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Motivating Team Members

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This is a practical approach to the concept of motivation: what it is, what it means to different people, how to discover what motivates different people, and how to create a motivational culture in a workplace.

There are several thought-provoking questions to help the student apply the course to themselves and their workplace in a simple, consistent, and straightforward manner.

It is intended for those wanting to understand the concept of motivation as a preparation to lead a project team or a work group.

It will help students understand the source of motivation and how to approach getting work done through people effectively. Although there are many personalities found in any workplace, these principles of motivation are universal and students completing this course will find them easy to apply.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students taking this course will learn to:

1. Define the term “motivation.”
2. Apply the concept of motivation in the workplace and daily life.
3. Explain and play the “mental game” that lies hidden behind workplace decisions and events.
4. Identify motivational opportunities that lie within events at work.
5. Discover what will motivate their employees individually.
6. Create and maintain a “motivational cycle” with his or her employees for a positive impact on productivity.

WHAT IS “MOTIVATION”?



Essentially, motivation is the unspoken answer people hear when they ask themselves **“Why would I want to do that”**, or **“What’s in it for me?”**

If their internal answer gives them a good reason to act, they will. If not, they will not act.

The unspoken answers to internal questions are typically something like this:

Situation	Internal Question	Internal Answer and Action (the motivation)
Seeing new clothes for sale at the mall	<i>“Why would I want to spend that much for a suit?”</i>	“Because it will make me look so good!” and buy it or “I need the money for something else that I want more” and not buy it.
Your boss asks for volunteers to work late	<i>“Why would I want to do that?”</i>	“Because I want to get off early next week to see my child’s game” and volunteer or “I don’t like him/her – why should I help?” and not volunteer.
You see a charity asking for donations	<i>“Why would I want to donate to that?”</i>	“Because it makes me feel good to help others” and donate or “Nobody helped me when I needed it” and do not donate.
You see a potential problem coming up at work that no one else sees.	<i>“Why would I want to tell the boss about this?”</i>	“Because I like my boss and this is a good place to work” and tell someone or “If my boss and this company doesn’t care about me, why should I care about them?” and stay quiet.
What have you seen recently?	<i>What would be the question?</i>	What are the choices of actions?



Think about this...

How does thinking about the internal questions help a leader who is trying to get a team member to do something specific?

It is because a leader should have an answer for the employee’s internal question of *“Why would I want to do that”* **BEFORE** they ask someone to do something.

Before we go much farther and explain why you should have an answer for them asking themselves “*Why would I want to do that*” you must consider something else first.



There can be as many reasons why people are motivated to act (or not act) as there are people. Some of the more common reasons include:

- I *materially* gain from it (money or property)
- I *emotionally* gain from it (it makes me feel good)
- I *spiritually* gain from it (it heartens my soul)
- I *psychologically* gain from it (enhances my reputation or self-image)



What additional reasons can you think of?

Think about this...

- Now before you ask someone to do something, take a moment to consider if there were a way that doing what you want will help him or her achieve any of the gains listed above.
- In other words, ask yourself this, “*How can I present this need of mine to them in such a way that it will help them achieve something they want?*” or “*How can I make it easy for them to want to do this?*”

Parents may say to a child, “The sooner you get your room cleaned up (what the parent wants), the sooner you can go out to play with your friends (what the child wants).” While it is true the parents can still order the child to clean up their room, it may not have the speed and quality that the parent desires.

We are now getting into the mental game that can have career ramifications depending on how well you understand the concept of motivation. *This is a crucial part of this course – please review it as often as necessary to make sure it sticks.*



Let's look at the situation where you as a leader need someone to work late on a special project deadline.

Start by asking yourself these questions:

1. Why do I need someone to work late?

- a. An unexpected event happened and we have to make up for it. *This could be an opportunity for you to demonstrate you are a good leader as you help the company recover.*
- b. It is poor planning on your part. *If so, what will you do differently the next time so this does not happen again? This could be a danger for you because an important part of a leader's job is PLANNING and SCHEDULING.*
- c. We always work late at this time because of workflows (like end-of-month processing.) *This is not a risk to you but maybe a chance to eliminate the periodic need to do this.*

2. How long will they have to stay?

- a. They stay until it is finished which may motivate them to work quickly.
- b. They must stay a specific amount of time. This may allow Parkinson's Law¹ to appear, ("Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion.")

3. What is the quality of results I need?

- a. "Good enough to get by" means their frame of mind should be at least **neutral** instead of **vengeful** that can lead to sabotage, a poor work product, or seeding dissention

¹ C. Northcote Parkinson first articulated it in an article published in *The Economist* in 1955, later reprinted together with other essays in the book *Parkinson's Law: The Pursuit of Progress*, (London, John Murray, 1958) based on extensive experience in the British Civil Service. The scientific observations, which contributed to the law's development, included noting that as Britain's overseas empire declined in importance, the number of employees at the Colonial Office increased.

among the employees. They would probably say, “I HAVE TO work late” when talking to coworkers.

- b. “Very good” means their frame of mind should be positive and would probably say, “I GET TO work late” or simply, “I AM WORKING late.”

Getting back to their internal question, “*Why would I want to do that*”, you now have to think about how to present the situation (the need to work late) to them that can do the most for your career (your motivation) or at least not harm your career (also a motivator):

1. *The work can be completed by anyone in the workforce.* If so, this gives you a broader potential audience for selection or volunteering.

How will you determine who does the work?

- a. If you consider asking for volunteers, ask yourself first, “**Why would anyone want to do it?**”
 - i. Can you trade them for some time off later? If so, you can say, “Who wants to trade working late tonight for 2 hours in exchange for 2 hours off later?” **(Note: This is “comp” – compensation – time. Be sure to check with your supervisor or HR department first to make sure your policies allow this.)**
 - ii. Is there something prestigious about doing that work that would appeal to someone? (“Only a specialist can do this.”)
 - iii. Does someone have a personal interest in the completion of the work? Is it part of a project he or she had initiated?
- b. If you are going to have a lottery (everyone’s name in a basket and someone pulls a name), does that indicate you cannot make a decision?
- c. If you are going to select someone, will he or she perceive it as retaliation for something in the past or as discrimination? Then what will you do?
- d. Do you have a rotation sequence that means everyone, in turn, must work late?

- e. If you select someone who does not want to do it and you say, “OK”, and look for another one, what will stop the next one from saying they do not want to do it?
 - f. If you have to insist that someone stays late and he or she really does not want to, how may their attitude affect the quality of their work?
2. *The work can only be done by a select few.* How will you select them fairly and without it looking like favoritism or revenge?

THE SOURCE OF MOTIVATION

Take a moment to look back to the opening statement, “Essentially, motivation is the unspoken answer people hear when they ask themselves “**Why would I want to do that**”, or “**What’s in it for me?**”

What is the source of that “...unspoken answer people hear ...?”

It is their internal voice responding to their needs based on their experiences. The things that motivate you may not be the things that motivate me. Therefore, it only makes sense that the more I consider the situation *from your perspective*, the better the chance I have that you will respond in the manner I want.



Suppose you really love ice cream and would do nearly anything for it. (Your motivator is “it makes me feel good!”)

You want someone to do something for you and you offer ice cream as an incentive. However, what if they do not like ice cream as much as you do? What is their motivation?

The point here is that we all have our internal motivators and a smart leader will learn enough about us through talking, listening, and observing to provide us with the chance to achieve those motivators *when he or she wants us to do something for them.*



Think about this...

Can you motivate someone with threats?

No, that’s not motivation, it is coercion. They still make the internal decision whether to act in the way you want them to.

They may decide that protecting their income is more important than telling off the boss if he says they **HAVE TO WORK LATE**. The boss did not motivate them to work by saying, “If you don’t show up, you’ll be fired,” he just forced them to make a decision.

What would they say if they had just won the lottery and did not need the job?

THE BIG MOTIVATIONAL PICTURE

Sometimes it is easier to get answers by asking more questions. Here are a few you can ask.



Think about this...

Why do you want to work for your employer as opposed to somewhere else?

If you are not able to detail why you work for your employer instead of doing the same job for someone else, you may not be the best example of a leader for your employer and employees. The best leaders know why they work for their employers and their example shows it.

How can the inability to explain your own motivations affect your ability to influence others?

Why would your employees want to work for your employer as opposed to somewhere else?

The better you understand the world from your employees perspective, the better you will be able to lead them.

Why would your employees want to work for you as opposed to someone else?

You first must know your strengths and weaknesses before you try to lead others. This way, you can work on improving your strengths and minimizing your weaknesses.

Why should you be asking these questions?

*The more you ask yourself these questions about yourself and your employees, the more you will begin to SEE the world around you, not just look at it. The more you see it, you more you begin to think of things from perspectives outside of your own. **The more you do this, the greater the potential for realizing that the best way for you to get what you want is by helping your employees get what they want!***

Many surveys have shown that most employees do not stay with (or leave) their employers, they stay with (or leave) their supervisors. Why do you think so?

Have you ever heard someone describe a boss who is an absolute dictator and you thought to yourself, “You could not pay me enough to work for someone like that?”

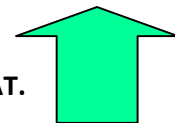
On the other hand, someone describes a boss who was an angel and you thought to yourself, “I would give anything to get to work for someone like that!”

REALITY CHECK

Take a few minutes to complete this question with your answers in the left column.

<i>“Life Would Be Great IF my employees would only...”</i>	

Now in the right column, write some reasons **WHY THEY WOULD WANT TO DO THAT.**



(Please note that simply saying, “Because it’s their job!” does not mean you will get the performance you want. Apparently, they have learned they can behave as they do without fear. In addition, do not say you will fire them if they do not act as you want unless you talk to your supervisor or Human Resources first.)

If you cannot think of any reasons why they would want to do that, what does that tell you about their performance? (They do not see any value in it.) Have there been times in your life when you did not see the value in doing something and did not do as good of a job as you could have if you had seen something in it for you?

Complete this sentence in the table with a few examples from your life.

When the best boss I ever had did this (column A), it had this impact on me (B) and this effect on my work (C). (We have given you an example)		
Column A What the best boss did...	Column B The impact on you...	Column C The impact on your work...
She trusted my judgment to do things right.	Made me try to be as 'trustworthy' as I could	Always did my best so as not to let her down and violate that trust.



Think about this...

What relationship do you see between how you want your employees to act and the impact on you and your work by the best boss you ever had?

(This should help you realize that the way the best boss you ever had treated you had a great impact on your motivation and work product.)

Why do we ask this question at this point in the course?

(To help you realize that your behavior as a leader has a major influence on your employees' actions)

Now go back to the Reality Check on page 12 and compare what you said about your employees when you completed the sentence and your behaviors when your best boss did what he or she did with you.

Can you see the employees' behavior is a direct result of their relationship with their boss (you!)?

What can YOU start doing differently RIGHT NOW that can help you get what you want from your employees' behavior?

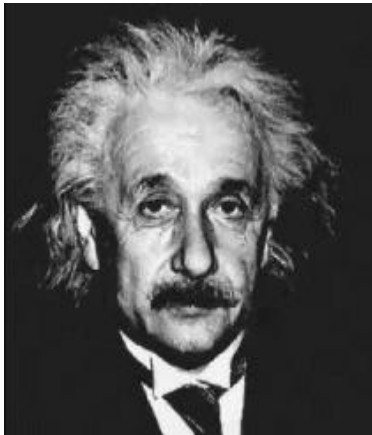
Take a few minutes and list some things you will start doing differently with your employees.



WARNING - READ THIS FIRST

As soon as you start acting differently toward your employees, they will wonder what you are up to and their behavior may temporarily change until they decide what you are up to!

Do not start making changes in your behavior unless you are ready for the long haul. If you stay committed to acting differently toward them so they will start acting differently toward you (and the job), they will eventually realize you have actually changed and begin responding appropriately.



Albert Einstein, the world's most famous scientist supposedly said once, *"Insanity is doing things the way you always have and expecting different results."*

WHAT DO TEAM MEMBERS WANT?



If motivation was the answer people hear when asking themselves, “Why would I want to do that?” or “What’s in it for me?” how can we learn what our employees want?

The easiest way to find out is just ASK THEM!

Before we talk about them, though, we should talk about you first.

What are the three or four things your boss could give to you right now that would have meaning?

Before you start your list, you must be realistic! Do not say, “A raise” or “a private parking spot” or anything that is highly unlikely. (Also, keep in mind that if you ask your boss for a 10% raise, he or she may ask you in return, “How has your value to the company increased by 10%?”

If you do not have an answer, it could be embarrassing for you.)

Gifts From My Boss That Would Have Meaning For Me

Some of your responses may include these:

Gifts From My Boss That Would Have Meaning For Me
A chance to learn and apply new skills
A chance to develop and lead a departmental project
A chance to lead a department meeting
A chance to do some of his or her work so I can see what it's like
Some scheduled "face time" periodically to talk about how I am doing

Now look back at your list and draw a line through any that will cost money. If your list contains items like the one above, there is a strong possibility you have drawn NO lines. This means THE GIFTS FROM YOUR BOSS TO YOU WOULD BE FREE!



Think about this...

What would keep you from asking your employees that same question? *"What is there within my ability to give would be a meaningful gift for you?"*

Consider calling them together and saying something like this:

"I want to do a better job of seeing the world through your eyes. Part of that is to find out what is important to you so that working here can become more than just a means of earning a living."

Take one of these 3"x5" cards and put your name on the front. Then on the back, list three or four things that it is in my ability to give you that would have meaning. Please remember that I cannot hand out a spot bonus or give you a prime parking place.

I will hang on to these and try to give you what you want as the opportunity comes up."

What if the employees asked for your "gift list" from them - What would be on it?

What value could there be in exchanging gift lists like this with your employees?

They may realize that they can encourage you to give them their gifts by giving your gifts to you. This is a simple way to demonstrate how much you rely on each other for high quality and productivity.

What reaction do you think you will receive from them: shock, surprise, suspicion, nervous laughter, or some do not participate?

It may be none of those or all of those depending on the relationship you have with your employees or the way past management before you has treated them.

There may no change in productivity or even a slight decline as the employees try to determine whether you are serious or playing with them. Once they see that you are serious, the morale and productivity should start to improve.



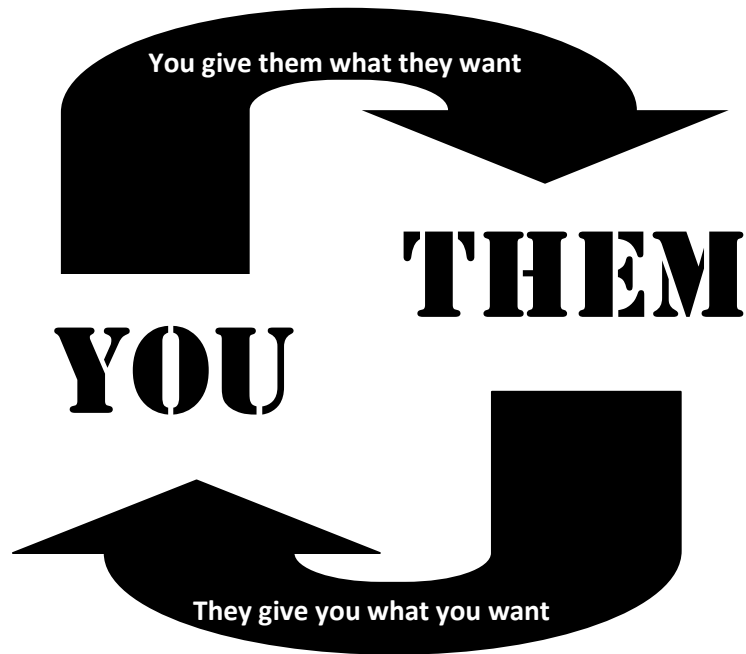
WARNING - READ THIS FIRST

Do not ask for their 'gift ideas' unless you are ready to stay with it for at least six months. Otherwise, you run the risk of getting their hopes up only to be disappointed when you do not follow through on keeping it going. After that, morale will only get much worse! There will be a natural deterioration of generally unhappy employees PLUS that added displeasure of feeling you "gamed" them and they'll be even more resentful afterward.

But if it works for you, AND IT CAN WORK WITH SOME PATIENCE ON YOUR PART, It will not be long until you create a "motivational cycle" with your employees where you give them what they want (their gifts) and they give you what you want (performance).

Each side soon realizes that the more you give, the more you get!

THE MOTIVATIONAL CYCLE



IN SUMMARY

- 1.) It should be evident that motivation to act comes from an internal source.
- 2.) Each person has his or her unique reasons to act on something. They control whether or not and how much they respond.
- 3.) Others such as a supervisor, a team coach, or a parent can only create a mood or situation in which they hope the person will respond in the desired manner – the ‘motivational moment.’”

When the football coach gives a “motivational speech” that he hopes will fire up the team, he is trying to touch something inside his players and hoping they will respond for their own individual reasons such as pride, a sense of accomplishment, ego, a championship (pride again), to remember a fallen comrade (makes them feel better), etc. He cannot make them WANT to win – they must find that desire within themselves.

- 4.) Some people may seem like they cannot be motivated. However (assuming no mental or physical illness), they simple have not had anything from the outside reach that internal stimulus to act. Perhaps they have such a low self-image that pride is nearly non-existent, or they feel no need to compete and self-accomplishment seems beyond them. The spark is still in there but may take a lot of work (which is beyond the scope of this course) to find it.
- 5.) People are most likely to stay with (or leave) their leaders, not their employers because of the personal relationship there. The “company” is nothing more than the assembly of individuals.
- 6.) If we do not know what motivates us to do something, it is difficult to understand what may motivate someone else.
- 7.) If we think back to the best boss we ever had and identify their behaviors when dealing with employees, we can trace the boss’ behavior directly to our relationship with them and our productivity. “The better they treated us, the better we performed so they would keep treating us that way.”

- 8.) Most of the motivational factors available to leaders are free! We simply need to ask people what they are so we can give those gifts to them.