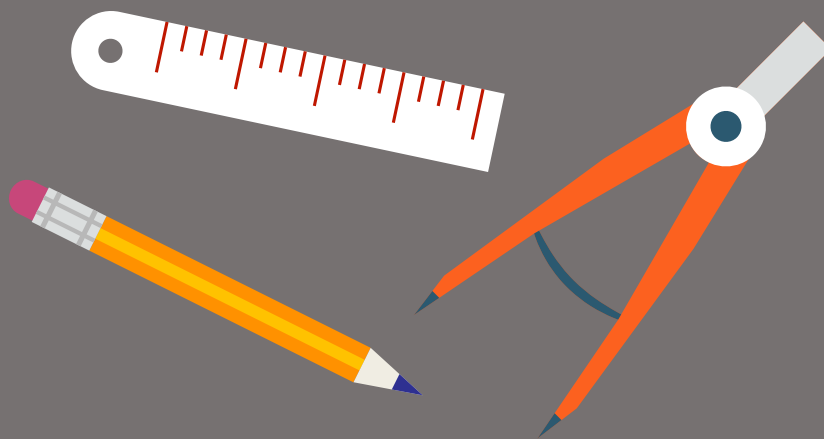


# Motivating Without Money 30 Proven Ideas That Cost Almost Nothing



PRACTICAL TOOLS

# Motivating Without Money: 30 Proven Ideas That Cost Almost Nothing



It's not necessary to set up complicated recognition programs when what's really needed are managers who provide praise and perks on a regular basis.

In fact, doling out thanks often trumps compensation and career development by making your employees feel valued.

Don't think you have to be an innovative, creative genius to come up with motivational ideas. Every idea in this report has already worked somewhere else. Most of them won't cost you a dime. And those that do can be done for the price of a few pizzas.

Feel free to adapt them to your workplace. They'll help you promote a culture of motivation all year long:

## 1) Pay It Forward With Praise

"Thank you. You did a great job," takes less than 10 seconds to say and costs nothing.

## 2) Offer Flexible Hours

Offer flexible hours, long lunches or an afternoon off. Flexibility can go a lot further than cash.

### 3) Honor Beyond-The-Call-Of-Duty Employees

Honor an employee who went above and beyond the call of duty at the start of every staff meeting. It's also a good idea to recognize accomplishments at every staff meeting.

### 4) Let Them Work From Home

Offer employees the opportunity to telecommute. It not only relieves stress, but makes them feel more appreciated, as well as more productive.

### 5.) Play Up Strengths

Give employees more responsibility by assigning them work that allows them to use their expert skills.

### 6) Throw A Pizza Party And Pass Out Rewards

Lunch with colleagues is fun, and what better way to show gratitude than by handing out gift cards or tickets to events with a simple note saying, "Thank you, I noticed."

### 7) Have A Good Day!

It's not just a corny slogan. Set a positive tone for the day by telling employees about what's going right – not what's going wrong. Send out an e-mail first thing in the morning with a positive quotation or tidbit of good business news.

## 8) Help Employees Reach Their Potential

Managers should identify employees' strengths and then assign them work that they're good at. Everyone is good at something, but few excel at everything. A bad fit is like a fish out of water. It'll die. Build teams whose members' skills complement one another.

## 9) Promote Exercise

It's a natural anti-depressant. And stress buster. Organize a brisk 15-minute walk every other day or suggest lunchtime walking teams.

## 10) Promote Work/Life Benefits

The less employees worry about how to squeeze in personal business, the better they can focus on work. Encourage employees to take advantage of company perks like flex time, telecommuting or on-site child care.

## 11) Stop The Negativity

Enforce a zero tolerance policy against office gossip. Toxic co-workers are not completely avoidable, but employees can limit their exposure to them.

## 12) Give Back

People who give back to the community are happier and healthier than those that don't. Get out in the local community and see how your company can help. Organize employees to volunteer in different programs and events. Spare them for an hour or two each month to volunteer.

### 13) Humor Breaks Barriers

People who drop a joke here and there are more likely to get ahead at work. Humor is associated with intelligence and creativity – two characteristics that are highly valued in workplaces. And workplaces with humor-loving employees are less likely to have turnover issues.

### 14) Enjoy The Fresh Air

Set up picnic tables outside the offices so employees could work outdoors on nice days. It draws more people outdoors to work, collaborate and even learn more about each other in a relaxed environment.

### 15) Make Your Space Your Own

Let employees decorate their work space to suit themselves. If they can reveal their personalities, interests and passions through the things that surround them most of the day, they will be happier.

### 16) Be Creative With Common Space

At Google, one conference room is specially designed to look like a rustic house with a fireplace and stained glass windows. Other rooms are equipped with whiteboard walls so ideas, jokes and doodles can be done at any moment. And, the library includes a secret room where employees can think in peace.

### 17) Start A Movement

Schedule walking meetings. The point is to get people moving and thinking at a different pace. The fresh air opens their minds in new ways and employees tend to laugh a lot more.

## 18) Take A Stand

At Burton, a snow sports manufacturer, employees are given time to create groups for causes that are important to them. Example: EPIC is a group of environmentally minded employees who research ways to reduce human and business impact on the environment. The Women's Leadership Initiative group focuses on promoting women's initiatives such, as balancing career, family and fun (in their case, snowboarding).

## 19) Rock The Rewards

At Rock You, an advertising and social gaming company, employees get to sit in on YouRock Awards every six weeks. Peers nominate each other for special recognition because of their problem solving, innovation and company vision alignment. Nominees get to spin a wheel and win prizes, such as cash, concert tickets, a day off or the current electronic must-have.

## 20) Bring Everyone Together

When possible, try to bring the entire organization or several departments together. At Technigraphics, every so often a sign goes up on the door that says, "Gone to have some fun. Be back after lunch." All the employees go to a bowling alley, ice skating rink or a mini golf and go-kart park. Sometimes they do things on-site like Ping-Pong tournaments and cookouts.

## 21) Team Them Up

Some tasks or regular work duties are boring by nature – and employees dread doing them. That’s why supervisors at a book publisher team up employees to handle the most mundane tasks. It gives them a chance to be social while sorting through boring tasks. Plus, the collaboration cuts down on errors and boosts productivity.

## 22) Gratitude Reminder

For managers who want to make a point of dishing out more compliments and praise daily to employees, you can try this oldie, but goodie: Put three coins in one pocket each morning and move one over to the other pocket with each delivered compliment until they’re all moved.

## 23) Break Bread Together

Mangia, mangia! Breaking bread is one of the best ways to bring people together and build friendships. Examples: Have a chili-cook-off, host a potluck and up the game with a theme like Cinco de Mayo, Fall Harvest, Mardi Gras and Summer Cookout. Make it a comedy lunch by playing reruns of classic sitcoms like I Love Lucy, All in the Family, Good Times or The Andy Griffith Show.

## 24) The Work 9/80 Approach

At Go Overseas, employees are given the option to work a 9/80 schedule during the summer months. That means they need to work 80 hours in nine days – they can choose to take off every other Friday or extend a weekend into Monday. The practice helped slash turnover.

## 25) Icebreakers Melt Communication Barriers

Leaders can use team-building games to create fun, motivation and camaraderie at work. Try this: Post one funny question a day in the break room on a white board where employees can write their answers. Examples: At which store would you like to max-out your credit card? What was your favorite TV show growing up? What are three things on your bucket list? What would you do if you won the lottery? What is the strangest talent you have?

## 26) Trivial Pursuit, Anyone?

One manager keeps boxes of Trivial Pursuit cards on hand and randomly asks employees question, allowing them to pick the category. The stakes aren't high: Employees get a small piece of candy for the right answer.

## 27) Send Birthday Greetings From The Top

The president at Integrated Project Management Company Inc., in Burr Ridge, IL sends employees personalized messages on their birthdays. No scripted email or secretary-signed card. Employees feel their boss knows and cares about them.

## 28) Encourage Celebrations For Employee Milestones

Allow employees to organize their own celebrations for special occasions, milestones or for no occasion at all – potlucks, showers, anniversaries or book clubs or fiber-arts clubs, all on company time.



## 29) Encourage Friendships At Work

More than half of employees who have a best friend at work are more engaged and care about the quality of their work. Promote building friendships by organizing local sporting, arts and entertainment events, trips to amusement parks, bowling centers or the movies, crafts and hobbies or aerobic, Pilates or yoga classes.

## 30) Use Seasonal Activities To Boost Motivation

Set aside a month, week or day to coordinate with every job position under the sun. There are plenty of special days out there. Here's a partial list:

- National Customer Service Week is the first week of October
- Administrative Professionals Week is the last week in April
- National Safety Month is in June
- Philanthropy Day is in mid-November
- National Payroll Week is the first week of September
- National Engineers Week is the week of Presidents Day
- Teacher Appreciation Week is the first week of May
- National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week is in late April