



Establishing a Motivating Environment

Each activity department manager strives to achieve a high degree of cooperation and team spirit in the facility. Although establishing an environment that fosters support and promotes motivation is the responsibility of all departments, the activity professional has a vital role in this process. The success of the activity program is dependent on tasks being done by others. These tasks include encouraging and inviting residents, assisting residents to activities, providing help with set up or clean up, serving refreshments, providing functional assistance and help implementing activities. Often statements such as “That’s not my job” or “I don’t have time to help with activities” are made. Specific actions can be implemented by the activity professional to create an environment that builds cooperation.

First, it is vital to understand that one’s performance of a task or duty is directly related to their ability to do the job, their motivation to do it and the environment in which they work.

Performance=Ability x Motivation X Environment
(*The Leader-Manger*. Hitt, William. 1988)

Once the person has been given the training and acquired the skills to do the job, the next step is to create motivation for support. Motivation to support the activity program can be developed by analyzing the following 5 areas:

1. The physical environment and the well being of the individual
 - Are the physical surroundings pleasant?
 - Are employee bulletin boards attractive?
 - Is the break room decorated in an appropriate style?
 - Are opportunities offered that promote good health such as exercise, stress classes, healthy food and snacks?
 - Are opportunities for laughter and humor provided on a routine basis?
2. The training and information that the individual receives
 - Is adequate training being given for the duties that are required?
 - Does the staff understand their role in supporting the activity program?
 - Do they receive feedback on their duties that support the program?
3. The level of involvement of the individual in the activity program
 - Is the staff included in planning activities?
 - When scheduling conflicts occur is the staff included in problem solving?
 - Is the staff included in activity department performance reviews?
 - Does the staff have the opportunity to make decisions about activities that involve them?
4. The recognition and awards that are given
 - Do other staff understand how their work impacts the accomplishment of The activity department goals?
 - Does the activity department ask for ideas and opinions from others on a



Routine basis? Are they implemented?
Is each individual recognized for specific actions that were performed?
Is praise given that explains what made it a “good job”?
Are individuals that assist reinforced immediately?
Is the praise genuine and not a “general phrase”?
Does the reinforcement that is given state how their work had a positive impact on a resident or on your work load?

5. The relationships with and individuality of each person
 - Does the activity program help promote the talents of the staff?
 - What opportunities are available to reinforce each person’s identity or culture?
 - Does the activity department provide mentoring to others who want to learn about the activity profession?
 - Are the staff provided with resources regarding career options?
 - Are their opportunities for the staff to share their personal goals?

As each of these questions is answered, strategies can be developed to address specific areas of need. The activity manager can play a pivotal role in implementing approaches and opportunities that target these 5 aspects of a supportive environment.

“Highly motivated people produce a more productive work unit”
(Hitt, The Leader-Manager)