· **Personalize recognition** – Don’t recognize people in a generic way that loses meaning. Instead, make it personal to show that singular efforts can really make a difference. Know individuals’ likes and dislikes, needs and interests, and tailor the recognition to that person and what he or she did.

· **Tell the story** – Stories not only entertain but also teach. Good stories move us, entertain us, and cause us to remember. Put the person’s accomplishments and what was done well in the larger context of the organization. In addition to providing context, the story can help make group members identify with each other more.

· **Celebrate together** - Celebrations bind group members together and can help mark transitions and achievements. Celebrations provide social support and build community for groups and individuals. Everyone wants to feel connected to the group, and celebrations can also add some fun to the daily routine.

· **Set the example** - To gain real success, you must be able and willing to walk your talk. Your follow-through gives you credibility as a leader. If you start offering encouragement, others will follow your lead, and the culture of encouragement will flourish.

These tips may help you on your way to having an organization of which people will want to be a part. These motivators will help you get people working together in a positive way, which will lead to more successful meetings, projects, and relationships.

Recognition and Motivation

The idea that we can motivate people is an age-old myth. Motivation is intrinsic, and therefore the best one can do is to create an environment that will encourage others’ internal motivation. As a leader, your responsibility is to create a group that will allow members to develop the energy and commitment to be highly motivated in their work. Such an environment has the following elements:

Supportiveness
– an environment in which individuals know what they’re supposed to do, that their work has real value, that they will be rewarded for their efforts and good work, and that you are committed to their personal success.

Openness
– an environment in which objectives and goals are clear, where praise is given publicly but constructive criticism privately, and where individuals have the ability to express their thoughts and ideas, knowing that their suggestions will be valued.

Trust and confidence
– an environment in which both responsibility and authority are delegated, and in which confidence is placed in an individual’s ability to complete the task at hand.

Consensus decision–making
– an environment in which as many people as possible will have a part in the decision-making process and where individuals can share in planning and goal setting.

From Colorado State University, campus activities center

If a person’s best efforts are wanted:

- She needs to know what is expected of her, how her contributions will fit into the group, and what, if any, are the limitations on her actions.
- He needs a sense of belonging in the organization – a feeling that he is sincerely welcome, a feeling that he is honestly needed for his contributions, and a feeling that he is expected to follow through on his commitments.
- She needs to have a share in planning the group goals in a climate of freedom. Her needs will only be met when she knows that her ideas have been heard.
- He needs to feel that the goals of the group are in reach and that those goals make sense to him.
- She needs to feel that what she is doing contributes to the welfare of people, beyond the purpose of the group itself.
- He needs to share in making the rules of the group – the rules by which, together, the group lives and works toward its goals.
- She needs to know in clear detail what is expected of her so that she can work confidently.
- He needs to have responsibilities delegated to him that challenge him, that are within reach of his abilities, and that contribute toward the group’s goals.

Encouraging the heart

In their book Encouraging the Heart, Kouzes and Posner (1999) describe some basic methods to make members of your organization feel appreciated and therefore more motivated to do their best. Here is a brief outline of what they suggest:

- Set clear standards – People won’t be motivated if they don’t know what expectations are held by the leader of their organization. These standards should be set for excellence so that there is pride in achieving them.
- Expect the best – Work to help others achieve their potential by letting them know that you think they can make meaningful contributions to the group. If you truly believe this, it will rub off.
- Pay attention – “Catch people doing things right.” This means being involved with your group members and noticing what they are doing well instead of only noticing mistakes or how you would have done it.
- She needs to see that progress is being made – both on specific projects and towards the group’s goals in general.
- He needs to have confidence in the leadership of the group. This confidence is based on his assurance of consistent fair treatment from the person in charge of the group and of recognition when it is due.