

Employee Motivation is the Big Challenge facing businesses today. The Fundamental Question is: "HOW exactly do we motivate employees to do their job the way it's supposed to be done and enjoy it, too?" Ultimately, everything a business does that amounts to "a lasting forward step" depends on motivating employees ... or, in other words, depends on applying the correct answer to that question. THAT'S BECAUSE — employee motivation is *the vital ingredient* to (a) overcoming business problems, (b) achieving business progress, and (c) realizing business goals. Motivating employees for greater individual and team performance is the *main road* to enterprise success.

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Motivation-building

The Top Ten Most-effective Ways of Motivating Greater Team Member Performance

(a.k.a. The Fourth Function of Performance-building)

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Today, people want everything distilled to its simplest form.

So ... for your reading convenience, here is the one-sentence secret to employee motivation-building:

Make doing desired performance MORE REWARDING than doing undesired performance.

Desired Performance = any performance that you want to occur.
Undesired Performance = any performance that's not desired performance.

"Whoa," you say, "it's impossible for it to be that simple."

But that, in essence, is all there is to motivation-building. Any activity, thing, condition, or program that results in getting a person to accomplish desired performance does so by making the execution of that desired performance more rewarding than the execution of undesired performance.

Here's why it works that way.

Whenever a person faces a choice between two mutually-exclusive endeavors — such as doing desired performance versus not doing desired performance — the

person always chooses to pursue whichever course of action appears to hold the greater amount of net reward for him or her. (We call this the *Law of Performance Choice*.) So, if it happens that not doing desired performance appears to hold the greater net reward, that's the alternative that gets pursued!

This takes us to the pivotal question of motivation-building: HOW do we get employees to choose to pursue desired performance over undesired performance?

THE ANSWER IS: We do it by *increasing the net reward of desired performance, as employees perceive it*. And how do we do that? It's in the upside versus downside of each endeavor.

Every performance holds an upside and a downside for the performer. The **Upside** is whatever a performer LIKES about doing the particular performance. The **Downside** is whatever the performer DISLIKES about doing it.

The UPSIDE can take the form of a compensation, event, communication, condition, situation, and/or opportunity that the performer finds enjoyable, beneficial, or fulfilling. It can be an aspect of the performance itself or it can be something received afterward as a result of doing the performance.

The DOWNSIDE is anything that the performer must either painfully endure or reluctantly give up to accomplish the performance. Things that a performer might have to endure include difficulties, physical discomfort, psychological discomfort, fatigue, boredom, risk, and inconvenience (or hassle) involved in doing the performance. Things that a performer might have to give up to engage in the performance include energy, resources, and the opportunity to do something else instead.

Virtually every performance carries both an upside and a downside. So, associated with every endeavor or performance is a formula. We call it the *Net Reward Formula*, and it reads like this:

$$\text{Upside} - \text{Downside} = \text{Net Reward} \\ \text{(for the performer)}$$

So, the way that we go about increasing the net reward of desired performance is by (a) **EXPANDING** the upside and/or (b) **SHRINKING** the downside of doing the performance, as viewed through the eye of the performer.

Expanded UPSIDE and/or Shrunk DOWNSIDE

=

Greater Net Reward of the Performance

We accomplish this vital process through two steps:

1. We FIND OUT what types of performance-related experiences employees like and dislike.
2. We INFUSE desired performance with a greater quantity of the experiences that they like and with a lesser quantity of those that they dislike.

These two steps are the essence of employee motivation-building — or, put another way, they are *The 2-step Motivation-building Process*.

So how do we do **Step 1**, or go about finding out what types of experiences make doing desired performance more rewarding for employees? Two basic ways: (1) We can ask them and (2) we can use trial-and-error. In the second way, we would guess at what we think employees might like or want, then provide that thing either as part of doing desired performance or as a consequence for accomplishing desired performance (but not for undesired performance). Then we observe the results. If it increases the frequency or intensity with which employees pursue desired performance, we've found something they like. If it doesn't, it's not something they like.

It's easy to guess at what to try because *most humans have the same basic desires*. That is, most of us want:

- To engage in enjoyable activity.
- To feel good about our self as a person.
- To feel good about what we're doing or accomplishing.
- To feel good about our future or where we're heading.
- To earn economic reward for our efforts, especially our "extra efforts."

Or put another way — most of us seek praise, convenience, fun, money, importance, success, advancement, nobility, and altruism (more on these things shortly).

Once we identify the specific experiences and rewards employees enjoy and want, we then should make those things either a part of doing desired performance or a pay-off for accomplishing desired performance (while, of course, taking care to avoid making those same things a part of undesired performance). Simultaneously, we should try to reduce or eliminate any needless pain and suffering employees might have to endure when pursuing desired performance. All this is the essence of **Step 2**, or the process of expanding the upside and shrinking the downside of doing desired performance.

By applying the two steps of motivation-building, we make doing desired performance MORE REWARDING than doing undesired performance for employees. *This, in turn, causes employees to choose to perform a greater amount of desired performance.* This is how motivation-building “happens.” It's also what the upcoming **Top 10 Motivators** of greater employee performance are all about.

However, before jumping into the Top 10 Motivators we're first going to take a brief side-trip to precisely define the concepts of performance and motivation.

As the term is used herein, **PERFORMANCE** is human action and any outcomes that directly derive from it.

Action can take the form of either a single activity or a set of related activities. Mental and verbal processes, such as decision-making and conversation, are forms of activity. “Doing nothing” is also an activity.

An **outcome** is an object, condition, or situation resulting from human action.

Here are examples that illustrate action and outcomes.

ACTION	OUTCOME
Floor-mopping	A clean floor
Decision-making	A certain decision
Selling	A sale made
Writing	A finished report

*Action + Outcomes = **PERFORMANCE***

In light of each company's goals, there are two kinds of performance:

1. Desired Performance
2. Undesired Performance.

DESIRED PERFORMANCE is any performance that you want to occur. Typically it's performance that contributes to achievement of at least one of your company's goals or priorities. It's sometimes called *productive performance* or *good performance*.

UNDESIRED PERFORMANCE is any performance that's not desired performance. Typically it's performance that does not contribute to achievement of any of your company's goals or priorities. It's sometimes referred to as *poor performance* or *inadequate performance*.

Every incident of performance is either desired performance or undesired performance. “Neutral performance” does not exist. Or, put another way, any given employee at any given time is engaging in either desired performance or undesired performance. No one is ever engaging in “neutral performance” or “no performance.” (For an overview and further discussion of the performance-building process, [click here](#).)

As used herein, we define **MOTIVATION** as a state of mind that causes a person to

choose to engage in (or pursue) a particular task or endeavor (ex., a particular desired performance). Further, we define **MOTIVATION-BUILDING** as the act of creating the *conditions* that generate motivation. So relative to any particular performance that we'd like to see happen, motivation-building is the act of creating the conditions that generate a state of mind that causes employees to deliver that particular performance. We often refer to a particular condition that causes motivation as a **MOTIVATOR**.

Since we can't read minds, the only way we can know when a person has motivation for a particular desired performance is by observing his or her *actions*. If s/he has the wherewithal to do the performance but isn't doing it, we conclude that s/he's lacking the motivation necessary for it. On the other hand, if s/he's doing the performance or attempting to do it, we conclude that s/he has the motivation for it.

Finally, as previously stated, the way that we create motivation within employees for accomplishing desired performance is to make doing desired performance more rewarding than doing undesired performance.

We now return to our pivotal question: *How do we go about making desired performance more rewarding than undesired performance?*

The way that we make doing desired performance more rewarding than doing undesired performance is by applying one or more of *The Top 10 Motivators of greater employee performance*. We view these 10 motivators as the fundamental ways that a leader/manager can generate an increased amount of desired performance within his/her enterprise or team. We start with "the short list," then expand it to the "brief description list," and, finally, provide the "full explanation."

TOP 10 MOTIVATORS – The Short List

To make desired performance more rewarding than undesired performance, make desired performance:

1. A RAP-receiving experience
2. A hassle-free pursuit
3. A fun time
4. A dollar-producing endeavor
5. An important accomplishment
6. A winning situation
7. A career advancement opportunity
8. A noble venture, and
9. An act of altruism.

Plus ...

10. Reduce the net reward of undesired performance.

Motivators #1-9 involve expanding the net reward of desired performance.
Motivator #10 involves reducing the net reward of undesired performance.

Increased D.P.N.R. and/or Decreased U.P.N.R.

=

Increased Motivation to Achieve Desired Performance

D.P.N.R. = Desired Performance Net Reward **U.P.N.R.** = Undesired Performance Net Reward

It's also possible to distill motivators #1-9 to one-word each. It reads like this.

To make desired performance more rewarding than undesired performance, infuse desired performance with:

1. Praise
2. Convenience
3. Fun
4. Money
5. Importance
6. Success
7. Advancement
8. Nobility, and
9. Altruism

TOP 10 MOTIVATORS – in Brief Description

Now we expand the short list to a brief description of each Motivator. To make desired performance more rewarding than undesired performance, do this:

MOTIVATOR 1: Make desired performance a **RAP-receiving experience** for employees by delivering sincere Recognition, Appreciation, and Praise whenever someone either accomplishes desired performance *or* engages in “right actions” or performance progress.

MOTIVATOR 2: Make desired performance a hassle-free pursuit for employees by identifying the needless aggravations and inconveniences associated with doing desired performance and then eliminating them.

MOTIVATOR 3: Make desired performance a fun time for employees by, as much as possible, matching each employee to a job and tasks that involve activities that that employee innately enjoys doing.

MOTIVATOR 4: Make desired performance a dollar-producing endeavor for employees by installing a differential pay program or, in other words, by paying an employee more when s/he accomplishes a greater amount of desired performance than when s/he accomplishes the "usual amount."

MOTIVATOR 5: Make desired performance an important accomplishment for employees by paying personal attention to the performing of desired performance by employees.

MOTIVATOR 6: Make desired performance a winning situation for employees by structuring desired performance into a series of desired goals, then arranging for employees to succeed in reaching them, and, finally, celebrate after each goal achievement.

MOTIVATOR 7: Make desired performance a career advancement opportunity for employees by creating an intra-position advancement system that makes an automatic connection between sustained desired performance by an employee and that employee's personal position advancement.

MOTIVATOR 8: Make desired performance a noble venture for employees by you personally committing to making your business enterprise the best at what it does.

MOTIVATOR 9: Make desired performance an act of altruism for employees by arranging for them to have the opportunity to be participants in helping their co-workers — including their leader — succeed.

MOTIVATOR 10: Reduce the net reward of undesired performance by identifying any upside for employees that might be associated with doing undesired performance, and then reducing or eliminating it.

TOP 10 MOTIVATORS — The Whole Picture

Here, now, is the full explanation of how to use the Top 10 Motivators to make desired performance more rewarding than undesired performance and, thereby, motivate employees, or team members, to more frequently choose to pursue desired performance over undesired performance.

MOTIVATOR #1:

Make desired performance a RAP-receiving experience.

This particular motivation-builder is, perhaps, the most important of all. If a manager does this and nothing more, the incidence of desired performance in his or her team will increase!

RAP stands for **R**ecognition, **A**ppreciation, and **P**raise. Although similar, there's a slight distinction between these three things:

Recognition = Awareness and approval of something we've done.

Appreciation = Thanks for doing it.

Praise = Commendation for doing it exceptionally well.

Receiving any one of the three is gratifying to most of us. However, it's possible to combine all three for maximum impact. Here's an example:

"I noticed what you just did [recognition]. That's exceptional work [praise]. Thanks a lot [appreciation]."

Humans very much enjoy receiving RAP. For many of us it's our biggest motivator at work or, at the least, second only to cash.

Unfortunately, as powerful as RAP is, most leaders and managers use it sparingly. The reason they state for doing so is: "Team members already get too much praise ... and if I praise them before they achieve the goal (i.e., before they perform a complete act of desired performance), they'll become de-motivated and stop working toward the goal."

This reasoning might sound logical. But it's actually incorrect. To prove it to yourself, simply go up to ANY group of workers — salaried or hourly, leadership or non-leadership — and say the following: "Would everyone here who has been receiving too much praise from their boss please raise your hand." You know what — no one ever raises their hand. Because no one anywhere believes that s/he is receiving too much sincere recognition, appreciation, and praise. Contrary to what many leaders and managers surmise, RAP is not overused. Instead, it's one of the most under-used motivators in the workplace today. Virtually EVERYONE loves RAP; virtually NO ONE receives close to as much as they would like. In short, no one gets so much of it that they're "tired of it."

Therefore, we should seek out instances of RAP-deserving performance by employees and, whenever we find it, promptly deliver sincere recognition,

appreciation, and/or praise.

So, what specific instances should we provide RAP for?

For maximum impact, don't wait until the "big goal" is achieved before giving RAP. Instead, dispense it "along the way." In other words, make performance progress a RAP-receiving experience for employees. *Performance progress* is an occasion when an employee's performance moves closer to a particular performance standard or goal. Accordingly, "right actions" are a form of performance progress. The following things are RIGHT ACTIONS:

- A successful first step in a new endeavor.
- Doing a particular thing "right" for a first time.
- Giving unusual diligence in pursuit of desired performance.
- Doing something extra that furthers team progress.
- Moving to a higher level of proficiency in some aspect of desired performance.
- Extending a streak of good performance longer than what has been done before, or setting a new record.

The main idea is: We focus on "rapping" right actions because the more RAP employees receive for right actions the more they enjoy doing right actions; and the more they enjoy doing right actions the more right actions they do; and the more right actions they do the quicker and more effectively the team achieves its overall goals.

This happens because (a) *performance progress is the pathway to goal achievement* and (b) *RAP is a primary motivator of performance progress*. In other words ...

RAP → More Performance Progress → Quicker Goal Achievement

It's that simple.

HOW should we deliver RAP for maximum impact?

RAP can vary in its degree of impact — some instances being highly motivating, others less so. What determines its degree of impact is how it's delivered. Behavioral psychology has created a list of rules for maximizing the motivating impact of positive reinforcement (which is what RAP is). By delivering RAP according to these rules we increase its impact on motivating employees to deliver right actions and desired performance.

To deliver RAP for maximum impact, make your RAP:

- **SINCERE**. Mean what you say and say only what you mean. If you don't believe it, don't say it. People almost always sense when someone is lying. So sincerity, or truthfulness, is Rule #1 for delivering effective RAP. It's because lying is a form of disrespect and disrespect is a de-motivator. Which means, insincere RAP is worse than no RAP at all. (Note: Whenever the rare instance occurs where someone says s/he's receiving too much positive reinforcement, what s/he's probably referring to is too many insincere compliments — a.k.a. flattery and BS.)
- **SPECIFIC**. Tell the person exactly what s/he did that you liked. In other words, state the specific actions or outcomes that earned him or her the RAP. "Generalized RAP" can sound like BS, and that's not good.
- **IMMEDIATE**. Deliver RAP as soon as possible after spotting the right action. The longer the delay, the smaller the impact will be on motivating repeat performance.
- **FREQUENT**. Don't be stingy with it. Every step forward — every act of personal progress or performance improvement — deserves some RAP.
- **PERSONALIZED AND INDIVIDUALIZED**. Use your own words and style — express how you feel as opposed to how the company or "management" feels. And when delivering RAP to a group, try to give it to individuals, as well.
- **VARIED AND RANDOM**. Avoid saying the same thing every time you give praise. Also, avoid praising the same employee for the same thing at the same time every day. "Routinized RAP" smacks of insincerity. And, as we've said, insincere-sounding RAP is worse than no RAP at all. So make your RAP creative and spontaneous.
- **SEPARATE FROM CRITICISM**. Don't combine criticism with RAP. Doing so reduces the enjoyment and motivating impact of the RAP for the employee. Give any criticism and "bad news" at another time.
- **OCCASIONALLY COMBINE WITH A TANGIBLE REWARD**. For extra impact in special situations, give a "token of your appreciation" along with the RAP. Use this for spotlighting right actions that are extra-important and that you want an employee to definitely repeat. The reward need not be expensive — a movie ticket, \$5 gift certificate, or even just a \$1.00 coin are examples. Note: The purpose of the reward is to *express your appreciation*, not to replace it. So keep the focus on your appreciation as opposed to the object.

TO SUM UP ...

We should be on constant lookout for right actions by employees. And each time we see one, we should provide Recognition, Appreciation, or Praise. By doing that we increase the net enjoyment (or net reward) that employees derive from performing right actions, which builds their motivation to continue doing them.

Applying this Motivator #1 will substantially increase the amount of desired

performance in most teams. However, if you desire to generate still further motivation in employees, consider also applying one or more of the following Motivators #2-10.

MOTIVATOR #2:

Make desired performance a hassle-free pursuit.

As previously explained, every endeavor has an upside, a downside, and a measure of net reward as expressed by the formula:

$$\text{Upside} - \text{Downside} = \text{Amount of Net Reward}$$

So one way we can increase the net reward of a particular performance is by shrinking the downside (i.e., reducing the difficulties, discomfort, fatigue, boredom, risk, inconvenience, and lost resources) that's incurred by the performer in doing the performance.

For most performances the downside comes in two parts: **Necessary** and **Needless**.

Necessary Downside is the part that's vital to accomplishing the performance. In other words, without it the performance couldn't be completed, or at least not completed well.

Needless Downside, on the other hand, is the part that's non-vital to the performance. In other words, if it were eliminated the performance could still be accomplished. We call this aspect of downside "hassle." **Hassle** connected to desired performance reduces the net enjoyment, or net reward, of the performance for the performer and, thereby, reduces motivation to accomplish the performance.

Therefore, we should identify the hassle associated with doing desired performance and eliminate it! Or, put another way, we should make doing desired performance more convenient.

By doing that we decrease the downside and, thereby, increase the net reward of desired performance for employees, which builds employees' motivation for doing the performance.

HOW does one go about identifying Needless Downside, or Hassle?

Three ways: (1) **EXPERIENCE** the job our self (for a day or two), or (2) **OBSERVE** it being done, or (3) **ASK** employees "How could your job be made easier and less hassle-filled?"

Even with that, spotting hassle can be tricky. This is because it often appears under the headings of “company policy” and “standard operating procedure.” When first installed, a procedure might be Necessary but, over time, becomes Needless without anyone recognizing it. So identifying hassle requires constant scrutiny of those things that are assumed to be “necessary” and “given.”

Once identified, eliminating Needless Downside can require persistence. This is because it often entails someone having to make a change in procedure or thinking — a formidable hurdle in any situation.

In addition to outdated, nonproductive policies and procedures, three other factors also can cause job aggravation: **(1)** *lack of awareness* by an employee of what exactly constitutes desired performance, **(2)** *lack of ability* to accomplish desired performance with ease and proficiency, and **(3)** *lack of adequate resources* for doing the job correctly. The three simple fixes for these three conditions are awareness-creating, ability-building (i.e., training), and resource-equipping.

- For info on how to create employee awareness, [click here](#).
- For info on how to build employee ability, [click here](#).
- For info on how to equip employees with proper resources, [click here](#).

TO SUM UP ...

We should be diligent in eliminating hassle from employees' jobs. By doing that we shrink the downside of their employment experience and, thereby, increase the net enjoyment (or net reward) that they derive from their work. The result: We eliminate a major obstacle that employees face in their efforts to adopt a good attitude and motivation toward their work.

MOTIVATOR #3:

Make desired performance a fun time.

Every job or task consists of a particular set of activities.

In the eye of each performer each of those activities is either **Enjoyable** or **Non-enjoyable**. So for each employee each performance consists of X percent of enjoyable activity and 100–X percent of non-enjoyable activity. The greater the percent of enjoyable activity in a particular performance, the greater the net pleasure, or net reward, that the performance holds for the performer and, thereby, the greater the performer's motivation to accomplish the performance.

However, humans differ in their affinity for performing various types of activities.

What one person loves another person hates. Which means, the percent of enjoyable activity contained in a particular performance differs among employees.

Therefore, we should — as much as possible — match employees to jobs and tasks that involve activities that they innately enjoy doing.

By doing this we increase the net reward of desired performance for employees, which builds their motivation to accomplish the performance.

How do we find out what employees enjoy doing?

When there's a choice of two or more jobs to be done, we should **ASK** the employee which one s/he would prefer to take on.

Another way of finding out what employees like is by **OBSERVING** them in action. When a person is pursuing an activity with tireless effort and a smile it usually means s/he enjoys the activity. When s/he's having trouble mustering energy and a smile, it usually means s/he finds the activity to be non-enjoyable.

Lastly, there's the situation where a job or task contains activities that the employee not only doesn't enjoy, but actually dislikes. This can be troublesome because us humans tend to "screw up" and "forget about" those activities that we find to be objectionable. In a situation where there's only one type of job and it contains some activities that are objectionable to most employees, you might try one or both of these two strategies.

First, try eliminating the disliked activities by changing a procedure or by "designing or automating the activity out of existence."

Second, try expanding the job to include additional activities that the employees like doing. If possible, arrange for the "disliked activities" to come first, followed by the "liked activities." That way the enjoyable activities serve as positive reinforcement for completing the unenjoyable ones.

TEAM MEMBER RECRUITMENT: Along with the above, an additional way to increase the level of work enjoyment within your team is to apply *selective recruitment*. In other words, during the process of selecting persons to fill a particular job position, hire only those who would enjoy (or at least not dislike) performing the activities involved in the job. A recruitment or consulting firm might be helpful in constructing a "test" for assisting you in determining the degree to which any particular job applicant is predisposed to liking the activities involved in a particular job. Another way of matching a person to a job is to describe for the person the specific activities involved in the job, and then observe his/her response.

After that, you might close with this question: "On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being 'no enjoyment' and 5 being 'very high enjoyment,' in your opinion how much would you enjoy doing the activities that I just described?" Obviously, a person who answers "4" or "5" is probably more likely to enjoy that particular job than one who

answers "1" or "2" (assuming that they're giving honest answers, of course).

TO SUM UP ...

As much as feasible, we should match employees to jobs and tasks that they innately enjoy doing. This Motivator combined with Motivators #1 and #2 goes a long way toward increasing the net enjoyment (or net reward) that most employees derive from their work and, thereby, makes it easy for them to "eagerly jump into" their job and excel at it. Motivators #1-3 constitute the "Big 3 Performance-builders." They form the foundation of a highly-motivated enterprise. When combined with Motivator #4, super things can happen.

MOTIVATOR #4:

Make desired performance a dollar-producing endeavor.

When a person receives something s/he likes as a result of something s/he has done, s/he will likely repeat whatever s/he did that resulted in getting that something s/he liked.

This phenomenon is validated by over a half-century of behavioral research. It's now considered to be a fact. And common sense confirms it, too. We all know that when we receive something we like as a result of something we've done, we tend to repeat what we did in anticipation of getting more of what we like.

What this means is: If we want to motivate a person or group to continue a particular performance, one way of accomplishing this is to give them something they like as a consequence of doing the performance. This process of giving someone something they like as a consequence for a performance is known as **reinforcement**, often called positive reinforcement. And that "something they like" is known as a **reinforcer**, sometimes called a reward. (Note: Do not confuse providing a reinforcer with providing an incentive. An incentive is a *promise* to deliver a particular thing if the performer delivers a particular performance. It's provided before the performance occurs. A reinforcer, on the other hand, is a *reward* that's received for actually accomplishing the performance. It's provided after the performance occurs. The logic behind an incentive is: "If you do X, I'll give you Y." The logic behind a reinforcer is: "Because you did X, you're getting Y.")

In the work setting there are four categories of reinforcers:

1. **TANGIBLES**, which are physical and economic things that the performer can use.

2. SOCIAL INTERACTION, which is communication between others and the performer.

3. ACTIVITIES, which are actions and events that the performer can do or engage in.

4. OPPORTUNITIES, which are situations and conditions that could result in the performer obtaining something s/he desires.

So, a reinforcer is an enjoyment-producing thing, communication, activity, or opportunity given as a consequence for a particular performance. Reinforcers are widely used in motivation-building. For example, four of these Top 10 Motivators make use of reinforcers. Motivator #1 uses RAP, a social interaction reinforcer. Motivator #6 uses winning moments, an activity reinforcer. Motivator #7 uses career advancement opportunity, an opportunity reinforcer. And this motivator #4 uses one of the most powerful reinforcers of all, money — a tangibles reinforcer.

CONTINGENCY DIFFERENTIAL IS THE KEY

In every enterprise, every form of employee compensation or reward is either **contingent** or **non-contingent** on accomplishment of desired performance.

Contingent Reward is that which can only be had through doing desired performance. In other words, if the performance isn't accomplished, the reward isn't realized.

Non-contingent Reward is that which can be had without doing desired performance. In other words, employees get it regardless of whether or not they accomplish desired performance.

A key to building employee motivation for desired performance is to increase the amount of contingent reward and decrease the amount of non-contingent. Doing this is an underlying purpose of each of these Top 10 Motivators! The difference between the amounts of contingent and non-contingent reward we call the **contingency differential**.

Contingent Reward – Non-contingent Reward = Contingency Differential

The greater the differential between contingent reward and non-contingent reward, the more frequently employees will choose desired performance over undesired performance.

This explains why, in most organizations, pay is not a motivator of increased desired performance. Most companies provide the same amount of pay regardless of the amount of desired performance that an employee delivers. In order for pay to be a motivator of a greater amount of desired performance, doing a greater amount of desired performance must result in greater pay than doing the “usual amount” of desired performance.

Therefore, we should pay an employee more when s/he accomplishes a greater amount of desired performance than when s/he accomplishes the "usual amount."

Doing this results in a portion of employee pay being contingent on doing desired performance. This, in turn, increases the net reward of desired performance for employees, which builds their motivation to accomplish it.

There are many ways that differential pay can be applied. No one way is best for all companies or situations because a differential pay program must accommodate the unique goals and functions of each particular enterprise. So creating the optimal program is a refinement process done by trial-and-error.

Regardless, applying the following guidelines will likely increase the motivational impact of most differential pay programs.

GUIDELINES FOR AN EFFECTIVE DIFFERENTIAL PAY PROGRAM

- 1. CREATE** a pay system consisting of two parts: (1) a **base pay** given for "base performance" and (2) a **performance bonus** given for "bonus performance." The two should add up to a total compensation amount that's competitive within your industry or market.
- 2. MAKE** the performance bonus at least 15 percent of the total pay. For example, if base pay is, say, \$6.00 per hour, the performance bonus might be an additional \$1.00 per hour (or more).
- 3. MAKE** the performance period the same as the pay period, typically either one week or two weeks. If you have a longer pay period, consider having several performance periods within the pay period, with each performance period having its own bonus opportunity.
- 4. ISSUE** the performance bonus with each paycheck.
- 5. BASE** the bonus on a simple, unambiguous performance criterion or set of criteria. "Unambiguous" means open to one possible interpretation only. Here are samples of simple, unambiguous performance criterions. Any one or a combination of which can serve as criteria for a performance bonus.
 - Number of days worked as scheduled (i.e., without tardiness or absence)
 - Number of days worked wearing the complete correct uniform
 - Average customer satisfaction score derived from customer feedback surveys
 - "Average team contribution score" derived from employee feedback surveys in which each employee numerically rates each of the other

employees on his/her overall contribution to the team's productivity

- Personal development as measured by a test score of some new skill or knowledge area
- Average number of units produced or delivered per hour
- Average number of customers served per hour
- Average transaction amount
- Average product quality score based on an objective quality measurement method
- And so on.

6. BE SURE to base the bonus on performance that's controllable by employees. Avoid pinning the bonus to something that employees only partially control the outcome of. (If any of the above samples of performance criterion aren't controllable by your employees, don't use that criterion.)

7. MAKE SURE employees know how much bonus they earned in each pay period. Pay the bonus with a separate "bonus check" or show the bonus amount on a separate "bonus" line on the stub of the regular paycheck.

8. MAKE SURE employees know what specific performance the bonus is for. Getting a bonus without knowing why has no motivating value.

9. NEVER issue the bonus to an employee who didn't earn it. In other words, never pay a bonus to a person who failed to meet the pre-established bonus performance criterion.

COMMENTS. Many things can sabotage a differential pay program. To create an effective one requires trial-and-error. After each test period, keep what's working and replace what isn't with something new. Then test again. Eventually perfection arrives.

Many variations are possible. For example, we can base the performance bonus on either individual performance or team performance, or on both. Basing it on team performance can provide the benefit of creating peer pressure on poor performers (a.k.a. bonus detractors) to bring their substandard performance up to par.

We also can use a revolving bonus criteria, where the criteria changes every month or so. This injects variety and newness into employees' jobs. It also helps broaden employee focus and abilities.

Lastly, we can apply a sliding scale to the bonus criteria. For example, employees could get full bonus for meeting the full bonus criteria, half bonus for coming just

slightly short of the full criteria, and no bonus for falling substantially short of the criteria. What constitutes “slightly short” and “substantially short” should be defined by specific criteria, or “hard numbers.” An advantage of a sliding scale is that it keeps an employee from giving up after one stumble or the first bad day.

For more info on the principles of behavioral psychology and how to use positive reinforcement in the workplace, check out *Performance Management* by Aubrey Daniels (770-493-5080).

TO SUM UP ...

We should think about putting our money where our mouth is. We should consider installing a differential pay program — a program that enables each employee to get a larger paycheck when s/he accomplishes a particular “bonus” performance criteria during the pay period. By doing that we increase the net payoff (or net reward) that employees derive from pursuing desired performance, which builds their motivation for continuing to pursue it.

MOTIVATOR #5:

Make desired performance an important accomplishment.

Virtually everyone likes feeling *important!*

So what enables an employee to feel that way? The equation is simple: An employee who does important things is important; an employee who does unimportant things is unimportant. In other words:

Doing important things = Being an important person.

So for an employee to feel important s/he must feel like s/he's doing important things.

This leads to the crucial question: In a team situation, what makes a particular activity important? The answer: *An activity is important when it's considered to be important by the team's leadership.*

So how does a team member know which activities the team leadership regards as important?

A person knows which activities are important by observing what the leadership pays attention to. In other words:

Leadership attention = Performance importance

Therefore, we should pay personal attention to the performing of desired performance by our employees.

And how do we do that? We take *personal time* to get *personally involved* with it. In other words, we frequently take time to explain, train, observe, and/or respond to desired performance. That's all there is to it. What the leader pays personal attention to is seen as important by employees; what s/he doesn't pay attention to is viewed as unimportant.

TO SUM UP ...

We should consider creating instances in which we pay *personal attention* to desired performance by employees. For example, we might consider spending at least a few minutes each day personally observing and responding to some particular desired performance of one or more employees (rotating between employees from day to day). Because when we pay personal attention to employees' desired performance we raise the importance of that performance in the eyes of those employees. And by doing that we increase the net enjoyment (or net reward) that those employees derive from doing the performance ... which builds their motivation to continue doing it. Very simple!

MOTIVATOR #6:

Make desired performance a winning situation.

A **winning situation** is one that's filled with winning moments. A **winning moment** is a point in time when a person *succeeds at reaching a desired goal and enjoys it*. Humans like winning moments a lot. So winning moments can be used to enhance the net reward of a particular performance for a performer and, as a result, build the performer's motivation to accomplish the performance.

Therefore, we should structure desired performance into a series of desired goals, then arrange for employees to succeed in reaching them, and finally celebrate after each goal achievement. Or, put another way, we should infuse desired performance with "success enjoyment."

In a nutshell here's how to do it.

- 1. CREATE** a challenging-but-attainable performance goal, a graph for charting performance progress, and a team action plan having numerous *sub-goals*, or milestones, leading to the main goal.
- 2. EQUIP** employees with the resources and ability to reach the sub-goals. For a full description of how to do this, see the [Resource-equipping](#) and [Ability-building](#) chapters.

3. **CHART** performance progress and provide *words of praise* (i.e., RAP) for progress and right actions.

4. **CELEBRATE** upon reaching each sub-goal. Make the success fun and rewarding. This is the WINNING MOMENT.

Through these four steps, we can actually turn employees' work into a *FUN GAME*. For details on how to do this, check out the [Progress-creation Game](#). It's an especially effective way to create motivation for achieving special goals and implementing special programs.

TO SUM UP ...

We should consider structuring employees' work situation — or the pursuit of desired performance — into a series of winning moments. By doing this we increase the net enjoyment (or net reward) that they derive from pursuing desired performance, which builds their motivation for continuing to achieve it.

MOTIVATOR #7:

Make desired performance a career advancement opportunity.

Most of us enjoy the feeling that accompanies personal progress and development. And personal advancement in our job is one of the ways that we can realize that progress. Indeed, many of us would give above-average effort to gain that feeling if the opportunity was there. However, in most companies the opportunities for position advancement are few and far between.

Therefore, we should create an intra-position advancement system that makes an automatic connection between sustained desired performance by an employee and that employee's personal position advancement.

For this to work, every employee must recognize the following cause-effect dynamic:

Sustained Desired Performance —> Personal Position Advancement

HOW do we create this connection?

Traditionally, people view job advancement as interposition advancement — that is, moving from one job position to another. Such moves occur infrequently for the majority of employees. This is because there are a limited number of position-to-position advancement opportunities available in most companies (especially if your

boss happens to be the same age as you and is perfectly suited for and content within his or her current position).

So how do we solve this problem? Answer: We install *intra-position* advancement — that is, upward movement within a particular position. We do this by (a) creating multiple levels of professional accomplishment within each position, (b) attaching to each level a particular title, pay grade, and/or set of perks, and (c) defining a performance criteria for each level, thereby enabling an employee to qualify for advancement. The criteria should be challenging-but-attainable. Or, in other words, it should be tough enough that an employee cannot qualify by way of substandard performance but not so tough that the criteria can't be satisfied with a reasonable amount of effort or sustained desired performance.

In short, we want a worthy, good-performing employee to be able to qualify for a promotion every few months or so (or at least once or twice each year), with the first promotion or two coming a little quicker in order to “grease the motivation skids.”

TO SUM UP ...

We should consider setting up an Intra-position Advancement System that rewards good-performing employees with periodic personal position advancement. By doing this we increase the net payoff (or net reward) that employees derive from their sustained desired performance, which builds their motivation to deliver more of it.

MOTIVATOR #8:

Make desired performance a noble venture.

Something is **noble** when it possesses high character or extraordinary merit. Most persons derive large satisfaction from being involved in a *noble venture* — so much so that they will support what they regard to be a noble venture with great conviction and, at times, considerable sacrifice.

Therefore, if we were to turn our enterprise into a NOBLE VENTURE it would give employees an opportunity to derive a deeper measure of personal satisfaction from their desired performance, because their desired performance would be imbued with nobility.

HOW can we turn our team activity, or business enterprise, into a noble venture?

The process is simple. But implementing it requires sincerity, commitment, and sacrifice on the part of team leadership. This is because, when it comes to nobility it's all or nothing. Either an endeavor is noble or it isn't. There's no such thing as “partial nobility” or “sometime nobility” or “pseudo-nobility.” So if we intend to

adopt this particular motivator, we first have some soul-searching to do and a personal commitment to make. Otherwise, it will fail.

To turn your enterprise into a NOBLE venture, apply these seven steps:

1. Make it your personal mission to be the leader (manager or owner) of THE BEST team, store, department, or business in your market, region, industry, or company. This will require extra work and sacrifice. If for whatever reason you can't or don't want to make this personal commitment and sacrifice, stop here and proceed to the next motivator. NOTE: We're talking about being the best, not the biggest. Nobility is a quality, not a quantity. Of course there's nothing wrong with being the biggest. It's simply not the issue here.

2. Translate your personal mission into a concise sentence or statement that will become your team's point of pride and rallying cry. You can call it your Team Mission, if you like. Or you could call it your *Point of Pride*. This statement now becomes the reason or justification, in effect, for why every employee should perform their job to a particular level of performance excellence.

3. Write out a *Performance Excellence Job Description* for each job position on the team. Describe the type (or level) of desired performance that's required in each position for achieving the team's Point of Pride. Each description should contain two parts: (1) the *Overriding Objective* of the position and (2) a description of the *Specific Action and Outcomes* necessary for achieving the Objective. For a description of how to pinpoint performance specifics, see the [Awareness-creating](#) chapter.

4. Convey the Performance Excellence Job Descriptions to your team. In addition, provide whatever [training](#) and [resources](#) they need for doing the performance described in the Job Descriptions.

5. Communicate the Point of Pride to your team on an ongoing basis. Communicate it orally and in writing. Include it as part of every communication, as much as feasible. Let your employees know on a frequent basis that it's your fervent desire and personal mission for your team to be THE BEST at what it does — to realize the team's Point of Pride to the furthest extent possible.

6. Personally demonstrate exemplary performance on a daily basis. In other words, personally embody the type of attitude, commitment, and desired performance that every employee must provide in order for your team (store, department, business) to achieve its Point of Pride. Similarly, base every decision and communication you make on the Point of Pride. The foundation of a noble venture is **leadership integrity** (i.e., leading by example — walking the talk and talking the walk). This step, along with Step 7, is the crux of the process.

7. Never tolerate from any employee deliberate recurring undesired performance. Such performance we call *anti-noble performance*. Of course, everyone has an

occasional accident, oversight, or unintentional mishap. And most everyone occasionally lapses into a moment of inadequate or less-than-great performance. But that's different from deliberate recurring undesired performance. Basically, if a person knows WHAT s/he should be doing and has the SKILLS and RESOURCES to do it but is routinely not doing it, then s/he is engaging in anti-noble performance. The toleration, or implicit acceptance, of anti-noble performance by a team's leadership is an insidious disease that undermines and defeats an organization from within — and, ultimately, strips that organization of any sense of *nobility*. To avoid exhibiting toleration of anti-noble performance, a leader's position toward that performance must at all times be this: *Either (a) the anti-noble performance must cease immediately (and be replaced by desired performance) OR (b) the perpetrator of the anti-noble performance must be promptly removed from the team.* Any position other than this constitutes toleration of anti-noble performance.

In conclusion, Steps 1 through 5 can be taken, but if Steps **6** and **7** aren't scrupulously executed, the process will not take, your business will not rise to a level of nobility in the eyes of your team.

The upshot of this process is that it will infuse your enterprise with three "Ps" — Purpose, Pride, and Passion.

PURPOSE = A unity of action directed toward a higher goal (i.e., the Point of Pride).

PRIDE = That sense of satisfaction derived from being a part of pursuing or realizing a higher goal.

PASSION = The commitment, enthusiasm, and sense of urgency that impels employees to do what has to be done to achieve a higher goal.

MARKETING TIE-IN: If the Point of Pride can be defined in a way as to also be usable in marketing, so much the better. To have sales-building effectiveness, the statement must define the *main point of difference* between you and your competitors. As such, it must be a "provable fact." For further info on defining a point of difference, see *Differentiate or Die* by Jack Trout. Pay special attention to Chapter 8. For an article on differentiation in this website, go to [Differentiation-builders](#).

TO SUM UP ...

If we, the leadership, are willing to make the necessary personal commitment and sacrifice, we can turn our business into a noble venture for us and our employees. By doing that, we give employees an opportunity to derive a deeper measure of personal satisfaction from their desired performance which, in turn, builds their motivation to deliver an above-average amount of desired performance on an ongoing basis — *or to achieve performance excellence*.

MOTIVATOR #9:

Make desired performance an act of altruism.

Altruism is the providing of help or assistance to another person when we're not required to do it and don't receive extra remuneration for doing it.

Most of us derive fulfillment from performing altruistic acts — *particularly when those who we help sincerely appreciate what we've done for them.* One of the most helpful and, therefore, satisfying acts of altruism is helping another person succeed in a pursuit that's important to them. In fact, most of us will give diligent effort — even “go out of our way” — to help someone succeed if that someone appears to really need or want our assistance, or personally requests it. This is especially true when the person is someone we like or respect, such as, perhaps, a fellow employee, including our leader.

Therefore, we should seek out or try to arrange instances in which employees have an opportunity to derive personal fulfillment from helping other employees personally succeed at their job.

One way we can provide this opportunity is to offer qualified employees the opportunity to mentor and/or train coworkers, especially new recruits. Before doing this, however, it might be helpful to train the would-be mentor/trainer in effective mentoring and OJT procedure. For a detailed description of OJT (On-the-job Training) procedure, see the [Training](#) chapter.

Another — and very powerful — way to provide this opportunity is to make it possible for employees to derive personal satisfaction from *contributing to their leader's personal success on the job!*

The fact of the matter is, every time an employee comes to work and delivers desired performance, s/he's doing exactly that — that is, helping his or her leader personally succeed. So why not let employees derive enjoyment and motivation from it? This, of course, is not easy for many leader-managers to do. It's because many of us like to feel that we — and no one else, or certainly not an employee — is responsible for our success. It can be a humbling thought to realize that our career success is due, in no small part, to the unending stream of unheralded daily performance contributions of largely-unnoticed first-level hourly employees.

However, if we can swallow our pride and accept reality, we have a great opportunity to increase employee motivation for desired performance. We can easily do it by applying the following 3-step process now and then (such as when we're confronting an unusually big goal or important project):

- 1. PERSONALLY REQUEST** assistance from your employees in helping you succeed at achieving a particular goal that's especially important to

you and your personal success.

2. ALLOW THEM to give a full measure of help and to give it in a way that's ennobling to them. If they need special training or resources to do it, provide those things.

3. SAY "THANK YOU" after you get the special help that you've requested. (As you might already discern, this motivator happens to be a special adaptation of Motivator #1.)

This is all so simplistic that many leaders blow it off. But "personally helping one's leader to succeed" is a powerful motivator for many of us. That's because most of us derive pleasure from giving a gift to someone we like. And when we help someone we like to personally succeed, we give them one of the greatest gifts of all.

TO SUM UP ...

We should consider creating occasional situations where employees can derive personal fulfillment from helping others succeed on the job, including — and especially — the situation where employees present their desired performance as a gift to their leader. By doing that we increase the net pleasure (or net reward) that employees derive from delivering desired performance, which builds their motivation for continuing to do it.

MOTIVATOR #10:

Reduce the net reward connected to undesired performance.

The way we motivate employees to choose desired performance over undesired performance is we either (a) make desired performance more rewarding **OR** (b) make undesired performance less rewarding. Motivators #1-9 deal with the first strategy. This motivator #10 deals with the second one — making undesired performance less rewarding. Apply this motivator in situations where an employee is pursuing undesired performance because that particular performance constitutes a "rewarding experience" for him or her.

HOW do we make undesired performance less rewarding?

In a nutshell, we **SHRINK** the *upside* associated with doing the undesired performance. As you recall, the upside of a performance is any compensation, event, communication, condition, situation, or opportunity that the performer derives from doing the performance and also finds to be enjoyable or beneficial. To shrink the upside associated with a particular undesired performance, structure the (job) situation so that doing the performance results in the particular upside no

longer occurring when the particular undesired performance is engaged in by an employee. When this is done it can sometimes result in a brief burst of repeated undesired performance by the particular employee involved. This is due to the person's desire to re-experience the enjoyable upside previously associated with doing the undesired performance. However, if the upside reduction remains constant or, in other words, the upside does not return, the burst of undesired performance will soon taper off and result in an overall reduction in the frequency of the particular undesired performance.

This takes us to a pivotal question: *Why, in certain cases, does undesired performance have such a strong upside in the first place?* Certainly no competent manager would deliberately build the upside of undesired performance. One reason is, sometimes the upside of undesired performance is created by non-deliberate reinforcement — that is, by the performer receiving some sort of inadvertent pleasure or “reward” as a consequence of doing the performance. This can cause an employee to pursue the undesired performance with great frequency or persistence.

Oftentimes this non-deliberate reinforcement of undesired performance results from a company compensation program that makes no distinction between types of performance. In other words, the employee receives the same amount of pay for undesired performance as for desired performance, or the same amount for an average amount of desired performance as for an above-average amount.

Other times the reinforcement occurs when fellow employees shower attention on the performer of the undesired performance.

In conclusion, whenever a stubborn performance problem exists — that is, where a particular undesired performance is chronically present — the correction strategy is twofold:

1. Enact measures that increase the net reward of desired performance. (In this case, desired performance is any performance that's the opposite of the offending undesired performance.)

AND

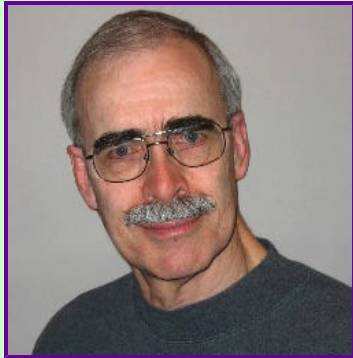
2. Find out what the upside of the undesired performance is for the employees who are performing the performance, then reduce or eliminate that upside.

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[starting motivation](#)

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