

Motivating Employees

Workshop 5

After two years of work for a large supermarket chain, JoAnn hears that she's being transferred to a new store, where she will become the day manager of the bakery department. It's a big promotion for her, and the store is in her own neighborhood, so her commute will be easy.

But she is warned that the bakery's sales have fallen below projections, and she is expected to improve the situation.

Before she reports for work, JoAnn thinks about her own experiences with that particular bakery department. She has bought fresh rolls and cookies there, and they were just as good as in every other market in the chain. But one day last summer, when she stepped to the counter to ask about having a cake decorated for a friend's birthday, she waited several minutes before any of the employees took notice of her. They were too busy talking with each other in the back. When a person finally came over to wait on her, the service was brusque and not very helpful.



JoAnn's first few days as a supervisor confirm her suspicions. Although the bakery staff members try to look busy whenever she observes

them, she can sense that they work because they have to, not because they want to. There's little joy in the employees' attitudes, and little pleasure in their exchanges

with customers. No wonder sales are disappointing.

When she talks to the employees individually, they seem nice enough. They're not basically rude people. But they seem to have little desire to help customers.

"How can I motivate them?" JoAnn asks herself. "Salaries are good, working conditions are fine—what is missing here?"

What's Inside

Here, you will learn to

- ◆ distinguish different kinds of motivation
- ◆ relate motivation to needs
- ◆ increase the motivation of your employees

Why Is Motivation Important?

The dictionary defines *motivation* as an incentive to do something. In a work setting, motivation is the internal drive that pushes an employee to perform at the highest possible level. In short, as JoAnn realized in the scenario you’ve just read, a motivated worker does the job because he or she *wants* to, not just because of the supervisor’s orders.

Motivating workers, then, is one of your most important tasks. Highly motivated workers can:

- ◆ Increase production
- ◆ Improve quality
- ◆ Raise customer satisfaction
- ◆ Make a supervisor’s job easier

Poor motivation can result in a lack of attention to quality, a failure to meet schedules, low output, tardiness, high absenteeism and turnovers, and a lack of concern about customer relations.



Types of Motivation

In the simplest terms, motivation stems from (a) desire for a reward or (b) fear of a loss or punishment. You’ve heard about “using the carrot or the stick,” a saying based on ways to get a donkey to move forward. You can dangle a carrot in front of the donkey’s nose—offering a reward if it does what you want. Or you can whack the donkey with a stick—a punishment for not moving.

Management experts believe that carrots are more effective than sticks. If you think back to your childhood experience with rewards and punishments, you’ll probably agree. Yes, punishment has its place—especially in deterring outright bad

behavior. But punishment usually doesn’t create a strong motivation to work hard at a task. Direct punishment is more likely to breed resentment and rebellion.

Your primary aid in building motivation, therefore, will be the rewards you can offer. What workplace rewards do you think are most important to people?

You may immediately think of traditional rewards such as these:

- ◆ Increased salary and better benefits
- ◆ Higher status in the organization
- ◆ Greater job security
- ◆ Greater power and authority

These rewards are indeed significant for most people. A century ago, in fact, management theorists believed that little else mattered. Then came the Hawthorne experiments, which helped to change people’s minds.

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The only way you
can motivate people is to
communicate with them.

— **LEE IACOCCA**
Former CEO of
Chrysler Corporation

The Hawthorne Experiments

In the early 1900s, researchers at the Hawthorne plant of Western Electric, near Chicago, began a series of experiments on the effects of certain working conditions. The researchers divided employees into two groups. For one group, they increased the lighting level. For the other group, they kept the lighting the same. Then they measured the effect on the workers' output. The group with more light showed increased productivity.

The conclusion seemed obvious: more light in the plant would raise production levels. The researchers were confused, however, by the fact that productivity also increased in the group whose lighting remained unchanged.

To clarify the results, the researchers reversed the procedure. For one group, they dimmed the lights, while the other group kept the same lighting. What was the result this time? Again, both groups produced more!

At this point a team from Harvard University began a more elaborate set of experiments. Ultimately the researchers concluded that the crucial factor wasn't the lighting. It was the employees' psychological reactions. Workers involved in the experiments were gratified

by the attention being paid to them. The increased attention was a sign, they thought, that managers cared about them and noticed the work they did. They felt more important.

Moreover, because of the way the experiments were set up, the employees had greater freedom from direct supervision. That meant they were



more responsible for their own work, and they responded by working faster and harder.

Overall, the Hawthorne experiments alerted managerial experts to the fact that wages, job security, and other such traditional motivators were not the whole story. Workers seemed to want—maybe even require—something more.

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People work for money,
but go the extra mile for praises,
recognition, and rewards.

— DALE CARNEGIE

*Developer of Self-Improvement
Courses*

”

ACTIVITY 5.1

NAME _____

What Motivates You?

To understand how to motivate your employees, you should reflect on your own chief motivators. Look at the following list and rank each potential motivator in terms of its importance to you. Select the appropriate number on the scale of 1 to 5.

	Unimportant			Very Important	
Money	1	2	3	4	5
Recognition from coworkers	1	2	3	4	5
Participation in decision making	1	2	3	4	5
Health insurance	1	2	3	4	5
Status in the organization	1	2	3	4	5
Status among my friends	1	2	3	4	5
Personal sense of accomplishment	1	2	3	4	5
Belief in company's goals	1	2	3	4	5
Authority over other people	1	2	3	4	5
Recognition from management	1	2	3	4	5
Chances for promotion	1	2	3	4	5
Challenging work	1	2	3	4	5
Pride in my own work	1	2	3	4	5
Financial security for my family	1	2	3	4	5
Pleasant work environment	1	2	3	4	5
Pension or other retirement benefits	1	2	3	4	5
Loyalty to the company	1	2	3	4	5
Loyalty to my superiors	1	2	3	4	5
Interest in the work	1	2	3	4	5
Friendships with coworkers	1	2	3	4	5
Job security	1	2	3	4	5
Chance to realize my dreams	1	2	3	4	5

Now look back at the items for which you circled 3 or above. In the jobs you've had, have your supervisors recognized what was really important to you? How did their recognition, or lack of it, affect your work performance?

The Hierarchy of Needs

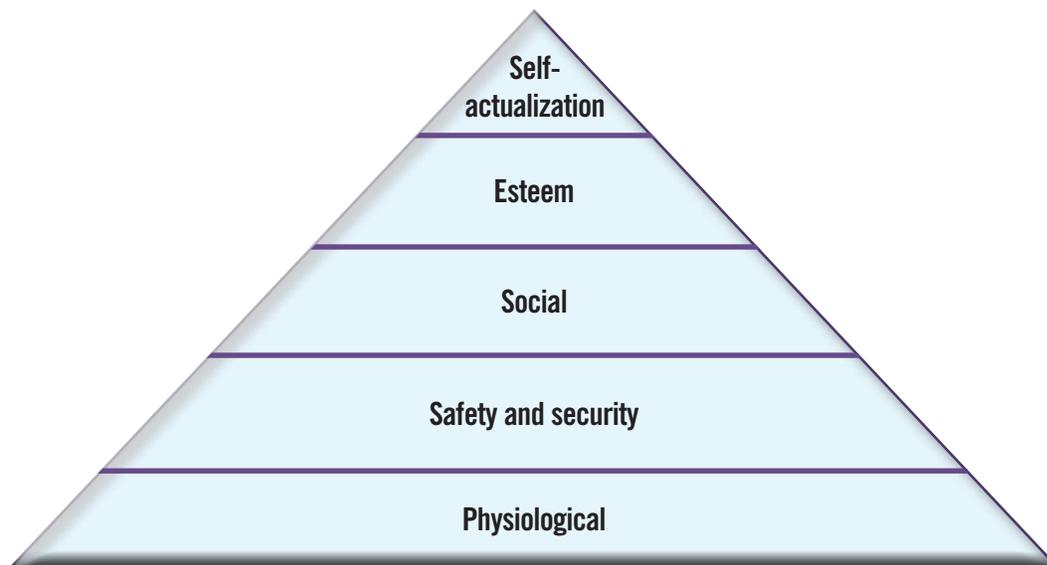
After the Hawthorne experiments and similar studies, experts on management realized that intangible human factors had a lot to do with employee satisfaction and motivation. In Activity 5.1, you may have assigned high priorities to items such as “personal sense of accomplishment,” “pride in my own work,” and “chance to realize my dreams.” These factors are difficult to measure in any precise way, but they have a huge effect on motivation.

In the 1950s Abraham Maslow offered a theory that helps explain the importance of such factors. Maslow said that people are motivated to satisfy their needs, and those needs fall into a pyramid-like hierarchy (see the illustration below).

At the base of the pyramid are *physiological needs*, such as food, water, and shelter. In the next level are needs related to *safety and security*. A person’s salary and benefits affect these two levels of needs. For instance, you can buy plenty of food and feel safe and secure if you have good wages and medical insurance. Similarly, safe working conditions help satisfy the safety need, and a sense that your job is stable helps meet the need for security.

The next level of the pyramid involves *social needs*. We need friendship, affection, and a sense that we belong in certain social groups. For most people, the work environment helps fill some of these needs.

Second from the top of the pyramid is the block for *esteem needs*. These include both self-esteem and the esteem of others. If your work helps build your prestige, self-confidence, and sense of worth, it contributes to the satisfaction of esteem needs.



Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Self-actualization—or, to use a more common term, *self-fulfillment*—occupies the very top of the pyramid. This category refers to your need to realize your own potential—to achieve all that you imagine achieving and to be everything that you think is best. Perhaps this need is never fully met, but many people attain at least a partial sense that they have lived up to their own wishes for themselves.

In the pyramid diagram, notice how each level rests on the one below. Maslow believed that the lowest needs—physiological and safety/security—are the ones we seek to satisfy first. After all, we can't worry about fulfilling our potential if we don't have enough to eat. Once we meet those fundamental needs, we concentrate more on the social and esteem categories. If we're physically sound and secure, have good social relationships, and enjoy high status, we'll begin to think more and more about self-actualization.

What does the hierarchy suggest about motivation on the job? For people struggling to earn a living, salary and benefits may be extremely important, because these workers haven't yet satisfied their physiological and security needs. For employees who are better off, however, the subtler psychological needs begin to take precedence.

Now think back to the Hawthorne experiments. It wasn't the lighting itself that increased motivation and production, because the lights affected only the physiological setting. More important was the boost to workers' self-esteem that occurred when they thought managers were paying attention to them. And the sense of responsibility for their own work probably increased their self-fulfillment. These higher-level motivators were important in the Hawthorne plant in the early 1900s, and they are even more vital for today's workers.



? Did you know?

Most companies try to increase motivation by giving employees basic conveniences and a pleasant working environment—for instance, nicely designed offices, comfortable furniture, convenient parking. The assumption is that such benefits show that the company cares about its workers. In return, managers hope, employees will feel loyal to the company and motivated to do good work.

Notice, though, that these benefits fall into the lower levels in Maslow's hierarchy. They meet physiological and safety needs, but they probably have little effect on esteem and self-actualization. So how effective do you think they are as motivators?

ACTIVITY 5.2

NAME _____

What's the Need?

To assess your understanding of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, read the statements below and imagine that you heard a supervisor utter them to an employee. In each case, which kind of need would the supervisor be addressing? Some of the statements may relate to more than one need. Check all the boxes that apply.

	Physio-logical	Safety/Security	Social	Esteem	Self-Actualization
1. "You're fitting in really well with your new team."	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. "I'd like you to take on a decision-making role."	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. "Your raise will begin with your next paycheck."	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. "Are you free on Friday night? I have an extra ticket for the basketball game."	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. "I've seen all the effort you're putting in, and believe me, we appreciate it."	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. "Starting next month, we're setting up a pension plan."	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. "You'll get a key to the executive washroom."	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. "Do you have a minute to give me your thoughts on this problem?"	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. "With your promotion, you'll get a larger desk."	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. "I've written out general guidelines, but you can develop your own plan for the specifics."	<input type="checkbox"/>				

1. Social and esteem, 2. Self-actualization, 3. Physiological and safety/security, 4. Social, 5. Esteem, 6. Safety/security, 7. Physiological and esteem, 8. Self-actualization, 9. Esteem, 10. Self-actualization

Motivating Today's Workers

In most industries, today's employees are better educated than in earlier times. They expect jobs to be interesting. They are used to having their opinions valued. They believe they are smart enough to make many of their own decisions.

Because of these employee attitudes, supervisors frequently need to appeal to the higher categories of needs in Maslow's hierarchy. Here are some guidelines for doing so:

- ◆ Treat employees as individuals. Learn which rewards are most important to each person.
- ◆ Whenever possible, allow employees to take part in setting goals.
- ◆ Seek out and respect your employees' suggestions.

The more freedom you can give your competent employees in management decision making, the happier and more effective they will be.

— **WARREN AVIS**
Founder, Avis Rent-A-Car

- ◆ Give employees the authority and responsibility for a whole job rather than just a fraction of it. As you learned in Workshop 3, this style of delegation helps employees take “ownership” of the work.
- ◆ Let employees make their own decisions. For example, tell them what job needs to be done rather than exactly how to do it.
 - ◆ Find opportunities for employees to be creative.
 - ◆ Offer a variety of challenging tasks.
 - ◆ Set up teams of employees to handle large tasks, solve problems, and make recommendations. Involvement with a team helps meet social and self-actualization needs.
 - ◆ Constantly let employees know that they are important and what they do is important.

Tips for Giving Rewards

In addition to appealing to higher-level needs, you can increase motivation by the style and timing of your feedback.

- ✓ Offer praise and recognition often—and in public.
- ✓ Give feedback promptly, as soon as possible after the performance in question.
- ✓ Be sure your rewards are directly related to performance, not to personal bias.
- ✓ Realize that employees may perceive the lack of expected reward or recognition as criticism. Saying nothing is saying something!

ACTIVITY 5.3

NAME _____

Motivation in Review

To review what you've learned about motivation, answer the following true-false questions. Mark the appropriate letter for each item.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Motivation comes from outside a person. | T | F |
| 2. With today's workers, punishments are less effective than rewards. | T | F |
| 3. Most employees care mainly about how much money they make. | T | F |
| 4. A job can be an important part of a person's self-actualization. | T | F |
| 5. The working environment plays a relatively small role in satisfying social needs. | T | F |
| 6. Assigning a job to a team tends to reduce individual motivation. | T | F |
| 7. Most employees don't want to be burdened with problem-solving responsibilities. | T | F |
| 8. Feedback is most effective when it is given promptly. | T | F |
| 9. The Hawthorne experiments showed the importance of needs such as esteem and self-fulfillment. | T | F |
| 10. To avoid favoritism, you should offer all employees exactly the same rewards. | T | F |

1. F, 2. T, 3. F, 4. T, 5. F, 6. F, 7. F, 8. T, 9. T, 10. F

If you're offered a seat on a rocket ship, you don't ask what seat, you just get on.

— **SHERYL SANDBERG**
Chief Operating Officer, Facebook



GETTING CONNECTED

Inc.com, the online site of *Inc.* magazine, offers a wide variety of readings on motivation. Go to:

<https://myqss.link/Motivation-Tips>

and enter the word *motivation* in the search window. You'll find articles about general principles of motivation as well as ideas for handling specific situations.

Another source where you will find articles on motivation and other topics:

<https://myqss.link/How-To-Motivate>

WORKSHOP WRAP-UP

- Rewards are usually more effective than punishments in motivating employees.
- People are motivated to satisfy needs of various types: physiological, safety/security, social, esteem, and self-actualization.
- Today's workers tend to be motivated by higher-level needs such as self-esteem and self-actualization, rather than by a mere desire for money and security.
- To increase motivation, effective supervisors involve employees in goal setting and decision making, give them plenty of responsibility, offer a variety of challenging tasks, and provide frequent supportive feedback.