

FULL-TIME MOTIVATION FOR PART-TIME EMPLOYEES



THE EXPERT: **JESSICA HERRIN**

CEO and founder of Stella & Dot, the \$104 million seller of jewelry and accessories

GETTING YOUR REGULAR EMPLOYEES fired up about their jobs is hard enough. But try doing it when they're working from home and part-time. For Jessica Herrin, that's business as usual at Stella & Dot, where the one-time WeddingChannel.com co-founder now oversees 10,000 mostly part-time stylists. They sell accessories online and through in-home trunk shows. The key to motivating a freelance workforce? Treat them like the professionals that they are. "Recognition is the most powerful currency you have, and it costs you nothing," she says. That's why she makes a point of hiring managers who have a natural sense of gratitude. "It is the careful art of catching somebody doing something good that you want them to repeat," she adds. Here's her advice.

■ PROVIDE YOUR OWN TRAINING

We have an online university, so we're providing professional development, just like great companies provide continued learning and the opportunity to grow. We write all of our own content because a lot of what's out there isn't right in tone. It talks down to people. When someone takes our quiz and gets an answer right, a little video flies in that says, "You got it, baby, you're ready to go." It gives salespeople a lot of instant gratification. Just because we're professional doesn't mean that we're not fun too.

■ GET TO KNOW YOUR EMPLOYEES

Although my stylists rarely come into my office, I personally e-mail and call at least 10 stylists every day. I text them, I post on their Facebook page. Part of my regular to-do list is to find and celebrate successes. When we promote someone, we send flowers, champagne, or chocolates. When was the last time your boss sent you flowers and said, "I appreciate you"? It's so simple, and it goes so far with people.

■ TOP PERFORMERS TRADE TIPS

Rather than mandate how a successful employee acts, we let them tell us—and everyone else—what works. We have a stylist tell her own story into a webcam, standing in her home, getting recognized with her own world in the background, giving a message to everyone. I like to tell people that it's not like you have the monopoly on busy. This person's got five kids, just so you know, and look at what she did. Here's how she did it, and you can do it too. We try to specifically have a takeaway. For example, if they had an amazing month, what were the challenges they had to overcome to get there? When we recognize people we do it in a way that's not preachy or demoralizing to others.

—Interview by Beth Kowitt

