4 STRATEGIES FOR MOTIVATING YOUR TEAM

In *Switch*, we stress that what motivates people is emotion, not information. We cite John Kotter’s “SEE- FEEL-CHANGE” model: People change because they see something that makes them feel something that gives them the desire to change. We’ve had a lot of people ask us: Ok, so what do I show my team? Here are four approaches—hopefully one fits your situation:

**A demonstration.** A factory owner was disappointed by his employees’ lack of participation in the 401(k) program he’d created, so he convened a company meeting. He walked in with a big leather bag, and as everyone watched, he unzipped it and inverted it over a conference table. Out of the bag poured ... CASH. A lot of it. He said, “You know what this is? This is your money. It’s the money you gave up by not forcing me to match your retirement contributions. Now, at the end of this meeting, I’ll put this money back in my bag and re-deposit it in the company’s account. Let’s plan to do this again next year. My only question is: Do you want this money to be in your pocket or mine?” There was a flurry of 401(k) signups after the meeting...

**A designed environment.** The manager of a retail clothing store was frustrated by the amount of “shrinkage” (i.e., employee or customer theft). After hours, she set up an elaborate clothing display in the back workroom—shirts in neat piles, slacks hung carefully on racks, mannequins dressed up in the season’s best. When her employees showed up for a meeting, they were surprised: *Are we expanding the store into this room?* The manager announced: “What you see in this room is the amount of clothing that disappeared from the store in the last 6 months. It’s unacceptable, and I need your help to stop it.” The employees were aghast. Since then, shrinkage has been reduced substantially.

**Photos or videos.** The 100,000 Homes campaign, which fights homelessness, has made brilliant use of “before & after photos.” The pictures are moving and dramatic—you can’t help but root for the campaign after you see them. Check out this video to see them. Of course, the same concept can be applied to less emotional situations: Where could you use a “before and after” approach?

**A site visit.** A bank executive had been harping on the need to be more innovative in the way his team served customers, but he was frustrated by the pace of change. So he started sending his employees in small teams to a competitor’s bank. When they walked in, they couldn’t believe the difference. They were greeted near the door by a smiling employee who pointed them in the right direction. The environment was brighter, hipper, and more colorful. Even the layout was different—the tellers stood right next to the customers at circular kiosks, rather than being walled off behind a giant wood barricade. The employees came back buzzing with ideas to improve their own bank. Suddenly the transformation had become their idea.