



Performance Matters

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Newsletter

Engage!

Tapping Potential through
Understanding Motivation

“People who are unable to motivate themselves must be content with mediocrity no matter how impressive their other talents.”

■ Andrew Carnegie

In the workplace there is a tremendous opportunity to tap unused potential and resources. Unleashing some of this hidden power is the challenge organizations and individuals face in today’s world of increased competition. To get individuals cognitively, physically, and emotionally engaged in their work is a worthwhile goal for all organizations. Almost all individuals have an innate desire to do well and to excel in their endeavors. The challenge then is not in creating a desire but in understanding motivation and what creates it.

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Robin has facilitated presentations with groups of 150 or more, and has been a guest speaker for several well-known organizations, including the New York State Conference of Mayors, The Governor’s Office of Employee Relations, and the New York State Society of Medical Assistants Annual Convention.

She co-authored the book *Maximize Your Mind; Peak Your Potential* that is available on her web site.

Her article “Ethics in Sales” was published in the HRDQ Press.

For a complete listing of products and services visit our web sites at: www.ReachandAchieve.com and www.PerformanceLeadershipTools.com

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What is Motivation?

Motivation comes from the root word “to move” and can be defined as the emotions, wants, needs and beliefs that drive a person’s behavior. We are all individuals with different needs and desires. In an organization no matter what the motivational technique used to increase productivity, the result is always that the method works positively on some people, negatively on others and has little or no effect on the rest. One size does not fit all, in other words different things motivate different people. Understanding what our unique motivators are and what makes us different gives us the power to be effective at what we do.

In our interactions with others, we observe their behavior but what we don’t see is what creates that behavior: their inner thoughts, feelings, values and needs. It is through understanding what lies beneath the actions that we can motivate ourselves and others. Feelings of confidence and optimism or of anger, guilt, and fear can cause us to act as we do. Studies have shown that the power of emotion directly effects our buying decisions. If we feel good about something, we are more likely to take action on it, whether that action is purchasing a product or service or completing a task at work. If we love the work that we do we are much more likely to take action and get things done. At the opposite end, if we don’t enjoy the work or experience negative emotions in relation to it, we are more likely to avoid taking the necessary action or do just enough to get by. Pleasurable feelings impact not only our buying decisions but the quality of our work as well. Many people are not consciously aware of the power of their feelings and don’t know how to use the power of emotion to their advantage.

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Underlying Values and Needs

Another underlying part of a person’s behavior is values and needs. We tend to act on what we judge is important to us at that time. These values unconsciously guide our actions and priorities. Stephen Reiss from Ohio State University said that if you want to predict a person’s behavior, understand their motivational needs and desires. People will behave in ways that fulfill their unique values and needs. As part of his research, Reiss discovered that nearly everything we do could be traced to sixteen fundamental values and desires. He designed the Reiss profile as a way to measure these individual strivings. For information on the Reiss Profile:

http://www.performanceleadershiptools.com/the_reis_pro.htm

Reiss believes these 16 individual strivings motivate everyone but to different extents. In other words, each individual has a unique motivational profile that drives his or her behavior.

Questions to Consider

What motivates you?

What are your unique talents and gifts?

What do you value most?

What keeps you engaged in your work?

What disengages you from what is most important?

David McClelland's Theory

In another set of research results on motivation, David McClelland, in his acquired-needs theory, suggested that an individual's specific needs are acquired over time and are shaped by one's life experiences. Most of these needs can be classified as either achievement, affiliation, or power. A person's motivation and effectiveness are influenced by these three needs.

- *High need for achievement* - High achievers desire to excel at what they do and like challenging projects with reachable goals. They prefer frequent feedback as a way to monitor the progress of their achievements.
- *High need for affiliation* - High affiliators perform best in a cooperative environment. They need relationships with other people and strive to be accepted by others.
- *High need for power* – Individuals who show a high need for power seek the opportunity to manage others. They desire to organize the efforts of others to further the goals of the organization.

Does all this sound complex? Maybe humans are complex creatures and there is more to us than can be seen by the naked eye. As leaders, we must strive to use our emotions to positively engage those around us and look beneath the surface manifestations for the seeds that make us unique. When people can begin to understand what drives them, they can proactively act in accordance with their needs, values and emotions to effectively achieve results through right action.

Favorite Quotes

“People underestimate their capacity for change. There is never a right time to do a difficult thing. A leader's job is to help people have vision of their potential.”

□ John Porter

“Give light, and the darkness will disappear of itself.”

□ Desiderius Erasmus

“Be miserable. Or motivate yourself. Whatever has to be done, it's always your choice.”

□ Wayne Dyer

“Who is sure of their own motives can in confidence advance or retreat.”

□ Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

“Life is not easy for any of us. We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something, and that this thing, at whatever cost, must be attained.”

□ Marie Curie

Principles of Motivation

You can't motivate others, but you can create an environment and the conditions for people to motivate themselves. Keep in mind these simple principles:

1. Positive thoughts motivate. Thoughts are powerful and have a direct impact on how we feel and what we do. Create an environment that encourages positive thinking.
2. Enjoyment motivates. When people love what they do they are naturally motivated to do their best. People enjoy what they do when the job fits their strengths and talents and they have the necessary tools to succeed.
3. Feeling important and appreciated motivates. Taking the time to appreciate others and make them feel important fills needs and fosters an environment of trust.
4. Success motivates. When people have experienced success they are more likely to take risk. Help people choose projects that they can achieve and recognize their accomplishments.
5. Personal benefits motivate. Everyone listens to the same radio station of WII-FM (What's In It for Me). Help people see the relevance of what they do and how it benefits them and others.

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