

Flipping burgers sets example for team



There's no single method to motivate entry-level employees. You need a range of communication tools to ignite their on-the-job passion.

Rich Snyder ran In-N-Out Burger from 1976 until 1993. The popular West Coast burger chain grew steadily under Snyder's leadership, hiring rapidly to fill positions in newly opened restaurants. Snyder knew he needed to create mechanisms to motivate newcomers.

A dyslexic, Snyder preferred verbal and visual communication. He liked to mingle with restaurant crews and praise their performance, but he also developed what he called "Burger Television" to reach more people at once. Employees throughout the company could watch videos on topics ranging from safety tips to new restaurant openings.

Snyder often appeared on air as a kind of genial talk-show host, interviewing employees about their friendly attitude and superior performance.

In addition to televising news and information about the company to boost morale, Snyder understood the role of status as a motivator. Because the company's success hinged on its core product—burgers—Snyder abandoned conventional wisdom: Instead of assigning low-paid employees to flip the meat, he insisted that only store managers could work the grill.

Every burger was made to order, so Snyder wanted to emphasize to his workforce that only the most skilled, experienced individuals could develop the speed and coordination to handle such a critical job. As a result, employees worked hard to earn the right to grill burgers—a task that competing chains viewed as monotonous.

— Adapted from *In-N-Out Burger*, Stacy Perman, HarperBusiness.