

Key lessons

“Motivation is a fire from within. If someone else tries to light that fire under you, chances are it will burn very briefly.” – Stephen R. Covey

Introduction

Pop quiz: How excited was your team to come to work this morning? Did people show up simply out of habit, grudgingly prepared to slog through another burner of a day? Or did they arrive with huge smiles, fired up for an incredible day and the chance to do some of the best work of their careers? Or maybe somewhere in between?

Our [Motivating Your Team](#) topic will help you bring out the best in your direct reports and ultimately in you as a manager.

Let's start by quickly looking at the two main types of motivation:

Intrinsic motivation is the motivation that comes from inside. It's shaped by the sum of someone's personality and experiences. Intrinsic motivation can be unlocked and amplified but rarely changes.

Extrinsic motivation is the motivation that comes from external factors like rewards, praise, bonuses, compensation, fear and deadlines. But people ultimately do what's important to them. As a result most extrinsic motivation doesn't work — or doesn't work for long, unless it can be tied to a deeper intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation is what truly drives people. That's why our articles for this topic focus on techniques for creating an environment in which your team members' intrinsic motivations can thrive.

Key lessons

- 1. You can't change someone's motivations.**

Motivation comes from within and is based on an entire lifetime of experiences. It's very unlikely that you'll be able to change what someone gets fired up about. So why try?

2. You *can* influence what someone is motivated to do.

The right environment, opportunities and encouragement allow people's existing, intrinsic motivation to drive them forward. It's up to you to create that environment for each member of your team.

3. Everyone is different.

Each of your team members probably has different, maybe wildly different, motivations. Take care to develop a customized approach for each person.

4. Reduce and remove motivation killers.

Workplace drama, harsh criticism, inflexibility, project roadblocks and many other actions, events and circumstances can get people down. Way down. Try to proactively prevent these motivation killers from happening, and minimize their impact when they do happen.

5. Carrots and sticks don't work in the long term.

They might help you convince your team to do something once in awhile but the victory will be short-lived. Even the most generous bonus plan won't get your best people deeply excited about their work (unless money is a strong intrinsic motivator for them — it usually isn't).

6. Everything you do (or don't do) affects your team's motivation.

Forget to say hi to your team this morning, or yawn during a team presentation? Even subtle slips can be interpreted in the wrong way and lead to stress, uncertainty and unhappiness within your team. Good management practices and a positive attitude go a long way toward sustaining a motivated and productive team.

Next: [10 ways to motivate](#)

