

## What motivates many DDC

### What motivates you to do a better job?

*By Jessica Walter, DDC Command Affairs*

“As supervisors, sometimes we think we know what motivates someone or a group, but many times we are off base,” said Jerri Taylor, Defense Distribution Depot Richmond, Va. (DDRV) Director.

As part of DDC’s continued focus on improving leadership across the organization, the DDC Review surveyed Defense Distribution Center (DDC) employees all over the world to find out how leaders can gain more insight into providing a motivating environment for employees.

One thing was clear, every employee is unique, and each is motivated differently. However, most responses fell into one of three categories: Being challenged, recognition for a job well done, and supporting our Warfighters.

Forty percent of the more than 7,500 employees working for DDC have served in the military themselves, so it was no surprise that providing support to America’s men and women of the Armed Forces was the most common response.

However, what was most interesting is the high level of passion and conviction employees feel for the work they do.

“I like knowing that, in all phases of the processes of my job, I am a vital part,” said Cathy Bazan of Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, Calif. (DDJC). “Being able to get them the supplies they need makes me work harder at my job.”

Russel Hornkohl of Defense Distribution Mapping Activity (DDMA) is motivated by the knowledge that what he does could help Warfighters avoid disaster. “Even though I may not ever directly see the impact of the job I do, I know that if I do a bad job, a Warfighter in the field may not get the materiel they need and it may result in a failed mission or someone being hurt, captured or killed.”

“They are defending our country. They need all the items and equipment to be there on time and ready for use,” said Fundador Caraballo of DDRV.

Many employees are also inspired by being a part of the fight. “No matter how big or how small my contribution is, I am helping our country to fight the War on Terror,” said Defense Distribution Depot Pearl Harbor, Hawaii’s (DDPH) Jose Bermudez.

Bob Vickers of Defense Distribution Depot Jacksonville, Fla. (DDJF), is also motivated by the importance of his contribution. “Knowing that my job, in the greater scheme of things, has an impact on the pointy end of the spear drives me to do my best.”

Executive leadership coach and President of the Business Development Resource, Deborah Wood, says important tasks such as providing supplies to America’s military drive many employees to perform better. “Meaningful projects and high expectations motivate people to work at their best.”

According to Wood, this makes employees feel that they are important. “It is motivating to a person when your manager makes it clear that, to them, you are the most important ‘resource’ and an asset to the organization.”

By helping the employee realize his or her

## Supporting our Warfight

## DDC employees?

importance, Wood says the supervisors cultivate an environment of loyalty, a key component to keeping employees motivated. “Loyalty tends to translate into people working at their best, doing whatever it takes, and going the extra step to get things done on time for their customers, themselves, their team or organization, and their manager.”

She adds that the key to employees’ loyalty is supervisors’ loyalty. “When managers demonstrate high loyalty and interest in their people, their people will be loyal in return.”

Wood says a supervisor can show their employees that they are loyal by conveying their belief in the employees’ ability to do the job well, helping them excel, caring about employees personally, assisting them with their professional development, and rewarding them for good performance.

This creates a culture, according to Wood, where employees are motivated to perform at their highest, most loyal level.

Supervisors who demonstrate they trust employees by allowing them to work on challenging, innovative projects are able to unlock the potential of employees. “I love change and finding ways to improve our work areas to make us more efficient, and trying new ideas really makes me kick in to high gear,” said Roberta Campbell, Defense Distribution Depot Oklahoma City, Okla. (DDOO).

Carl Ruth of Defense Distribution Depot Sigonella, Italy (DDSI), is also inspired by being part of innovations and improvements. “The desire to find solutions to make life or work better, from day-to-day tasks to major changes, is really all it takes for me.”

Recognition and encouragement are also leadership behaviors proven to increase employees’ productivity by increasing their self esteem.

Benjamin Zander, Conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, holds leadership presentations all around the world using the orchestra as a metaphor for overcoming barriers and increasing productivity in the workplace.

Pulling from his experience as a conductor, coach and teacher, Zander says, “Everyone gets an A. Give them a possibility to live into, not an expectation to live up to.”

Providing the tools for success, clear expectations, and positive feedback for doing a good job can be all it takes to make some DDC employees tick. “It feels good to be recognized for a job well done,” said Edita Pepa, Defense Distribution Depot Puget Sound, Wash. (DDPW).

Deneen Brown of Defense Distribution Depot Guam, Marianas (DDGM), pointed out, “A simple ‘great job’ can make anyone’s day.”

According to Wood, it is often reported that the three most important management practices are ones that promote equity, an employee’s sense of achievement, and camaraderie.

Keeping these three principles up front, she says, will help people stay motivated and promote optimum performance. “When people work at high levels they are happier and more motivated.”

For the 486 supervisors across DDC, these principles could be the key to helping employees reach their optimum level of performance and job satisfaction.

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