What are the best strategies to motivate staff to maintain a high level of work performance, for example, financial incentives, free lunch, awards?

1. Direct feedback. Make them part of the report card. That is, the score card is a reflection of the provider and the MA.

2. The single best motivation for anyone, anywhere, anytime, is sincere praise for their character. Sure, folks appreciate money, but if they are praised, especially in the presence of other people, the impact is amazing. (Think back to the last time your mom or dad praised you for the diligence in accomplishing a task, or an employer for your punctuality or enthusiasm, or a fellow worker for your joyfulness). This is different from thanking someone for a job well done; praising the character quality that caused them to do such a good job is contagious. People will leave good-paying jobs if they don't feel appreciated, and will stay at lesser-paying jobs if they are truly being given as examples to others of being people of good character, and feel as though they are really a part of something bigger than just a number filling a cubicle. For more information, check with the "Character First!" program in Oklahoma City.

3. I have an office meeting every month to every other month. Everyone is expected to bring something to discuss, usually involving office efficiency, and I buy lunch. It is a forum for problems and it empowers everyone to have input. We set goals for prevention, and we trouble shoot everyone's problem areas. I give everyone a birthday bonus of $50, and we give Christmas bonuses every year if we have a good year. Usually 5% of their annual income.