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Motivation Skills

Motivation Skills

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Preface

So just what is motivation?

Just how can you motivate yourself and others?

In this textbook we'll cover the main motivational theories and what they mean in the real world. You'll learn what it takes to be self motivated and how you can use different techniques and strategies to motivate others.

Sean McPheat, the Founder and Managing Director of management development specialists, MTD Training is the author of this publication. Sean has been featured on CNN, BBC, ITV, on numerous radio stations and has contributed to many newspapers. He's been featured in over 250 different publications as a thought leader within the management development and training industry.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Motivation in the Business World

One of the most commonly debated and researched fields in the business world is motivation. Why do people do what they do and how can we motivate others to do what we need them to do in the business place? If we understand how and why people are motivated, we can encourage them to be their best and do their best at work. The more that people are motivated to be successful and achieve the goals set for them, the more their confidence in their own abilities will grow as well, which can, in turn, make them even more motivated.

When people are motivated at work, there are many positive factors that result in the workplace:

- Job satisfaction improves
- Effort increases
- Working environment improves
- Results are the focus
- Drive is created
- Everyone's full potential can be tapped
- Everyone is certain of the role they are to fulfill
- Your team becomes more skilled as a whole

1.2 Defining Motivation

A simple definition for motivation is that it is a description of a person's motive to action. You can have a low level of motivation to perform an action, for example, if you are taking a long time to complete a project or even to begin it. But if you have drive towards a goal, objective, or target, we talk about you having positive motivation. Those who are highly motivated to achieve things in their lives are also likely to be more fulfilled as they accomplish the things that are important to them in their lives.

1.3 Personal Motivation

All of us have a desire to achieve something in our lives. We want to know that we have achieved something important, of value, of quality, or of meaning. Being motivated to meet our goals means that we are able to:

- Improve our self-confidence
- Enhance our self-discipline
- Set examples for ourselves of what we can achieve
- Challenge ourselves to stretch beyond our perceived limits
- Reward ourselves for reaching our goals
- Enjoy the recognition or perks associated with reaching our goals

The more that we are able to achieve, the more self-confident we become. Then the more self-confident we become, the more we are able to achieve.

The reverse can happen if we fail to meet our goals. If we fall short of achieving something, we may experience a dip in our confidence levels, which in turn may impact our motivation to try again. Understanding this relationship between motivation and goal setting and achievement is important if you want to be able to improve either trait in yourself or in others.

When you are responsible for motivating others, your own personal motivation matters in two ways. First, you need to be motivated to continue applying techniques until you have found what works best for the individuals on your team. But second, though just as important, you need to make sure that your motivation is grounded in the right intentions. If you simply try to force others to achieve what you want them to do without considering their own needs and values, you will end up with temporary motivation – if they are motivated at all. Eventually you would face turnover, job shirking, and poor attitudes.

1.4 Motivating Others

In order for you to motivate others, you need to understand what will drive them to take appropriate action. This requires that you take the time to understand what is important to the people you want to motivate. Then you must use that knowledge to create motivating systems in the workplace. In some cases you might not be able to motivate every person on your team the same way. You may need to get creative and think in non-traditional terms as to how to get people revved up about what they need to accomplish.

1.5 An Overview of this Ebook

This ebook will start with an examination of different theories regarding how people are motivated. Then we'll look at means of communicating with your team so that you understand exactly what they need from you in order to be motivated. In addition, we'll look at how goal-setting, delegating, and performance management techniques can be used to motivate others to take action. Plus, we'll look at how you can lead that action without deflating the motivation that your employees already have.

2. Theories Regarding Motivation

2.1 Introduction

Since motivation has been so thoroughly studied, there are numerous theories about what motivates us. In this chapter, we'll look at some of the most popular motivational theories to help you build a base of understanding for improving your own motivation and the motivation of those that you lead.

2.2 Herzberg's Motivational Theory

Frederick Herzberg studied how a worker's work environment would affect his work by causing satisfaction or dissatisfaction. His idea was that if people were satisfied at work, they would be motivated to work, and the opposite would be true if they were dissatisfied at work. He interviewed employees about their feelings at work and then published his findings in 1959 in his book called *The Motivation to Work*.

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His theory is also called the motivation-hygiene theory because he considered the factors that satisfied employees to be motivators and those factors that were dissatisfying to be hygiene factors. Hygiene factors being present does not avoid job dissatisfaction, but if you take them away you will find that they can demotivate an employee. Examples might be the loss of a regularly expected pay raise or some decrease in how you perceive your work environment (turning off the air conditioner or no longer allowing personal space heaters). Herzberg identified the top six factors leading to dissatisfaction and the top six factors leading to satisfaction in the workplace. These are listed in order from highest importance to lowest importance in Figure 1 below.

Factors Affecting Job Attitudes	
Leading to Dissatisfaction	Leading to Satisfaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company policy • Supervision • Relationship with boss • Work conditions • Salary • Relationship with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement • Recognition • Work itself • Responsibility • Advancement • Growth

Figure 1: Herzberg's Factors Affecting Job Attitudes

Herzberg argued that because the list of factors for dissatisfaction and satisfaction are not exact opposites of each other, we cannot assume that simply improving a dissatisfying factor would result in satisfaction – it would simply result in the absence of dissatisfaction. The same could be said if you remove a factor of satisfaction – the result wouldn't necessarily be dissatisfaction, but just the absence of satisfaction. So what does this mean for actions we can take?

Because the list of factors for dissatisfaction and satisfaction are not opposites, we cannot assume that improving a factor of dissatisfaction will lead to satisfaction; it would simply lead to the absence of dissatisfaction.

There is one important distinction to notice when it comes to self-motivation and motivating others. The factors that tend to bring us the most satisfaction at work, and so we assume, the most motivation, are the ones that we have some control over – and that are most related to our own job performance. If we are focusing on our performance, we will achieve our goals and receive recognition. If we do something we enjoy, that alone can provide satisfaction. We also see that taking on more responsibility, advancing, and growth are all ways to be satisfied at work. We can volunteer for additional responsibility, look for ways to grow our skills, and discover what would be necessary in terms of our performance to take advantage of opportunities for advancement. We might not be able to control company policy or the other factors that can lead to dissatisfaction, but we can certainly control our own work performance.

The factors that tend to bring us the most satisfaction at work, and so we assume, the most motivation, are the ones that we have some control over – and that are most related to our own job performance.

If you happen to be a manager, this information is also important because it shows you how different decisions you make may affect your employees. If you focus on motivation by putting in place factors on the left-hand side, you might relieve dissatisfaction, but you won't necessarily create satisfaction and motivation. Fail to provide opportunities for growth, advancement, additional responsibility, achievement, and recognition, and you will have a team lacking satisfaction – and motivation. This is important to realize – that you have a better chance of achieving motivation when you focus on the individual, not on the traditional 'carrots' (salary, benefits, prestige, etc.) that we tend to think of as motivating us.

If you are a manager, you have a better chance of achieving motivation when you focus on the individual, not on the traditional 'carrots' (salary, benefits, prestige, etc.) that we tend to think of as motivating us.

2.3 Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Another theory of motivation was posed by Victor Vroom. It is different from the previous theory because it focuses not on the needs of a person, but on their outcomes. He saw effort as being the result of motivation, which led to performance and then the resulting outcomes of that performance. He said that in order for a person to be motivated to put forth the effort, he or she must see a link between the three factors – effort, performance, and outcome. He proposed three variables that created the link:

Victor Vroom proposed that motivation is directly linked to the expected outcome of any effort that is expended. He defined three variables that created the link: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence.

- Expectancy
- Instrumentality
- Valence

Figure 2 gives a visual description of this theory, which we will examine further below.

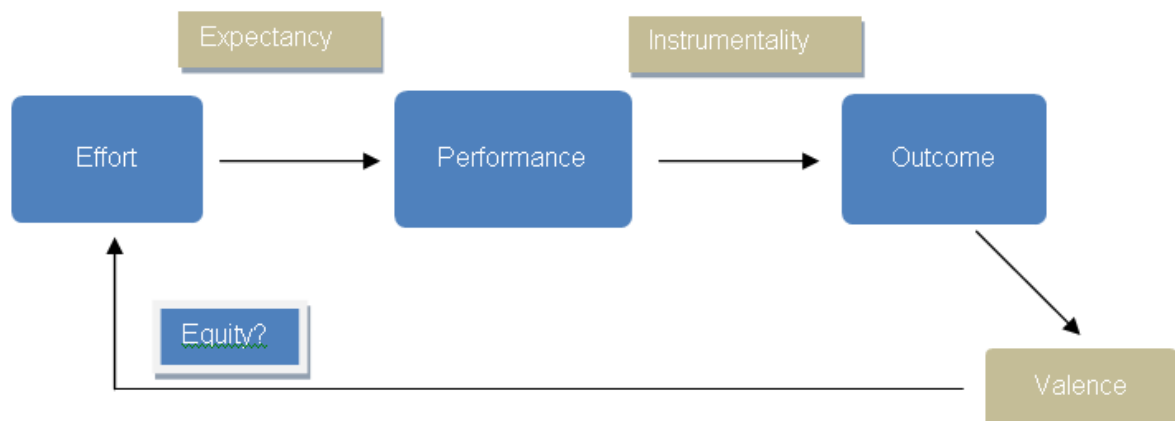


Figure 2: Vroom's Expectancy Theory

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2.3.1 Expectancy

Expectancy means that you believe that the effort you put in can affect the performance that you deliver. For example, if you work harder, you will perform better and if you work less, your performance will suffer. This factor is affected by:

- Having the resources you need to do the job (time, money, hardware or software)
- Having the skills and knowledge to do the job
- Having the support you need to get the job done (manager support, approval, information)

So if you are trying to motivate your team using this information, you need to make sure that when you assign duties or set goals, that the person you are giving them to actually has the skills they need to complete it. You need to make sure that they have the resources they need and that you support them in getting the job done. Otherwise, you would be setting them up for failure.

3.3.2 Instrumentality

Instrumentality refers to the belief that your performance will affect the outcome. For example, excellent performance will result in a more positive outcome than poor performance. But even more, it is the belief that you will be rewarded for the hard work. You believe there is something in it for you if you perform well. This belief can be affected by:

- Having a clear understanding of what has to be achieved in order to receive a reward – what the ‘rules’ are for you to get rewarded for your effort
- Trusting the people who will decide whether or not you (or others) receive a reward for a corresponding level of outcome
- Transparency in the process that results in who gets what outcome and corresponding reward

As a supervisor, you can be informed by this information on how you need to implement any reward system. It must be clear and take into consideration any possible outcomes so that you know what to do in any given situation. The rules must be applied consistently and with integrity so that your team knows you will give them the reward that they have earned. And finally, the results should be obvious to the team members. In other words, no one should be wondering why team member A got the reward but the other team members didn't. You could satisfy this requirement by using posted results like a board showing the number of units of something achieved, completed, or sold.

2.3.3 Valence

Valence is the importance that a person places on the reward or expected outcome. For example, if I am motivated to spend time with my family more than by money, I will not value an offer of overtime. On the other hand, if money is of utmost importance to me at the moment, I will place a much higher value on that overtime.

If you are going to motivate a team of individuals, you need to know what rewards will actually be important to them. Otherwise they will fail to be as motivated as the people to whom the proposed rewards are valuable.

2.3.4 Putting It All Together

So in order for a person to be motivated by what they believe the outcome will be (the reward), all of the following must be true:

- They must believe that their increased effort will increase their performance
- They must believe that their increased performance will increase their reward
- They must value the reward being offered

You'll also notice the box in Figure 2 with 'equity?' indicating that people will compare their outcomes with those received by others and they may adjust their effort accordingly. For example, if I sold 100 widgets and you sold 50 widgets but we both got the same bonus, I will probably reduce my effort the next time around – in other words, I will be less motivated because I will perceive that there was some inequity in the reward structure.

This poses a challenge to you as a supervisor because it means that you may need to experiment with the units of the reward structure that will be the most effective at motivating your team members. For example, if there is a cap on your reward structure, what will you do if multiple people reach that cap and then stop being motivated because there is no additional reward? You need enough flexibility in your reward structure that you can make adjustments based on how well the team performs. But be certain that you communicate any changes clearly and that you share why you are changing them. That way you will be sure that you keep transparency in the system.

2.4 McClelland's Need-Based Model

David McClelland based his theory of motivation on the idea that each of us has three fundamental needs:

- The need for achievement
- The need for affiliation
- The need for power (authority)

McClelland said that each of us has these three needs in a different balance. These needs affect how we can be motivated as well as how we try to motivate other people. McClelland was particularly interested in understanding people who have a high need to achieve because they are not as common as one might think. Here is a brief explanation of each type of need:

N-ach: Need for achievement: These people:

- Seek achievement
- Strive to attain goals
- Want advancement
- Need feedback
- Need a sense of accomplishment

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N-affil: Need for affiliation: These People:

- Need interaction with others
- Need friendship
- Want and need to be liked

N-pow: Need for power: These people:

- Are authority motivated
- Need to influence others
- Need to make an impact
- Need to lead
- Need to increase personal prestige or status

McClelland conducted a famous experiment where he asked people to throw rings over a peg, like in a fairway game. There were no instructions given as to where the people had to stand, so people threw the rings from different distances. Yet he noticed that the people who had tested as having a high level of the need to achieve chose their positions carefully – they picked positions that were neither too close nor too far. They chose a distance that was realistic but not too easy. In other words, they seemed to be challenging themselves while still making achievement of the goal a real possibility.

What McClelland realized about those with a high level of need to achieve is that they set goals at a level where they feel they can influence the outcome and yet where there is still the need to stretch in order to achieve the goal. He also found that these people were more likely to look for ways that a situation could be improved. They believe they have influence and the ability to make a difference.

So what if you are managing people that are not naturally achievement-motivated? If your employees don't see the achievement of the outcome as reward in itself, that is not unusual. Many people are motivated by affiliation or power instead. But McClelland believed that motivation by achievement could be taught and learned. In fact, you will learn some of the ways to become more motivated by realistic goal-setting in this ebook.

2.5 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Finally, not discussion of theories of motivation would be complete without Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. In 1943, Abraham Maslow published a theory on what motivates people in his paper *A Theory of Human Motivation*. He posited that people have five levels of needs that they seek to meet. The more basic the need, the more motivated a person will be to fulfill it. So using his Hierarchy of Needs, you can begin to assess how strong the motivation factor will be for a group of people or an individual. Figure 3 shows Maslow's hierarchy.

Maslow proposed five levels of human needs. The most basic, and therefore the most motivating, are at the bottom of the model.

The bottom four layers of the pyramid Maslow called d-needs or deficiency needs. Failure to meet these needs could result in physical harm in the case of the physiological level. Or if the next three layers of needs are not met, such as lack of security, friendship or love, and self-esteem, the body won't necessarily give physical signs of the deficiency, but the person will be upset, disconnected, anxious, or tense.

3.5.1 Level One - Physiological Needs

The bottom, or most important needs, are the physiological needs. These are just what they sound like – with the exception of clothing and sexual activity, the things that our bodies need in order to keep functioning. These are the things that we will be most motivated to pursue should we experience a lack of them. They include:

- Air
- Food
- Water
- Clothing
- Shelter
- Sexual Activity

On the one hand, being motivated enough to keep a job is partly due to needing to meet these needs. I know I can't pay for shelter or food if I don't have an income. But if you are trying to motivate someone who cannot provide these basic needs for themselves and their families based on the rewards they are receiving from their work, it is going to be difficult to motivate them because they may not think they will ever receive a level of rewards that would let them meet these needs. This makes it easy to understand why someone working a minimum wage job may not be motivated to do the best job they can, but may instead only do enough to keep from losing the job and worsening their situation.



Figure 3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

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2.5.2 – Level Two – Safety Needs

Once the physical needs have been met, the individual will then focus on making sure that they are safe. These are the things people want in order to create a certain level of predictability and order in the world. It doesn't just mean physical safety, but can also mean general health and well-being, safety from financial ruin, injustice, or having to deal with the stress of the unfamiliar. Other examples related to our professional lives include:

Safety needs are the second level of human need. Meeting these needs helps establish a sense of predictability, order, and well-being.

- Job security
- Protection from unilateral authority
- Financial savings
- Insurance policies
- Reasonable accommodations for the disabled

Hopefully you don't have a problem with employees feeling safe in the workplace. Of course, there are jobs where safety is not a guarantee, such as in the military, law enforcement, or disaster response personnel like firemen and emergency medical personnel. In these situations, we have to assume that your employees are motivated by the desire to serve others, their community, or their nation more than they are motivated by their personal safety.

In any position, however, you should have policies in place that prohibit harassment of any kind and bullying, and policies that allow employees to report a problem or grievance without fearing that they will lose their job. This is often called a "whistleblower" policy. You can also encourage employee loyalty by offering things that help a person feel generally safe such as:

- Health, dental, and vision insurance
- Short and long term disability
- Sick leave
- Personal leave
- A wellness program (access to a gym, classes on health topics, etc.)

3.5.3 – Level Three – Belonging Needs

The third level of human needs revolve around social interactions and the need to belong. These needs will be pursued once the lower needs are met. People will fulfill this need by pursuing individual relationships and by joining larger social organizations. These relationships are emotionally-based and fulfill the need to be loved by, cared for, and accepted by others.

All human beings need to feel a sense of belonging which will be manifested in a variety of relationships – including those in the workplace.

If these needs are not met, individuals become more at risk for depression, social awkwardness or anxiety, or loneliness. In some cases of extreme peer pressure, individuals may actually sacrifice the lower levels of needs in order to fit in.

People may fulfill this level of need through different relationships, such as:

- Family
- Friends
- Intimate Relationships
- Clubs or Social Organizations
- Sports Teams
- Office Culture
- Religious Groups
- Professional Organizations

If you have the ability to create time for relationship-building activities in the workplace, you can help people to meet this level of need at work. If you don't make time for it, you will find that people take time for it anyway. It's natural to want to feel bonded in some way to the people that you work with every day. Many of us will spend more time with coworkers in a week than we do with our own family or friends.

3.5.4 Level Four – Ego-Status

The ego-status needs are related to the belonging needs, but with one major difference. Whereas belonging needs refer to being a part of a group, ego-status needs refer more to how the individual believes she is seen by those groups. We each have a self-image which is at

The ego-status level of needs related to how we believe others see us and how we see ourselves.

least in part developed by how we believe we appear to others. For example, we believe we are smart, funny, kind, considerate, or any number of different attributes. We also believe that others see us that way. Our needs at this level revolve around us reinforcing our self-image and, by turn, the image others have of us.

People will strive to fill this need by such means as:

- Status and achievement at work
- The accumulation of wealth
- The accumulation of 'status symbols' (cars, homes, etc)
- Recognition from others
- Taking opportunities to lead others
- Associations with people who have the esteem of others
- Personal achievement in areas such as education, skills, and hobbies
- Pride in the achievements of their family members

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As we said in the introduction, people who gain self-esteem from their accomplishments at work will then be motivated to achieve more in order to feel even better about themselves. Those with the healthiest sense of self-esteem are those whose esteem is based on their own accomplishments and internal feelings. The more self-esteem is based on external things and associations, the more fragile that esteem is.

Additionally, we perceive a certain ‘status’ that we have in our groups. This status could be conferred on us literally with a title, such as Director, Manager, Administrator, Chair, Treasurer, or Secretary. It could be an honorary status in the sense of being the person that others come to when they need help or advice. Or it could be that you simply have a certain level of popularity, success, or other achievement that gives you a strong sense of self-esteem and accomplishment. If these needs are not met, the individual may suffer from low self-esteem or an inferiority complex.

If you have a staff that you manage, it’s important to understand that the methods you use to reward and recognize their achievements can have an impact on their self-esteem – which of course in turn will affect their motivation. The opposite is true as well – if you fail to recognize the efforts and achievements of your team, you could end up damaging the motivation levels of your team, and even possibly, their self-esteem.

3.5.5 – Level Five – Self-Actualization

Maslow described this level of human need as the desire to become more and more oneself, and to become more and more of what we are capable of becoming. This level of need is related to meeting one’s full potential – whatever that might be.

The need for self-actualization is the need to become more and more oneself, and to become more and more of what we are capable of becoming.

The exact need is very individual. For example, one person might have the need to be the perfect parent. Another individual might have the need to become athletically gifted, or another to become artistically expressive.

It’s important to realize that this level of need is only achievable when the other four have been met. One must be physically nourished, not have to focus on safety, feel loved and a sense of belonging, and have a good level of self-esteem before he or she would seek this level of desire.

Maslow related two ways of understanding self-actualization that were taught to him by his professor, Dr. Wayne Dyer. They are:

1. To cease caring about the good opinion of others
2. To do things purely because you enjoy them – because they are the reason you are here on earth, not because of money, fame, or any other reason.

The more we are self-actualized, the more we will find that we are motivated by the things in life that make us happy rather than those that we do simply because it is our job or our role. Also, an increase in self-actualization naturally leads to more self-confidence because you feel more secure of yourself in general. If you no longer care about what other people think (generally) and you are doing things that you love, you are affirming your individuality and accepting yourself – faults and all.

Since we know that the other needs must be met before we can even consider self-actualization needs, It's no surprise then, that few workplaces we experience in our working lives will provide opportunities for our self-actualization. Yet as a supervisor, this information is important because it points to the value of assigning people to the jobs that they most enjoy.

Certainly, this is not possible in every job or at all times in any job. There are bound to be tasks that a person has to do that they will not like. But if you can identify what aspects of the job your employees like or that they excel at, try to assign them to those topics or tasks. You will find that they appreciate the opportunity to do what they enjoy and you will also be impressed by how motivated they are to do the task.

Also, look for opportunities for your employees to perform tasks that might not be directly within your department. For example, some workplaces allow people to:

- Volunteer for a local charity for a certain number of hours each pay period
- Participate in creating department newsletters
- Create “secret pal” programs where employees give each other small gifts on holidays
- Pursue training programs that they are interested in
- Attend higher education courses

If you need some assistance in thinking of ways to help your staff meet their needs for self-actualization, consult with your Human Resources department. There may already be programs or opportunities available that you just haven't heard of yet.

3. Motivation through Performance Management

3.1 Introduction

Performance management involves many roles. You must be a communicator, a leader, a role model, and a collaborator. Each individual member of the team should understand exactly what their responsibilities and expectations are, and as their supervisor, you should work to help them reach those goals.

One of the major roles of a supervisor is to manage the performance of the team and of each individual team member. Although some people find performance management to be difficult or unpleasant, when it is done well, it is about partnership and motivation.

Some people find performance management to be a difficult role to play. Some people in particular have difficulty when it comes to evaluating performance. But when it's done well, performance management is about partnership and motivation. If it's done from this perspective, there is nothing to be uncomfortable about. When this perspective is shared with your employees and they learn to see it that way, performance management becomes a powerful tool that helps your team to become more successful.

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3.2 Benefits of Performance Management

There are multiple benefits in performance management, many of which are directly related to motivation:

- When roles and responsibilities are clear, motivation is increased. If your team members know what they are supposed to be doing, there is no loss of motion due to confusion or uncertainty. Instead, a motivated individual will be in action, and a team full of motivated individuals will feed off of each other and help keep that motivation going.
- When expectations are clear, employees are more likely to take ownership of their work and to be committed to the expected outcomes. They will be more likely to be willing to take risks, to put in extra effort, and to view their own role as that of a partnership with you and with the rest of the team.
- When goals are clear and being pursued, your team members each will be able to contribute to team effectiveness. Without performance management, a team can't be expected to be effective. Without it, they can be expected to flounder.
- Performance management also helps you to develop your team members. You can use it to stretch their capabilities, to challenge them to step outside of their comfort zone. Doing so will provide opportunities for individual growth, which in turn will help to fuel their enthusiasm for their job.
- Helping them to grow and develop will help you to progress the individuals through the company. You can be building on strengths that the company needs – both in your division and in other areas.
- A solid, well-formed performance management process gives you a powerful tool for addressing poor performance issues, should they arise. If you and your employee have agreed upon what their duties and responsibilities are, then you have something to refer to when they are not holding up their end of the agreement.

Notice how these benefits would help your employees meet the needs of motivation we discussed in the last chapter. However, these benefits have all been listed from the point of view of the supervisor. But just as important is finding a way to communicate the benefits of performance management to your employees so that they are properly motivated by it. What are some of the benefits for the employee of well-structured and well-implemented performance management process?

- Security in knowing they are doing the job they way you want it done

- A clear understanding of what you expect and what the corresponding rewards or consequences will be
- A framework for gauging their own performance
- A continuing conversation with you regarding how to improve their skills and performance
- Knowing that they have the ability to determine their own success by following the performance plan you have set in place
- An enjoyment of the achievements they reach, which help foster their self-esteem and their future motivation

These benefits are fully attainable for your team members – provided you have laid the foundation of a fair, consistent, clear, and achievable performance management plan. What would you need to hear or see from your own coach in order to see performance management and performance evaluation as benefits in your own job performance? Or another way of asking yourself this question is to consider what actions from your own supervisor would ruin the possibility that you could see the benefits of the process? Your actions (or lack thereof) will determine the attitude that your team members have towards the performance management process and whether they are motivated by it or de-motivated by it.

These benefits are attainable for your team when you lay the foundation of a fair, consistent, clear, and achievable performance management plan.

3.3 Guidelines for a Motivational Performance Management System

3.3.1 Maintain Consistency

First, maintain consistency. Once you set performance targets, you need to act and evaluate according to them. If you tell your employees that you expect one thing but then evaluate them based on something else, your employees will lose trust in you as their supervisor and in the validity of your performance management process.

Maintain consistency. The targets you set for your team should be the same performance expectations that you use to evaluate them.

Certainly, there are times when the nature of the job or the goals of the organization may shift, requiring that you need to adjust performance targets. However, the reason for these changes should be made clear – and should remain as consistent as possible in the future.

3.3.2 Follow Through

Next, be sure to follow-through on your performance management process. If you tell your team that you will have quarterly performance evaluations, then be sure you have them. If you have as a goal for your employee that they learn a new skill, be sure that you provide them with the necessary training or resources. If you don't take your plan seriously and follow-through on what you said you would do, then you can't expect your employees to do so either.

Follow-through on your performance management process. If you don't stick to it, you can't expect your team to do so.

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3.3.3 Demonstrate the Right Attitude

If your attitude towards performance management is one that focuses on the benefits and your actions mirror that attitude, then your employees will learn to appreciate the process. They will understand that performance management isn't about punishment or criticism – it's about growth, productivity, and success as a team.

3.3.4 Be Willing to Do the Work

When you become a supervisor, unless you are leading an entirely new division or team, there will probably be some form of performance management program in existence. It might seem easy and productive to simply enact what has been done before. We are all so pressured for time on the job that doing something like reviewing the basics of your performance management process may easily slip to the back burner.

But look back a moment at the benefits we discussed in the last section. The only way for you to be certain that you and your team will experience those benefits and motivation is to review the existing process and make sure that it is set up as well as possible. Does the current system foster an environment of partnership and motivation, or does it perpetuate a negative perception of what performance management means? By taking the time to review the foundations of your performance management process, you will be in an excellent position for reaping all of the possible benefits.

4. Motivation through Goal-Setting

4.1 Introduction

Goal setting is a powerful tool that can be used to motivate and challenge employees or yourself. Knowing that you have achieved a goal gives you a sense of accomplishment and gives you a way to keep track of what you have completed in the work place. As your employees achieve each goal that you set and see the reward for doing so, they will become more motivated to reach the next goal that you set for them.

Goal setting can be used in every type of work place and with every level of employee.

However, there is a right way and a wrong way to set goals. Well set goals are clear and you can objectively determine whether or not the goal has been reached. Poorly set goals are not clear and you can't necessarily tell what it will look like once the goal has been achieved. The result is frustration and lack of effectiveness. We'll now look at two methods for goal setting that you can use to keep your team – and yourself – motivated to achieve.

4.2 Locke and Latham's Goal Setting Theory

Dr. Edwin Locke published his theory on goal setting in 1968 in an article called “Toward a Theory of Task Motivation and Incentives.” His theory was that employees were motivated by having a goal to work towards and that reaching that goal improved work performance overall. He showed that people work better when their goals are specific and challenging rather than vague and easy. For example, telling someone to ‘improve customer service’ is not specific. You might know what it means, but will the employee interpret it the same way? Instead, the goal should be clear, such as ‘reduce customer complaints by 50% over a five month period.’

In 1990, Locke and Dr. Gary Latham published “A Theory of Goal Setting and Task Performance” in which they identified five principles that were important in setting goals that will motivate others. These principles are:

- Clarity
- Challenge
- Commitment
- Feedback
- Task complexity

We'll now look at each of these principles individually.

4.2.1 Clarity

A clear goal is one that can be measured and leaves no room for misunderstanding. Goals should be very explicit regarding what behavior is desired and will be rewarded. Look at the goals listed in Figure 4 below to help you understand how to be clearer when setting goals. Continue to ask yourself the question, 'What will it look like if the goal is completed?' The answer to the question will help you identify clear goals.

A clear goal is one that can be measured and leaves no room for misunderstanding.

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Figure 4: Examples of Clear Goals

4.2.2 Challenge

What would give you a greater sense of accomplishment: achieving an easy goal or achieving one that was a real challenge? We are motivated by the reward that we believe we will receive for completing tasks. So if we know that a goal is a challenge and is also perceived as such by those that assigned it to us, we are more likely to be motivated to achieve it.

We are motivated by the reward we believe we will receive for completing tasks.

Of course, there is a balance to be struck with this principle. A goal should be challenging, but must still be achievable. If I don't believe that I can meet a goal that you've given to me, I might not even be motivated to make an attempt. I will dread the goal rather than be motivated by it. You should also be sure that you have identified rewards that are appropriate for the achievement of challenging goals versus

normal expectations. By positively rewarding the achievement of challenging goals, you encourage not just the achieving employee, but those other employees who witnessed the reward that was given for the achievement.

4.2.3 Commitment

In order for goals to be effective and motivating, they need to be agreed upon. The goal should be in line with the general, established expectations that you have had for the employee in the past. The employee and employer must both be committed to using the resources needed to complete the goal and should also agree on what the reward will be. This takes more time and energy on both parts, but it prevents an end result where the employee didn't have what he or she needed to have in order to be successful, or where the employer is frustrated by the employee's distaste for pursuing the goal.

The employee and employer must both be committed to using the resources needed to complete the goal.

This doesn't mean that you have to get an employee's absolute agreement to every goal that you set for them before setting it. But it does help to gain general agreement if the employee is involved in setting the goals. Allow them to participate in the conversation about what is needed in order to complete the goal, how much time it will take, and any other ways that you can let them participate in decision making about their work assignments.

You could also ask employees to create their own goals for themselves and then discuss them as a team. You might not be aware that someone wants to improve their skills in a certain area or learn more about a specific process. Letting them take on something that they want to learn and feel challenged by will give them more motivation to do the needed work to achieve their other goals as well.

4.2.4 Feedback

Goal setting for motivation is not going to be effective if there is not an opportunity for feedback. What if the person is halfway to completing the goal but they have a question? What if you suspect that the person is going about the process of completing the goal in the wrong way? Feedback is a chance to correct or clarify before the goal has been reached.

Feedback gives you the chance to clarify expectations, adjust level of difficulty, or make other necessary changes to keep the employee motivated.

Ideally, feedback is a type of progress reporting. It gives the supervisor the chance to clarify expectations and to adjust the level of difficulty of the goal if it seems it's too hard or too easy, or to make any other necessary changes to keep the employee motivated. For the employee, it offers a chance to make sure they are meeting their supervisor's expectations and to get recognition for what they have achieved up to this point, which can also help to recharge their motivation. When the goal has been reached, you can also conduct a formal feedback session so that you can discuss what went well and what could use improvement in the future.

4.2.5 Task Complexity

The final principle in Locke and Latham's goal setting theory is related to the level of complexity of the assigned task. When a role is complex or highly technical, the person in that role is often already highly motivated or else they wouldn't have reached that level in their organization.

However, even the most motivated person can become discouraged if the complexity of the task and the time it would take to complete it wasn't fully understood. Projects can have the tendency to reveal themselves as being more complex after they have begun, so both the employee and supervisor need to be in communication about how involved a task has become.

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Even the most motivated person can become discouraged if the complexity of the task wasn't fully understood.

In complex or technical work environments, it's important to make sure that the person has enough time to reach the goal. Unreasonable time expectations will drive a person to overwhelm themselves with work and become less effective as the stress level increases. You may also have to take into account the time necessary to allow for a learning curve or to ramp up their existing skills.

4.3 S.M.A.R.T. Goals

In goal setting, there is one method that has stood the test of time. Although there have been variations to what the acronym stands for over time, the main definition of a SMART goal is one that is:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Timely

Let's take a look at each of these aspects in more detail.

4.3.1 Specific

When a goal is specific, then you have clearly identified what it is that you expect to be accomplished. If you can't say specifically what you want to achieve, then how can you expect yourself or a subordinate to be able to achieve it? A specific goal will answer the questions:

- Who? Who is taking action or is affected?
- What? What is the result I want to achieve?
- Where? Is there a specific location?
- When? When do I want to complete this goal?

- Which? Are there restraints or requirements that have to be met?
- Why? Why is this important? What specifically is the benefit of achieving this goal?

For example, let's say that you want your employee to improve in customer relations. That's not specific enough. What exactly needs to happen in order to improve customer relations? How will you know that they have been improved enough? If you answer the questions above, however, the goal becomes much more specific:

- Who – customers whose accounts the employee is assigned to (currently 750)
- What – I want the employee to be the person that customers think of first when they need to talk to someone about internet technology. I will know this is happening when employee receives at least 20% more inbound customer calls each month. Employee will need to email and then call all 750 customers to re-introduce himself and our services.
- Where – In the five states where the employee currently has customers.
- When – Within six months.
- Which – Starting with customers that the employee hasn't heard from in more than a year.
- Why – To increase sales, reduce customer complaints, and increase customer satisfaction.

4.3.2 Measurable

Each goal that you set for employees should be measurable so that you have a means of ascertaining how far along the employee is in reaching the goal as well as when the goal will be complete. If you have a measure for an entire project, as in our example above of reaching 750 customers, then you can also determine how much of an employee's daily work load should be dedicated to achieving the goal. This will help you break your goals down to identify what needs to be accomplished day-to-day. You can then focus on motivating the employee to reach those smaller goals as part of reaching the overall goal.

So, for our example above, 750 customers need to be emailed and then called in enough time that we see a 20% increase in the amount of inbound calls within six months. Of course, that means that your employee(s) should complete outgoing contacts as soon as possible in order to allow time for the customers to respond. Let's assume that your employee(s) can complete 50 emails in a day in addition to maintaining normal customer service. Then we know that you can email everyone in 15 workdays or three weeks. But, you might not want to wait three weeks between emailing and calling. So let's say you decide to alternate emailing and calling.

In the first week, you decide to only email 100 people. The second week, you call those 100 people. Then you alternate doing the same thing over the following weeks until you have completed your list. Not only do you now have a measurable goal, but you've determined the work that needs to take place in order to achieve that goal and how you need to implement that work into your regular routine so that the employee has the best chance of success.

Not all goals have measures that are readily obvious. For example, if you want someone to get better at writing a certain report, how can you measure that? Ask yourself these questions to help you identify what the measures could be for each goal:

- How much?
- How much less?
- How many?
- How many less?
- How often?
- How much less often?

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- What rate of reduction (in errors, mistakes, issues, complaints)
- What rate of increase (in productivity, repeat business, retention, etc)

Or, just answer the question, “How will I know when the employee has reached the goal?” If you can come up with a clear picture of how you will know when your employee has reached the goal, then you are ready to motivate them by using the goal.

Going back to our example of how to write measures when you want someone to get better at writing a specific report, depending on the type of report we’re talking about, you could decide on measures like:

- A percent reduction in spelling and grammar errors
- A percent change in the length of the report
- A percent rate of the time that the correct format is followed
- A percent change in the amount of data, charts, or other visual figures
- A percent reduction in the number of times you have to return the report to them for corrections (or a number that is the limit of times you have to return said report to them in a month, quarter, etc.)

It might require some creative thinking for you to come up with appropriate measures, but every goal can have them. Just be sure that the measures are objective; that is, that anyone taking the measures would get the same result when looking at the results.

4.3.3 Attainable

As we saw in the last section, having a measure for your goals lets you plan the work for your employees that is necessary to achieve the goal. But before they begin working, you need to be certain that the goal is truly attainable. What if in the example above you had said that you wanted to see a 20% increase in inbound calls in just six weeks? How would your plan for reaching the goal have changed? Given your existing resources and the workload that you have to maintain while reaching for the goal, would that even have been possible?

If a goal is not attainable given the constraints that you face, you either need to work towards removing those restraints or lowering the level of the goal so that it becomes attainable. Otherwise you will have a completely de-motivated team who will not even want to try since they know (or believe) that the goal is attainable. You can avoid this issue by demonstrating to the employee how the goal is attainable. For example, by showing them the breakdown of work required each day in order to reach the goal.

4.3.4 Realistic

If a goal is to be realistic, it must be something that you and your team are willing and able to work towards. This doesn't mean that all your goals have to be low and simple. It just means that you have done a thorough analysis of the task at hand and you have come to the conclusion that the goal is realistic. Some questions you could ask yourself during this analysis include:

- Do I have the resources (financial, personnel, equipment, etc.) to reach the goal?
- Do I have the support of others in the department and the organization?
- Am I willing to provide – and make time for - necessary support for my team?
- What knowledge or expertise am I lacking that I will need to locate or learn?
- What knowledge or expertise does the team lack that I will need to provide for them?
- Have I reviewed my existing workload with my employees to prioritize this goal with existing goals?

In some version of SMART goals, the R actually stands for 'relevant.' In this case, you are comparing the goal to the overall mission of the organization and to your personal goals, objectives, and roles. Is the goal something that your team should actually be completing or is it better suited for someone else? Will it improve the employee's overall skills and ability to do his or her job? If not, why are you asking them to pursue it?

4.3.5 Timely

The final component of the SMART goals strategy is 'timely.' Without adding a time restriction to your goals, you don't have the necessary motivation to get going as soon as possible. Adding a realistic time boundary lends a sense of urgency to the goal for your employees, which can give them extra motivation.

Since organizations change regularly, so can goals. Making sure your goal is set with a time limit also ensures that you complete the goal while it is still relevant to what you are doing on the job. If a goal is no longer relevant, no one is going to be motivated to take action towards it.

5. Motivation through Delegating

5.1 Introduction

Delegation. It's a word that brings up different pictures for different people. But in terms of motivation skills, delegation is one of the most important things that you can learn to do well. There are two main reasons for this.

First, you are only one person. You are certain to need assistance in completing the tasks that your team has been assigned – otherwise, why even bother having a team at all? So when you learn to delegate, you are actually learning a powerful time-management skill. You can use it to focus on what is actually important for your team rather than wasting time on items that you could pass on to another of your team members. You will be a better leader if you are able to focus on what is best for the team, and delegating is the way to make this possible.

Second, delegating is actually a powerful tool in helping to develop and motivate others. When you delegate, you are offering an opportunity to the person you entrust with the job. They can learn a new skill, further develop existing skills, be responsible for bringing back new information to the team, get practice in leading others in completing the task that you assign, or get exposure to other areas of the organization that will make them better informed for performing their roles in the future. This is a powerful way to view delegating – you're not 'passing the buck.' You're creating motivational opportunities for your team members.

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Of course, delegating is a skill. You can't just hand off a job to an employee and expect them to automatically be ready to go and succeed. You will need to examine your workload, the skills of your team members, the potential for development, and the level of risk you are able to take when you are planning to delegate. And delegating doesn't mean washing your hands of something either. Delegating requires the ability to remain in communication about the status of a project without seeming to be micromanaging. If you're having to follow every detail along the way, you haven't truly delegated and you're not doing yourself or your team member any good.

5.2 Why People Resist Delegating

There are a number of reasons that people decide not to delegate a task or project. One common reason is that you might think it is easier to do it yourself. That's because it takes some work up-front in order for you to be able to delegate. Sure, in the short-term, it might have been faster for you to do it yourself. But once you have established a delegating relationship with your employee, it will take less time as you continue to do it.

Another reason people don't like to delegate is because they are afraid of losing control over the project that they are ultimately responsible for completing successfully. You have to ask yourself where your skills are best put to use. As the leader, focusing on individual projects is usually not the best use of your time. You can delegate the individual tasks, keeping your mind on the overall strategy and direction of the 'big picture.' You'll need to learn to balance the desire to keep control over every bit of a project with the understanding that in the long-run, you can be more effective as a leader and as a team if you learn to delegate well. Not to mention, you can't gain the motivational benefits of delegating if you don't ever delegate!

5.3 When Delegating Does and Doesn't Work

Before you know for certain whether a project is something that you can delegate, you'll want to explore several questions about the type of task or project, the frequency of it, and the risk that delegation might entail.

- Does anyone else on the team have the information that is needed (or can be given the information needed) to complete the task?
- Is the task likely to be needed again in the future?
- Could the task help to develop the skills of one of your team members?
- Do you have one or more team members who are likely to be motivated by this project?
- Do you have the time that it will take in order to delegate effectively? You'll need to have time to transfer knowledge, answer questions, check progress and possibly, for corrections.

- Is this a task that I can afford to delegate? Am I comfortable with the risk that I am taking in delegating?

To look at this from another point of view, there are also reasons that delegating might not work. Reasons that you might choose to do it yourself include:

- There isn't enough time to redo the job if it's not done right the first time
- The consequences for not completing the job on time are severe enough that it's not worth the risk
- The results have to be of the highest quality the first time around
- A failure at this project would do critical damage to the project
- No one is motivated to do this kind of work – they are more motivated doing what they are doing now.

In general, the more mission-critical a job is, the less likely it is one that you should delegate. But if you have a tendency to view every single job as mission-critical, you need to re-examine your ideas. There are certain to be tasks in every job that are less critical than others, or that are less bound by time. Start small, and gradually you'll build confidence in your team's abilities and in your own ability to delegate successfully.

5.4 To Whom?

To whom should you delegate? That depends entirely on the staff that you have, their skills, their interests, what they are motivated by, and the skills required for the task that you plan to delegate. You want to do the best you can to match the task to the right person. If you're considering more than one person for a task, addressing some of the following factors may help you to make the final decision.

1. The individual's level of experience, knowledge, skills, or ability to acquire new ones

- What abilities does he or she possess?
- Is there time to get the person additional needed skills?

2. How does the individual like to work?

- Is he or she independent enough?
- Does he or she have enough confidence?
- Does this task align with his or her interests?
- Will the new skills acquired align with his or her future work goals?

3. How will I shift his or her existing work load?
 - Does he or she have time for more work?
 - How will this affect the other team members?
 - Will it have any impact on meeting existing deadlines?

Once you have delegated to someone, you might feel that they are taking longer than you expected. Don't let this alone convince you that you have chosen poorly. Often we forget that tasks we are now accustomed to doing regularly once took us longer as well. If you have chosen the right person, their speed will likely increase with time, and the motivation that you see in them will more than make up for any delay you experience.

5.5 How to Delegate Successfully

Now that you've identified what tasks to delegate and to whom to delegate them, you need to still do the actual delegation. You need to be certain that you have shared all necessary information, given them the needed authority, and set boundaries as to where that authority ends. Other items should be covered so that you give your staff person the best possible chance of completing the task successfully. The following suggestions will help you to delegate well.

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1. Identify clearly for the person what the outcome and results of the task should be. You should be able to describe what a successful result will look like in specific detail. For example, you shouldn't give them the expectation of a report. Instead, be as specific as you can. A 10-12 page report, single spaced, answering questions A, B, & C, which includes the same sort of graphics as were used in the similar report dated January of last year.
2. Now give them the boundaries. How much authority do they have? To whom are they accountable during this process? Be sure to identify for them:
 - What types of decisions they can make on their own
 - What types of decisions they must come to you for
 - What information can be shared and what should be kept private
 - Any budget authority or constraints, if applicable
 - Any milestones at which they should check in with you before moving on
 - Any time expectations for those milestones and for the final project
 - Whom they can go to for support, information, or assistance
 - Who else on the team will be assisting them
3. Make sure you are giving them the appropriate responsibility level for the authority level that you have given them. In other words, you cannot hold them accountable for something that you have not given them the authority to do. Remember that ultimate accountability rests with you. Expecting something from them that you have not given them the authority to achieve will kill their motivation quickly.
4. Look for the person who is closest to the work that you want done, even if it means delegating to a lower level of the organization than you would have first considered. For example, if you want to write a 'frequently asked questions' document on your product, who better to delegate the task to than the customer service representative who has had the best sales record, customer service satisfaction scores, or other obvious demonstration of expertise in the subject matter? They may also have the most interest and therefore the most motivation.

5. Establish a means and schedule of communicating that ensures that you are available for questions and troubleshooting. Make sure you treat that set aside time as if it is a scheduled appointment you must keep. This lets you monitor progress and identify any corrections that are needed before the person is way off target. Make sure you do this in a timely manner – you don't want someone having put in hours and hours of work only to find out they are on the wrong track. Otherwise you'll face the situation of having someone who was motivated now feel discouraged.
6. Monitor against agreed upon timelines, deadlines and milestones. This has you focus on results rather than the way those results are achieved. In other words, let them do the work their way as long as they are producing satisfactory results in a timely manner. It can be very motivating for someone to have control over how they spend their day – as long as they are getting the job done, you shouldn't worry too much about exactly in what order they are getting it done.
7. Focus on fostering continued motivation. Let the person know what additional opportunities might become available if they complete the task successfully. Will there be financial rewards? Public recognition? Shared credit? Remember the theories of motivation we examined earlier. You need to be sure you are committed to whatever you promise and that you have considered what will be most motivating to the person you have selected.
8. Expect the person to propose solutions to any problems that they bring to you. This prevents them from passing the project back to you and keeps them involved and responsible. Let them know this is an expectation when you first discuss the problem with them so that they are motivated to problem solve before they come to you.
9. Be certain to inform other team members of the authority that you have given to the person you are delegating to, and to share this information with any relevant stakeholders in other divisions or departments of the company or to anyone else affected by the decision to delegate. Remember to do so in a way that won't demotivate your other employees.

As you have more experiences of delegating to your team, you will learn additional items that need to be covered in order to make each particular project easily delegated. As you continue leading the team, you'll figure out what works best with each team member as well. Remember that as a leader, you are helping your team to develop skills that will not only help you the next time a similar task comes around, but will help that team member to be better equipped for additional responsibilities in the future.

6. Understanding Unmotivated Employees

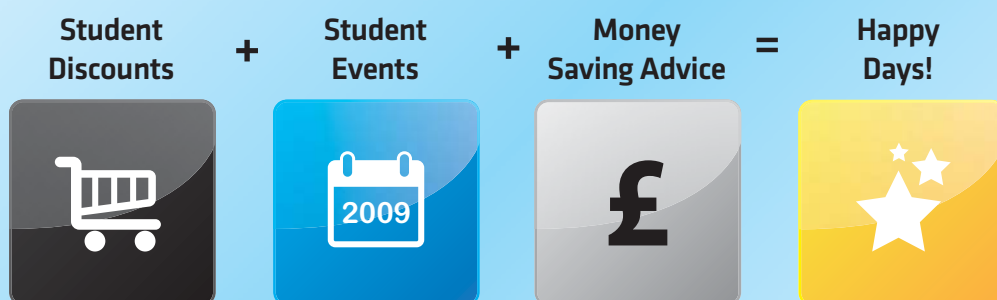
6.1 Introduction

If you have an unmotivated employee, you need to try to understand why they might not already be performing at the level that you would like them to. We will first assume that any employee you have is someone with the desire to perform well. This intention is necessary for you to successfully motivate anyone; even if the intention is hidden beneath a poor attitude. Your ability to identify the reasons for a lack of motivation and then tap into the potential of a person is what will distinguish a good motivator from a great one.

Before you can motivate an employee to their best level of performance, you need to understand what the barriers are that are keeping them from performing at that level already.

In other words, a great motivator is someone who makes the poor performance of an employee his or her own responsibility. He is someone who looks at poor performance as a failure to provide some information, example, encouragement, or other resource to his employees. He recognizes that poorly motivated employees are employees who have not yet been tapped for their potential, and he makes a plan to coach that employee towards reaching that potential. He is willing to consider that he might be part of the employee's motivation problem, and that as a result, he is part of the solution.

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6.2 Common Reasons for Poor Motivation

There are a number of common reasons for poor motivation in an employee, though every situation and every person is different. But the only way to get someone performing at peak levels is to find and understand their reasons. Following are some of the most common reasons.

- They lack the required capabilities.

In this situation, the employee simply doesn't have the needed capabilities to perform the job. They might not have asked for help, or they might have asked but not received it for some reason. They might feel as if they should know it or be able to do it, and so they have tried to keep working without the needed capabilities.

Improved motivation will not be possible unless you can help this employee to acquire the needed capabilities. You may need to arrange for training programs, one-on-one assistance from another employee, or dedicated time with you in order to help get them to the right place. But the important thing to realize in this situation is that if it is not rectified, frustration will grow – and motivation will continue to suffer.

- The job isn't challenging enough.

In this case, your employee is simply bored. Perhaps they have more capabilities than you have realized and that haven't been put to use. Boredom can manifest itself in several ways; poor attendance, poor attitude, and poor motivation.

Improving motivation with this person will require that you find a way to end the boredom. Ask them to help train new employees, or get them involved on committees or team projects that let them learn about other areas of the company. Remember that people are motivated by things that interest them and help them grow. If boredom isn't addressed, a poor attitude will eventually develop, followed by possible shirking of responsibilities.

- They feel they aren't appreciated.

No one wants to feel that they aren't appreciated. Most of us need to get some kind of affirmation from our work and in fact, remember that a portion of our self-esteem is based on getting that affirmation. Employees who don't feel that they are properly appreciated – whether with money, opportunities, or just words of acknowledgement – are bound to have performance issues eventually. You have to remember that the kind of appreciation you express should be in line with what the employee wants. Otherwise they will not be motivated by the appreciation you give them.

This is one area in which you can take effective action as a manager. Ask yourself if you have been providing enough positive feedback in the format that is best suited for the individual. You might need to provide more appreciation to some employees than others, and perhaps more than you would normally provide. Speak plainly, and only make promises that you are certain you can keep.

- They feel they've been overlooked in some way.

This is a similar situation to the previous one of feeling under-appreciated, except that this situation is usually specific to feeling as if they have not been provided with certain opportunities. They may believe that they have been overdue for a promotion, a position of some status, or some other perk that others have received. They have stopped being motivated because they don't believe that they will ever receive what they deserve.

Again, you have an opportunity here to take action, beginning with asking yourself whether or not there is validity to their concern. Have you somehow overlooked the employee? Examine your thoughts about their abilities and their skills. Have you failed to give them the same opportunities as you have given to others? If so, try to understand why. Is there some prejudice on your side, or is there something actually lacking in their performance? Honest examination of the situation will help you identify your next steps towards re-motivating the employee.

- They don't get along with their colleagues.

As we said before, most of us spend more time with our work colleagues than we do with our family or friends. If we don't get along with our colleagues, that's a lot of our lives that will be spent in unpleasant situations. If an employee feels like an outsider or as if he is not liked, or if he feels he has no support from his team members, then your employee is lacking a necessary resource to be motivated.

As the team leader, you have a responsibility to foster a supportive team environment where all of your employees at least respect and are considerate of each other even if they can't actually like each other. Ask yourself if you are doing everything you can to provide opportunities for the team to bond and support each other.

- They have personal problems

Life goes on, even during the work week. All of us have times when our personal lives have encroached on our professional lives. Perhaps we needed to take or make more personal calls than normal or take time off at inconvenient times. Or maybe our

motivation has suffered because we are nervous, distracted, or upset. The issues we are dealing with just overwhelm any motivation we would normally have at work.

The good news is that this type of performance issues is often temporary. Once the problem is resolved, the motivation issue is resolved as well. Identify whether or not there are resources available that can assist your employee through this time period. For example, some organizations offer employee assistance programs that involve temporary counseling or even temporary financial assistance. Don't wait until you have an employee with a personal problem to find out what resources are available in your organization – find out before you need the information so you are prepared.

There may be some personal problems that you cannot address in the workplace. For example, you may have a zero tolerance program for drug and alcohol use in the workplace. Again, be certain that you are aware of your options and your responsibilities so that you protect yourself from any legal response as well.

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- They've developed an attitude

A negative attitude is a sign that something is wrong but is not usually the problem itself. When you have an employee with a negative attitude, your goal should be to discover what is causing the attitude. It could be any one of the other reasons for poor motivation mentioned here or it could be something else all together.

The best chance you have of getting this person motivated again is to have open and honest communication with them. When you do this, you need to be willing to hear out their concerns or complaints. Remember that to them, their concerns are valid enough to be impacting their motivation. So it will behoove you as the supervisor to understand the root cause of their concerns so that you can address them and move on.

- The job isn't right for them

In the end, there are some times when the lack of motivation is due to the fact that the job and the employee are simply not right for each other. You may try to work with the employee and improve their motivation and performance, but nothing seems to work. In these cases, you may need to accept that the job is simply a bad fit for the employee.

You have several options in this situation. You can attempt to find another position for the employee within the organization, you can attempt to reorganize job duties in order to make the job a better fit, or you can decide that it is time for the employee to move on.

6.3 More Discussion on Attitude Problems

When you have an employee who has a bad attitude, we discussed that it is often a symptom of another problem. You are confident that this employee is able to do the job, that they have the needed skills and abilities, but for some reason they are not currently doing so.

The problem with a bad attitude is that it can become infectious. If one person is focusing on the negative aspects of a situation, being sarcastic about your attempts at motivation, attempting to sabotage the team's efforts, or in other ways having a negative impact on the team, they may eventually affect other individuals with their negative thinking. The team's performance as a whole will suffer. If you don't handle a poor attitude, you will soon have more poor attitudes to deal with.

This situation is complicated by the fact that in most cases, someone with a bad attitude will not admit to or even recognize that they have a bad attitude. This makes it important for you to control your approach. When you first approach someone with your concerns about their attitude, some common responses are:

- I don't have a bad attitude – I'm just being realistic
- This is just who I am
- I am just saying what everyone else is thinking
- I have this attitude because of others, this organization, or you as a manager
- I don't see what the big deal is
- Other people say these things and you don't say anything to them

The key to addressing a poor attitude is to focus on the effects that specific behaviors are having on the overall motivation of the team. It would be easier for you to be general and just say, 'you're attitude is having a negative impact on the team.' But that won't be productive and doesn't give the employee anything specific to work on.

Instead, you need to isolate the specific behaviors and what the result of those behaviors is. A good form of communication to use is a pattern of 'when you (specific behavior), it (specific results). For example, you might say:

When you speak in that tone of voice, it sounds very aggressive and it makes your teammates uncomfortable and unwilling to express their own opinions.

When you make negative comments about your team member it causes him to feel as if he is not a valued member of the team, which impacts his motivation and performance.

When you talk to me with that sarcastic tone, it makes me feel that you don't respect me or my role as the leader of this team. It makes our relationship strained, when it could be a mutually supportive partnership instead.

The next step is to suggest that they try seeing what difference changing that behavior will produce. For the first example above, ask them to try changing the tone of their voice in the meeting and seeing what happens. Once they see the difference their new behavior makes, both for themselves and for others, they will be more likely to adjust their behavior in the future on their own.

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