**The Right Motivation**

Tip Sheet #5 from *Doing the Right Things Right* by Laura Stack

Forget offering bored employees the same old brass rings to grab for. Make them want to go for the gold. I don't necessarily mean financial motivation, though that may help. What they *really* need is purpose: a chance to excel at something that matters. Here's how to help them avoid boredom:

1. **Keep the Communication Lines Open.** Touch base regularly with your top employees, allowing them open access to you. Stay alert for signs of boredom. Ask them what they're working on that excites them—or what *would* excite them if nothing currently does.
2. **Offer Them Tasks With a Real Chance of Failure.** You likely have blue-sky projects that could be extremely profitable if done well. They're challenging enough that most people can't achieve success, so hand these to your bright but bored. The intellectual challenge will help them channel their bore­dom—and any risk-taking behavior associated with it—into potential success.
3. **Keep Them Busy.** Pile your employees' plates full of a variety of tasks, so when one gets boring, they can jump to another. Keep those plates full until they cry uncle, and then help them prioritize. All your team's tasks should produce results worthy of their talents; busywork does nothing for the team's bottom line. And don't worry about overworking superstars. When Sirota Consulting conducted a study of 800,000 employees at sixty-one organizations in 2009, they found that workers with too little work posted an average job satisfaction rating of 49 percent—while those with too *much* work reported a job satisfaction rating of 57 percent.
4. **Help Them Fall in Love with the Process.** Anyone can work hard when motivated. But in real life, con­sistent productivity means bulling one's way through the dull patches, producing even when doing less-than-inspiring work. If you can help your employees fall in love with the *process* of marketing, coding, writing, speaking, or whatever their job entails, they'll never be bored. Teach them to anticipate the sense of accomplishment reward that comes *after* the humdrum.

**Stepping It Up**

Employee boredom can corrode morale and productivity not only for those who are bored but also for those to whom they complain. There's no reason to allow this when you can step up and actively fight it. You may not eliminate bore­dom altogether among your brighter employees, but if you keep an eye on the situation and implement these simple tips to motivate them, you can definitely fight it to a draw.

Laura Stack, MBA, CSP, CPAE, aka The Productivity Pro®, gives speeches and seminars on sales and leadership productivity. For over 25 years, she’s worked with Fortune 1000 clients to reduce inefficiencies, execute more quickly, improve output, and increase profitability. Laura is the author of seven books, including *Doing the Right Things Right: How the Effective Executive Spends Time*. See [www.3TLeadership.com](http://www.3TLeadership.com).