

Keep Your Driving Costs Down This Summer

With summer here many of us are thinking about taking a road-trip or a vacation, but fuel prices are so high that it may seem impossible to keep your traveling expense affordable. Don't despair! There are some tried and true tips for you to take that trip and still have some spending money when you get there!

- Check your tires. Under-inflated tires are a safety hazard and can have a negative affect on your fuel economy. Be sure to check your tire pressure before you start a long trip.
- Lighten your load. Studies show that driving around with a fully loaded trunk or hatch can result in lower gas mileage. And although you have to pack for your trip you should clean out un-necessary items before you load the trunk.
- Go cruisin'. If your vehicle is equipped with Cruise Control use it! One website (www.edmunds.com) states that using cruise control at highway speeds can save you an average of 7% overall!
- Windows vs. air conditioning? The myth that using air conditioning will ruin your fuel economy has been busted! Sever studies show that overall using your air conditioning has only a negligible effect on your gas mileage. The same is true for driving with you windows down. Yes, it creates drag, but the effects are so small it just doesn't have an impact. So use what is comfortable and don't worry about the temperature.
- Keep it steady. Rapid starts and stops will ding your wallet and it isn't safe. Try to avoid revving the engine or accelerating too fast from a stop. It wastes fuel and is unnecessary. In city driving it's almost impossible to avoid frequent stops so try to avoid "Business Loops" while on your trip.
- Obey the speed limit. Drivers who consistently drive over the speed limit are losing between 15 and 98 cents per gallon! That can really add up so take your time and follow the speed limit.

There's no reason to cancel your vacation or take a second mortgage out! You can still enjoy those weekend road-trips and those Route 66 vacations if you plan ahead. So put the top down and turn the radio on!

Drive Safely: School is Almost Out!

Even if you don't have children in your home it's a good idea to be extra careful this month. Most schools end their year in June which means more children are out and about.

Be sure to check behind your car before you back out. Children may not be paying attention to where you vehicle is so check before you get in the car.

Come to a complete stop. Four-way or three-way stops can be a hazard. Be sure to stop completely and check for children on bicycles, skateboards, or scooters.

When driving in residential neighborhoods obey the speed limit. Most children know better than to dart out in between cars, but in the heat of playing kick ball they may not remember; so be careful!

It may seem like common sense and most people obey the road rules. It's just a good idea to be more careful as the school year ends.

5 Ways to Inspire Your Employees

When you look around your office what do you see? Is your staff listless or full of energy? Do they appear disinterested in their work or are they enthusiastically striving to achieve your company goals? Are they working to their full potential?

If you are like many employers, your team could probably use a little nudge or oomph on the job; something that will help them want to come to work each day. But how do you achieve this? In simple terms it's time to inspire your team.

An employee will give their all to you, their employer, if they feel inspired. An inspired employee will constantly endeavor to be and do their best and to use their skills to their full potential.

But how do you accomplish this? Believe it or not money is not the answer. If an employee's wages are enough to cover basic living needs then salary is NOT the most important factor in overall job satisfaction.

Use the following ideas to inspire your employees to perform at their peak and to play a vital role in the success of your business:

The Buck Stops With YOU!

Are you passionate about the mission and goals of your company? If not there's a good chance your staff won't be either. It might be time to re-energize your own commitment and enthusiasm.

What Are We Doing Here?

Have you shared your company's Mission Statement with every member of the team? Articulate and share the mission, purpose, and goals of your company with everyone. It will give them a feeling of belonging and a rapport to the bigger picture. It's exciting to be part of a long-term goal and see how your part is important.

Re-enforce positive feedback.

Many employers don't realize how important it is to give positive feedback to their staff. Always focusing on the negative will stifle productivity and instill fear. No feedback at all will leave employees feeling complacent. Positive feedback, on the other hand, can be motivating. Remember to focus on an employee's strengths and accomplishments.

Encourage participation.

Seek out their opinions and ideas with a goal toward implementation and you'll get employees who feel valued and an integral part of your business. Team meetings and suggestion boxes, are just two ways you can encourage your staff to participate.

Allow for autonomy.

Employees need to know when and how tasks need to be performed, they cannot work to their full potential when they are being overly micromanaged. This type of management creates an atmosphere of distrust, and eventually leads to workers giving less of themselves, becoming less effective as a result creativity and motivation are soon snuffed out.

Are you pushing for improvement? There are many, many ways you can improve your business. You can streamline processes, add a nurturing program for your staff; the list goes on. There's always something that can be updated or improved.