

How to Motivate People

Section Three

Learner Support Handbook



Contents:

Introduction

- Theory 23 Maslow's hierarchy of Needs Theory
- Theory 24 Alderfer's Existence Relatedness and Growth (ERG) Theory
- Theory 25 McClelland's Achievement and Acquired Needs Theory
- Theory 26 Herzberg's Motivation and Hygiene Theory
- Theory 27 Adam's Equity Theory
- Theory 28 Vroom's Expectancy Theory
- Theory 29 The Hackman and Oldham Job Characteristic Model
- Theory 30 Ernst's OK Corral Model
- Theory 31 Berne's Theory of Transactional Analysis

Introduction



Dwight D. Eisenhower once described leadership as ‘the art of getting someone else to do something you want because he wants to do it’. While we’re talking about American generals, how about George Patton’s belief that ‘You don’t tell people how to do things, you tell them what you want doing and let them surprise you with the results’. What managers understand is that people are motivated by their own needs, expectations and interests. But great managers know that people also have overarching values that impact on their motivation to do things. Tap into these values and watch the person perform beyond your wildest expectations.

In this section I look at nine theories of motivation. All are useful to the busy manager but some get misused. I’ve lost count of the number of writers who ignore the fact that many motivational models were based on research obtained from studies of white, male, middle-class employees in the USA in the early 1950s. How applicable his hierarchy of needs might be to an unskilled, largely female workforce in multi-cultural Britain of the twenty-first century is debatable. Therefore, you will have to decide how applicable every theory discussed in this section is in the unique context of your working environment.

The entries discussed emphasise three broad approaches that writers on motivation have taken. These are:

1. Motivation as a force that satisfies people’s needs.
2. Theories that examine how the way in which we treat people either motivates or demotivates them.
3. The importance of good communication between managers and staff.

There are similarities as well as some opposing views expressed in the entries. It’s up to you to decide whether Maslow’s progression theory makes more sense than Alderfer’s adaptation theory or whether Vroom’s expectancy formula is more powerful than Hackman’s job characteristic model. Whatever choices you make the theories will help you to connect with staff at a meaningful level. Read the theories and think about their application and, I promise, you will be able to identify everyone you know or ever will know within one or more of the theories.

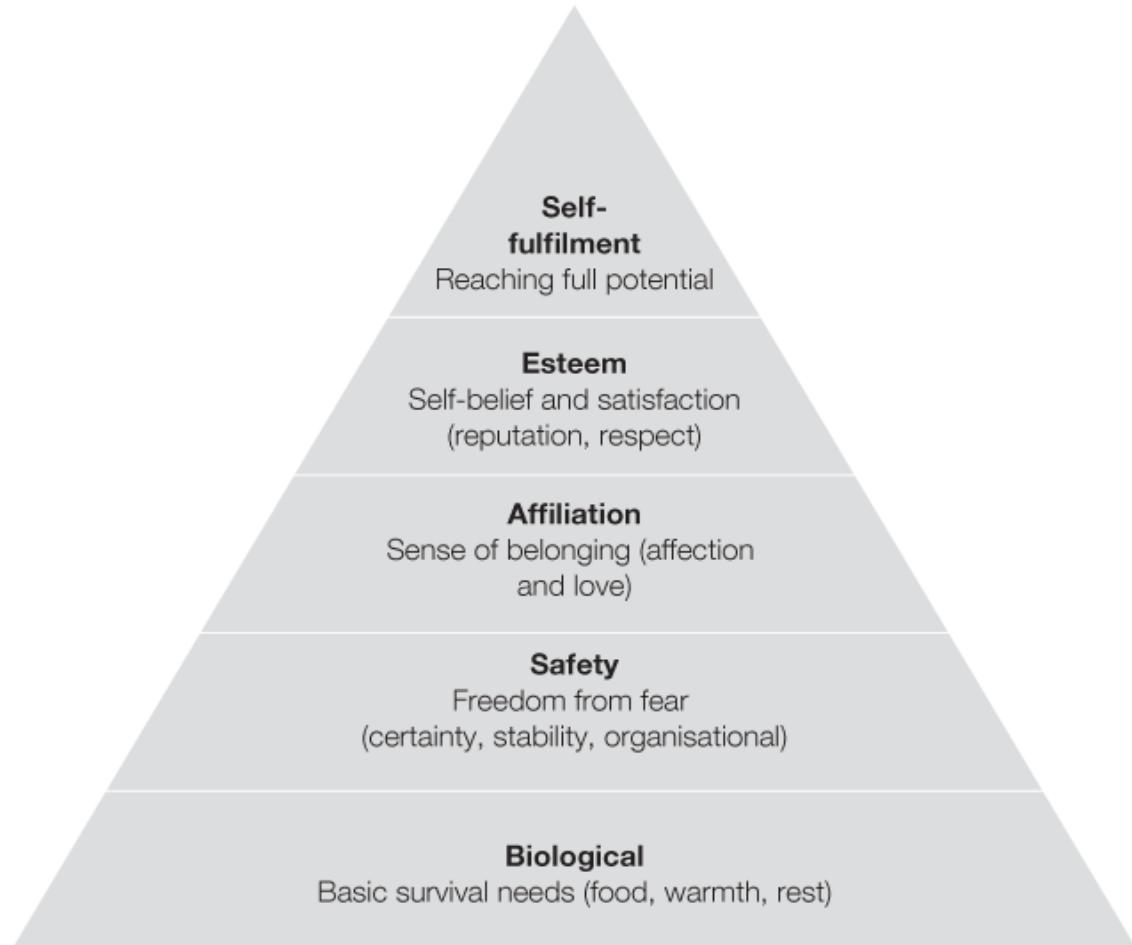
One thing that is clear from these entries is that words lead to actions. Therefore, whenever you try to motivate someone think carefully about your message and how you are going to communicate. Think also about how the message will be received, interpreted and acted upon by the recipient. Is that the response you want? Remember, there is often a huge difference between the message you think you sent and the one the person receives.

Theory Twenty-Three

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Use as a general overarching theory that explains people's whole life motivations, many of which will not be satisfied in the world of work.

Abraham Maslow's pyramid represents a hierarchy of needs that must be satisfied in a sequential order from bottom to top. He suggests that failing to satisfy a need at any level will prevent progression to the next level. Popular Traits that Leaders are expected to Display are:



The needs can be divided into two categories. Basic needs include biological and safety. Growth needs include affiliation, esteem and self-fulfilment.

Maslow argues that people die if their basic needs aren't satisfied and feel inferior and dissatisfied if their affiliation and esteem needs go unfulfilled and if they cannot achieve self-actualisation.

Managers have a responsibility to ensure that an employee's basic needs are met and to create a climate in which employees can develop.

How to Use It

- Ensure that your team's basic needs are met. These include food, water, warmth, rest and shelter. These equate to a safe working environment free from physical and psychological harm. Heating, lighting and ventilation must meet required standards and you should regularly compare pay and conditions with what your competitors are offering (see Theory 74).
- Once basic needs are met start to work on satisfying some of the higher level needs. Encourage social interaction and team spirit. Some organisations have dress-down Fridays as a means of encouraging less formality and greater interaction.
- People now feel happy and content with life in your organisation. They are well-paid members of a family with a good sense of security and belonging. Build on this by developing opportunities for teamwork (see Section 4).
- Build and enhance your team's self-esteem by designing challenging jobs. Give positive feedback and praise regularly. Delegate responsibility and offer developmental training opportunities. Contentment now becomes excitement as people start to feel valued.
- By now the pyramid is nearly complete but putting the final touch to it may be beyond even the best manager. Most people don't seek to achieve self-actualisation at work. They find that elsewhere. However, you can create the conditions for self-fulfilment by providing challenges for all staff, encouraging creativity and removing any obstacles that might block a person's progress.

Questions to Ask

- What are my lifetime ambitions?
- What **would count as self-actualisation for me?**

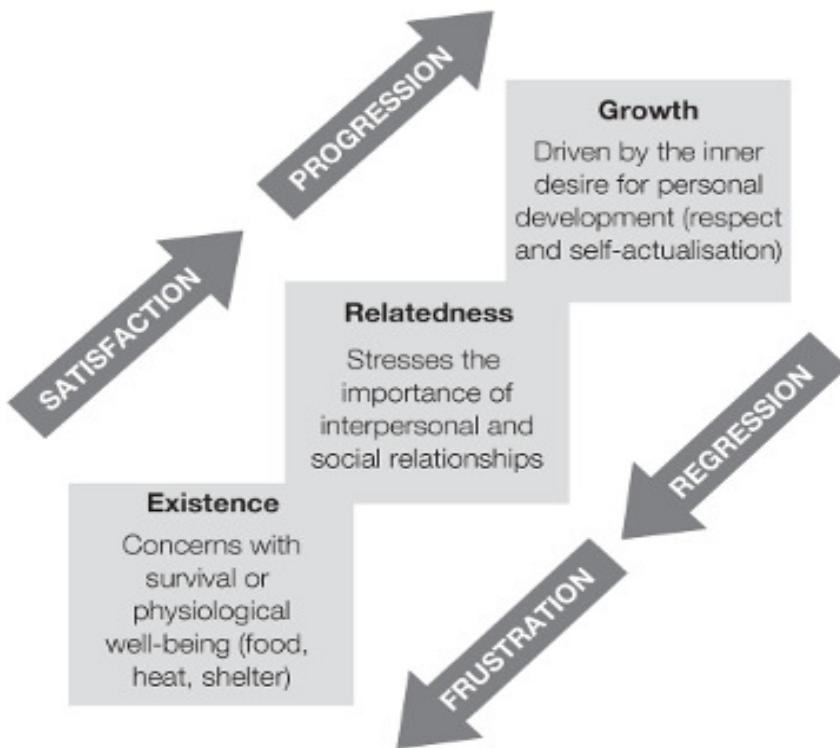
Theory Twenty Four

Alderfer's Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) Theory:

Use when a member of your team has regressed to a lower level of development/motivation and you need to arrest and reverse the decline.

Clayton Alderfer summarised human motivation factors into three categories rather than the five Maslow used. These he called existence, relatedness and growth.

These are shown in the figure below.



Alderfer maintains that although there is a progression from existence through to growth, all three needs can be operating as motivators simultaneously and it is not uncommon for people to regress to a lower level set of needs.

How to Use It

- Compare Alderfer's existence, relatedness and growth needs with Maslow's hierarchy (*see Theory 23*) and you will see that they are almost identical. The difference is that Alderfer suggests that you must address all three sets of needs simultaneously. Focusing on just one at a time will lead to discontent.
- Frustration at not being able to satisfy all needs may cause staff to regress to one of the lower levels. For example, if you fail to satisfy their need for personal development, they may regress to relatedness needs such as dependence on socialising with workmates or questioning whether pay and conditions are acceptable.
- If the person starts to regress (disinterest in work or sudden poor attendance or time-keeping) arrest the decline and make sure they don't fall back further. Meet with them and identify as precisely as you can what the problem is. Use Berne's theory (*see Theory 31*) and NLP (*see Theory 84*) to ensure good quality exchanges and try to stabilise the position.
- Once the problem has been correctly identified, work with the person to agree a plan of action. This will probably require both of you to do something.
- Ensure that you deliver on what you have promised and monitor on a regular basis that the person is meeting their targets.
- There will be occasions when you can't stop a person regressing. In such cases try to understand why they have regressed and work with them to address any frustrations they have until they are able to pursue growth again.

Questions to Ask

- Have I reached a plateau in terms of my own personal development and motivation?
- If so, what am I going to do about it?

Theory Twenty Five

McClelland's Achievement and Acquired Needs Theory:

Use to understand the three overarching needs that people within your team have.

David McClelland proposed the theory that people are motivated by one of three needs: the need for achievement, power or affiliation. He argued that a person's motivation and effectiveness in a specific job function would be influenced by one of these needs.

McClelland's Achievement and Acquired Needs Theory can be summarised as:

- Achievement (N-Ach): The N-Ach person seeks achievement, attainment of realistic but challenging goals, recognition for a job well done and advancement.
- Power (N-Pow): The N-Pow person has a strong desire to motivate or lead others. This can take the form of personalised power which can involve seeking advancement at the expense of others (see Theory 77).
- Affiliation (N-Affil): The N-Affil person has a need to maintain friendly relationships and interaction with others and seek acceptance from them.

Although the drive to satisfy one of the needs will dominate, individuals will also need to satisfy elements of the other two.

How to Use It

- There's no questionnaire to help you here. You'll have to talk to each person individually about what they want from their job and what they think they can contribute to the organisation. Keep the meeting friendly but don't be afraid to ask direct and challenging questions.
- Based on the information collected identify which of McClelland's three needs dominates each person and develop a strategy for dealing with them.
- Individuals who have a need for achievement (N-Ach) will thrive when you give them personal responsibility. But they fear failure and may only be prepared to take moderate risks. Give them support and regular feedback but step in if they start to demand too much of other team members who are not as task focused as them (*see Theories 7, 12 and 13*).
- Individuals who have a need for power (N-Pow) have a high work ethic and a commitment to the organisation and their job. Which is great. However, many people who seek personalised power don't have the flexibility and people skills required to work well with others. Give them projects to work on alone and keep a watchful eye on them. Step in if their behaviour becomes overly forceful (*see Theories 30, 31 and 83*).
- Individuals who have a need for affiliation (N-Affil) are a treasure to work with until their fixation on maintaining good social relationships undermines their ability to do their job. Play to their strengths. Insist that they do their job but allow them time to act as mediator in minor disputes among team members and organise the social activities for the team (*see Theory 32*).

Questions to Ask

- Which stereotype do I and members of my team fall into?
- Do I need to change my behaviour or that of my staff?

Theory Twenty Six

McClelland's Achievement and Acquired Needs Theory:

Use to distinguish between those factors that genuinely motivate staff and those that merely demotivate them when they fall below acceptable levels.

Frederick Herzberg identified two groups of factors. Motivating factors which create satisfaction and hygiene factors which don't provide satisfaction but can be a source of dissatisfaction if they fall below acceptable levels.

The most important factors are:

Hygiene factors:

- Pay, company policies, relationship with supervisors, working conditions, feelings associated with lack of status or security
- If these factors fall below a certain level dissatisfaction sets in

Motivating factors:

- Recognition, achievement, advancement, nature of the work undertaken, responsibility
- If these factors are present staff will feel motivated

Herzberg uses the term KITAs (literally kicks in the ass) when he refers to some of the ineffective strategies used by managers to motivate staff.

These are:

- Negative physical KITAs are literally a kick in the backside and include critical feedback or a right royal rollicking.
- Negative psychological KITAs include emotional game playing and physiological manipulation.
- Positive KITAs include bonuses, pay increases and benefits. However, he argues that regardless of how generous the positive KITAs are they will not on their own generate positive motivation. But, if they drop below an acceptable level they will cause resentment and de-motivation.

How to Use It

- Start by recognising that most people are not motivated solely by pay and working conditions.
- Make people's work interesting. Redistribute the more mundane tasks between members of the team and impress on each person the importance of their job to the team's overall performance.
- Give each member of staff the necessary resources and training they need to work effectively. Make them responsible for the quality of their work and give them the autonomy to get on with it. Do this and they will see work as their responsibility and not something they just do for the boss.
- Set challenging but realistic targets which when achieved will give staff a feeling of achievement. Recognise such achievements publicly. Simply saying 'thank you' or 'well done' publicly will do wonders for morale and productivity.
- Provide opportunities for advancement and personal development for all staff. Promote from within whenever possible but remember, providing a new challenge or more interesting work can provide greater motivation than a pay rise or promotion.
- Although factors such as pay and working conditions are not motivational factors, if they fall below a certain level they can be serious de-motivators. Benchmark (see Theory 74) pay and working conditions with similar groups in your organisation and competitors and ensure equivalence.
- Maintain good communications with staff and adopt their good ideas. But make sure that they receive full recognition for their suggestions (see Theory 8).
- Don't be afraid to use negative physical KITAs. By delivering a right rollicking to a member of staff you can often provoke the reaction 'Right, I'll show that b*****'. Which is exactly the response you want.

Questions to Ask

- Do I assume that what motivates me motivates my staff?
- Do I publicly thank and/or celebrate the success of my staff?

Theory Twenty Seven

Adams Equity Theory:

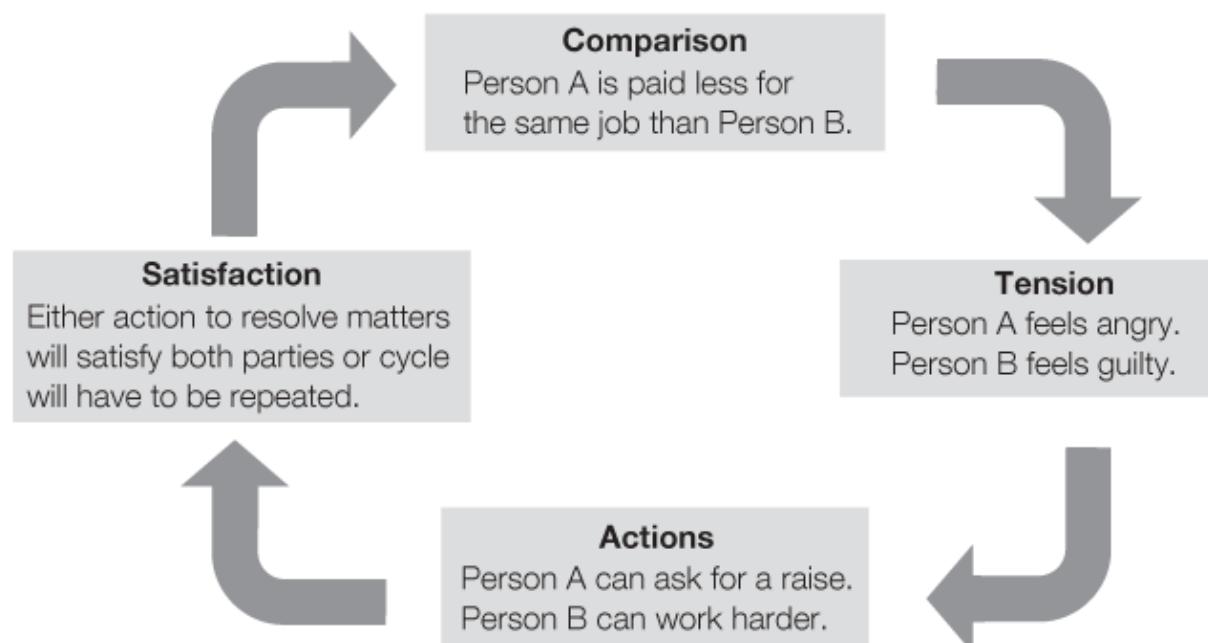
Use this to understand how people act when they perceive they are treated differently from another member of staff.

Stacy Adams' equity theory is based on the principle that people are motivated to act in situations where they perceive they have been treated inequitably or unfairly. Adams argues that the more intense the perceived inequity, the higher the tension, and the stronger the motivation to act.

The figure below tracks the perceptions of two different people.

A who feels s/he deserves to be treated better than B.

And B who feels guilty at not working as hard as A.



A stalemate occurs if neither or both actions take place (e.g. A getting a raise and B working harder simply replaces the focus of the tension).

Employees who perceive inequity will seek to address it by reducing their level of effort, increasing their pay or leaving the organisation

How to Use It

- Look for the signs of discontent including sulking, passive or aggressive behaviour, tensions between two or more members of staff, snide remarks during meetings or conversations and general ‘dark mutterings’.
- Accept that any sense of inequity stems from the person’s perception of how unfairly they have been treated. Such perceptions are seldom based on fact but are driven by emotions.
- Accept that the extent of de-motivation is proportional to the degree of perceived disparity in treatment. You will find that some people feel a huge sense of unfairness at the slightest indication of inequity.
- Recognise that you are dealing with emotions and that they are never logical. Telling someone they are wrong is not always going to work.
- Meet with the person/s concerned. Allow sufficient time for the meeting, it’s not going to be done and dusted in ten minutes. Let each person tell their story and blow off steam without interruption. This by itself will lower the temperature.
- Many people have misconceptions about what is equitable. Some have delusions of adequacy and an inflated view of their importance to the organisation. If they are not as indispensable as they think you need to tell them. They won’t like it but you must confront them with the reality of the situation. Not what they think it is (see Theory 83).
- If you discover that inequality exists, deal with it. And while you are at it, check if your dispute is just a symptom of a wider problem in the organisation.

Questions to Ask

- What is the precise problem I am facing?
- Is it a problem of recognition masquerading as an issue about pay or conditions?

Theory Twenty Eight

Vroom's Expectancy Theory:

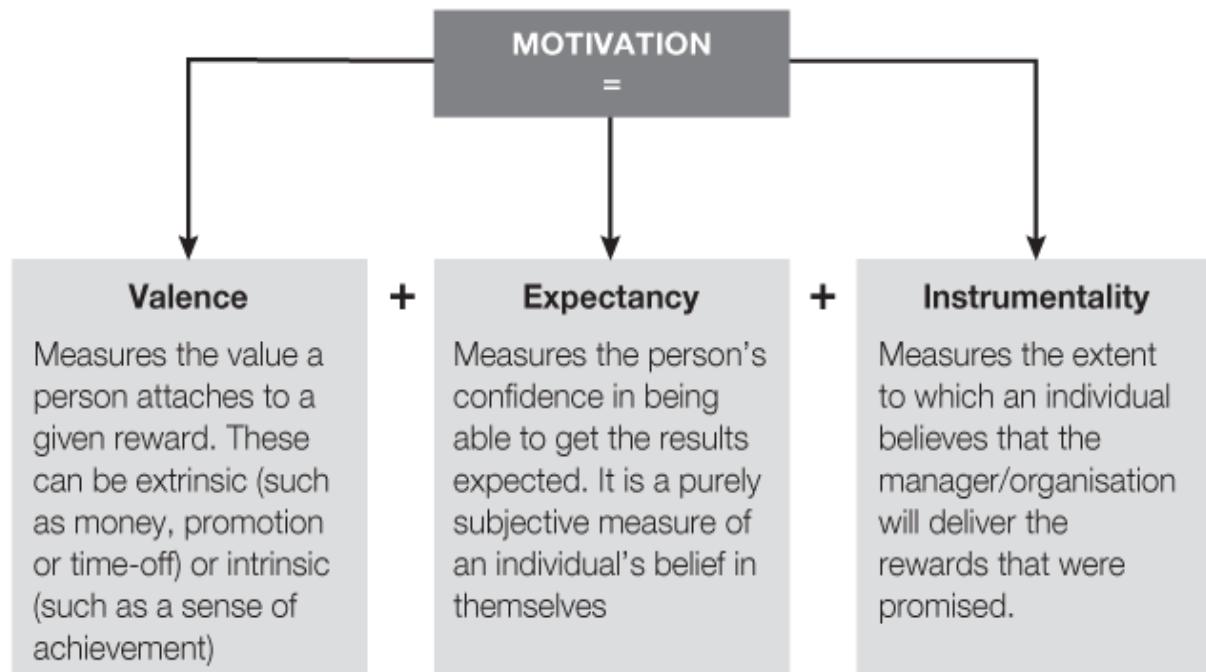
Use this to understand why people react to certain work-based requests or promises as they do.

Victor Vroom suggested that an individual will behave in a certain way based upon the belief (expectation) that a specific act will be followed by a desired reward (valence) once the act has been completed (instrumentality).

He expressed his expectancy theory of motivation in terms of a mathematical formula:

$$\text{Motivation} = \text{Valence} \times \text{Expectancy} \times \text{Instrumentality}.$$

If any one of the three factors is nil, the overall score will be zero, and there will be nil motivation.



A stalemate occurs if neither or both actions take place (e.g. A getting a raise and B working harder simply replaces the focus of the tension).

Employees who perceive inequity will seek to address it by reducing their level of effort, increasing their pay or leaving the organisation

How to Use It

- Don't dismiss Vroom's theory just because people don't consciously allocate scores to concepts like valence, expectancy and instrumentality, and if they did how the hell could you as a manager guess what they were? People may not use the jargon or consciously identify and weigh up the factors in the terms that Vroom describes but they do think in terms of: What do I want? How likely is it that I can get it? Will the organisation deliver on its promises?
- So forget about the scores. Instead, find out what your employees want from their job and provide work that is economically beneficial and/or intrinsically motivating for them. This will have the effect of creating rewards that they really want (see Theory 26).
- If expectancy is all about effort and results, make sure that you create an environment where effort is both encouraged and rewarded and employees have access to the resources, equipment and materials they need to get results.
- Strengthen the instrumentality link in the chain by keeping your promises and distancing yourself from those that don't.
- It's no good delivering on two out of the three factors because, as shown by Vroom, failure to deliver on any one results in nil motivation.

Questions to Ask

- Which factor (if any) would I and my staff give a score of zero to – valence, expectancy or instrumentality?
- Even if there are no zero scores what can I do to show staff that good work is recognised and rewarded?

Theory Twenty Nine

The Hackman and Oldham Characteristic Model:

Use to remind you that autonomy and feedback are powerful motivating factors, cost nothing to provide and should be built into the design of every job/task.

Richard Hackman and Greg Oldham's theory is based on the principle that employees derive motivation from completing a task.

They suggest that high levels of motivation occur as a result of three critical psychological states.

These are:

- Meaningfulness: The employee must consider the task to be meaningful.
- Responsibility: The employee must have sufficient discretion to plan and carry out the task as they see fit.
- Feedback: The employee must be aware of how effective they have been.

Hackman and Oldham claim that satisfaction in each of these states can be derived as a result of effective task design.

How to Use It

- Recognise that some jobs are boring and monotonous! Then do something to relieve the boredom and provide meaning.
- As far as possible ensure that an employee can work on a task from start to finish and see a visible end product. Show them the importance of their work and how their efforts affect the work of other people in the organisation and the end customer (see Theory 1). During the Second World War the women who packed parachutes regularly met with flight crews. This significantly reduced the number of chutes that failed to open!
- Encourage staff to use a variety of skills and abilities to complete the task. Give them the freedom to choose their own working methods and control the resources they need to complete the task.
- Provide feedback to each person on a regular basis and give them clear and direct information about how well they performed at critical stages throughout the task.
- Use work rotation within the team to avoid staleness. Do this and staff will gain a greater understanding of the contribution that each member of the team makes to the final outcome.
- If job rotation doesn't work challenge individuals to come up with a design for their job that will make it more interesting. If they do come up with an efficient new design let them try it out. If the experiment fails, so what? At least you listened to the member of staff (see Theory 4).

Questions to Ask

- How much autonomy and variety do I offer staff?
- How much feedback do I give staff?

Theory Thirty

Ernst's OK Corral Model:

Use to understand how your feelings about yourself and others affect your work.

Franklyn Ernst suggested that the way we regard ourselves and those we interact with influences our attitudes and emotional states and hence our behaviour.

He represented this theory as a 2×2 matrix with the one axis depicting the level of value of others (I'm okay with you) and the other one's own self-value (I'm okay with me).

The Characteristics of the four Quadrants are:

- I'm okay with me – I'm not okay with you: This situation is characterised by anger and you trying to coerce the other person and/or get one over on them.
- I'm not okay with me – I'm okay with you: This is characterised by your feelings of lack of worth and fear and a willingness to allow the other person to get what they want.
- I'm okay with me – I'm okay with you: This is the happy harmonious situation, characterised by constructive and cooperative relationships.
- I'm not OK with me – I'm not OK with you: This is a horrible place to be and you need to get out of it before you descend into depression and self-loathing.

Ernst's theory can be used to challenge people's old belief systems and replace them with more constructive thoughts about how they feel about themselves and others.

How to Use It

- Identify where you are on the model. Be honest.
- Identify your feelings towards the other person and locate your opinion on the grid.
- Recognise that where you are on the model and how you feel about yourself and the other person can change from day to day.
- If you're not OK with the person you need to change your outlook. Identify why you feel as you do. Often this will have nothing to do with work issues. You may be jealous of them, fear them or think they are wasting their talent. You have to park such feelings and accept the person for what they are: an imperfect human being.
- Much more problematic is if you're not OK with yourself. You too are an imperfect human being – so give yourself a break and stop setting unachievable standards for yourself.
- No one knows if people are born with a lack of self-belief or if it's drained out of them by life. What is clear is that self-fulfilling prophecies play a role in destroying self-belief. Keep telling someone 'you're stupid' and guess what? Keep telling yourself 'I'm stupid' and the implications are even clearer. Every time you catch yourself thinking like that, challenge the thought.
- Replace negative thinking with positive self-talk. Rehearse in your mind social and work-related scenarios where you come out on top and replace the word 'can't' with 'can' or 'why not' (see Theories 11 and 84).
- As your sense of self-value increases, so will the value you attach to other people.

Questions to Ask

- Who was it that told me I'm no good? My parents, a teacher or my boss?
- What power do they have over me today? Probably none. So why am I affected by what they said?

Theory Thirty One

Berne's Theory of Transactional Analysis:

Use this to become a more effective communicator.

Transactional analysis theory describes the state of mind that a person is in when they give or receive a message.

The way managers communicate with staff has a significant effect on how staff receive, interpret and act upon the broadcast message.

Berne identified five patterns of behaviour, or ego states, that people use when communicating.

The Characteristics of Each State are:

- ***The critical parent state:*** The person is overbearing and tells people what to do.
- ***The nurturing parent state:*** The person expresses concern for people's feelings but likes to tell people what to do in the guise of offering advice.
- ***The free child state:*** The person expresses their emotions without constraint.
- ***The adaptive child state:*** The person lacks confidence and is anxious to please.
- ***The adult ego state:*** The person acts with maturity and assesses the situation in a calm and rational manner.

Although behaving in the adult ego state is generally the most effective approach, Berne suggests that there are times when managers may need to adopt the parent or even the child ego state in order to motivate employees.

How to Use It

- Recognise that you have the ability to adopt any ego state.
- To use transactional analysis identify which ego state your staff are in and adopt the ego state that is most effective in dealing with them.
- If you are both in a parent ego state then the likelihood is that there will be friction as you both try to impose your own rules on the other.
- If you are both in a child ego state you might have a bit of fun but nothing will get done because you will be too busy sucking your thumbs and throwing your teddies out of the crib.
- If you are in the parent ego state and the other person is in the child ego state or vice versa then this will produce an outcome satisfactory to at least one side, but this may be short-lived.
- The ideal state to aim for is when you are both in the adult ego state.
- To move from either the parent or child ego states ask questions such as: What can we do about this? How I can I support you to get this done? How can we sort this? How would you suggest we move forward? If you follow this simple process it will improve your ability to manage and motivate your staff significantly. Give it a try.

Questions to Ask

- Which is my normal state?
- Is it a productive state?
- If not, how can I change it?
- What causes me to shift states?
- Is it words, actions or events?