

MOTIVATION IN A CO-OPERATIVE

Members must be encouraged to have interest in their co-operative. If members are motivated they will remain loyal and be true volunteers in their co-operative.

How To Motivate Members

If a co-operative is to grow it must be supported by the members. In turn the board of directors of the co-operative must ensure that it has the support of the members. In short, the members must be motivated to continue supporting their co-operative. This motivation must come from the board so that the members feel valued and included in their co-operative. It is very important that a co-operative be true to its name and be all inclusive.

Members as the foundation of the co-operative must also share ideas with management of the co-operative as to how they can be motivated to continue supporting their co-operative.

Motivational ideas

1. Social activities

The avenue must be created for members to interact with each other outside of work. There must be fun time so that members learn to get along and appreciate each other. These activities could include parties, dinners, in door social games (domino & draught), sporting events (cricket, netball, football etc).

2. Provide members with goods and services at low cost.

People become members of a co-operative to gain benefits. The board members must manage the co-operative to guarantee that benefits are delivered to members. If members receive goods and services at low cost from their co-operative it means that they will be saving money. This situation would build their confidence in their co-operative.

3. Create new and increase benefits for members.

All efforts must be made to avoid stagnation within the co-operative. There must be new ideas that brings new and increase benefits to members. If a fisherman's co-operative is providing members with fishing gear over the

years and fail to deliver new benefits, members will soon lose interest. New benefits/services such as provision of storage and marketing of members' catch would be very meaningful to members. The marketing of members' catch would relieve members of market headache. Revenue generated from such sales will help to pay increase dividend to members.

4. Keep members informed and educated

Training and education is a key principle of co-operatives. The sharing of informed and educated could lead to a more vibrant membership.

Knowledge would prepare members to take on responsibilities including leadership roles. An enlightened membership is better able to contribute to the development of the co-operative.

5. Show appreciation for members' efforts and contribution

Members are people and must feel appreciated. The work in a co-operative is expected to be done by the members through volunteerism. Creative ways must be developed to show appreciation for the contributions of members.

Saying thank you has meaning to people and most times mean more than money. This can be done through an award ceremony, honorary title or some other creative way to express appreciation to members so that they are motivated to continue quality service.

6. Involving members in the activities of the co-operative

If a co-operative is a member based business then the membership must be involved in its various activities. The board of directors must reach out to its members so they can contribute their talents and ideas in the development of the co-operative. Ad-hoc committees should be created through the inclusion of the general membership. Eg. Fund raising committee, education committee, nominating committee etc.

7. Payment of dividend on a regular basis

This is a bonus paid to members based on their share value. However, this is paid if a surplus is made by the co-operative after the accounts are prepared at the end of the financial year.

8. Patronage Refund

Members must be loyal to their co-operative. They must purchase goods and services from their co-operative. At the end of the financial year they can get back a percentage of the money spend with their co-operative during the last

financial year. This repayment of money is called patronage refund. Usually patronage refund is greater than dividend.

9. Meeting the requirements of the law

A) Timely annual general meeting

The co-operative must hold its annual general meeting at least three months after the end of its financial year. If it is unable to do so it must write to request more time from the registrar.

B) Monthly board meetings

The Co-operative Societies Act # 31 2011 dictates that the board of directors must meet at least once per month. Such meetings are for planning, revision of economic activities for the past month and study and act upon reports from the supervisory committee.

C) Regular meetings of members

The board of directors must make sure it is connected with its membership. Meeting once per year with its membership is not good enough. There must be other meetings to get support and ideas from the members. This helps to build confidence and motivate members.

Conclusion

Board of directors must appreciate the value of membership in co-operative. Members must be motivated on an ongoing basis to contribute to the development of their co-operative. A satisfied member will be motivated to be committed to his co-operative. The total involvement and the delivery of benefits to members will bring about motivation.