miles that way. No sooner had the nation been linked with railroads when road builders started to place gravel and concrete on dirt roads. Now the trip to South Bend was half as long. We switched from rails to roads, not

because the nation had run out of rails or locomotives, but we had found something better. During World War I, the belt lines in rail hubs Chicago and St. Louis clogged. Shippers bought trucks and went around Chicago. They wrecked the flimsy roads of the day and politicians built better roads. Shippers bought bigger trucks and wrecked those roads. It's still going on.

The dirt roads we started with had advantages. In the country, farmers made a few extra bucks by pulling Studebakers, Elcars, and Auburns out of the mud. At night they hauled water to the road to be sure the mud would be there the next day. In the city, dirt roads had an advantage. With dirty stoves shut off in the summertime, we opened the windows and let the dirt blow in from the roads, dust scented with Dobbin #5. Then we discovered gravel, then concrete, then multi-lane, controlled access highways. Our roads have been improving all of the time, thanks to people like you.

I have another book about highway safety ready for the press. In it, I say, "Thank God for the road builders." Speeds have doubled and the death rate is less than a tenth of what it was before World War II. You've given us better roads. Detroit has given us better cars. And we now have a fifth generation of drivers. Go to Mexico and Italy and you'll find what a first generation driver drives like.

MOTIVATION

It's easy to say about motivation, "Use the Golden Rule." Treat workers as you would wish to be treated. But! Correct an extrovert and he'll let it brush off. Correct an introvert and he'll think he flunked life. No two people are alike. No two can be handled alike. An insurance salesman stuck his head into a Sales Manager's office and said, "You don't want to buy any insurance, do you?" He, of course, said NO. The salesman said "thank you" and started to leave. The Sales Manager called him back and gave him a 30-minute lecture on how to sell. He stressed that everybody is different. You have to use a different approach with different people. He said, "You lack confidence, Son. Get out your pad. I'll give you a little confidence. I'll buy \$5,000 of your insurance." When the insurance salesman started to leave, the Sales Manager repeated, "Remember what I told you...everybody is different...you use a different approach." The salesman said he did that. "What do you mean? You do that?" the Sales Manager wanted to know. The salesman said, "This is my approach with Sales Managers and you know, it works almost every time."

HOW MY MANAGERS MOTIVATED

My first boss at Allis-Chalmers was in the shop. I asked Fred Smith what we were building. He didn't know. The company was wrong by not informing him. Fred was wrong in not asking. The lesson here: Know what your job is all about and be able to convey that information.

Then came Ed Lanigan, a tall, elderly Irishman, the branch manager at LaPorte Branch. You didn't love Ed. You highly respected him. He was all business. He came into my office and asked for the Michigan figures. I said, "Mr. Lanigan, that was the next thing I was going to do." He said, "hhrummp" and left. Later he came in asking for the tractor break-outs.

I said, "Sorry, Mr. Lanigan. I don't have those yet. That was in this pile that I was going to get at yet this morning." He said, "hhrummp" and left. You better believe that the next time he asked for something, I had it ready for him. The lesson here: Motivation doesn't have to be severe. Gentle motivation worked well for Ed Lanigan.

Lou Drewes was our Assistant Branch Manager. He wasn't really my boss, but he took me aside and went through all of the catalogs with me to explain what wonderful machinery we had. What Fred Smith didn't know, Lou Drewes did. He took me to Walkerton to see a demonstration of the All-Crop Harvester. I was sold on the A-C team. Out in the shop I was paid every two weeks. Now that I was promoted to the office with a \$8 cut in monthly pay, I was going to be paid only every month. Lou knew I was short. He slipped me a \$20 bill, saying, "Pay me back a little out of every pay check." The lesson here: You don't look just at the employee's work. There may be something in the off-hours that is bugging the employee.

H. A. "Grat" Gratner was my next boss when Toledo Branch opened. Grat was big, tough, gruff, profane, obscene, but he operated like Vince Lombardi. He had a team that would have died for him. He would bawl us out, "You're either going to line up or line out," and then he would invite us over after work for a beer. "You're either going to line up or line out" meant that he would give you another 17 chances. John Hupman ran the thing to 17. He went to New York City for a week and had his landlady send in his daily reports. Grat caught him at it and lined him out.

When Grat was promoted, a fellow salesman, Willis Scholl became Branch Manager. I was Sales Manager of Toledo branch. Willis, I don't think, finished high school, but he had a business sense about him that was near flawless. His axiom, which I heard often, was, "Any fool can read the rule book. It takes a manager to know when to make exceptions to the rule book."

Following Willis, there was Jim Campbell. He was a Southern gentleman who held his head down so that he didn't need to talk to the peasants on the way to the can. He spoke only to department heads. He didn't sit on the desk and shoot the breeze with the help like all previous bosses had done. He didn't go across the street and buy a watermelon so we could all stand on the loading dock, seeing how far we could spit the seeds. One day a union boss came in to announce to Jim that the place had been organized. I don't need to explain the motivation here because there was none.

When I got to the home office in Milwaukee, my boss was Bill Klein, the best handshaker I ever met. He could talk meaningfully to a Bowery bum for a half hour and then go up the elevator and visit with the head of the New York Stock Exchange and feel equally at home. Bill never met a stranger. You can't help be motivated with a boss like that. Bill's boss was Bill Roberts. The first time I met him, he met 100 new company men. The next morning, to open the meeting, he called all of us by name. The ability to remember names and faces is a great way to motivate. You have to work at it. Too often I say to myself, "I'll never see this person again, so why remember the name." A person's name is a great motivator.

My best boss was Shorty Voegeli. Shorty liked to gamble, gamble big, on sure things. He asked me to put together an incentive program that would get us 10% more business at a cost of about \$100,000. I put something together all right. It got us a 110% increase in business over the year before and the cost was \$942,000 instead of \$100,000. See what I mean by gambling big? In 1963 we were stuck with too many tractors. Shorty suggested we give a trip to the factory to anyone in North America who bought a tractor. We hauled 7,100 people into the factory in 99 chartered airliners and 14 helicopters. Break-even was a 100% increase in unit sales. We had a 112% increase.

In her book, Catherine Marshall says she never prayed for small things because she figured the Good Lord could deliver big as well as small. At our daughter's church last Christmas, a big black man the size of a Colt guard said he had a call from a woman who told him that her house had been robbed of Christmas presents, heavy coats, and a TV set. He told us in his sermon, "I told her that we could handle the Christmas presents all right, and the Salvation Army had a good coat program going. I held back on the TV set because I wasn't sure the Lord would want us to spend discretionary funds that way. No sooner had I hung up when I got a call from a man who asked if I knew anybody who could use a TV set. I called her back and apologized for having such weak faith that I didn't believe the Good Lord could handle a TV set."

Your workers are quite likely to give you what you deserve. Have great expectations from them and they may surprise you. I know that you can't come up with incentive programs, ESOP plans, profit sharing. But people are competitive. When Charles Schwab was president of US Steel, he came to Gary to find that the night shift was only coming up with six heats a night...a sure sign of red ink. He took his cane and drew a big figure 6 in the dirt on the floor. The message was passed on to the day shift. They ran eight heats and changed the 6 to an 8. The night shift saw that and took it as a challenge. They drew 7 in the dirt. Eventually both were producing 9 and 10 heats a shift. Yes, competitiveness is a great incentive.

I see that the time has run out, so let me close with the words of my mother, "Don't let me have to talk to you about this agin."