

***Fire Up! Your Employees and Smoke your Competition;  
How to Invite, Incite, and Ignite Employee Performance***

By Jay Forte



**A Personal Note from the Author**

The purpose of this book is to help all organizations grow their bottom lines by maximizing every employee's contribution and performance. As I write this, these same employees are actively disinterested and uninspired in the workplace. Managers continue to dictate and demand employees to perform, using management methods that are ineffective and outdated. These outdated methods divert workplace energy into a battle of wills instead of into a united, collaborative, and results-oriented focus on performance. This workplace battle for results is perpetuated more by ineffective management than by confrontational or lazy employees. Our world has changed but our management methods have not. Intellectual-age employees do not respond to industrial-age management and the shrinking bottom line reflects that most organizations do not know this or know how to change with the times.

Despite the significant number of business books, programs, and resources available, managers and leaders have not yet consistently learned how to connect today's employees to performance. The amount of materials available to management now confuse instead of educate. What is needed is a clear theory of what to do to manage in an intellectual age, and a comprehensive instruction guide to show how to implement this theory today, real time, in our actual workplace. This is the purpose of *Fire Up Your Employees and Smoke Your Competition*.

As a CFO, corporate educator, speaker, and performance consultant, I have worked with managers and leaders struggling to activate employees to perform and contribute. In virtually every case, the inability of these leaders and managers to achieve their desired results was because their management approach was ineffective with today's employees.

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This has compelled me to prepare and present not only a clear and concise theory of millennial management (the what), but a practical implementation process (the how) that I call the Fire Up! Process<sup>SM</sup>. To perform today, employees need to be excited, engaged – in short, fired up.

The Fire Up! Process<sup>SM</sup> is based on the three components of INVITE, INCITE, and IGNITE employee performance:

1. **INVITE:** Millennial managers invite the best by creating an employee-focused culture that supports, respects, appreciates, and attracts employees. They hire employees based on specific talents (not strictly skills and experience) and thinking to invite the best talents and people to the organization. *This connects employees intellectually to their work.*
2. **INCITE:** Millennial managers incite or activate employees to step up and own their work by creating customized roles around employees' talents, values, and interests, *and* the needs of the business. They also establish performance expectations that define the standard of performance (the end), but leave the process to achieve them to the employee. Employees now have a voice in how they complete their work; they act and think like owners. *This connects employees emotionally to their work.*
3. **IGNITE:** Millennial managers ignite performance by spending meaningful time with each employee through recurring performance feedback and career development. This connection between employee and manager is the key to igniting employee loyalty and performance, and is core to millennial management. *This connects employees emotionally to their managers.*

The pressure is on you; today's poor performance is more a statement about management than employees. You have the ability to Fire Up! employees – to achieve extraordinary performance – or douse the flames of enthusiasm. Employees come to the workplace looking to make a difference. It is in the relationship with you that this spirit is ignited or extinguished. Employees stay or go because of you. Employees actively commit or do

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great things or as little as possible because of you. Employees are engaged or actively disengaged because of you. It all comes back to you and how you manage.

I want your organization to have the best employees who impress both you and your customers. I want your organization to have employees who innovatively spot and react to opportunities. I want your employees to act and think like owners, taking personal responsibility for driving performance and results. Only then will your organization be competitive enough to lead in today's roller coaster economy. And as I see it, most organizations are not able to make this happen. They are locked in a battle of wills with their employees and have not learned how to engage and inspire the intellectual-age employee to perform. This book will introduce a Process that will end the battle of wills and direct employee energy into performance.

You will see this is not a conventional business book. It is built on the shared collective perspectives of contemporary authors, thinkers, and business professionals who publicly offer their ideas about management, employees, and performance, coupled with my research and perspectives from years of teaching adult learners, managers, and leaders. All great ideas use other ideas and perspectives as inspiration; this encourages continual progress in understanding our changing world and developing responses that have the greatest impact. However, what is frequently missing in contemporary business authors' work is the guidance and instruction to move from the theory to practice – from ideas to implementation. Our world requires practical solutions. Though it is always a great thing to be able to dialog and discuss theory, at the end of the day we must not only be smarter, but we must also have a plan to be better. This book presents both – theory (the what) and practice (the how) with activities, exercises and worksheets hosted on the text's supporting website ([www.FireUpYourEmployees.com](http://www.FireUpYourEmployees.com)). Its goal is to educate today's managers in the methods to connect employees intellectually and emotionally to the work, the workplace, and their management, resulting in extraordinary performance. Significant bottom-line performance is the goal.

### **How to Use This Resource**

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Since this text presents both theory and a full implementation process, you will need some guidance to use it effectively and to get the greatest impact for your organization. This is my recommendation how to proceed for the greatest results:

### ***Before You Start This Book***

First, to have a clear perspective of the entire Process, review the Fire Up! Process<sup>SM</sup> Overview and the Step-by-Step Process Instructions. These will not only show you the complete Fire Up! Process<sup>SM</sup>, but they also introduce its terminology and tools to help prepare you to implement the Fire Up! Process<sup>SM</sup>. The theory that supports the Fire Up! Process<sup>SM</sup> is summarized in this text. Each step of the Process includes the text's corresponding chapter numbers for easy reference.

Once you have reviewed the Process and have a basic understanding of its steps, review the Fire Up! Process<sup>SM</sup> Summary of Tools; these tools are available in each chapter's link on the Fire Up! website ([www.FireUpYourEmployees.com](http://www.FireUpYourEmployees.com)). The text will direct you when to access the tools to enhance your learning and practice to develop your confidence with the Process.

### ***Start the Book***

As you start each chapter, you will be directed to go to the Fire Up! website ([www.FireUpYourEmployees.com](http://www.FireUpYourEmployees.com)). On the website, print the chapter's corresponding worksheets, exercises, and activities and have them ready as you progress through each chapter. The text will guide you when to access these additional pages. You will also be asked to create action items as you progress through each chapter to help you implement the Fire Up! Process<sup>SM</sup> in your organization. The best way to become successful and confident with this Process is to complete the exercises and activities before advancing to the next chapter. Note that the Fire Up! Process<sup>SM</sup> is a step-by-step process with worksheets and forms to help you easily, quickly, and comprehensively learn how to connect your employees both emotionally and intellectually to their work and workplace. As a process, practice will be the best way to fully implement its concepts and tools and benefit from its ability to significantly impact performance and results.

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Initially, you will first practice with fictitious employees and events. As you progress, you will be asked to involve your actual employees. This will connect the Fire Up! Process<sup>SM</sup> to your workplace and give you the ability to see its impact with actual employees, in actual workplace situations. Its greatest benefit to you is to see both theory and practice in your workplace.

I know that most employees want to be great; they want to contribute and be noticed for making a difference. I also know that most of today's managers do not know how to help employees be great. They are unfamiliar with the best methods to manage the intellectual-age employee. As a result, performance is average, employee turnover is high and most employees are disengaged. By understanding the theory of the Fire Up! Process<sup>SM</sup>, and developing the practice and proficiency with its components, you will see a dramatic change in your connection with and the engagement levels of your employees. As employee engagement increases, you will see greater contribution, greater responses, and less turnover. Your workplace will start to attract and retain the best employees. They will become more fired up about what they do, and when fired up, they will smoke your competition.

Jay Forte