

# Positive Thinking

*Motivated trainees have a better chance to succeed, and trainers help to make that mindset a reality*

Any training program will be more successful when trainees are motivated. It is a mindset that will ensure they remain focused on the information being delivered and even excited about the chance to learn something new.

A trainer's commitment to the art of motivation can help to make that mindset a reality.

Trainers begin to support a positive attitude by setting a positive example of their own, establishing a professional training environment without resorting to tirades, profanity or sarcasm. Someone who understands the purpose of the information they are delivering will also be able to show trainees how the skills will make a difference in their lives.

The language used during a training session can be motivating in its own way, making it particularly important

to phrase any statements in a positive manner. Rather than saying, "You don't have a clue about how to fill out a logbook" – which would immediately put someone on the defensive – the better approach would be to say, "We want to help you understand the hours of service guidelines to keep you safe." The positive language shows trainees they have an opportunity to succeed, and that the training is there as a source of help rather than a penalty.

Some of the biggest challenges will emerge when a trainee's performance has been struggling, or if they fail time and again in their attempts to grasp a specific skill.



Any feedback will need to be honest. A coach, mentor or assessor can't tell someone that they are doing a good job when a task is not being mastered. But the positive attitude can be established by discussing the personal outcomes or goals that a lesson will support. Discussions about defensive driving habits, for example, can include information about how these habits will keep a trainee safe and even support the fuel efficient driving habits that can lead to a fuel bonus.

Another important step will be to ensure that everyone is defining the same problem. Quite simply, an employee will need to understand why an issue matters and share a view of the barriers that exist.

The related discussions will often help to identify underlying challenges. For example, an employee who is failing to follow a fleet's policy about personal appearance may reveal that they are in the midst of divorce proceedings and no longer have access to laundry facilities of their own. Once the problem is out in the open, there is an opportunity to discuss solutions. In the case of the lack of laundry facilities, it can mean something as simple as identifying laundry services in truck stops along a route, or near different terminals. When that is addressed, it will be a matter of discussing ways to address the underlying issues themselves, perhaps by guiding the employee to support available through a fleet's Employee Assistance Program.

Every solution should be measured on its own merits, and trainers should be careful not to be judgmental. A trainee who sees themselves in control over a number of options will be much more likely to commit to making a change.

Of course, there are some situations where a negative action needs to be addressed directly. Trainers cannot ignore actions that disregard other trainees or coworkers, after all. Here, a better opportunity is to speak to the trainee in private, without humiliating them in public.

And when faced with a potentially dangerous or difficult situation, there will need to be a thorough plan before reacting to an issue. By talking a trainee through the process, and helping them see what was wrong, trainers will have the chance to listen for feedback and address the root cause of any related issue.

Ultimately, the art of motivation is more like a skill that can be learned, and there are sources of support. The Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council recently released training modules for coaches, mentors and assessors alike, helping to enhance the training experience for employees throughout the trucking industry.

It is the type of information that can help any trainer to remain positive.


– *Funded by the Government of Canada's Sector Council Program, the Canadian Trucking HR Council (CTHRC) is an incorporated not-for-profit organizations that helps attract, train and retain workers for Canada's trucking industry. For more information, visit [www.cthrc.com](http://www.cthrc.com).*

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