

MOTIVATION

Idea in brief

Motivation and profitability are close partners in business. Companies with highly motivated employees have lower staff turnover, lower recruitment and training costs, fewer absentee days, grow faster and are more profitable. A motivated organisation will help drive you to success.

Typically, an organisation will use the simplistic 'carrot and stick' style reward system. There are two problems with this: humans aren't donkeys, and rewards and punishments are very powerful forces – sometimes there are unintended consequences.

In a motivation reward system, a simplistic application of Expectancy Theory (which is essentially what most businesses use) results in the opposite outcome to that which is intended. Objectives and metrics must be incredibly carefully set and aligned if they are not to lead people astray – the customer focus, for example, may be lost.

Motivation is difficult to command given that its drivers vary from person to person. As such, rather than trying to motivate certain behaviours or certain people, organisations should examine other factors and how they may help or hinder a person's ability to get the job done.

Doing things this way harnesses the intrinsic motivation that stems from our human desire to want to contribute to something meaningful. Given how much it can generate success for business, this intrinsic motivation is something we should seek to preserve and bolster.

Ideas in practice



- Rewards and incentives work in a particular way – we may not always like the consequences.
- Ensure that the carrot is the consequence and not the purpose – the carrot may lead some people astray.



'Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and the support they need and trust them to get the job done.'

The Agile Manifesto

- Since the team is the unit that will be most affected by its members – give them the responsibility of seeking out the people they need.

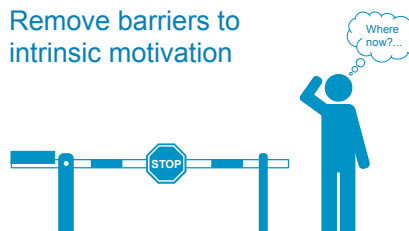
Motivating people is difficult – we should seek to harness their intrinsic motivation

INTRINSIC
Motivation that is driven by an interest
Exists within the individual

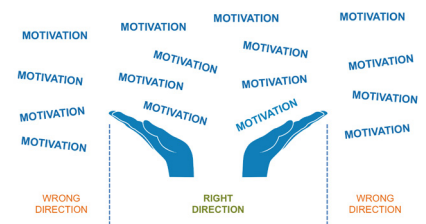
EXTRINSIC
Motivation that comes from the outside of an individual

- Work is a highly regarded outlet for our natural desire to participate in a purpose larger than ourselves.
- Motivation and commitment to a purpose can make us do work that we would not ordinarily do because we can see the benefits for the whole.

Remove barriers to intrinsic motivation



- Remove barriers that hamper an employee's ability to get on with the task.
- Ask yourself: do people have the right working environment? Do they have the right tools? Are schedules realistic?
- Give people responsibility and accountability.
- Pay attention to hygiene factors.



- Ensure that people are channelling their motivation in the right direction.
- Each individual in the organisation should share the responsibility for the flow of motivation.

Demotivation sticks...



- In a company of highly motivated individuals, it's easy to spot the few struggling with motivation.
- If the primary reasons are personal, provide assistance sensitively – when restored, the individual's commitment and sense of loyalty will be increased.
- Explore whether an individual needs training, development or a completely different job altogether – inside or outside your company.