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Motivating Employees

by Anne Bruce and James S. Pepitone
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Take-Aways

- You can only influence what people are motivated to do; you can't motivate them yourself.
- All motivation is intrinsic; it comes from within.
- To influence people's motivation, you have to discover why they do things; learn their reasons, purposes, and causes.
- The three keys to intrinsic motivation are collaboration, content, and choice.
- Understand the different needs that drive individuals; each person is unique with different talents and skills.
- You can get people to work harder if you encourage their entrepreneurial spirit.
- Use personal growth motivation instead of fear or incentives.
- Link motivation to performance to get improved work.
- Besides using positive motivators, eliminate the de-motivators, such as frustrating policies or red-tape.

Rating (10 is best)

Overall	Applicability	Innovation	Style
6	7	6	4

Review

Motivating Employees

Anne Bruce and James S. Pepitone have written a basic, hands-on book about motivating employees more effectively. They emphasize the need for your employees to become self-motivated, since only intrinsic motivation truly works. The book provides good, specific suggestions about ways to increase motivation. However, its core principles sound familiar – like material from an Organizational Behavior 101 textbook. Nonetheless, this book provides a good, easy-to-read summary of these fundamental ideas. *getAbstract.com* recommends this book to supervisors or managers who want to refresh their foundation in motivating employees, or to new managers who need to acquire this ability.

Abstract

"If you really want to influence people's motivation, you have to uncover their reasons for doing things, their purposes, and their causes. People aren't going to be truly motivated for your reasons and goals."

The Importance of Intrinsic Motivation

The key to motivating employees is understanding that people are motivated to do something by the <u>belief that it is in their best interest</u>. As a result, you cannot motivate someone else. You can only influence them once they become motivated. Thus, you have to improve your ability to influence your employees, so they feel motivated to do a good job. You can do this by helping them recognize how their welfare meshes with the organization's. Then, they will be naturally motivated to work hard – because they believe it is in their best interest. This relationship between influence, motivation, and hard work occurs because <u>motivation is within each person</u> or "intrinsic." People are motivated when they want to do something and, therefore, act to achieve that goal. While external factors may affect employees, these factors are always shaped by their personal intrinsic concerns. Employees have to "buy into" the extrinsic stimuli by linking it with their intrinsic concerns.

"People are motivated to do what they believe in is in their best interest."

The Keys to Inspiring Intrinsic Motivation

Three basic motivational keys provide this intrinsic motivation in the workplace. The three "C" are <u>collaboration, content, and choice</u>. Collaboration is critical, because people are more motivated to work hard when they want to cooperate and help others succeed. Content is essential, because people feel more inspired to work hard when they recognize how their work adds value to the organization and contributes to their "work community." And, choice is necessary because people are eager to work harder when they "feel empowered to make decisions about their work." Thus, you want to create an environment in the workplace based on these principles, so employees feel motivated to work hard and well. You can accomplish this three key ways:

"Your expectations affect the behavior of your employees. If you expect better performance and trust employees to deliver, you're likely to get it."

1. <u>Fear motivation</u> – Fear motivates workers to work harder so they don't lose their jobs. This approach can work in the short-term, but it can result in less cooperation and communication, and result in anger and resentment.
2. <u>Incentive motivation</u> – Incentives motivate employees to work hard for rewards. However, when you set up this expectation, workers can come to want even more rewards in the future.
3. <u>Personal growth motivation</u> – This helps employees find more meaning and purpose in their work. It is really the best way to inspire long-term motivation.

Understanding the Basic Principles of Human Nature

The factors that motivate employees are rooted in basic principles of human nature, as described by authors Douglas McGregor and Abraham Maslow.

McGregor discusses his concept of <u>Theory X</u> and <u>Theory Y</u> in his book *The Human Side of Enterprise* published in 1960. He distinguishes between Theory X managers and Theory Y managers. Theory X managers base their management style on the assumption that work is "inherently distasteful." Theory X managers believe that most people are lazy, unambitious, and irresponsible. They prefer close supervision and are motivated primarily by money. By contrast, Theory Y managers assume that people really like their work, are committed to it, find recognition and self-fulfillment as important as money, like to express self-direction, and want responsibility. Theory X managers are more control-oriented and directive, while Theory Y are more empowerment-oriented and encourage people to be more creative and grow in their work. McGregor's theory is useful for understanding different ways of interacting with employees and how they may respond.

Maslow bases his theory on <u>the needs that motivate behavior</u>. He proposes that people are motivated, first, by their fundamental physiological needs for food, shelter, water, and air. Next, they are motivated by the need for security and safety. At the third level, people are motivated by social needs, for instance, the need for belonging and respect. At the fourth level, people seek fulfillment of ego needs: self-esteem, status, and recognition. Finally, at the fifth level, self-actualization motivates people, who need to realize their "personal potential," and to become all they can be.

You should understand the <u>different needs that drive different people</u>. Each person is unique, with individual talents and skills. Learn by watching people work, talking to them, or doing employee surveys, so you can better meet the needs of different employees.

Encourage Entrepreneurial Thinking

Help employees <u>think more like entrepreneurs</u>. Explain the nature of the company and demonstrate how it functions and makes money. Help employees better understand the competition and encourage them to take intelligent risks. Inspire them to engage in "innovative thinking." As part of this empowerment process, support your employees if they make mistakes and treat errors as learning opportunities. You might set up special training programs or brainstorming sessions to teach your employees more about the company, to allow them to provide input in how it can improve, and to explore their ideas.

The Need to Link Motivation to Performance

Help your employees feel more motivated by linking motivation to performance. <u>Build a connection</u> between their interests and the organization's. Major ways you can help increase their employees' performance include:

- Make their work more challenging.
- Help them see the big picture and how they fit into it.
- Set clear standards. Specifically describe what you expect. Define good performance and delineate unacceptable performance.
- Clarify each employee's responsibilities, including situations that require extra work.

- Help your employees "buy into higher performance standards," so they are willing to accept these goals.
- Decide on a plan of action, including specific tasks you expect each person to do. Be willing to revise your expectations as necessary.
- Observe your employees in action and follow-up as necessary to provide feedback.
- Be clear about the rewards you will give your employees if they meet or exceed the performance goals and standards you have set. You can use a number of different types of positive reinforcement to help you motivate them, such as greater autonomy, more responsibility, promotions, special recognitions, and greater visibility in the organization.

In making this link between motivation and performance, you should expect the best from your employees, because expectations influence behavior. Researchers call this the "Pygmalion Effect." If you are confident your employees will do better, they generally will. To apply this Pygmalion principle in the workplace, create a high-performance environment based on high expectations. Then, share the rewards of successful performance, through special recognition, praise, profit-sharing, or bonuses. Inspire others to perform at even higher levels by creating a work environment where people really like what they do. Make work fun.

Getting Your Employees to Accept Responsibility for Motivation
As you influence employees to become more motivated, teach them to "rely on themselves to stay motivated." Get them to accept self-responsibility, which includes recognizing that they are responsible for their own success. Promote this sense of initiative by giving your employees responsibility for achieving something alone. Be sure you also give them the authority and power to do it their own way. You have to give up some of your power, to do this, but sharing power improves performance. Power-sharing is also at the heart of promoting another great motivator: the entrepreneurial spirit.

You can share your power and redefine the manager-employee relationship several ways. You can "enlarge every employee's circle of influence," by increasing the ways each employee interacts with other employees. You can define jobs more broadly, so employees have room to be more creative and exercise more autonomy. You can eliminate unnecessary rules and policies that hamper employees.

Feeling Hope and Trust
Along with giving your employees more power and responsibility, you also need to tell them you believe in their abilities. Show that you trust them, since trust is the foundation of all relationships. Then, demonstrate trust and respect. Show them they can trust you as well by keeping your promises and expecting others to keep theirs. Trust requires being a good, inspiring role model and living by the values of the organization and by your personal values. Be optimistic that your faith and trust in your employees will have good results. Show them you believe they will "do the job right."

Making Work Fun
When a work environment is fun, people have plenty of energy, increased self-esteem, more team spirit, and more enthusiasm. They are also more likely to provide better customer service.

"People feel more motivated to work hard when they're inspired to cooperate, when they understand how their work adds value to the organization, and when they feel empowered to make decisions about their work."

"The key for you is to create an environment where employees feel motivated to do a great job every day."

"People act according to their basic needs. Know what drives each of your employees so that you can link job activities with each individual's personal needs and help him or her find greater motivation to perform well."

Combating the De-Motivators

Besides taking positive actions to promote motivation, get rid of "de-motivators." De-motivators are essentially the opposite side of the motivation coin. They are the events, management decisions, disappointments, and frustrations that discourage employees. For example, while you can use performance reviews in a positive way to give positive feedback and help employees see how well they are doing, you can also use these reviews in a negative way. A performance review is negative if it is handled like a school report card that highlights what the employee has done wrong.

A bad fit between an employee and a job to be done is also very de-motifying. Hire employees who offer the best fit with the job requirements, both in terms of skills and personality. Develop those multi-faceted employees through training, feedback, praise, and encouragement.

Motivating Good Teamwork

Finally, beside inspiring motivation in each employee, you want to inspire employees to work together as a team. You can accomplish this by being a caring manager. Encourage team members to do more together than each member could do alone. Lead from the heart. Show your concern for team members. Let them know you have a passion, a "fire in your belly," for your work. Emphasize how people can make a difference by working together. Instill the spirit of teamwork in your people, a spirit based on a "cohesive, ener-gizing, and compelling force that brings individuals together to work toward a common goal."

About The Authors

Anne Bruce is a nationally recognized keynote speaker and workshop leader. She has led programs at Harvard and Stanford law schools. She facilitates workshops on perfor-mance management topics, leadership, customer service, and internal performance con-sulting. James S. Pepitone has twenty years experience as a management consultant. He has worked with many of the world's leading companies. He is the author of *Humaneer-ing: Technology for Improving Human Performance at Work* and *Future Training: A Roadmap for Restructuring the Training Function*.

Buzz-Words

Accountability / Choice / Collaboration / Content / De-motivators / Empowerment / Entrepreneurial thinking / Extrinsic motivation / Hierarchy of needs / Intrinsic motiva-tion / Motivation / Sharing power / Theory X / Theory Y