

Motivating your Members

The basic motivational philosophy of any organization towards its members should be to help them get what they want. A leader will foster motivation within an organization by helping his/her group members develop a good healthy self image. If group members are to develop this healthy self image within an organization a leader must follow five basic rules: Do what's right, Do the best you can, Treat others as you'd like to be treated, Exhibit a positive attitude, and Expect the best at all times.

The word motivation comes from the Latin word *movers*, which means to move forward satisfying a need. Since each person's motivation comes from within then we truly can not motivate other people. However, if we know what personal motives or needs regulate a person's internal energy flow then we can still stimulate them into action. As a leader, it is important that you assess and understand your own motives as well as those of your group members. Different individuals have different needs or are motivated by different things. Whatever the reasons for joining your organization it is important to note that there are four major forces that motivate people: **accomplishment/achievement, recognition, power, and affiliation** (Atkinson, 1964).

Accomplishment/Achievement:

Achievers are people who want interesting work or the opportunity to achieve something significant. They thrive in situations in which they can take personal responsibility and calculated risks, set goals, and solve problems. Achievers need constant and concrete feedback, especially the impact that their contributions have had on the greater whole. It is important to them that their contributions actually make a difference beyond their own immediate personal gain. Success means excellent performance. The individual is concerned with doing personal best and leaving a unique mark. The achiever might be motivated by the chance to develop a new program or to extend the group's activities.

Recognition:

Certain people want to be appreciated for what they actually do in an organization and derive personal satisfaction from that direct involvement. Success is measured by obtaining something. Rewards may be tangible (certificates, food, a higher position) or intangible (thank yous, respect, prestige). These people would get involved in many projects-as long as there is a reward upon completion. They expect special benefits and privileges as a result of their participation and thrive on recognition from others, especially positive recognition.

Ways to recognize others

- Take time to talk.
- Keep perspective and a sense of humor.
- Write notes of encouragement.
- Help solve problems.
- Order a surprise pizza or sub sandwich.
- Plan occasional parties or social events.
- Give gift certificates.
- Praise people often around others.
- Nominate them for awards.

- Say "Thanks, you are doing a great job!"

Power:

Other people also want the opportunity to compete for responsibility and authority within an organization. They like to influence others directly and tend to manage groups well without being manipulative. Success is measured by perceived influence over others. The individual is concerned about control and getting his/her way. He/She might be motivated by achieving an officer position or managing external relations. They thrive on being involved in program production and planning; and also like the opportunity to apply new skills in the proper contexts.

Affiliation:

Affiliators need to feel that they belong and are accepted by the group members. They like cooperating and being in on things, meeting and/or knowing many people, and enjoy having fun. Affiliators get involved to meet people and socialize. The person values being liked and accepted. He/She could be motivated by the chance to interact with people-social chair or recruitment chair. Since affiliators need to feel welcome then they must be kept informed at all times. They also care about their feelings and the feelings of others and derive satisfaction for a job well done, especially if it involves serving others.

The environment of your organization –its meeting climate, activities and member interactions – can provide opportunities for members to maximize strengths and minimize weaknesses. As a leader, you can help create an environment that encourages members to succeed. Know your members. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each? What areas does each want to develop? What kind of work does each do well/poorly? What kinds of rewards does each respond to? What does each need to be successful?

If you can determine the source of an individual's motivation, you can begin to unleash his or her energies and ideas and maximize that member's potential within the organization. It is important that you allow them the opportunity to use their individual talents to the benefit of the organization. A leader must set goals that will help meet group member's wants and your organization's needs at the same time. Keep focused on the goals, talk about them often, and praise progress towards those goals.

Give your members an accurate view of the situation. Be honest. Listen and respond to the questions they raise. Most important, create an environment in which they feel free to raise questions. Be positive and appreciative of suggestions made by committee members. If you seem indifferent to members' opinions, your committee may lose interest.

Build trust within your organization. Make yourself visible and available to members. Listen and respond to your members' concerns and feelings. Seven ways to build trust:

1. Provide low threat situations and listen to others.
2. Pair inexperienced members with experienced people to build skills.
3. Remember and use people's first names.
4. Divide projects into manageable parts before asking for volunteers.
5. Get a sense of what people want from you and the organization.
6. Encourage cooperation and teamwork.

7. Be informal and personable; share personal and organizational information.

Learn to look beyond a person's current abilities and identify any potential that needs developing. In doing so, you will increase the group member's satisfaction by allowing them the opportunity to achieve within the organization. Group members need to be given some control over the job tasks, an opportunity to exercise responsibility, and a reason to feel they are learning and growing. Start delegating small tasks to your members. As they are successful in carrying out these tasks, give them more responsibility. Encourage them to make their needs known to you.

Solicit participation. Ask for members' ideas; self-involvement motivates. Delegate responsibility; people who have a hand in creating the organization will feel some "ownership". Foster self-confidence within the membership; if the organization and the leadership builds members up, more will want to join. Recognize member contributions. Public recognition is vital because it shows each individual proof that contributions are valued, but offers all members a standard to attain. Even the smallest contribution deserves some recognition – and might lead to a huge contribution later on! Positive feedback, praise and rewards reinforce participation. Confront with a caring attitude. People deserve to be told (privately) if their behavior or performance does not meet expectations, but do so with empathy. If leaders show genuine concern for members and support attempts to contribute, members will enjoy their group experience.

You can increase a person's motivation by:

1. Increasing the rewards he or she anticipates receiving or the individual's satisfaction level with the organization, and/or
2. Reducing the psychological time or resource costs he or she anticipates incurring.

Some hints on motivating others

Motivation may be one of the most difficult tasks a leader is faced with. Some days it is hard enough to feel enthusiastic about the group's meeting, so how can you motivate the rest of the group? The following methods of motivation tend to have "universal" application in most groups:

- Use people's names often
- Actively Listen to others
- Be courteous/respectful
- Avoid domination or forcefulness.
- Make suggestions or requests, not demands; explain your reasoning.
- Make the members want to do things (inspiration, recognition).
- Explain how work contributes to the group's goals
- Encourage member growth and learning
- Be fair, honest, and consistent. Observe with equal care so you can determine which group members find joy in getting work done, which want praise for a job well done, which need leadership opportunities, and which want to be part of a team.
- Be a good listener, and always be considerate.
- Show interest in and appreciation for others and their work.

- Keep members informed. Survey your membership to see what group members want or need and provide avenues for recognition.
- Share your direction, goals, and your vision with other members.
- Build prestige into jobs by giving titles and appropriate authority.
- Show members you have confidence in them and expect only the best.
- Give individual attention and demonstrate that you understand members and accept their strengths and weaknesses. Create various mentoring relationships within the organization by teaming up experienced members with newer members.
- Ask members for their counsel and help.
- Reassess members' needs and provide them with new challenges.
- Provide honest feedback -- praise their successes publicly, and privately give constructive criticism to help them learn from their mistakes.
- Be consistent with punishments and rewards.
- Play up the positives.
- Involve members in goal-setting and decision-making.
- Delegate responsibility to members.
- Give weight to the fact that people carry out their own ideas best.
- Clarify your expectations of members and their expectations of you.
- Keep members informed on decisions affecting them.
- When you are wrong or make a mistake, admit it and apologize.
- Be open to feedback, both positive and negative.
- Be careful of what you say and how you say it.
- Never forget the leader is a role model.
- Use ice breakers or team building activities in newly formed leadership teams or committees to energize the group members and strengthen the organization.
- Occasionally serve food at your meetings or have social events outside of work.
- Don't be upset about every little detail. Things will work out!

Communicate openly. Share your vision, your expectations and your plans with group members. If they know information and feel involved, they are more apt to participate. Be aware of body language and non-verbal signals and watch for signs of hostility or boredom. Spoken language is another crucial motivator; remember the following phrases:

“I think you are wonderful.”

“Great job!”

“Thank you for helping.”

“I made a mistake; I ’m sorry.”

Since motivation stems from inner needs, drives and goals; the leader's task in motivating others is to tap into these to supply a channel for their fulfillment. The individual members must still do the rest.