Motivating Yourself And Others

Goals & Objectives:

- To learn the basic elements of motivation
- To understand the ways to motivate yourself
- To identify ways of motivating others

Outline:

- What is Motivation?
- Hierarchy of Needs
- Motivation in the Workplace
- Internal and External Motivators
- Meeting Needs at Work

What is Motivation?

“What the difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will.”

- Vince Lombardi, legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers

What is motivation? The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines motivation as ‘something (as a need or desire) that causes a person to act.’ Motivation is driven by a series of needs and desires. The more you need or want something, the more you must change your behavior and actions to reach a goal. Self-motivation cannot be taught but it can be measured. Each milestone that is achieved should be the motivation to move even closer to an ultimate goal. In the workplace, this process is known as the carrot and stick. If the goal is at arm’s length and foreseeable, then inner drive and motivation should initiate that urge to achieve. Motivation is the fuel that allows scientists to experiment until the great discovery occurs. It drives inventors to persist until a final product is introduced. It inspires high school students to identify a career and pursue that dream until it is achieved. Motivation is at its highest point when results occur and the rewards follow. An easy way to visualize this process is noted in the following chain of events:

Needs → Actions → Goals

Hierarchy of Needs

Motivation drives even the basic needs in life. In the early 1950’s, a psychologist named Abraham Maslow did extensive work to understand human nature. He found that to achieve the basic needs in life, certain behaviors and actions needed to take place for the needs to be met. The most basic of human needs is for food and water. Once that need is
satisfied, the need for shelter occurs. Once shelter is obtained, the urge for belonging is pursued. And the cycle continues until the final goal is obtained. Maslow displays this cycle eloquently in his Hierarchy of Needs.

As each stage is achieved, a higher level of esteem is satisfied. It begins with how others see you until a level of self-esteem is reached, then you are concerned at how you measure yourself against others. The final stage of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs is self-actualization. At this point you no longer have a need to prove yourself to others but have reached a need for meaning and purpose in your life. You know you have value and
can serve a higher purpose by contributing to society at a more meaningful level. You reach a state of contentment and all needs have been satisfied, but for how long? Once you have realized your potential to achieve, then you should want to keep the momentum going to achieve more and more.

**Motivation In The Workplace**

Some people might consider work as a necessary evil. At the same time, others may find work stimulating. Work is a means of reaching self-actualization and securing some of the luxuries in life. Dreams are free and until you change your behavior and actions, your dreams will still be dreams. However, work is action. Actions lead to achievement of goals. Work can lead to a full spectrum of goals from job satisfaction to promotions to pay raises and then to bonuses.

This concept of motivation is clearly identified in the sport’s world. If an individual has a talent for a sport and is a top performer in that sport, then there will be talent agents flocking to this individual to sign him/her on to their teams. To get to this level, the athlete had to demonstrate the will and desire to be the best that he/she could be in that sport. There are few spots at the top – the only way to get there is to work hard and ‘drive and strive’ for the top. Once achieved, the rewards will come – a contract with a top team, a high salary, and bonuses in the form of endorsements.

The same situation applies in the workplace. If an individual chooses a career and a profession, there is a sense of drive and motivation that needs to occur to get the best job, at the right location with the highest salary. This process does not occur overnight. It is a process that must be driven through actions and the desire to achieve. Each achievement will provide some rewards but should also lead to more actions in order to receive more significant rewards.

As stated in the case of the athlete, getting a top job or even a better job requires self-motivation to be the drive to obtain those goals. Some of the ways that you can motivate yourself to achieve those goals would be to:
- attend courses to improve competencies
- learn new procedures
- ask to be mentored by a manager
- network with other professionals

The point to be made here is that much of what needs to be done to fulfill your needs and desires needs to be initiated by you. You have to want to expend the energy to reach a goal.
Internal and External Motivators

Rewards come in a variety of ways. There can be internal motivators and external motivators. These motivators are the result of the carrot and stick phenomenon described earlier. What is the internal driver that leads to the external reward? Every employee demonstrates motivation in a different way because there is a specific personal need that must be met. Some examples of internal motivators may be job security, job satisfaction and quality of life. The most obvious external motivator is money.

**Exercise #1:** Provide 2 examples of both internal and external motivators that you experience now or have experienced in the past.

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In a study conducted by Dr. Gerald Graham at Wichita State University, the following top five motivators were described by a random group of 1500 employees in today’s workplace:
- personal thanks from manager
- written thanks from manager
- promotion for performance
- public praise
- morale-building meetings

In that same study of 1500 employees, Dr. Graham found that there was a definite lack of external motivators applied in the workplace. The results were as follows:
- 58% seldom if ever received personal thanks from their manager
- 76% seldom if ever received written thanks from their manager
- 78% seldom if ever received promotions based on performance
- 81% seldom if ever received public praise in the workplace
- 92% seldom if ever participated in morale-building meetings

Although employees must openly demonstrate the drive and energy for internal motivators, their managers must realize that the responsibility for external motivators, in most cases, rests with them and they must respond in order to continue that drive and energy within their employees. Dr. Graham’s conclusion was that external motivators
must be manager initiated based on the employee’s performance. He also noted that “the techniques that have the greatest motivational impact are practiced the least even though they are easier and less expensive to use.”

In today’s economy and working environment, workers know that more is being asked of them. The saying ‘more with less’ is a harsh reality. Rewards for hard work do not always appear as more money. Employees should realize that just having a job in today’s economy provides all the motivation that is needed to maintain that job. Nothing should be taken for granted. At the same time, employees should not be taken for granted when it comes to external motivators. Managers have many more ways to motivate their employees without money being the issue.

Meeting Needs At Work

Managers have a difficult yet interesting position. Whether in corporate America or in the healthcare industry, all managers face many of the same issues and concerns. Motivation is certainly one of the most difficult areas to manage. While motivation is self-driven, a manager should meet with each employee to identify the needs that are inherent to each one. All people are different and if they were the same, managing employees would be very easy. Managers should know that employees are motivated to serve their own interests. To succeed in creating the right environment for employees to grow, managers must identify what those interests are and try to address them. To operate effectively as a manager, the roles that a manager demonstrates to employees vary according to the need and situation. For example, a manager may be a military commander who fights every battle that comes along; a firefighter who extinguishes every flame or heated situation that occurs; and, a babysitter who needs to watch some employees who cannot be left alone.

One of the most important roles of a manager is that of psychologist. A manager cannot help the employee if the reason is unknown or not verbalized. In the same respect, the manager must uncover the needs of each employee before the employee’s internal needs can be met. A manager should:

- understand what rewards turn the employees on and off
- predict how employees will react to different situations and rewards
- identify the employee’s strengths and weaknesses
- identify the employee’s interests and dislikes
- understand the personality traits of each employee and how they interact together
- adjust the manager’s behavior to deal with each employee.
**Exercise #2:** As a manager, identify 3 non-financial ways that you can motivate your staff.

1. 
2. 
3. 

In his book, *The Effective Supervisor’s Handbook*, Louis Imundo lists several non-financial methods of external motivation that can be achieved. These external motivators can be tried by managers to reward their employees, or, the employees can approach their managers and ask for assignments that will produce these external incentives.

- Interesting work
- Recognition for performance (non-financial)
- Special project or work assignment
- Sense of accomplishment
- Opportunity to participate in decision making
- Opportunity to learn a skill
- Opportunity to acquire and exercise power
- Opportunity to work without direct supervision
- Exposure to key decision makers
- Job sharing
- Flexible work schedule
- Time off without penalty
- Receiving a letter of special commendation or plaque
- Opportunity for additional training
- Opportunity to attend conferences / professional meetings
- Mentoring other employees
- Opportunity for exposure within the organization
- Freedom to choose special work assignment
- Leading business meetings
- Empowering employees

Managers should create an environment for their employees to reach their full potential and achieve their career goals. Managers should be positive and proactive – recognize the performance and praise the behavior that led to that performance. A simple ‘thank
you’ or ‘good job’ goes a long way and may just be the right medicine to rejuvenate staff members.

Summary

“Men and women want to do a good job, a creative job and if they are provided the proper environment, they will do so.”

- Bill Hewlett – Co-founder, Hewlett-Packard

As demonstrated in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, every individual has needs and the desire to act on those needs results in motivating an individual, whether employee or manager, to achieve a goal. Motivation comes from within – it cannot be taught and it cannot be learned from reading a book. Satisfied needs do not motivate. Rather, unsatisfied needs motivate the human spirit to be recognized, to be accepted, to be validated, to be appreciated.

References: