



Motivate This!

Science tells us that motivation is much more than carrots and sticks. In fact, studies have proven that excessive extrinsic (external) rewards can actually reduce motivation in the long run. Some of the most detrimental extrinsic rewards are of the if/then variety. For example: If you meet your quota of 1000 parts produced, you will get a small reward. In this scenario, what would be the motivation to ever produce more than the 1000 parts? Instead of an if/then reward, give the employee an unexpected reward when they produce considerably more than the expectation. This will leave them, and their peers, continuously striving for excellence.

A certain level of extrinsic motivation certainly needs to exist. If employees are being compensated fairly and have a defined career path, they will be much more likely to be internally motivated and engaged. If the pay and benefits are not there, the Intrinsic (internal) motivation will likely be short-lived.

If you are looking to improve the intrinsic motivation within your team members, you should focus on three things:

1. **Autonomy** – To be intrinsically motivated, people need a level of control over task, time, team, and technique. This doesn't mean they don't need direction from their leaders. They just need to be involved in deciding what they work on, when they do it, how they do it, and whom they involve.
2. **Mastery** – Carrots and sticks help to ensure compliance. Intrinsic motivation requires engagement. Engagement in one's work allows the individual to influence their own success and drives them to pursue mastery. While some may argue that mastery isn't truly attainable, only an intrinsically motivated individual will have the dedication and internal drive to truly strive for it.
3. **Purpose** - People naturally want to be part of a cause greater than themselves. Working in healthcare, purpose is a huge part of our business. It might be in our best interests to remind ourselves and our employees of our part in supporting our patients.

For many leaders, giving up control and providing autonomy to your employees is not an easy ask. Here are a few recommendations you can implement to loosen the reins a bit:

1. Allow your employees to participate in setting their own goals.
2. Use uncontrolling language. Instead of "must" or "should" try "think about" or "consider".
3. Hold office hours. Clear your schedule for a couple of hours so you are accessible to your employees.
4. Delegate some of your smaller tasks and allow the employee to handle it on their own. This will lead to either a success story or a positive coaching opportunity.
5. Involve your employees in department improvement efforts and problem-solving. While you're at it, let them lead the initiative.

As society and work changes, our motivation must evolve with it. Work is moving away from assembly line-type repetitive tasks to activities that require more creativity, innovative thought, and critical

thinking. To reach excellence, we need to first develop an internal motivation in ourselves and those we lead.

-Scot

Pink, Daniel H. *Drive*. Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.