

iLEAD™ Tools

PEOPLE LEADERSHIP

How to Motivate Others

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HOW TO MOTIVATE OTHERS

Understand how to get the best from others in your working environment.

● ISN'T IT INTERESTING?

Love 'em or hate 'em, rats are smart, and they've been explaining a thing or two to us. They've been at the leading edge of psychological research into what motivates us and how, which is helpful. Thanks, mates.

How do we motivate others?

People are motivated by all kinds of things. At the most basic level, we're driven by simple needs, as we illustrate below. Once these needs are satisfied, what motivates or gives us purpose, varies with each of us.

Trick or treat

In a series of revealing and insightful studies into motivation and survival back in the 1970s, researchers managed to 'teach' rats to ring bells, pull levers and escape from a complex maze.¹ How? By tapping into the most basic of animal and human needs, providing food as an immediate and positive reward for action.

Rats were put in boxes with a simple lever and a food chute. Each rat would typically run around the box, scratching, climbing and exploring until eventually it accidentally pulled on the lever. This caused a pellet of food to be released down the chute. Initially, the rats made no association between lever and food, but after a few consecutive taps of the lever, they recognised the connection, pressing the lever more frequently for food pellets. The researchers then alternated the delivery of the food, sometimes delaying its timing or changing the effort required to get it – in much the same way that work and targets can be adapted!

These experiments are now recognised as critical to our understanding of learning and motivation. They provided new insights into the most basic way our actions can be (and often are) reinforced by positive rewards. Of course, we're not rats, but we share the same basic needs.

This tool can help

Rewarding behaviour is one of our simplest approaches to motivation. It's the one many parents and teachers use to encourage children's learning, and is still the basis of many 'employee reward' schemes. There are, however, other ways to get results. This tool is about **how to motivate others** and get the best from them in the working environment.

● UNDERSTANDING MOTIVATION

Motivation

Think you lack motivation? Not so – we're all motivated, it's just that it isn't always easy to know exactly what drives you. It's even more of a puzzle, since everyone's different, to work out what motivates others.

So, if managing others involves knowing how to motivate them, what do you need to know to get the best out of people – and yourself?

Motivation – The facts

There are many theories,² some of which add more to our understanding than others. Such theories proliferate because motivations differ according to circumstance and from one individual to another. However, we will summarise some of the enormous amount of research undertaken, (much of it's quite hard work to read and doesn't translate easily to practical, daily application) and note the findings which are relevant and most useful to managers, below:

- People have basic and essential needs – food, comfort, security – that they strive to satisfy. Once these are satisfied, they turn to 'higher' needs, like self-growth and personal fulfilment.
- Generally, people compare themselves to those around them in the workplace; they need to feel they are treated fairly (equitably) in relation to colleagues.
- Setting stretching but achievable goals usually motivates people to achieve more than they would without any goals.
- People are often (but not always) motivated by positive rewards and recognition.
- People's motivations are influenced by two factors: satisfaction and dissatisfaction.
- Satisfaction is primarily the result of 'motivator' factors, which enhance satisfaction but don't necessarily do much to counteract dissatisfaction.
- Motivator factors include: status, opportunity for advancement, gaining recognition, responsibility, challenging/stimulating work, sense of personal achievement and personal growth.
- Dissatisfaction is primarily the result of hygiene factors. (See what we mean? – this is nothing to do with people not washing properly, it's a term used by psychologists to mean 'external!') These factors, if absent or inadequate, cause dissatisfaction, but their presence has little effect on long-term satisfaction. Hygiene factors operate independently of those to do with motivation, so an individual can be highly motivated in his work but dissatisfied with the environment in which he does it. 'Hygiene' factors include:
 - Company policy and administration
 - Wages, salaries and other financial remuneration
 - Quality of supervision
 - Quality of interpersonal relations
 - Working conditions
 - Feelings of job security.

- People are also often more motivated by a need to avoid threat than to seek out opportunities – because most of us are more aware of threat than reward. We are, therefore, seemingly more likely to take risks to avoid negative outcomes than to achieve positive ones.

Recent research³ lists the top 'motivators' at work as:

1. Accomplishing something worthwhile
2. Learning new things
3. Personal development
4. Autonomy

(Interestingly, pay was 12th on the list and chance for promotion 17th.)

Since all this refers to the majority of us, it's worth remembering when setting goals, reviewing salaries, putting a new team together or just trying to encourage and fire people up. It's useful in everyday interactions, too.

The table below gives ideas and tips for motivating other people, devised from the research we outlined above.

Top Motivational Tips

Make an assessment of what motivates your colleagues. Do this by talking to and observing them.

Think about the following:

- What do they say is most important to them at work/home?
- What gives them the greatest feeling of achievement and reward?
- What switches them off?
- What do they get most emotional about in discussions?
- What do they most value?

Do or say things that relate to whatever motivates them

- It will help to obtain their 'buy-in'.
- Explain how changes will relate to what they care about.
- Adapt your own behaviour to include things which motivate them.

Use goals/set targets to motivate

- Make sure you know the difference between a challenge and an unachievable goal.
- Set goals for organisational/team requirements but which also give opportunities for personal development, learning and achievement.
- Break down the goal or target to smaller ones to give individuals more opportunity to feel they are achieving and progressing.
- Set regular reviews of progress and celebrate successes. Give help and advice to overcome hurdles and re-focus attention.

Be transparent

- Give as much information as possible to ensure people understand why they might be treated differently from their colleagues in terms of pay and conditions.

Note: such differences should only ever be based on merit or competence.

Up to here, we have dealt with the most basic principles. Next we'll explore the more obvious differences between people and their corresponding needs and motivators at work...

● MOTIVATION – HOW ARE PEOPLE DIFFERENT?

Think about your team members or colleagues. You can probably describe the most obvious differences in the ways they work. Some may be energised by new ideas and concepts, others by the detail. Some will come alive talking directly to clients and socialising with colleagues, then there'll be those who only light up when it's time to go home! While generalisation is a dangerous thing, it's useful to highlight the most common characteristics of different types, what their 'needs' are and, therefore, what motivates them. See if you can recognise any of your team members or colleagues in the descriptions here:

A Need to Achieve...

What you'll see: Outward drive, competitive behaviour, impatience with themselves and others, intolerance of others' mistakes, always busy.

How to harness it: Set stretching targets, give autonomy for results, set competitions, set clear timescales, avoid ambiguities.

Watch out for: Burn-out, signs of anger, disappointment at failure, over-reactions to negative feedback, doing too much.

A Need to Please...

What you'll see: React positively to feedback, back down quickly in arguments, present their results positively.

How to harness it: Set challenging (but reasonable) goals, make the goals visible to others, make the goals part of a collective team effort, offer praise publicly and regularly.

Watch out for: Individuals becoming too compliant, being easily upset by criticism, putting others ahead of own needs & being over-sensitive to negative feedback.

A Need to Belong...

What you'll see: Highly sociable, eager to talk to others, enjoy team working, adaptable, outwardly friendly and cohesive style, a 'team' person.

How to harness it: Include in team activities, giving people-focused responsibilities, create opportunity to build relationships.

Watch out for: Being easily distracted, difficulty working independently, being over-sensitive to relationship challenges.

A Need for Autonomy...

What you'll see: High independence, desire for freedom, self-management, controlling behaviours, tendency to work outside the rules.

How to harness it: Break tasks into separate chunks, provide management responsibilities, agree overall targets (not every step).

Watch out for: Lack of communication, detachment from teams, over-controlling behaviour.

A Need for Variety...

What you'll see: Interest in new ideas, start-up rather than closure, flexibility, moves easily from one task to another.

How to harness it: Encourage innovation, involvement at the start of projects, provide opportunities for a change of environment and responsibilities.

Watch out for: Signs of boredom, lack of follow-through and closure, putting personal agenda ahead of business agenda, being too flexible with regulations.

A Need for Structure...

What you'll see: Organisation, reliability, predictability, structured work, plenty of planning in meetings and a need for clarity.

How to harness it: Plenty of clarity when planning, build in clear structures for meetings, regularly agree goals and targets, engage in projects that need micro-managing.

Watch out for: Inflexibility, uncertainty when dealing with ambiguity, being overly rule-bound, perfectionism.

A Need to Care...

What you'll see: Considerate behaviours, concern for welfare, questions based on feeling more than fact, empathy, support.

How to harness it: Put into a support role within the team, give 'people responsibilities' to manage.

Watch out for: Avoiding confrontation, over-sensitivity to others' comments, tolerating too many requests for support, lacking a 'task focus'.

A Need for Control...

What you'll see: Highly organised, planful and detailed approach, strong dislike of ambiguity.

How to harness it: Provide opportunities to manage tasks and projects, provide them with team responsibilities, capitalise on personal organisation.

Watch out for: Tension/frustration with ambiguity, poor delegation ('telling' others, rather than influencing them).

● IDENTIFYING MOTIVATORS – A QUESTIONNAIRE

This will help you reflect on your own and/or your colleagues' motivation. It's about what you see in others' behaviour at work. When designing this questionnaire we used research about people behaving in ways that reflect their personal values (what matters to them). Bear this in mind when you look at the results, because like most theory, it's useful but not bomb proof!

It won't take more than about five minutes and you'll have a 'map' of your own and others' 'primary motivators' – you could make copies for however many people you have in mind.

'Motivation Web' instructions

1. Using the right-hand box, tick any of the statements that clearly apply to you/your colleagues.
2. Once you've responded to all statements, add up the number of ticks for each section.
3. Using the Motivation Web(s) mark each score on the appropriate part of the 1-5 scale, treating the innermost mark as a score of 1 and the outermost mark as 5.
4. Finally, join each of the scores together to reveal the high and low motivators around the web.

Section 1: Need to Achieve

1. Works with a strong sense of urgency	
2. Is often impatient	
3. Enjoys competing with others	
4. Sets self demanding targets	
5. Shows strong disappointment at failure	

Section 2: Need to Please

1. Smooths over conflicts in the team	
2. Cooperative – is often looking to help others	
3. Responds quickly to a pat on the back	
4. Takes others' comments very much to heart	
5. Eager to please/impress others	

Section 3: Need to Belong

1. Sociable and talkative	
2. Cohesive in teams – pulling people together	
3. Adaptable in teams	
4. Avoids conflict with colleagues	
5. Easily distracted by others	

Section 4: Need for Autonomy

1. Often chooses to work independently	
2. Manages self – non-reliant on the support of colleagues	
3. Makes up own mind – not easily influenced by others	
4. Can be distracted	
5. Prefers to take control of situations where possible	

Section 5: Need for Variety	
1. Excited by new ideas	
2. Starts new projects but doesn't finish them	
3. Easily bored	
4. Follows own agenda – expedient	
5. Innovative approach	

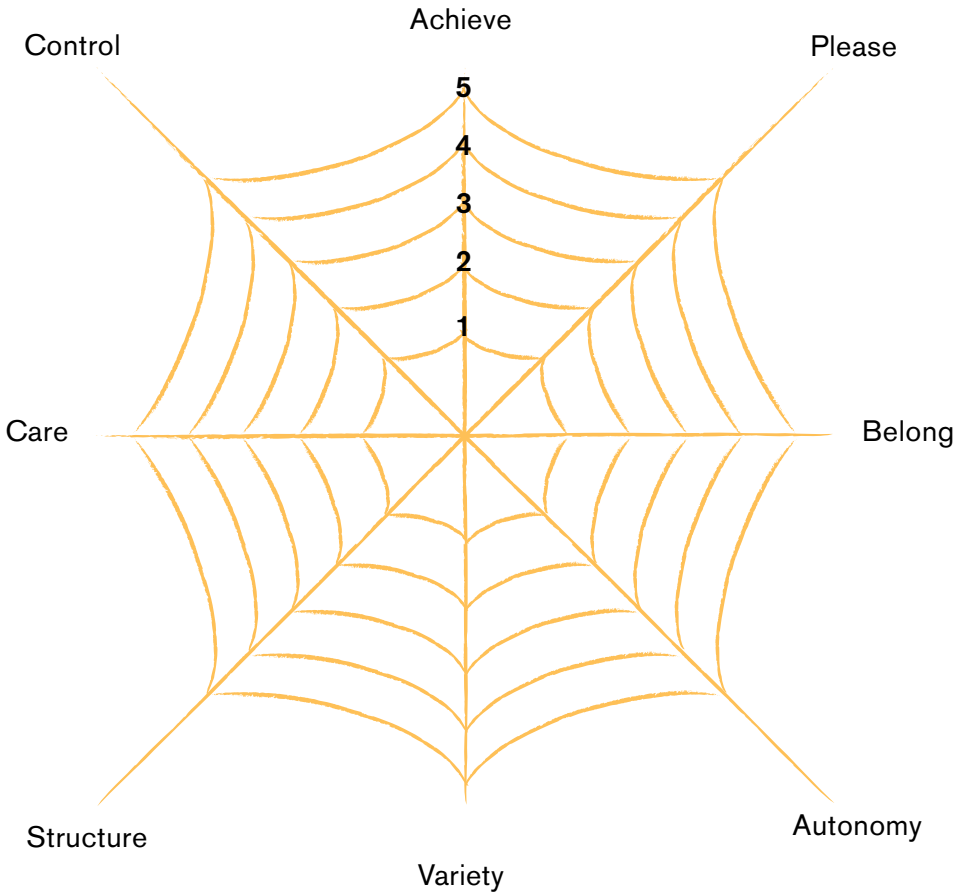
Section 6: Need for Structure	
1. Organised	
2. Reliable	
3. Dislikes ambiguity	
4. Plans work well	
5. Communicates frequently, clearly and consistently	

Section 7: Need to Care	
1. Considerate to others' situation	
2. Genuine concern for colleagues' welfare	
3. Empathetic	
4. Supportive	
5. Tolerant of others	

Section 8: Need for Control	
1. Takes control of team activities	
2. Sees others' support as interference	
3. Does things in own way, regardless of feedback	
4. Becomes tense in uncertain situations	
5. Finds it difficult to delegate to others	

● THE MOTIVATION WEB

Name



● NEXT STEPS

By now, you should have one (or more) motivation 'webs' on the chart. You can use these to:

1. Identify any 'highs' and 'lows' for yourself and others, and note how these insights could contribute to your own management, team contribution and other work-related subjects.
2. Identify any differences (or consistencies) within your team and consider their implications for the way you work together.
3. Act as a starting point for discussing your performance management targets and the best way to achieve them.

Use the following table, and the information you collected on the previous pages, to consider ways to motivate your team (or whoever else you choose), according to their 'motivators' as identified in their individual webs:

Motivational area	High (4-5)	Low (1-2)
Achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High sense of urgency ● May become frustrated and impatient ● Likes to compete with others ● Sets demanding targets for self and others ● Doesn't take failure well <p>Consider setting them ambitious targets. Encourage them to talk to you before they get frustrated or irritated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low sense of urgency ● May not be focused on high quality levels ● Collaborates with others ● Does not mind making mistakes <p>Ensure you clarify priorities and outline the implications of mistakes. Encourage them to work with others.</p>
Please	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Resolves conflicts in the team ● Will help others to please or impress ● Responds to recognition or acknowledgement ● Takes others' comments very much to heart <p>Take the time to recognise/reward achievements and good work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does not mind upsetting people to ensure tasks completed ● Tolerates criticism and constructive feedback ● Not bothered about making good impressions <p>Gently advise them to take care not to upset others in the team, and give them a more autonomous role in it.</p>
Belong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sociable, outgoing and talkative ● Brings people together ● Can modify their behaviour with different people ● Avoids conflict with colleagues <p>Use these people to bring the team together. You could allocate them a co-ordination role in the team. Ensure that they have contact with people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Able to work on their own ● Will challenge others in team ● Tends to take their own approach ● Generates ideas and completes task rather than work with people <p>Give these people work to do and involve them in idea generation or strategy. Focus their questioning and challenge constructively.</p>

Motivational area	High (4-5)	Low (1-2)
Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prefers to work independently ● Self managing ● Makes up own mind ● Can appear distracted ● Prefers to take control of situations where possible <p>Give them space and autonomy. Monitor to ensure compliance and encourage them to join team activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Works well as part of a team ● Reliant on the support of colleagues ● Easily influenced by others ● Happy to let others take charge <p>Provide them with a central role in the team where they have to work with others. Support them if giving responsibility – but not too much!</p>
Variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Excited by new ideas and shows innovation and creativity ● Energised when beginning things, less so by completing them! ● Can become bored or distracted ● May concentrate on own interests <p>Delegate activities to them, keep them busy and involve them in creative tasks and projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May build on existing processes ● Prefers routine ● Gets upset by change and finds this hard to deal with ● Likes to work on one thing at a time <p>Give them clear instructions and limit the number of tasks given at any one time. Clearly explain any change and support them through it.</p>
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Highly organised and plans work well in advance ● Very reliable and works well to deadlines ● Dislikes ambiguity and uncertainty ● Communicates frequently, clearly and consistently <p>Provide clear structure and frameworks. Give early deadlines to work towards. Conduct regular review sessions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Carefree approach, works well with flexible deadlines ● Tends to work in bursts of activity ● Lacks structure and process ● Infrequent or irregular communication <p>Give time and space for work to be completed. Don't be too prescriptive. Expect work to be done but without regular updates!</p>
Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Considerate towards others in the team ● Shows genuine concern for colleagues' welfare ● Empathetic and supportive ● High levels of tolerance and patience <p>Give them a role where they can help others learn or develop. Ensure they remain focused on tasks as well as people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not overtly caring towards other team members ● Task focused rather than interested in people's lives ● May walk over others' feelings to get work completed <p>Give them a more task-focused role. Ensure they consider others before taking action.</p>

Motivational area	High (4-5)	Low (1-2)
Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Likes to take control of team activities ● Does things in own way, regardless of feedback ● Does not like uncertain situations ● May find it difficult to delegate to others <p>Provide them with however much responsibility or ownership you're happy to! Clarify the boundaries between their role and those of others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Will allow others to lead ● Best employed in a supporting role where others take charge ● Happy to be told what to do and follow orders ● Will delegate work to colleagues if required <p>Give them a supportive role where they can add value and contribute without having to take control. Make their responsibilities clear and offer support.</p>

● FURTHER INFORMATION

If you found this tool useful then you are likely to find the following tools both insightful and relevant:

- How to raise energy levels
- How to influence others
- How to develop others
- How to engage others to deliver
- How to use optimism to achieve

● REFERENCES

- 1 Weiner, I. et al. (2003). **Handbook of Psychology**. John Wiley and Sons.
- 2 (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs; McGregor's Theory X/Theory Y; Attribution Theory; Valency Theory; Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory).
- 3 Lawler, E. (1994). **Motivation in work organizations**. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

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