

## How to Motivate and Engage Your Team Post Competitive Bid

### *“The light at the end of the tunnel is not a TRAIN”*

You’ve done it. You submitted your bid for the competitive bidding process and now you have a business to run, customers to serve, and a team to keep motivated. How does added stress and uncertainty weigh on your team?

To answer this we need to take a look at what the past few years, months, and days has held for you and your team. As a member of the elite MSA’s who had the awesome responsibility of submitting the first bid; there is no simple way to put this: you were under the gun.

Over the past few years, you have seen changes in our industry and tremendous adjustments to the competitive bidding process- from the structure to carve out MSA’s to submission and implementation dates. You have called upon numerous industry experts and service organizations. You have listened to or read more articles and updates than you thought humanly possible. You have dedicated time and resources that would otherwise have been used to service your business and customers. Thus, your team has worked overtime to fill the gaps and prevent any service issues.

The anxiety can be cut with a knife. During this time you reviewed data (only to question if the data was correct); you then prepared as best you could to submit your bid. Never before has such an easy task such as pushing the SUBMIT button been so difficult. Yet, you did it.

Now, how do you keep your team moving forward and serving your customers? While you feel you have the corner on stress, your team has their share of stress every day. You now have a greater appreciation for what they do for your business, customers, and referral sources.

Here are a few basic interventions that need to be a top priority for you and your team:

- **Listen** to your team members. (Not just their words; actions do often speak louder.) This will show your team members that, while these are somewhat stressful business times, you will always have time for them.
- Conduct **one-on-one** meetings. Team members often view your preoccupation with the market conditions and the bidding process as a disinterest in dealing with them and their concerns and issues. These meetings will be a great time for you to share your thoughts about the present and the future.
- Concentrate on **building credibility** for coming prosperity. If you focus on listening and the one-on-ones, you will be building credibility for the future of your team member and your business.
- Develop a **Strategic Plan** for the future of your business. Your team is looking for security and they want to see the options for their future and the future of your business.

Some global statistic may help you understand where your team may be. In surveyed organizations, 50% of employees were not engaged in promoting their company’s mission or goals. Almost 20% were actively disengaged-thus, influencing directly or indirectly other employees to join in their disengagement. \*

There may be a “straw that breaks the camel’s back”-but it is after an accumulation of events, atmosphere, interactions, and frustrations. Employee turnover is **not** an event. It is a process of disengagement that can take days, weeks, months or even years until the actual decision to leave occurs. The employees begin to disengage and think about leaving when one or more of four fundamental human needs are not being met.

These needs include:

- The need for trust.
- The need to have hope.
- The need to feel a sense of worth.
- The need to feel competent.

There is far too little coaching and feedback between leadership and team members. There may be no greater time in your business to begin to openly communicate with your team. Whether you just submitted your bid or if you’re a spectator, your team members must be able to answer these basic questions:

- 1.) Where are we going as a company?
- 2.) How are we going to get there?
- 3.) How do you expect me to contribute?
- 4.) How am I doing?

The answers to these questions constitute much of what gives meaning to a team member’s effort and builds upon those fundamental needs previously addressed.

Coaching is an essential component of every business to be successful. There are 5 steps for successful coaching that can be adopted by owners and leaders of businesses. These steps will have a terrific impact on how your business will move forward.

- Step 1: Get the employee’s agreement if a problem or action needs to take place.
- Step 2: Mutually discuss alternative solutions.

- Step 3: Mutually agree on actions to be taken to solve or prevent the problem.
- Step 4: Follow up to measure results.
- Step 5: Reinforce any achievement when it occurs.

As you have walked through the competitive bidding process, there has been an arena filled with people. These people include:

- Players: those actively engaged in the Bid Process
- Coaches: industry experts, vendors and manufacturers, State and National Associations
- Spectators: those anxiously waiting to see the results because their turn is coming

Your efforts have afforded us a great vantage point. Although many of us have not submitted a bid, we are kindred spirits in this industry and with the customers we love. As coaches and spectators, we, too, have an awesome responsibility to our team members. We are next. What are we doing today to bring our team with us on this journey? We may not fully realize what the next bid will look like, but that is no excuse to wait. We are an industry of PRODUCTIVITY not activity.

So let's get PRODUCTIVE. After the bid is awarded, why not contact the individual or company who won the bid? Try to see if you can take a field trip and better understand what they went through. As you prepare for your bid, prepare your team. You will both be better for it.

\*(From asae & the center for association leadership [www.asaenet.org](http://www.asaenet.org))

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