

Motivation in the Workplace

What Is Motivation?

- Motivators differ dramatically from one person to another.
- Motivation adds to the quality and quantity of work one produces.
- Understanding what motivates us and others helps support creating the conditions for high performance work environments.

Your Experience with Motivation

Think of a time when you were highly motivated to perform a particular task or complete a work project. This could be an event from your current job or any motivating situation from your past.

1. **What was it that motivated you?** *External factors (like money or a tangible prize)? Internal factors (challenge of doing something well, achieving a personal best)?*

2. **How did you respond to that motivation?** *Worked extra hours, concentrated harder, got help from someone else, etc?*

3. **What kind of recognition and rewards do you value?** *Verbal praise, letters from boss, certificates, bonus, trophy, tickets, etc?*

Job Factors and Motivation

This chart lists a number of common workplace factors. The presence of some of these factors will motivate you to perform better while the lack of or inappropriate/low amount of the others can cause you to be dissatisfied. Their presence will not necessarily affect your motivation to perform.

For example: a work space that is either too cold or too hot will dissatisfy you, while a comfortable temperature workspace will not necessarily motivate better performance.

Consider each factor and place a check mark in the column (or both columns) to indicate your response to that factor.

Factor	Motivated by Presence	Dissatisfied by Lack
Advancement opportunity		
Control over work content		
Flexible work schedule		
Benefits		
Job security		
Nature of the work		
Open communication		
Salary/wages		
Size of organization		
Stimulating work		

Source: *The Big Book of Business Games*, John Newstrom & Edward Scannell

Self-Motivation

Self-motivation is the strongest type of motivation. It's linked to your level of initiative in setting challenging goals for yourself, your belief that you have the skills and abilities needed to achieve those goals, and your expectation that if you put in enough hard work, you will succeed (or at least be in the running if it's a competitive situation).

Factors in Self-Motivation

1. Self-confidence and self-efficacy
2. Positive thinking about the present and positive thinking about the future
3. Focus and strong goals
4. A motivating environment

Steps for Self Confidence and Self-Efficacy:

- A. Think about the achievements in your life and list some of them here.

- B. Examine your strengths to understand what you can build on. List your work strengths here. (organization skills, good time management, goal achievement, etc.)

- C. Determine what other people see as your strengths and key capabilities. Find out! Add these to your strengths list.

- D. Set achievable goals for yourself, work to achieve them, and enjoy that achievement. What examples can you list of important goals you achieved?

- E. Seek out mentors and other people who model the competencies, skills, and attributes you desire. What mentors have helped you? Who else would you like to have as a mentor?

Positive Thinking is closely related to self-confidence. When you expect positive results, your choices will be more positive. Having a vivid picture of success, combined with positive thinking, helps you bridge the gap between wanting something and going out to get it.

To apply the power of positive thinking, do this:

- A. Become aware of your thoughts. Write them down throughout the day.
- B. Challenge your negative thoughts, and replace them with positive ones.
- C. Create a strong and vivid picture of what it will be like to achieve your goals.
- D. Develop affirmations or statements that you can repeat to yourself throughout the day. These statements should remind you of what you want to achieve and why you will achieve it.
- E. Practice positive thinking until you automatically think about yourself and the world in a positive way every day.

Self-Talk Exercise

The good news is that we can change bad habits and replace them with new habits. It is possible to change our 'self-talk' so that it represents positive reality. Here is an opportunity to practice changing from negative 'self-talk' to positive reality.

Situation: You are working on a new project and it isn't going well.

Negative self-talk: *I am so stupid! Why can't I get this? It seems like the harder I try, the worse it gets. I am just no good at this. I might as well give up.*

Positive reality: *I have finished projects like this before with good quality results. I know that I can be persistent and improve my skill. I have been successful before, and I will be this time, too.*

Now add your own examples....

Situation:

Negative self-talk:

Positive reality:

Self-Esteem Assessment Scale (SEAS)

Using the scale below, write the number that most closely indicates the frequency with which each statement applies to you. Do NOT write in the cells with 'xx.' (People have different preferences and opinions; therefore, there are no right or wrong answers.)

0=Never 1=Almost Never 2=Sometimes
3=Almost Always 4=Always

Column A	B	C
1. I feel that I am in charge of my life.		XX
2. I catch myself wishing that I could be more like someone else.	XX	
3. I hesitate to take on new projects because I fear that I might fail.	XX	
4. Upon making an error, I tell myself, "That's not like me, " and get on with it.		XX
5. When meeting new people, I introduce myself by stating my full name.		XX
6. I feel that I can do just about anything.		XX
7. I think that getting ahead in life is primarily a function of luck and being in the right place at the right time.	XX	
8. When asked to volunteer for a new project, I tend to focus mostly on why it might not work out.	XX	
9. When I kid or tease others, I focus on their negative attributes.	XX	
10. When paid a compliment, I answer with "Thank you."		XX
11. I am constantly improving.		XX
12. When I make a mistake, I get on my case, telling myself such things as "You are a dummy, " "You will never learn, " or "I knew you couldn't do it."	XX	
13. When interacting with others, I focus most of my mental energies on trying to recognize their positive attributes.		XX
14. When things work out well for me, I attribute it to circumstances.	XX	
15. I believe that my self-image controls my life.		XX
16. I respect other people's opinions, even if they are very different from mine.		XX
17. I find criticism very hard to take.	XX	
18. I tend to be envious of successful people.	XX	
19. I look for ways to help others even if there is absolutely nothing in it for me.		XX
20. When my boss is talking to me, I tend to think about what I will say next so that I come across positively.	XX	
Total of column B		XX
Total of column C	XX	
Score = column B total minus column C total		

Interpretation of Your Score

17 or higher	<i>Very Good:</i> your self-esteem is in good shape. Tune in and you will learn lots of new strategies that will enable you to get even better.
12-16	<i>Good:</i> You are on the road to optimizing your self-esteem. You will do better if you make a commitment and plan to apply the strategies from this training.
11 or lower	<i>Average:</i> You have an opportunity to learn lots of valuable strategies. Be sure to study this training carefully and plan how to maximize your self-esteem.

Affirmations are positive, true statements that you say to remind yourself of your worth, your goals and aspirations. They are a great way to silence the inner critic and to motivate yourself. Notice that affirmations are stated in the present tense.

Here are some examples:

- *I really am very special. I like who I am and I feel good about myself.*
- *I am warm and sincere and honest and genuine! I am all of these things and more. And all these things are me. I like who I am and I'm glad to be me.*
- *I am genuine and sincere with everyone. I treat everyone I meet with courtesy, respect, and consideration.*
- *I have many beautiful qualities about me. I have talents and skills and abilities. And I am discovering new talents inside myself all the time.*

You can use these affirmations or write others to apply to yourself. Then read them often, either silently or out loud. Keep your affirmations where they can function as reminders to you of your own unique self.

Goal Setting

A key part of building self-motivation is to start setting **Strong Goals**. When you set a goal, you make a promise to yourself, and that gives you a clear direction. According to Locke's goal-setting theory, your goal should have the following characteristics:

Clarity – Effective goals are clear, measureable, specific, and based on behavior, not outcomes.

Challenge – Goals should be difficult enough to be interesting, but not so difficult that you can't reach them.

Commitment – Goals should be attainable and should be relevant; they should contribute in a significant way to the major objectives you are trying to achieve.

Regularity of Feedback – Monitor your progress toward your goal regularly to maintain your sense of momentum and enthusiasm, and enjoy your progress toward those goals.

Sufficient Respect for Complexity – If the goal involves complex work, make sure that you don't over-commit yourself. Complex work can take an unpredictably long time to complete (particularly if you have to do the task "on the job").

Let's try writing a strong goal, changing a vague dream into a goal that is specific enough and has both clarity and challenge for you.

Vague Dream:

Strong Goal:

Are you willing to commit to this goal? _____

When will you begin? _____

Who will help you to stay on track with achieving your goal?

Your Work Environment

A motivating environment - Focus on surrounding yourself with people and resources that will remind you of your goals and help you with your internal motivation. Try the following:

1. Look for team work opportunities. Working in a team makes you accountable to others.
2. Ask your boss for specific targets and objectives to help you measure your success.
3. Ask for interesting assignments.
4. Set up some goals that you can easily achieve. Quick wins are great for getting you motivated.
5. Buddy up with people you trust to be supportive, and ask them to help keep you accountable.
6. Try not to work by yourself too much. Balance the amount of time you work alone with time spent working with others.

Notes:

Common Sense Principles for Motivating Your Team

1. Be clear about their responsibilities.
2. Give them authority equal to their responsibilities.
3. Set standards of excellence.
4. Provide people with training that will enable them to meet these standards.
5. Give them knowledge and information.
6. Provide feedback on performance.
7. Recognize them for their achievements.
8. Trust them.
9. Give them permission to fail.
10. Treat them with dignity and respect.

Non-Monetary Motivation

Recognition/Attention
Opportunities for Learning
One-on-One Coaching
Training
Career Development
Job Titles
Good Work Environment
On-the-Spot Praise
Leadership Roles
Team Spirit
Executive Recognition
Social Gatherings
Casual Dress Day
Time Off
Outside Seminars
Additional Responsibility
Theme Contests
Stress Management
Fun Food Days
Creative Activities

Other Tips:

Focus on your employees' strengths.
Teach employees to measure their own success.
Measure and track motivation levels.
Communicate openly.
Ask employees for information about their performance.
Explain your reward systems.
Carry an idea notebook.

Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.

-Mark Twain