

# Job motivation

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



<http://www.term-papers.us/ts/bb/bmu273.shtml> There are people out there in the workforce that believe they are obligated to do their best at their job simply because that is what is expected from all of us as humans. On the other hand there are those out there that want to only do as much as they can get away with doing. No matter which one of these employees you are or are working with companies and employer's need to understand the concept of motivation. Motivation comes in many forms such as money, benefits, or simple recognition within. Motivation also leads to higher productivity and profit and that is what we are all looking for in business. The key to unlocking peak performance from your work force is the concept of human motivation. And the key to motivation revolves around one fundamental principle: "What's in it for me?" (WIIFM). We've all been socialized to believe that only "selfish" people consider "What's in store for me." When in reality all people are motivated first by self-interest. The word selfish is used as a negative label for someone's perceived behavior. Understanding the concept of self-interest is perhaps the only way we will understand our need to achieve. Self-interest or feeling good about your self is a fundamental ingredient of motivation. When you work an extra hour, not on the clock, you are doing it for one real reason. It makes you feel good to either get the job done well or to help someone else. In the end you might get some sort of recognition in the company but usually you will not stay an hour extra today to get a gold star in two weeks from now. Dr. Gerald Kuschel, author and professor emeritus, has stated in his book *Reaching the Peak Performance Zone*, there are several variables involved in motivation. Among them are intensity, durability, context and value (reward). Motivation

intensity has a big part in how hard someone will work for his or her reward. If an employer offers a reward that does not mean a lot to the employee then they will not work for it. Intensity has to do with how strongly the person wants the reward (Opportunities in Human Resource Management Careers, Traynor and McKenzie). A person can be highly motivated, mildly motivated or only slightly motivated. The person answers the question "What's in it for me?" with "Something I want very much," the performer is considered highly motivated. If the answer is "I can take it or leave it," that performer is considered only slightly motivated. Durability has to do with how long lasting the motivation is (duration) (Managing Human Resources, Sherman, Bohlander, Snell). Motivation tends to last longer when it is reinforced intermittently rather than consistently. Somehow, intermittent rewards are stronger. A person can come to expect the reward rather than see it as a treat, which it is supposed to be. Psychologists have believed this for years. Perhaps it has to do with the uncertainty or the surprise factor of the stimulus. We tend to take for granted and not appreciate the thing that has become routine. There is a certain excitement factor and something we cannot take for granted or assume. We have learned that the intensity and duration of a given motivator are enhanced if the reward is immediately given following the act of behavior (Managing Human Resources, Sherman, Bohlander, Snell). This immediate reinforcement leaves no confusion in the mind of the performer, as to what the reward is for. For example if you tell an employee "If you finish this stack of paper work and type this letter for me I will treat you to lunch." If you choose to tell this person "I owe you one." and do not give them their reward until the following week they might

have already forgotten what it was for. In turn when you ask for another favor and promise a reward your employee will be less motivated to do it. What might ordinarily be perceived as a reward to one person it might be a punishment to another. You must custom fit a reward system to your employees and jobs to get the ultimate performance from you reward system. Furthermore, the more value the recipient of the reward places on the completion of the behavior that is being rewarded, the more powerful and personally rewarding it is. Context is the time, the place and the way the reward is delivered (Managing Human Resources, Sherman, Bohlander, Snell). Context is partly a matter of the culture of a particular organization. What that means is, when a certain motivator is offered in a particular corporation, it may not have the same value it has when it is offered in another place. For example, an "employee of the month" parking space may be a meaningful reward in some companies, meaningless in some companies, or even a demotivator for some people in other companies. It all depends on what is perceived as "valued" by the corporate culture. To be demotivated means that neither the energy nor the commitments are there. Negative reinforcement often proves to be highly demotivating. In one form or another, these have been used in business settings for a long time. Negative reinforcers include such things as "taking names," "kicking butt," penalties, reprimands, docking or withholding pay, canceling vacations, removing privileges, and showing contempt for or ignoring the performer. Demotivation is worse than no motivation at all. Positive reinforcement works better. Positive reinforcers include such things as recognition, respect, praise, better working conditions, money, paid vacations, fringe benefits,

prizes, etc. There are two types of motivators, intrinsic and extrinsic (Managing Human Resources, Sherman, Bohlander, Snell). The word motivation often brings things to mind like money, or special privileges, like the key to the executive washroom. These are extrinsic, meaning external. Someone else is dangling this particular item in front of you as a way of getting you to do something. Intrinsic motivators are internal. They originate entirely from within you. Intrinsic motivation tends to be deeper and more powerful than extrinsic motivation. The effects tend to last longer too, with intrinsic motivation. The following motivations are usually intrinsic:

- Enjoyment of the work itself for its own sake
- Desire to have a "piece of the action," such as sharing visions, missions, leadership, authority and responsibility
- Pride in performing excellently
- Proving some secret point to oneself
- Achievement of deep-seated value (such as helping another person)
- Having a deep and abiding belief in the importance of the work one is doing
- Desire to exceed one's previous level of job performance (being self-competitive)

A self-responsible performer can find a sufficient reason to excel if there is a WIIFM or two to strike the proper sensitive nerve. Some of the following WIIFM's are likely to motivate your probable peak performers:

- Trusting and being trusted
- A mutual mission
- Continuous quality improvement
- Benchmarking progress
- A mutual, measurable objective
- A quality work life balanced with a home life
- More money
- Psychic income

Here is how 1, 000 employees, in a survey, ranked their needs in the workplace in order of preference ([www. thelab@busreslab. com](http://www.thelab@busreslab.com)). 1.

Interesting work 2. Full appreciation for work done 3. Feeling "in on things" 4. Job security 5. Good wages 6. Promotions and growth opportunities 7.

Good working conditions 8. Personal loyalty to workers 9. Tactful disciplining 10. Sympathetic help with personal problems In another survey by Dr. Gerald Graham, Wichita State University, the top five motivating techniques reported by employees in order of preference are (www. thelab@busreslab. com): 1. Personal thanks 2. Written thanks 3. Promotion for performance 4. Public praise 5. Morale-building meetings Motivation is not always a reason to instill rewards in your company. Sometimes as an employer you need to address problems that you already have rather than just trying to avoid future ones. One of the biggest problems for employers is absenteeism. On any given day 10% of employees are absent from work for more reasons than sickness (www. employer-employee. com). There are four ways to combat this problem: 1. Change management style 2. Change working conditions 3. Provide incentives 4. Develop an attendance policy We are all aware of that when employees call in ill, it does not mean they are truly too physically ill to work. One reason, outside of illness, that employees are absent is stress (www. employer-employee. com). The number one reason employees are stressed has to do with their relationship with their manager or supervisor. Management styles that are authoritarian tend to promote high levels of absenteeism among employees. Authoritarian managers are managers who have poor listening skills, set unreachable goals, have poor communication skills, and are inflexible (Managing Human Resources, Sherman, Bohlander, Snell). In other words, they yell too much, blame others for problem and make others feel that it must be their way or the " highway." By identifying managers who use an authoritarian style, and by providing them with management training, you will be taking a positive step not only

toward reducing absenteeism, but also reducing turnover, job burnout, and employee health problems such as backaches and headaches. Not only does relationship stress occur between the employee and manager, but it also exists between employees. Frequently I hear employees say they did not go to work because they are fearful of or angry with another employee. These employees usually report they just could not deal with a certain person today, so they called in ill. Companies that adopted policies and values that promote employee respect and professionalism, and promote an internal conflict resolution procedure, are companies that reduce employee stress. A reduction in employee stress reduces employee absenteeism. An incentive provides an employee with a boost to their motivation to avoid unnecessary absenteeism. It simply helps the employee decide to go to work instead of sitting home watching non-intellectual television programs such as Jerry Springer. Some companies allow employees to cash in their unused sick days at the end of a quarter. Others give an employee two hours of bonus pay for every month of perfect attendance or unused sick days. And still others provide employees with a buffet lunch, a certificate of achievement, or even a chance at winning prizes. The type of incentive program your company uses should be created for your company. As I said before, incentives and rewards can be unimportant or punishments to some while they are incentives to work harder and rewards to others. For example my employees might not care about getting an extra \$20 at the end of the month but might respond greatly to getting a weekend off the next month or getting free lunch for perfect attendance. The duration of the incentive program is also very important to it working well. Once again, your employees should help

you set a time frame that is reasonable. Since I work for a beach club and it is only open for three months a year I would work on a two-week program or even a weekly program if I were using something like a free lunch. Generally the younger the employee and the harder the work the more the incentive should be given. Another idea is to start small and work up to larger rewards, ex: free lunch can progress to a weekend off. This would start with the weekly reward and finally the big reward would come at the end of the month. This would work well because I have young employees (ages 14 to 20). An attendance policy allows a manager, like myself, to intervene with an employee who is frequently absent. . According to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), employees' are allowed up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave (Managing Human Resources, Sherman, Bohlander, Snell). This is because stress is not the only reason for absenteeism. Besides stress as a primary reason for employee absenteeism, other causes relate to alcoholism, domestic violence, family problems, and sometimes laziness (like in my case). If you confront an employee about his or her frequent absenteeism, and they inform you it is due to personal problems, consider referring them to an Employee Assistance Program, EAP ([www. employer-employee. com](http://www.employer-employee.com)). If the employees absenteeism relates to a medical problem or a family member with a medical problem you may have to consider allowing the employee to use the benefits allowed to them under the American's with Disability Act, ADA, or the Family and Medical Leave Act, FMLA (Managing Human Resources, Sherman, Bohlander, Snell). Make sure you check that your employee policy does not break any federal laws before you enforce it. Reducing absenteeism will reduce employee burnout, turnover, poor morale,



and workplace negativism. Here is a little information about the FMLA. It can be used for the care of a newborn after birth, or adoption. It is for any immediate family member such as a spouse, child, or parent. It is also for your own serious health concerns. Serious health problems include cancer, or fatal disease. It does not include the common cold, headaches, or a stomach bug. Not everyone is covered by FMLA. To be considered an eligible employee you must have 1,250 hours or 12 months in a company and your employer must employ 50 people within 75 miles of the worksite. If you do take the allowed 12 weeks or less, your employer, when you return, must uphold a few standards. They must allow you to return to the same position or one of equal status, and they must maintain your benefits. Your employer also must not decrease your pay or benefits at the conclusion of 12 weeks. We all know what it means to be deprived of time. The way it is today, everything you do has to be done "in a New York minute". An added stress people have to worry about is not having time to do the little day-to-day things such as doctor's appointments and the dry cleaning (www.thelab@busreslab.com). Another way a company can motivate employees and keep stress down is to come up with solutions to their workers problems. When I saw this information I thought a little about some ways to help solve these problems. For doctor's visits, try to find a doctor to do on the site checkups where anyone in the office can schedule an appointment. For the dry cleaning, find a service near by that will pick up and deliver from the office. What about grocery shopping? What would it be like to call in an order ready for pickup when you get off of work? There are also on-line services that you can buy your groceries from and have them delivered to your

house. How about a stress relieving massage or facial and pedicure? You can offer to have a weekly visit from a masseuse and a manicurist. I have also thought that there are not always stores with these services so why not hire people for these jobs. I'm sure there is an older person looking for part time work, or a mom who wants to earn a little extra money. These are the type of people for this job. Now that you have thought of ways to keep your employees in the office more and ways to keep them calm, you will have a more productive business. These are only a few dilemmas with easy solutions. You would have to find out what irks your employees to make a project like this successful. To do this you might come up with a questionnaire (see sample at the end of the paper). Not only will you know their problems, but they will also notice that you, as a manager, care about their needs. This creates a sense of worth in a company. There are all kinds of employees out there with different work ethics. This creates a problem with keeping productivity high. A way to ensure employee happiness and high profit is to reward and provide custom made incentives for your company. Bibliography Works Cited 1. Eye, David E., 1, 001 Ways to Inspire 1999 New York Publishing 2. Newman, Dr. Fred, Let's Develop 1994 Castillo International, Inc. 3. Sherman, Arthur W., Managing Human Resources 1998 (11th ed.) South-Western Publishing Co. 4. Traynor, William J., Opportunities in Human Resource Management Careers 1997 VGM Career Horizons 5. www. employer-employee. com 6. www. thelab@busreslab. com Word Count: 2659