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# HOW TO MOTIVATE YOURSELF AND YOUR TEAM

**m**any business leaders still believe that motivation is a personality trait – you've either got it or you haven't. We hear about leaders who are "great motivators" in their pep talks they use to energise their employees – David Brent is alive and well! Of course motivation is fundamental to human performance – but as those who have completed our athlete at work tm programme know, it's far more complex than many would choose to believe.

That's why the "one size fits all" answer – motivational speaking, team building or an improved commission scheme invariably fail, often not changing behaviour at all and sometimes alienating as many people as they inspire – and it's not hard to see why.

Reflect on your motivation – are there activities that you engage in simply because you're passionate about them? What about those where you're only there because you're being paid or because you'll feel guilty if you aren't?

Why we do what we do differs enormously between people and tasks. The one size fits all solutions may help lazy managers put a tick in the box, but they don't work because we are humans, not machines. Anyone serious about performance understands that the answer lies in understanding the true nature of motivation.

The more that motivation is internal – "I do it because I love it", or "it's part of who I am", the higher the quality of performance. In contrast, when motivation is external – "If I don't do it I'll feel guilty" or "If I do it I'll get a reward", the opposite happens.

The key players we work with in the corporate arena learn that the degree to which

motivation comes from the inside is driven by three basic needs we all share – for autonomy, where we can make our own choices – for confidence in using our skills and for strong relationships where we feel supported and valued. The more these needs are met, the more motivation comes from the inside and performance is enhanced. If not met, motivation has to come from the outside and performance suffers. At a team level you can greatly influence the quality of motivation by creating the right environment – and that doesn't mean repainting the office!

Internally motivated teams have higher levels of interest, excitement and confidence and perform better as a result. So instead of painting those walls, or offering to improve the bonus scheme, you'll deliver better performance by ensuring you and your team have as much autonomy as possible, feel confident in the jobs to be done and have adequate emotional support. It will cost less and the results will be better!

We meet some unenlightened souls who are certain it's not true. They tell us people are purely motivated by material rewards. They get out of bed because of the salary, the big car, the holiday home and the share options. So at what point does the reason they get out of bed begin to control them? Our experience is that the best performances do not result from people who feel strongly controlled.

Elite individual and team performance is about shifting emphasis from giving people direction to one where they commit to doing things they care passionately about. It doesn't mean letting people do whatever they want – but it might involve a real change of attitude. For example,

where a job simply has to be done, having and giving a sense of choice as to how it should be done will improve results immediately! However, simply asking for opinions with the intention of completely ignoring them if they don't match yours, won't work.

A business driven by its values alongside a strong sense of purpose is also essential for a culture where motivation is strong. That means discovering the values that are truly important for your business, not those that are fashionable or you believe to be the right set of values, but those that you wouldn't give up, even if he world punished you for having them. Alongside a sense of purpose, the reason your business exists, beyond profit alone, these qualities are vital for a high performance culture. Stating your purpose and values is not enough - you need to put mechanisms in place to make them live and breathe every day - no matter what the size of your business or the sector in which you operate. Values and purpose which come from the inside, that are truly yours, give your people a reason to get out of bed each morning and strive to do more - even when times are tough.

So the gold standard of motivation comes from the inside. For you that means finding ways where you can exert influence and where your sense of confidence leads you to seek even greater challenges. It means ensuring you have support in and out of work. For your team, if you create an environment where they can have the same your job becomes much easier – for it no longer becomes a question of "how do I motivate my team?" – they will motivate themselves!