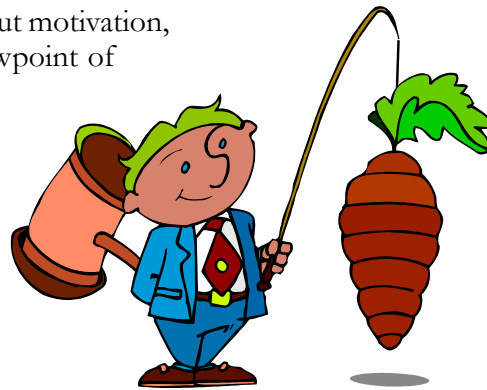


Motivation-The Magic Spark

An employee who is “motivated” runs under their own steam. *You don't need to keep stoking them up every day.*

There has been a lot written about motivation, but let's look at it from the viewpoint of *performance* and *production*.

It doesn't matter whether you're dealing with a Sales Executive, an Installation Technician or a Control Room Operator; if you want them to produce well, they need to be motivated.



motivation”. An employee who provides their own energy on the job is, of course, the optimum.

Unfortunately, people who are naturally self-motivated are fairly rare. But there is definitely something you can do to improve the self-motivation level of the remainder.

The key here is the answer to the simple question: “Why does this person come to work each day?”

Think of motivation as a scale.

The First Trap

The World Book dictionary defines the word “motivate” as:

“To provide with a motive or incentive to act; induce to act.”

This suggests some external influence is necessary, which leads to a common misconception.

This definition seems to suggest that you have to *externally* induce some magical factor called “motivation”. It sounds like you have to “give incentives”.

From this, a lot of managers get the idea that they have to hand out freebies or organise motivational seminars in order to get their employees fired up.

The fact of the matter is, if an employee is not already motivated, attempting to boost their motivation level artificially, from an external viewpoint, will almost certainly fail.

The reason for this is that the best type of motivation comes from within. It is “self-

■ **At one end of this scale you have the employee who hates their job, but needs the money.**

■ **At the other end of the scale is the person who gets such a kick out of their work. They can't wait to get stuck into it.**

Some people dread the thought of another “day of drudgery”, and only come to work because they will get a pay cheque at the end of the week. These are the ones who take “sickies”, and find any excuse to *not* produce the results you pay them for. These are the “non-performers” we often refer to in these articles.

A “top performer”, on the other hand, actually enjoys the challenge of their job. They get a real buzz out of achieving results. They get up in the morning and actually look forward to going to work.

We are not talking here about the “workaholic”. That's someone who has such an *obsession* about working that they just cannot leave it alone. Some *don't even enjoy their work* — but are simply unable to stop.

Motivation- The Magic Spark

No, the top performer is generally a highly self-motivated individual who devours his or her work because they *really enjoy producing the results.*

Have you seen a topnotch Service Tech who is regularly solving complex problems and leaving happy customers in his or her wake? Do they goof off, or take sickies, or come to work late? No! The reason they don't is that they are having too much fun doing the job. They are producing results!

In The Extreme

The rare case is someone who has "found their calling in life", so to speak. They manage to get themselves into a line of work that is *exactly* what they want to do. And they usually dedicate their whole life to this activity. Do you think Mother Theresa or Fred Hollows had to be pushed by some external influence to get them moving each day? Were they motivated by the money they were making?

Even though these are extreme cases, we can learn some lessons here about motivation. The key lesson is that *when a person is producing meaningful results, they are motivated.* There is a definite link between production and motivation.

Production & Motivation

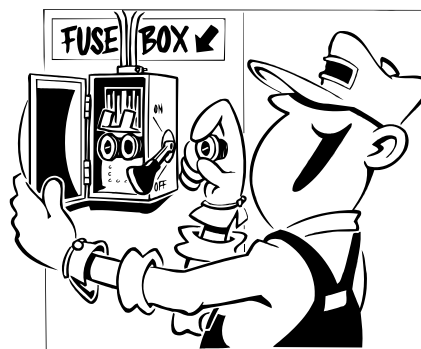
You can see this phenomenon very easily with sales people.

Watch a sales exec who has just made several sales in quick succession. Do they need any external push to get them going on the next sale? Not likely! They are up. They are full of confidence. They are eager to approach that next prospect.

But this is also true of any job. When an employee is consistently achieving the results expected of them (or even over-achieving), their morale is high

and they need *no* external motivating influences to get them started or keep them going.

Consider the other scenario: an employee who is *not* producing any meaningful results. Think of an Installer who gets the cable connections wrong, takes too long to complete the job and generally does such sloppy work that someone always has to check up on them.



These are the ones who need to be pushed. They may even have trouble getting up in the morning, as they feel there is nothing to look forward to.

How to Motivate

So, how do you motivate these people? How do you get employees to do, of their own accord, what you are paying them to do?

- Offer more money?
- Improve working conditions?
- Increase sick leave?
- Increase holidays?
- Reduce working hours?

The answer is "NO", to all of these.

And the simple reason is this: *if the only motivation a person has to come to work is the money, or the perks, the first time they see a job with more money and perks, they will leave you.*

In addition to that, these are all *short term gains*. They give a temporary boost. But none of these solutions creates an environment where the employee is continually *stimulated by their job* — actually looking forward to working.



Motivation- The Magic Spark

Now, this is not to say that one should not strive to have the best possible working conditions for their staff. But this comes under the heading of pride in your organisations. And it is a fact that your *productive staff* will feel this pride and strive even harder to contribute to the overall results.

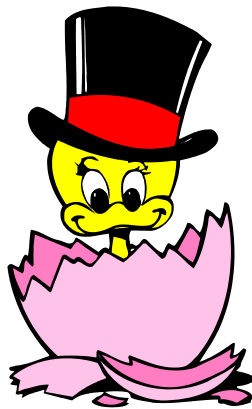
'Chicken & Egg' Situation?

Ok, we've got two factors here. Highly motivated staff are productive. Highly productive staff are motivated. But which comes first?

Actually, there's only one entry point to this dilemma. We've already stated that trying to motivate your staff by providing external incentives will not cut it. It's only temporary. It will not get at the things that will improve their *self-motivation*.

Therefore, the way to tackle this is from the viewpoint of *production*. If you can increase their production, you will automatically increase their motivation.

Production and Motivation go hand-in-glove. Increase one and you will increase the other. You may not be able to externally increase motivation, but you can certainly increase their production. And when you do, their self-motivation will also rise!



If you want highly motivated staff, take a tip from those people who already demonstrate a high degree of self-motivation. They produce results!

Increasing Production

So, how do you increase an employee's production?

Let's break this down, because the approach is different for different types of employees. You have three types of employee:

- **Poor performers.**
- **Average (mediocre) performers.**
- **Top performers.**

There are three major things you can do to help these people to increase their production:

- **Clarify the end-results of the job.**
- **Remove the barriers to production.**
- **Provide support.**

...but it depends upon who you are talking to as to which approach you take.

1. With poor performers, you need to clarify exactly what their job is. If they really knew what they were supposed to produce, this would dramatically improve their production. If you don't have an effective Job Description for that job, check out our web site for the article "Writing Job Descriptions". It's important that the "end result" of the job is clearly defined.
2. For the average, or mediocre, performer, the best approach is to find out what's stopping them. What barriers are they encountering that they can't handle? They probably have a reasonably good idea of what they are supposed to produce, but they are having some difficulties. For example, a Technician can't do his job because the job materials have not been organised in time. If you can remove some of the barriers for them, their production will go up.



Motivation- The Magic Spark

3. Top performers generally know exactly what they should be producing and they need little help in removing barriers. In fact, *don't even try to remove barriers* – solving these is part of the fun for a top performer. What you do with these high producers is find out how you can support them better so they can produce more. It might be more or better equipment, or a lesser-paid support person to help them out.

Effective Motivation

Improving the self-motivation of your staff consists of clarifying the end results of the job, removing barriers and providing appropriate support. But you must apply these solutions in accordance with their current production level, as covered above.

Whatever it is, if you, as the manager of the area, can make it easier for your staff to accomplish the results of their work, you will see a rise in morale and production. *And you will see a corresponding rise in motivation.*

