

The “Right Stuff:” Motivating Your Employees

Participant Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Workshop Objectives.....	2
Module One: A Psychological Approach	3
Module Two: Personality’s Role in Motivation.....	9
Module Three: A Personal Toolbox	13
Module Four: Addressing Specific Morale Issues	16
Module Five: Keeping Yourself Motivated	17

Motivation is the art of getting people to do what you want them to do because they want to do it.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Introduction

Welcome to The “Right Stuff:” Motivating Your Employees workshop. Employee motivation is becoming ever more important in the workplace as time goes on, and everyone agrees that a motivated workforce is far more likely to be a successful workforce. The happier and more professional an employee is, the better the results he or she will deliver for you.

There is a challenge for all employers and management in delivering the right balance between a confident, motivated workforce and a workforce which is driven to attain goals. It can be described as a mix between the pleasure of a comfortable working environment and the fear of failure, although in honesty it is more complicated than that equation suggests. Regardless of how it is characterized, it is important to get the right balance in order to ensure that you have a motivated workforce. This manual is designed to show participants the way to get the best out of a confident, motivated set of employees, and to show them how to motivate that group.

Workshop Objectives

Research has consistently demonstrated that when clear goals are associated with learning, it occurs more easily and rapidly.

By the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

- Define motivation, an employer’s role in it and how the employee can play a part
- Identify the importance of employee motivation
- Identify methods of employee motivation
- Describe Herzberg’s theory of employee motivation and how it pertains to our workforce
- Identify some personality types and how they fit into a plan for employee motivation.
- Identify specific issues in the field, and address these issues

Module One: A Psychological Approach

Organizational Orientations

The individual organizational orientations, temperaments, and personalities in each unit influence how people outside of that unit, as well as how the people within the unit see it. Not all people approach work in the same way. Some are “organization friendly” while others are not. Some are that way part of the time. These orientations are a major factor in their success or failure in the work environment. These are associated with both their temperament and their communication traits. They are all associated with workers’ job satisfaction and motivation to work.

Three orientations were identified by Presthus in 1962 which specifically relate to the way people approach their roles in organizations. These orientations are believed to be traits, which means that they tend to have these orientations regardless of the organization in which they are employed and the orientations are not expected to change markedly as a person moves from one organization to another. These orientations are: “upward mobiles,” or high achievers, “indifferents,” and “ambivalents.” All three types are found in virtually all organizations.

ORGANIZATIONAL ORIENTATIONS

Organizational Orientations are trait-like ways that people approach work in contemporary organizations. The measures reported below are designed to measure the degree to which an individual employs one or more of these orientations in their own work environment. In research to date, these orientations appear to be very related to organizational communication behaviors of employees associated with job satisfaction. There are three orientations. While any of these can be measured alone, that will not give a complete picture of the orientations. The measures are randomly provided below.

Instructions: Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements below by recording your response in the space before each item. Use the following response options:

- 5 = Strongly Agree
 - 4 = Agree
 - 3 = Undecided
 - 2 = Disagree
 - 1 = Strongly Disagree
-

- _____ 1. I generally try my best to do what an organization I work for wants me to do.
- _____ 2. Other than a paycheck, the organizations I have worked for have little to offer me.
- _____ 3. My life begins when I get off work.
- _____ 4. If I had a choice, I would take a promotion over the acceptance of my peers any time.

- _____ 5. The product / service produced by organizations where I have worked are of very low quality.
- _____ 6. If I were offered a job that paid better, I would take it in a “New York Minute.”
- _____ 7. One of my goals is to get a good job and excel at it.
- _____ 8. **I have generally been quite satisfied with jobs I have had.**
- _____ 9. A job is a job – everyone has to work somewhere.
- _____ 10. Eventually, I would like to be the “big boss” in an organization.
- _____ 11. The organizations I have worked for couldn’t care less whether I live or die – and I feel the same way about them.
- _____ 12. I am generally indifferent to where I work. One job is about the same as another.
- _____ 13. I really dislike the rules and regulations I am forced to live with in organizations.
- _____ 14. I firmly believe that if I work hard enough, one day I will be right up at the top.
- _____ 15. I am good at my job and I love it.
- _____ 16. Generally, I just do as much as is required by my job.
- _____ 17. Most of all, I really want to be recognized for the excellent work I do.
- _____ 18. I am usually unhappy wherever I work.
- _____ 19. Since I am entitled to them, I take all of my sick days whether I am sick or not.
- _____ 20. I don’t much care where I work, so long as the pay is good.
- _____ 21. “I think moving up in an organization is not worth all the work you have to do.”*
- _____ 22. Wherever I work, I wish I were working somewhere, almost anywhere, else than where I am.
- _____ 23. Everywhere I have worked, I have had an incompetent supervisor.
- _____ 24. When work is over, life begins.
- _____ 25. Sometimes I think I am a “workaholic.”
- _____ 26. ** The procedures and regulations of organizations I have worked for have generally been quite reasonable.**
- _____ 27. One job is pretty much like any other job.

- _____28. I find it difficult to adapt to the demands of most organizations.
- _____29. I want a job where what I do really counts for something.
- _____30. Generally, I don't like the rules that organizations make me follow.
- _____31. I don't really like most of the people I have worked with.
- _____32. Everyone tells me that I am a really good worker.
- _____33. "I have worked for really good organizations."
- _____34. Most organizations have unreasonable expectations for workers like me.
- _____35. I want work which has a lot of intangible rewards.
- _____36. Most of the time, a half-hearted effort is all I feel I need to give a job.
- _____37. Ordinarily, I feel really good about what I have accomplished when I am done with my day's work.
- _____38. I really hate most organizations I have worked for.
- _____39. If I found the organization I worked for was in trouble, I would quickly look for job in another organization.
- _____40. I would be willing to work hard to be the top person in an organization.
- _____41. One supervisor is about like any other, a pain in the backside.
- _____42. Work is something I have to do, not something I want to do.
- _____43. Since I am really good at what I do, I will move up in the organization.
- _____44. What I want most in a job is to be left alone.
- _____45. What I want most in a job is the possibility of really doing something important.
- _____46. Frankly, I am smarter than most people I have worked for.
- _____47. When it comes to choosing a job, "show me the money."
- _____48. I have been unhappy just about everywhere I have worked.
- _____49. Any job worth doing is worth doing as well as I can.
- _____50. I am a very creative worker

ORGANIZATIONAL ORIENTATIONS SCORING INFORMATION

Scoring:

Step 1. Add the scores for the following items: 1, 4, 7, 10, 14, 15, 17, 21, 25, 29, 32, 35, 37, 40, 43, 45, 49, 50. This is your Upwardly Mobile Orientation score.

Step 2. Add the scores for the following items: 2, 5, 8, 11, 13, 18, 22, 23, 26, 28, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 38, 41, 44, 46, 48. This is your Ambivalent Orientation score.

Step 3. Add the scores for the following items: 3, 6, 9, 12, 16, 19, 20, 24, 27, 39, 42, 47. This is your Indifferent Orientation score.

Your Upwardly Mobile score will fall between 0 – 90, therefore if your score is an 82, for instance, this would be a strong Upwardly Mobile orientation score.

Your Ambivalent score will fall between 0 – 100, so a score of 50 would be considered a moderate Ambivalent score and score of 95 would be a high score.

Your Indifferent score will fall between 0 – 60, so a score of 30 would be moderate, a score of 15 would be low, and a 50 would be a moderately high score.

Source:

McCroskey, J.C., Richmond, V.P., Johnson, A.D., & Smith, H.T. (Under Review) Organizational orientations theory and measurement: Development of measures and preliminary investigations. *Communication Quarterly*.

“Upwardly Mobiles”

- Make up about 10-15% of any organization
- The most dedicated and most easily recognizable type
- Your typical “organizational man or woman”
- Like the status quo
- Deeply devoted to the goals and functioning of the organization
- Strong identity with the organization
- Self-motivated
- Believe in the organization’s rules & procedures (and expects others to be, also)
- Personal goals in line with organization’s
- Strive toward high job satisfaction
- Do not like associating with “losers” (not on the same career path)
- Highly critical of people who are not as dedicated or devoted as they are
- Thrive on work, decision-making, power, and organizational rewards
- Ready and willing to go the extra mile for the org
- Openly defend the org and criticize those who are not dedicated to it

- Have high standards and expect others to do the same
- Usually groomed for bigger and better positions
- Most likely to be rewarded and encouraged by higher ups
- They “live to work”

“Indifferents”

- Make up about 70-80% of any organization
- Work because they have to
- Work only to satisfy their own very basic needs or the basic needs of their loved ones
- In it for the paycheck
- Accept the status quo
- Will avoid participation in the daily organizational routines
- Rarely share in the rewards the system has to offer
- Not highly satisfied with their jobs
- Rarely do any extra work without compensation
- Come to work do their jobs, and go home
- Much of their communication is about their families or personal lives
- When encouraged to communicate about organizational matters with co-workers, they generally say nothing, change the topic, or suggest others should discuss those matters
- Not dedicated or upwardly mobile in an aspect
- Will never do more than what is absolutely necessary
- May be very nice people, but are there to do their jobs and be left alone
- Can be assigned menial, routine tasks that require little thought
- “Work to live”

“Ambivalents”

- Most difficult to work with
- Very unpredictable
- Not necessarily likable
- May be creative and anxious
- Always want to change the status quo
- Never truly comfortable in any organization
- When in a new position, within a few months find a number of problem areas that need changing
- Cannot seem to accept organizations or the people within them for what they are
- Supportive one day; attacking the next
- Moody, which makes it difficult for people to work with or for
- Will not stay in any one org for more than a few years
- Get disgruntled and change jobs
- Reject authority structure and will try to turn others against the org and the supervisors within it
- May be highly skilled verbally and intelligent
- Will openly criticize the system
- Their criticism might be useful, but usually is rejected because of how it is delivered

- Most systems are happy when they leave the org – going away parties held AFTER they leave!
- Communication is difficult, since you can seldom can predict how they will react to ideas
- Best advice – stick to small talk with these types
- Absolutely keep your new employees away from them – they will “infect” them with the negativity and disgruntled attitude with everything

The importance of psychology in achieving and maintaining employee motivation is essential. A message can be repeated over and over to a group of employees but unless they believe it and believe in it, the words are empty. Frederick Herzberg’s Theory of Motivation is one of the key psychological theories which aid employers in their end goal of producing a motivated workforce.

Herzberg’s Theory of Motivation

Herzberg’s theory says that employee motivation is affected both by the employee’s level of satisfaction (motivating factors) and dissatisfaction (hygiene factors) and that, importantly, these two elements are independent of one another and are equally important. Although an employee can be satisfied by the elements of his job which are intrinsic to the job itself, such as achievement and recognition, at the same time he can be dissatisfied by the elements which are secondary factors of the work – pay and benefits, job security and relationships with co-workers.

Things that make us satisfied are not related to things that make us dissatisfied. It’s possible to both satisfied and dissatisfied at the same time. Our reactions on the dissatisfaction factors are based on salary, interpersonal relations with other subordinates, supervisors, and peers, status, working conditions, policy and administration, job security (or a lack of it), and technical supervision things that are thought of as “basic” needs. On the satisfaction factors (possibility of growth on the job, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, opportunity for advancement, and achievement) we focus on “higher order” needs. Employees who are high achievers have strong needs of this type. “Indifferents” have very little concern for these matters and will very likely never be motivated for anything having to do with the job, since the job itself is not a valued concern in their lives.

Herzberg’s assertion was that the opposite of satisfaction was not Dissatisfaction, but rather an *absence of satisfaction*. Similarly, the opposite of dissatisfaction was an absence of dissatisfaction rather than simply satisfaction. In terms of motivating employees, it is important to encourage satisfaction (motivation) on the one hand, and avoid dissatisfaction (hygiene factors) on the other.

Module Two: Personality's Role in Motivation

The personality or culture of an organization is a composite of the varied behaviors of the people within it. In any organization, there needs to be a mix of personality types. The importance of personality types is criticized by some as a kind of fad science, but it is difficult to run an office or any other workplace when everyone has the same "soft skills". The reason for this is perhaps best explained by the old saying "too many cooks spoil the broth". Where everyone has the same personality type and a problem arises, there is likely to be conflict as everyone tries to take the same role in solving it. The different personality types are not explicitly defined, and therefore there is no hard-and-fast list, but there is a set of soft skills which all workplaces require, and these are best met by different types of people.

Different Personality Types

You probably have an idea of your own personality type. A personality type is defined by the aspects of your character that emerge when around others or when doing important work. These character aspects are, as often as not, described as "soft skills". You may have been described as "maternal", "skeptical", "humorous", or any number of other things. These are issues which do not relate directly to your work but can aid or restrict your ability to do it, and can aid or restrict others. It is considered beneficial to have as many different types of personality in a workplace as possible.

There are countless tests that can be done to detect a personality type, and many different ways the results can be expressed, but there are certain things which hold true in all personality tests. Perhaps the best way in the workplace to detect a personality type is to judge your reaction to a problem which affects a whole team, or a group within it. Are you immediately looking for a way of overcoming the problem? Are you instinctively worried by what happens, and do you look to other people to help out? Do you comfort people who are stressed out by the problem? Or do you perhaps sit on the fringes, making comments and playing for laughs? Strange as it may sound, all of these elements are worthwhile in a team. The person who immediately looks for the solution is a "problem solver"; the second type is a "consensus seeker". The third is considered a "nurturer" while the last listed is a "humorist". All of these are classic personality types.

Equally, all of these people, and others, play a major part in making up a workplace.

- Without the problem solvers, an organization would be in trouble if things deviated from the plan as laid out.
- Without consensus seekers, it would be easy for a problem solver to become too autonomous, solving the problem to their satisfaction without being particularly concerned for how others felt about the solution.
- Without the nurturers, people would feel that a problem could too easily become a crisis.
- Without the humorists a bad situation would depress everyone.

Reason and etiquette dictate how much we allow our personality to take control of us, but most people will avoid becoming too “cliché” in how they behave. What is your personality type?

Here are some examples of different personality types:

- **Authoritarianism:** This type has highly predictable patterns of behavior. They are consistent, if anything, in that they are very structured and rule-oriented. They may be stern, unhumorous, suspicious, and sometimes hostile. They dislike it when not shown proper respect and obedience to their authority. If you do not choose to conform to this person's need for authority and obedience, he or she will likely make your life miserable. If you cannot accept doing what you need to do to be able to work for this type of person, you probably should leave that position.
- **Machiavellianism:** these people can be very useful to an organization if they are working with and for the org, not against it. People with this type tend to enjoy manipulating others and are very good at it, depending on their levels of the type. It is very rare that you can spot a really good Machiavellian, as they can be so manipulative that you don't even know that you've been manipulated. They seem to get what they want without being pushy and are generally liked by others. The bottom line with one of these types is that they manipulate to help themselves, or others.

Mach Scale IV

Instructions: For each of the following statements, indicate your agreement or disagreement, or the extent to which the statements are characteristic or uncharacteristic of you. Use the following scale:

1 = strong disagreement / almost never true

2 = disagreement / rarely true

3 = neutral / occasionally true

4 = agreement / often true

5 = strong agreement / almost always true

- _____ 1. The best way to handle people is to tell them what they want to hear.
- _____ 2. When you ask someone to do something for you, it is best to give the real reason for wanting it rather than giving reasons which might carry more weight.
- _____ 3. Anyone who completely trusts anyone is asking for trouble.
- _____ 4. It is hard to get ahead without cutting corners here and there.
- _____ 5. Honesty is the best policy in all cases.
- _____ 6. It is safest to assume that all people have a vicious streak and it will come out when they are given a chance.
- _____ 7. Never tell anyone the real reason you did something unless it is useful to do so.
- _____ 8. One should take action only when it is morally right.
- _____ 9. It is wise to flatter important people.
- _____ 10. All in all, it is better to be humble and honest than important and dishonest.
- _____ 11. Barnum was very wrong when he said that there's a sucker born every minute.
- _____ 12. People who are suffering from incurable diseases should have the choice of being put painlessly to death.

- _____ 13. It is possible to be good in all respects.
- _____ 14. Most people are basically good and kind.
- _____ 15. There is no excuse for lying to someone else.
- _____ 16. Most men forget more easily the death of their father than the loss of their property.
- _____ 17. Most of the people who get ahead in the world lead clean, moral lives.
- _____ 18. Generally speaking, men won't work hard unless forced to do so.
- _____ 19. The biggest difference between most criminals and other people is that criminals are stupid enough to get caught.
- _____ 20. Most men are brave.

Scoring instructions:

Sum the scores on the 20 items after reversing the scoring items 2, 5, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 20.

Source: Christie, R. & Geis, F. L. (1970). Studies in Machiavellianism. New York: Academic Press.

Interpretation: Scores can range from 20 to 100. Scores from 20-46 suggest low Mach; 47-73 suggest moderate Mach; and 74-100 suggest high Mach.

- **Dogmatism:** These people are considered difficult. They have narrow views and expect others to see their points of view. They are rigid in their beliefs and do not tolerate viewpoints that disagree with theirs. Things are either right or wrong with them, black or white, etc. It is virtually pointless to argue with a dogmatic supervisor, as he or she will simply discount your arguments as either wrong, frivolous or just plain stupid – and will develop similar attitudes about you in the process.
- **Achievement Orientation:** Sometimes these people are over-achievers, too. Money is not the main motivator behind them. They work because they want to achieve certain goals for themselves. They are often over-committed, overextended, and overworked and will take on more duties than they can handle, but will work overtime to get things done. They also tend to blame themselves when things go wrong.
- **Self-Esteem:** Many people in contemporary organizations have constant feelings of inadequacy that dominate their entire personalities. They are called “inadequates” because that is the way they see themselves. They worry that they cannot perform the work well, or that others will not like them, or that they might be promoted because they know that they could not succeed at a higher level. Many times they are incorrect as to how they see themselves. They also tend to see attacks coming from all sides, making it almost impossible for you to praise their work as they will not believe you anyway. They are seldom promoted into supervisory positions, and when they are, they tend to be disasters at supervision. When you don't trust or believe others, it makes one paranoid. A supervisor with low self-esteem is usually not an effective supervisor. These people are driven by their insecurities and generally do not “play well” with others.

Motivators by Personality Type

The different personality types have different ways of motivating the people around them as well as themselves. Someone who emerges as a conciliatory person is likely to motivate others by speaking to them one-on-one and allowing them to see where they excel as well as where they can improve. Being able to put bad news in a good way, as well as being able to share good news discreetly in a way, can be very valuable.

Other people, who may have a more dominant personality, will have a different way of motivating positively or negatively. They will generally tend to prefer delivering criticism one-on-one, as doing it in the open will de-motivate others, but good news will be delivered loudly and shared throughout the team, as a way of spreading the joy and motivating other people to try to achieve the same, and gain the same kind of acclaim.

Depending on someone's personality type, they will have vastly different ways in which they can contribute to the team's motivation. Indeed, it is becoming common practice in many workplaces to have what are known as "champions" to take control of certain aspects of the team. This empowers people in non-management roles to play a significant part without pressuring them with the responsibility of the concrete performance of the team. By assigning people the correct champion's role, you can enable them to get the best out of themselves and others, and not let a talent go to waste.

Module Three: A Personal Toolbox

Motivating yourself and others is something that takes no small amount of effort and can sometimes seem like a fruitless endeavor, as motivation initiatives do not always take hold immediately (or at all, in some cases). It is also worth mentioning that, although there are many resources on the Internet for managers and team leaders seeking to motivate their employees, not all of these will work in a specific situation. It is well worth reading the best books and the best sites in order to promote ideas, but the best motivational strategy will always take some account of the exact situation where it is used, so it is worth honing yours somewhat.

Encouraging Growth and Development

Development is something that is demanded by just about every section of our society today, and the workplace is absolutely no different in this respect. An employee who is new in the workplace will not offer the same skills and understanding as someone who has been there for five years, but will certainly bring some of their own qualities including a fresher outlook. The employee will change with time, and this is to be encouraged. It is also to be encouraged that they have some input while they are new. The benefits of this are twofold. Firstly, the new member of staff is encouraged to feel part of the team, and an important part at that. Secondly, the agency benefits from a fresher outlook on things.

In order to encourage a new member of staff to grow as part of the business, it is worth listening to them and finding out where they see themselves fitting in. This will help in encouraging their development as a member of staff and as a person, and it will not solely benefit them. The more integrated a team is, the more smoothly it will work. The better people work together the more motivated they will feel to continue. A lack of personal motivation for the job is one of the main reasons that people look to find work elsewhere, and a business is never helped by losing its more able members.

Getting Others to See the Glass Half-Full

A major part of motivation in the workplace has to do with ensuring that people are not discouraged by situations which are anything other than favorable. The very definition of a challenge is that it is a situation which presents some risk of failure. For many people the fear of failure can be troubling. The challenge is in getting the fear of failure to represent as something different – the desire, the need for success. Fear of failure should not be a de-motivating factor. It would be surprising for most of us if we were not to some extent scared of failing – no one wants to fail, and this fear can provide the impetus for us to make sure we succeed.

More than anything, turning a bad or potentially bad situation into a good one relies on outlook. The way that this is normally verbalized is by asking whether you are a “glass half-full or a glass half empty” person. This is in some ways just a more simplified way of separating optimists from pessimists. Optimists look at a glass of water which contains exactly half its capacity and say that it is half-full, while pessimists look at it and say that it is half-empty. The more people you can get to maintain a “half-full” mindset, the better for staff motivation.

There are various ways to get people to see the glass half-full. Most common among these is in knowing the fact that challenges come with consequences and rewards. If you do not meet the challenge, you fear the consequences. If you do meet the challenge, you eagerly anticipate the rewards. The challenge is part of the job, so there is really no point in shrinking from it for fear of the consequences. Keeping the rewards in mind is a way of seeing the glass half-full, and makes it far more likely that you will live up to the challenge and have a chance to share in the rewards.

Pick Positive People

List the names of your three closest friends or family members:

Are any of them “negaholics?” or “Rise and Whiners?” If so, watch out. According to social psychologists, we tend to duplicate the attitudes of our closest friends. IN other words, we take on the behaviors of people we hang out with. If your closest friends or family members are “negaholics,” people who are addicted to negative thinking and behaviors, you may become a gloom and doomer yourself – or at least start thinking like one.

If your co-worker complains (“My boss is an idiot. They don’t pay us enough. The food in the cafeteria is always so bland.”) she just wants you to agree with him and then be miserable like he is. He can’t whine all by himself and will glom onto anyone who lets him. If you usually ignore this person and suddenly find him hanging out and complaining more and more it may be because you made a small complaint and he instinctively has begun to feed it. He wants you to be as miserable as he is. If he feeds your anger and negativity, he will have an ally and someone to be miserable with. Stay far, far away from the negaholics!

People try to rain on your parade because they have no parade of their own. Your success makes them feel uncomfortable about their own failures. If you fail, then they will feel better about themselves. Compare this to what happens when you tell positive, successful people about your dreams. Most of the time, they will say, “Sounds great. How can I help?”

Positive people encourage you when you need it. They know that there is plenty of success for everyone. They want you to win! The best thing about hanging around with positive people is that you will start feeding off of each other’s positive energy. Problems will get solved, ideas will be created, and opportunities will be recognized. You must make a conscious effort to seek out the company of these people. You may not get to choose who you must sit next to at work, but you can choose with whom you eat lunch or chat with at break. You can’t completely eliminate them completely from your life, but you do NOT have to let their constant complaining suck the joy out of YOUR life!

Another way to help yourself be more positive is to quit thinking about the things you have to do and see them as things that you GET to do. If you keep telling yourself that you HAVE to do something, you'll find yourself rebelling against it.

Module Four: Addressing Specific Morale Issues

Motivation in a job is linked intrinsically to morale. As interesting and challenging as work may be, if there is a problem with morale then it can very quickly run through the business and lead to underperformance. There are many reasons why morale may be low, and they range from the banal to the very serious. It is only by knowing the nature of the problem causing low morale that morale can be restored and the performance of the business resurrected to a high level. Low morale can affect an individual, or it may go wider than that. It can end up affecting an entire team, department, or company. Depending on what causes it each situation may require a different solution.

Dealing with Individual Morale Problems

Every employer has seen at least once in their time as the head of a team or company an employee who is suffering from low morale. Morale is the mental state of being confident in one's purpose, and is therefore most relevant in the workplace. Low morale is usually not difficult to identify, as it is usually visible in an individual's entire bearing, and then in their work performance. There are so many different factors which can affect morale that second-guessing the reasons why a particular staff member is unhappy can be very difficult. How you deal with the issue of an employee's low morale can easily govern how well they perform and how their morale goes from there.

Identifying an employee with low morale can be a tricky situation to address. Everybody has their low days and these can happen for any reason, even for no reason. Sometimes people just "wake up on the wrong side of the bed". If you are concerned that it may be something more than that – if the colleague is showing signs of visible distress or appears not to be "switched on" for a prolonged period – then it is worth asking them how they are. This can be something as simple as stopping on your way past to ask "Are you OK?" in a relatively conversational tone. Generally people will not want to make a big deal of it, but it is important to ensure that they are looked after and aware that the help is there if they need it.

If the problem of low morale continues over time, it will clearly become detrimental to the your work group. From a point of view of employee motivation as well as a sense of camaraderie, it is vital to ensure that every avenue is explored to ensure that the morale is lifted and the employee satisfied. It may be that they are concerned about their ability to do the job, and it may be something entirely unconnected to the job, but whatever the case it is essential that the employee should be able to see that there is available support there for them. If this support is not forthcoming, the morale problems can continue and spread. If it is, however, the team morale can be raised as a result.

Addressing Team Morale

Ask any sports coach, and they will tell you that a team assembled expensively from the finest players on the planet can be beaten by a team of scrappers from an amateur league if the professionals are short on team morale. Some of the most extravagantly gifted sides around rarely win anything because they fail to operate as a team. Meanwhile, sides who have players

of limited ability can win trophies, as long as everybody works together and sacrifices their individual gratification for the collective good. In short, team spirit is vital to team performance. The way that people work together is governed by how they relate and communicate with each other.

You can affect your team's morale by being proactive or reactive, and can contribute to its building, or its destruction. It is essential in cases of team conflict to be even-handed and fair. Even if you don't not feel this way you must be seen to be impartial. Favoritism must be avoided at all costs, and you need to be prepared to be unpopular in the short-term. It is much better to put your personal loyalties aside in order to ensure that individuals within your team are not alienated. Petty conflicts can be over in days, but a reputation for bias sticks for good.

Module Five: Keeping Yourself Motivated

Maintaining personal motivation is something essential as an important member of a company, particularly in the case where you are responsible for the motivation of others. As a team leader or manager you will be looked to for reassurance and guidance in a job, and if you give the impression that you are merely going through the motions, your lack of motivation can become contagious. Even if you are responsible solely for yourself, personal motivation remains vitally important. Motivation is what keeps us from giving up and refusing to get out of bed in the morning. Any way we can improve on our level of personal motivation is valuable.

Identifying Personal Motivators

What constitutes a motivation for one person may not be the same for others. Personal motivators are different between people, because the very definition of personal requires that you see things differently from the next person. The importance of identifying your own personal motivators is clear. Without a clear, identifiable set of personal motivating factors, it can be easy to fall into either an unmotivated condition or to rely on other people's motivations to keep you going forward. There are times when we cannot rely on other people to give us the motivation we feel we need, and when you are on your own you need to motivate yourself.

Identifying your own personal motivators is something that takes some self-knowledge and some thinking time. What is it that you want to take from your job? Are you happy to keep cashing the pay checks, or do you wish to advance further in the company? Why did you apply for the job in the first place – and are you close to satisfying that goal? Ask as many questions as you can ask yourself, and as many answers as you can give to those questions, the better your own personal motivation.

One motivation that works well for a number of people is surpassing themselves. Keeping a record of personal achievements attained while in your current job and attempting to do better every month is a challenge that is never completed. If this fails to motivate you, then look at other things which reward performance. Often, people are most motivated by the recognition of their achievements by others, and by setting an example to other members of staff. Whatever works for you is a valid means of self-motivation. Make sure that you have as many motivating factors as you can think of, because the more things you want to achieve, the more you will achieve.

Maximizing Your Motivators

As far as motivation in a job is concerned, it is a matter which requires regular evaluation and frequent updating. There are countless potential motivators for individuals, and as long as they work for you they are valid. What some people struggle with is ensuring that they continue to work. Particularly if you have been in the same job for a long time, it can be easy to lose the urgency and motivation that drove you to your best results when you started. Think of yourself ten years ago and the principles you held which you believed to be as solid as a rock. Do you still feel the same way now, or has life given you a different outlook?

Constantly giving some thought to what motivates you and why will enable you to get the best out of your motivators. When you started in the job, it may have been about the money, but maybe you have enough money now. In this case, it can help to think of something that you want to do which will require more money – taking a break to travel for a while, building a new house, or whatever suits your means. This is a way of maximizing an old motivator which may have ceased to be that effective. Maybe one of your motivations has been recognition. In this case, seeking to mentor a newer member of staff can be beneficial. While you may have achieved almost all there is to achieve in this job, someone else could maybe do with the benefit of your experience.

Taking the factors which have motivated you in the past and updating them for the future is one way to maximize your motivational factors. In addition, it helps to look at your home life as it relates to your work life. If there is something you really need or really want in your home life, and your job can help you achieve it, then this may be all the motivation you need. Pushing yourself to achieve as much as possible will eventually pay off, especially when other people have ceased to push you because they know how good you are

Evaluating and Adapting

We all have things which motivate us – when we are kids, when we are young adults and when we are mature adults – and all that changes is the nature of our motivations. Even once we have retired, we will often find that there are things that we need to do and need to achieve before we can truly rest. In fact, one thing that motivates a lot of people is the need to keep their minds active. Research has proven that people who remain active through their middle and early old age keep syndromes such as dementia at bay for longer than those who do not. This makes it all the more important to remain motivated.

It is sometimes too easy to just let things pass you by through complacency, especially when you have already achieved enough to make you more or less immune from being fired. While it may be nice to remain in a job even when on auto-pilot, there is no denying that it is disadvantageous for keeping the challenge in a job and for motivation. Should you want to make a move into another part of the company or another job, it is always useful to have a results sheet which shows continuing improvement and achievement. To this end it always helps to have a record of achievement and keep testing yourself against it

In the end, the person who can best judge how well you are doing is you. Any manager to whom you answer will probably have other people to manage as well, who may require more careful handling than you. The only way you can ensure you remain motivated is to motivate yourself – so if you find that your motivation is beginning to wane, look at other reasons to stay in the job and work harder. There are always reasons to push yourself, and it is a matter of finding the one which does it for you, no matter how often that changes.