

LEADERSHIP AND YOU

ENERGIZE YOUR WORKFORCE

By Jo Smith



The most effective leaders, with or without authority, energize their workplace by creating an environment where people thrive individually and collectively, personally and professionally. Positive leaders use the best in themselves and bring out the best in others to energize their workplace, resulting in increased engagement, productivity, retention, and profitability.

The following are highly effective ways to energize your workplace. They are not exclusive. Each is effective and all are complementary.

Use the best in yourself

Leadership begins with you. In order to energize your workplace, you must find or spark your own energy. How can you find and use the best in yourself?

1. **Get clear about your own vision of professional and personal success.** What do you really want to achieve? What will you need to do to achieve those successes? What are your core values, and is your success vision consistent with your values? Does your personal vision of success support your organization's vision of success? Your personal vision and organization's vision don't need to be the same, but they must be complementary. Take care of yourself and live by your values for a healthy, successful life.

2. **Identify your Highest Talents™ or key strengths.** An assessment like DiSC, Myers-Briggs, or, my favorite, PREP Personal Strengths, can help you identify your key strengths. You can also review some of your successes one at a time and ask yourself, "What skills or strengths did I use to achieve that success?" When you observe that you used the same strength to achieve multiple successes, you've probably identified a key strength. Continue this process to identify three to five key strengths, what I refer to as your Highest Talents™. Typically, these are strengths you enjoy—even love—using, in addition to using them well.

3. **Ask others about the strengths they see in you.** You don't need to accept everything others say, but when a strength is mentioned repeatedly, it's probably a key strength. You're already using your strengths. Use the best in yourself by consciously using your key strengths and finding more opportunities to use them.

When you align your behavior with your vision and values, you'll be healthier and set a positive example for your team. When you know your strengths and use them to work toward your personal and professional goals, your energy and commitment will inspire others.

LEADERSHIP BEGINS WITH YOU.



Bring out the best in others

When you've raised your own energy level, you're better able to lead by boosting the energy of others on your team. How can you do that?

1. **Lead with vision.** Visionary leaders are clear about their organization's vision. They talk about the vision in order to inspire others and get them on board. They remind the members of their team of their work's importance. They sometimes share stories about how their team's work supports the vision, makes a difference in their organization, and perhaps impacts their broader community. Finally, visionary leaders walk their talk. If leaders' actions are inconsistent with their words, people will believe their actions and distrust their words.

Visionary leadership is a highly effective way to energize your workplace. If you choose to lead with vision, be certain your actions support your words and both support your organizational vision. To learn more about visionary leadership, see "Primal Leadership" by Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee.

2. **Lead by coaching.** Coaching leaders help people achieve their own goals and aspirations while simultaneously fulfilling the needs of their job and organization. That begins with a caring mindset and requires leaders to learn more about each of their team members. Start by observing. What do you see each of your team members doing well? What do they seemingly do with ease? What do they appear to especially enjoy doing? Tell them what you observe. If you choose to use a coaching style of leadership to energize your workplace, consider meeting with each of your team members individually to discuss their strengths and aspirations. Ask what they think they do best, what they enjoy doing most. Don't make assumptions. Ask what they want to do more of, what skills they want to use, and what they want to learn. Listen to their answers and use the information you gather to help them do more of what they do best and enjoy most, while simultaneously fulfilling the needs of their job and organization.

"A boss has a title. A leader has the people."
—Simon Sinek

3. **Build trust.** Trust creates a strong foundation for team energy and effectiveness. Lack of trust leads people to keep to themselves and refrain from sharing information. When people trust each other, they communicate openly, even when they disagree. Trust encourages people to commit to shared goals, then work together to achieve those goals. Trust elevates energy and improves workplace results and satisfaction. What can you do to improve trust on your team? Speak openly. Always keep your promises, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant. Walk your talk. Invite open communication.

Show respect by listening to your team members and following through. That doesn't mean you have to agree with everything they tell you, but it means you hear them and consider their suggestions. What more can you do? Praise publicly and, when possible, provide constructive feedback privately. If you must correct or disagree publicly, do so respectfully.

4. **Be present.** Be present in the moment and be available to your team when they need you. It's often said of successful leaders that when you're with them, they're fully present with you. They're not thinking about other people or other demands. They're thinking about you and paying attention to the conversation you're having in the moment. These are people with multiple demands at all times, so it isn't easy. It takes practice, but the benefits of effective leadership are well worth the time it takes to learn how to be present in the moment.
5. **Have fun!** You can have fun while doing serious work. To the surprise of many employers, work-from-home policies that became necessary during the pandemic did not reduce productivity. In fact, as measured across industries, productivity increased slightly. What was perhaps unexpected, though, was a decrease in workplace creativity. Without personal contact, employees were less creative. They were less energetic. Much of the energy we feel and fun we experience from our work is a result of personal contact with our colleagues. Some employers provide social events, but having fun doesn't require dedicated time. Casual comments and laughter lighten the daily workload, help people connect with their teams, and engage in their work. Fun energizes people and energizes the workplace.

Any or all of these leadership methods can help you boost your team's energy. If you currently use some, consider using them more consciously. And pick a new one to add to your toolbox to energize your workplace for increased engagement, productivity, retention, and profitability. **NWPPA**

Jo Smith, CMC, is president of Jo Smith Associates, Inc.; a certified management consultant; an executive coach; and an instructor for NWPPA and Willamette University. She can be contacted at josmith@josmithassociates.com.