

Our guide to

# Building a motivational culture



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“The job of a president is to motivate, to inspire, to be side by side with people making sure that they develop all their capacities and that I remove all the obstacles they have to grow by themselves.” Vicente Fox, Mexican Statesman

## What is the payoff?

We humans rarely do anything unless there is something in it for us. Where motivation is concerned generally, we are looking for the fundamentals of life to be available and then some more sophisticated needs to be satisfied. For a leader, a motivational environment results in higher performance, higher retention rates and more and bigger ideas to give you a competitive edge. It can also release you up to develop your own strengths and concentrate on the next big thing coming over the horizon.

## What is motivation?

Motivation is enabling people to do their job to the required standard over and over again. That is the basic definition. It goes wider though once that is established to include higher outcomes for people such as a sense of achievement, recognition and stimulating work that helps someone grow.

Motivation is an inside job. We talk about ‘going to motivate’ someone or ‘she just needs to be re-motivated’, yet in reality we cannot ‘do it’ to anyone we do it to ourselves. In this way your team members can be motivated without you being in the room which is useful for all of you who manage remote staff. We don’t bestow motivation on others we create a culture where they can get it for themselves. And that takes skill, but the good news is the workplace is already designed to do this and it is useful to understand the key processes that drive motivation so you can maintain them.

Just to really nail this definition here are some other things that are allied to motivation:


- **Incentives** – this is specifically for a one-off situation. This includes bonuses and other forms of instant recognition. It is not long lasting like motivation – “if you stay late three days this week to get this proposal out, I will reward you with a later start next Monday” type of thing.
- **Inspiration** – you often come across speakers at conferences labelled as a motivational speaker. In reality, just to be pedantic, they are actually inspirational speakers. They inspire you, prod you, poke you to think differently or follow their example. This may take you on a different path or inspire an idea to make you a better performer but again it’s probably short lived and doesn’t necessarily get you up on a cold dark morning raring to go.
- **Influence** – we influence people all the time without knowing it. Maybe you heard someone using an interesting phrase at the Monday meeting so you nicked it and started using it because you liked it. The person who said it probably never knew they had that impact on you. We can also directly influence people by being very planned about the way we will talk to them or demonstrate something to them to help them improve. However, if motivation is a long term, every day thing influence is a bit hit and miss. To keep people motivated with influence you would have to be doing it every day in every way which isn’t sustainable. The biggest impact influence often makes is in developing people, helping them stretch which eventually could drive their motivation.

- **Good manners** – there is always a place for good manners in the workplace but is it motivational? That thank you from the CEO every end of year is great and will be appreciated but the effects of it will wear off. A thank you for an extra bit of effort is really important and will hit the spot on the day but will it last longer than that? If you think good manners are motivating you may be in danger of becoming lazy as a leader – ‘I just have to smile at my staff every day and hey presto that motivates them for the rest of the year!’

In summary, motivation could be seen as an umbrella term with all the associated terms part of driving it with the essential component being that motivation weaves in and out of our lives every day where as others may not.

## What about Maslow and all those other theories?

It is useful to be aware of some of the science behind motivation so here is a quick summary of the key theories and their messages – you can read more about them if you need to through the web and books on the subjects.

Key theory	Main messages
<p><b>Maslow – Hierarchy of Needs</b></p>  <p>The diagram shows a pyramid with five horizontal levels. From top to bottom, the levels are labeled: 'Self-actualisation', 'Self esteem', 'Belonging needs', 'Security needs', and 'Physiological needs'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We strive to rise up the hierarchy from physiological, security and belonging needs up to self-esteem and self-actualisation.</li> <li>• We perform at our best at self-esteem and self-actualisation.</li> <li>• The first three are striven for as a foundation to push out to learn and grow.</li> <li>• We can go up and down the hierarchy through stages of our lives.</li> <li>• Once achieved we are not motivated by it anymore.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Herzberg's Hygiene theory</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have hygiene needs that need to be met before we can move to the motivating factors</li> <li>• Hygiene needs include salary, good working conditions, relationships with colleagues and line manager, job security</li> <li>• The higher motivators include a sense of achievement, recognition, stimulating work, personal and professional growth</li> </ul>

Key theory	Main messages
<p><b>Vroom's expectancy theory</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He assumes that behaviour results from conscious choices to maximise pleasure and minimise pain.</li> <li>• He has three variables – expectancy, instrumentality and valence.</li> <li>• Expectancy – the belief that increased effort will lead to increased performance e.g. if I work harder, I will get better at this.</li> <li>• Instrumentality – the belief that if I perform well, I will receive an attractive outcome e.g. I worked hard, I performed really well and I have been given a promotion.</li> <li>• Valence – how much you like the outcome of high performance. E.g. a person valuing more money is not going to be attracted by an extra day's holiday.</li> <li>• These three elements spin around each other to create motivation or frustration if one element does not match what the person expects.</li> </ul>
<p><b>McClelland's Human Motivation Theory</b></p>	<p>He suggests we have three main driving motivators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for achievement – to solve problems, achieve goals and be innovative</li> <li>• Need for Affiliation – consistency, low risk and good relationships</li> <li>• Need for Power – to be in charge, control others and go first</li> </ul>

## What do we take from these theories?

It might be worth reviewing your approach to motivation through the lens of these types of theories.

Ask yourself:

1. Are you making sure new staff settle in, feel secure and confirmed in role?
2. Do you sort out conflict in your team to ensure everyone has a feeling of belonging and are not ostracised?
3. Are you providing lots of opportunity for staff to grow and develop their feeling of being ok – their self-esteem?
4. Are you backing off when someone is clearly very able so they can enjoy autonomy?
5. Do you rely on good relationships with staff to drive motivation – as long as you all get on that's fine – without offering anything to stretch people?
6. If you have a really great office environment are you relying on that to retain people?
7. Do you offer opportunities for achievement, recognition and learning?
8. Are you creaming off all the exciting bits of work for yourself?
9. How well do you know your people? Do you know what they like as a reward and do you put that on the table?
10. Do you ever promise something for high performance that you can't deliver?
11. Are you giving feedback in a language your staff like? For Achievers is it about results, for Affiliators is it about how they support the team and for Powers it's about talking about their ability to control and organise?

### Reviewing your approach to building a motivational environment

If you answered **Yes** to questions 1,2,3,4,7,9 and 11 you clearly have a good understanding of your role in motivation.

If you answered **No** or not sure to any of those, these may be areas you might need to address.

If you answered **Yes** to questions 5,6,8,10 you may need to think about the impact of your actions on motivation.

If you answered **No** to any of those questions this is a sign you get what you need to avoid.

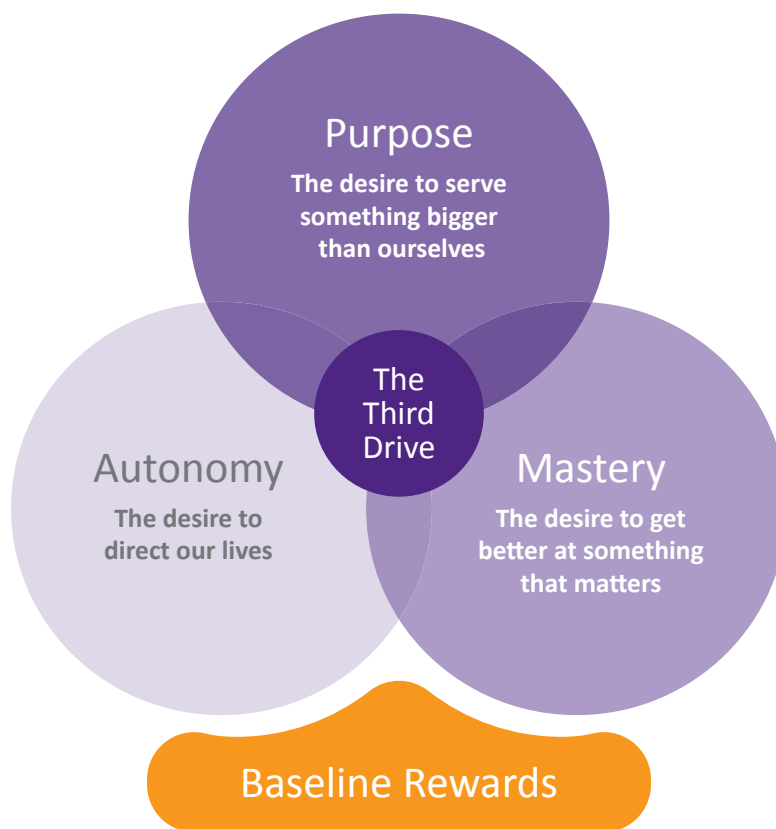
### Summary

- The basic foundations of human needs must be sorted before people begin to fly.
- Your role is to ensure all the factors that drive motivation are available to your team.
- Keep reviewing – individuals' needs change as they go through different life stages.
- Broadly motivation is about extrinsic rewards (tangible things like salary and status) and Intrinsic rewards (internal responses to achievement, recognition etc.) Intrinsic rewards are the longer lasting ones and drive high performance and retention.

## Let's get practical

The most modern model of motivation is Drive by Daniel H Pink (yes, he has written books on it if you want more depth). The model is a modern take on motivation based on the classic theories discussed earlier and tweaked to reflect the development of the workplace particularly the move away from carrot and stick motivation to more inclusive/engagement types of approaches. It also assumes Extrinsic (baseline rewards) are in place.

If we use this as our template, we can check out what you do already and what you may want to introduce to further build a motivational culture. This is the Drive model:



If we take each of the elements in turn you can review where you are with them.

### Purpose

***“We leave lucrative jobs to take low-paying ones that provide a clearer sense of purpose.”***

**Daniel H Pink**

Why do you work? Is it to put food on the table? Bring structure to your life? Use the skills you have to make a better world? We all have our own personal reasons for working and in our modern society it tends to be around doing something meaningful. We want a point to the job we are doing. To have a sense of our impact we need to know what the organisation is aiming for and see a clear path between our role and those aims. This means our job matters at an individual, team and organisational level. Organisational culture needs to reflect this too, it's no good having an overall aim around creativity when the sign off process is so long and arduous that people see it as a process where ideas go to die.





## And you could try

These are based on what we have seen and heard our clients do around Purpose, you probably do them or a version of them too...or maybe you could introduce a few.

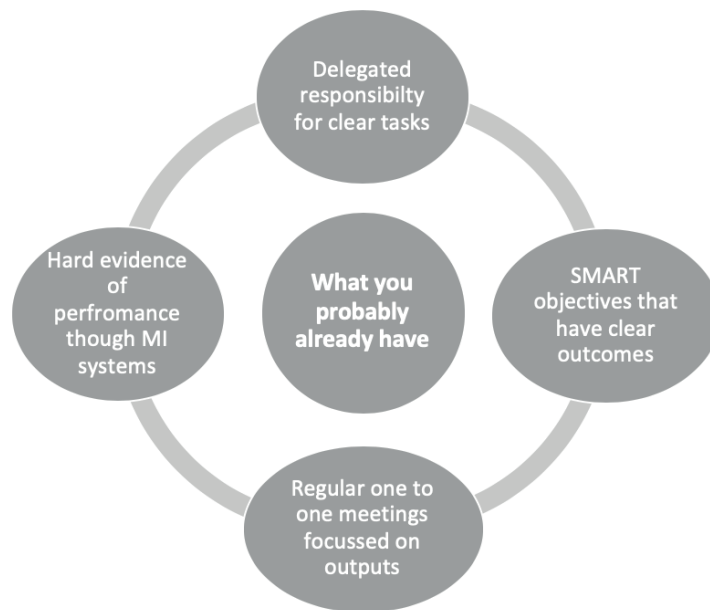
- Visits to where the action is – the shop floor, the research lab, the service delivery, the fundraising event, the projects – whatever it is that helps people see the end product so they can more easily relate to it.
- Regular Town Halls where achievements are firmly rooted in the contribution of everyone in the team
- Task objectives written under the strategic heading they impact.
- Team meetings that are less about death by update and more about what impact has been made on strategy this month.
- Visual reminders of the Purpose – screen savers, posters behind toilet doors, witty messages related to Purpose in social areas.

## Autonomy

### ***“Control leads to compliance; autonomy leads to engagement” – Daniel H Pink***

Have you ever wanted to scream – “just leave me alone and let me do my job!!”? If you have you may be suffering from a lack of autonomy. Most of us want to direct our lives and be free to do that in the time, style and order that makes sense to us. This is not about freedom for all to make it up as you go along, its about creating and agreeing a mandate to do our jobs, then being given the autonomy to go and do it.

Autonomy is also about accountability. We cannot have the choice without delivering the outcomes. This comes into sharp focus with remote teams. They have to be autonomous in order to perform, constantly having to check in or delay progress because the permission levels are too low is frustrating.



### And you could try

- A clear process with new starters to get them solid in their job and then move them towards being autonomous. Having the expectation that a leader's job is to do that.
- Creating a culture where people can be mobile around the organisation, they can talk to who they need to without having to go through loads of red tape of hierarchical obstacles.
- Being a coaching manager – believing that the head that has the problem is the head with the solution. Avoid enjoying being the font of all knowledge and instead derive satisfaction from empowering others.
- Build trusting teams where everyone is engaged and up for high performance because its fun, satisfying and grown up. Members of these teams want to do their bit because they know it's part of the bigger picture and don't want to let their colleagues down.
- Letting people make mistakes and learn from them, this as it drives autonomy. Be committed to this, we hear this so many times in organisations, "we have a no blame culture" whilst looking for someone to blame for not having one. If mistakes are frowned on people will wriggle out of their responsibilities blaming everyone and the cat for not hitting the deadline.

### Mastery

***"Goals that people set for themselves and that are devoted to attaining mastery are usually healthy. But goals imposed by others--sales targets, quarterly returns, standardized test scores, and so on--can sometimes have dangerous side effects." Daniel H Pink***

When did you last learn something? What is the skill or knowledge you are most proud of? Many of us put huge effort into learning something that is meaningful to us, it gives us more satisfaction. We all know that if you were forced to go to piano lessons because it was good for you, you will put less effort into practising than if your passion was to play Mozart like Lang Lang.





### And you could try

- Exploring the Support and Challenge culture for high performance where opportunity for growth is part of the way things are done with support to help people get there.
- Adopting the 70/20/10 rule of learning. 70% of learning takes place through work, 20% through working with others and 10% on formal training events. To make this successful leaders must be dedicated to coaching their people, helping them work problems out for themselves, reviewing what they have learned formally as well as informally. This helps promote a learning culture where everyone is up for mastering their roles and beyond.
- Have a scheme where staff can pitch for a learning opportunity to be funded, it might not be directly linked to work and is based on the idea that learning anything is good for confidence, growth and performance.
- Adopt a growth mind-set not a fixed one. Role modelling that you are always up for learning something new and not stuck in your ways may inspire others to adopt it too and lead to motivation.
- Stop worrying that you haven't got a training budget (apart from compulsory professional training), most learning is on the job, with others and completely free.

## Summary

We often use the metaphor of entertaining to explain what leaders need to attend to around motivation. If you give your guests a packed lunch, they may not like most of it and find something missing then go home hungry. If you spread out a buffet, they can pick what and how much they want and be more satisfied and have enjoyed your hospitality. It is the same for motivation. If you hand your people a packed lunch of things you think will motivate them, they will be ok with some of it but turn their nose up at bits and be frustrated that something they would like wasn't included. Spread out a buffet of motivational goodies and they can fill their boots with what does it for them. By the way, don't promise a dish you can't deliver or take one away that they thought they could get.

Go forth and be the cultivator of a motivational culture – the high performing, self-directed, engaged team will fuel yours forever.