

# Teamwork and openness lift spirits

Wilson Lau

Open communication and the active engagement of team members are keys to effective motivation that helps maximise a team's productivity, says Bella Khan Yee-lan, manager of payroll solutions at Links Recruitment.

"I put great emphasis on teamwork and I am very open with my team," she said. "I always require my team members to participate. My department has a very flat hierarchy which makes it much easier to motivate team members."

Ms Khan attaches importance to building a close relationship with her team members by understanding their needs.

This helps to facilitate co-operation within the team. "The key is that there are no boundaries between us."

By thoroughly understanding the needs of team members, Ms Khan develops and enhances their skills through coaching so that she can provide them with a better career path. She said her team members appreciated her efforts and became highly motivated at work.

Leading by example and providing support to team members are crucial. "When I find out they have to work in the office at the weekend, I always ask if they want me to come in and help out," she said. "You need to be a good role model to motivate them."

A middle manager needs to guide team members when they encounter setbacks at work.

"For example, if they come across

## MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

### Five keys to effective motivation

- Lead by example and be the team's inspiration
- Understand the needs, working styles and personalities of individual team members
- Encourage open communication with team members
- Recognise the contribution of team members with financial and non-financial rewards
- Build a strong team

some problem with a client, I might take over and deal with the client directly," Ms Khan said. "But I always make sure I explain to them what the solution is and the reasons behind it afterwards."

Joining Links Recruitment as an office administrator in 2001, Ms Khan climbed up the corporate ladder quickly. She was soon promoted to be the senior accounts executive and office manager, and now holds the dual positions of the payroll solutions manager and general manager. "As the payroll manager, I look after a team of five, including myself, and I am responsible for the business development of the division."



Bella Khan leads by example and provides support for team members. Photo: Jonathan Wong

Links Recruitment offers a diverse range of services, including recruitment, payroll and outsourcing to multinational and small to medium-sized companies in China, through its offices in Hong Kong, Macau, Shanghai and Singapore.

Most clients of its payroll service were multinational companies that operated offices in the region, Ms Khan said. The division provides payroll and visa application processing services for the staff of clients' offices in Hong Kong, Macau and Singapore.

Ms Khan makes use of a lot of activities outside the office for team building. "We often have lunch together. Our whole

team also spent a Friday in Macau which helped to lift the team's spirit tremendously," she said. "Team bonding is effective for motivating staff."

Timely acknowledgement for jobs well done and some unexpected extra incentives also help to encourage staff to excel. "When they feel good, they do not mind going the extra mile," she added.

Ms Khan said she got feedback about her leadership from team members at performance reviews which helped her to enhance her skills in motivation. "I also learn from other managers at the office by observing what they do," she said. "I just keep an open mind."

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