

What Motivates People

Employers have been struggling with motivating their people pretty much since the first person hired an employee.

Motivated people whether individual, group or an entire organization creates a corresponding “tone”. If its an individual, they are often thought of as the “go-to” person, people generally liked and considered reliable. Well motivated groups exhibit more energy, ideas abound and typically greater collaboration exists. And certainly, if an entire organization (no matter its size) is composed of highly motivated individuals, the dynamics, effectiveness and ability to excel are readily apparent.

What happens when you don’t have motivated individuals, groups, organization? At the very least, the tone is “same-o, same-o”, everybody going through their paces, cynicism, doing what is required to get done, but not much more. It can be an energy sapping environment where the do’ers either leave (perhaps even the company) or lose their motivation. Teams with little or no motivation can create a negative group think and often are more concerned about CYA and blame game then achieving any kind of results. A poorly motivated person or group not only produces mediocre results, but will be toxic to the greater group. . Poorly motivated individuals or groups will create a drag on a department or organization far in excess to their possible (or lack of) contribution. Thus poorly motivated people can be a significant challenge posed for any business.

So what motivates your people or even yourself for that matter?

There are three key factors to motivation.

Tangible - The items we can see & touch. Not only location, work space, technology and company policies (the organizational), but benefits and salary pertaining to the employee. (personal)

Leadership - The company leadership (organizational), but also the individuals direct supervisors. (personal)

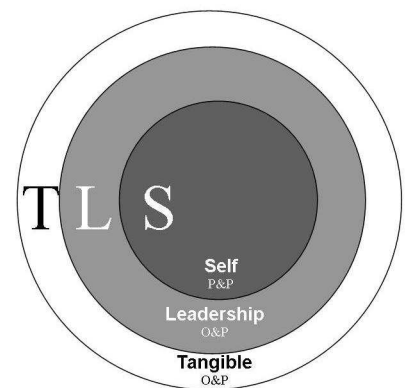
Self - How does this job fit/satisfy the individuals career goals (Professional) and how does it fit/satisfy their other goals. (Personal).

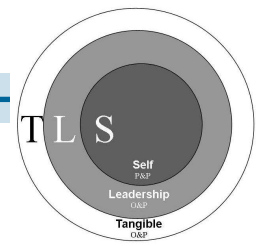
By recognizing all six elements (2 each of Tangible, Leadership and Self, we can get a clearer picture of what motivates people and how the organization can influence that motivation.

This model makes very clear that organizations can’t control everything that motivates people.

In the next pages, we will illuminate what can be *controlled* by the organization, what can be *influenced*, as well as what is not under their control or influence.

By understanding each, we can better understand how we will be able to create the environment that can motivated our people.





Motivating factors are not created equal. While we can give you an idea of the importance of each, the simple fact is that **the final judge is each individual.**

An example are those **Tangible** health benefits. You could offer the best package in the world, yet if I'm a young, healthy 20-something or married with a spouse that has great benefits, I may be likely to give a lesser value to those benefits than a married person with a stay at home spouse and 3 kids.

But we do know when looking at the 3 key factors, the order of importance is -

- Self
- Leadership
- Tangible

Study after study shows that people place attributes such as “feeling valued” or “being an important member of the organization” (Self) & how their boss treats them (Leadership) as consistently more important than salary or “perks” (Tangible). Don't get me wrong. I'm not suggesting that it's ok to slash everybody's salaries 10% as long as you start running around, hugging everyone, screaming “I love you man!”. Yet time after time, organizations who consistently show they value their people and their contributions produce a higher motivated workforce.

Lets look at the 3 factors and what they represent -

As mentioned, the **Tangible** factor are those things that we can see and touch. They can be placed into two categories that quite clearly overlap. The two categories are **Organizational and Personal**. Tangible factors will be location, office space, benefits, human resources and other policies, technical support (computers, telephones), training policies, etc. Is it a cubicle culture or something different? What are the tele-commuting policies, flex-time and the like?

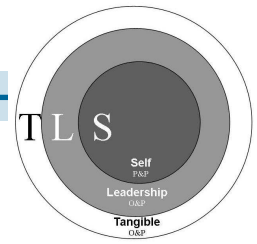
When those factors touch the individual it becomes part of the Personal Category. My salary, my computer, my other tools, my work space, etc.

If its not Personal is the individual going to care? Absolutely. Perhaps not as strongly as something that effects them personally, but certain benefits or policies may be judged as important indications of how the organization functions.

Does the organization have a strong Diversity Policy? That could be an important measure for an individual. A noticeable trend is a number of prospective employees (especially Generation X and Y'ers) who look to see if a company has domestic partner benefits in their offering. They may not even be eligible, but it may represent to them what type of environment that they could be working in.

While Tangible factors may be the lesser of the three factors, it certainly is still important.

Everyone just needs to understand that while necessary, Tangibles will be a motivational buffet! You need to have them comprehensive and available, even though the individual will likely pick and choose what is relevant (and important) to them.



The second key factor is **Leadership**, again both Organizational & Personal.

Your Organizational Leadership is the C-Level group or any manager not directly in the individuals personal chain.

The Personal Leader is typically just one person, the immediate supervisor. That person will have a greater effect than all the rest combined.

Again, that doesn't let the Organizational Leadership off scot free since they will be the ones that set the "tone" of the organization. They will also be the ones that determine the validity of the company policies. You can (for example) have very strong diversity policies on paper, but if the company's management doesn't "walk the talk" (and there are no repercussions), it's not worth the paper its written on and the employees will see that.

It's not only policies, but the company's strategic vision & direction, core values and both long and short term goals. If its felt within the organization that their superiors behavior is aligned with all the above mentioned, it creates a more predictable and positive environment. If not, there will be a climate of distrust which will have a corrosive effect especially on peoples motivation.

When you look at turnover, productivity and motivation, the most common denominator is the individuals superior. Do they empower, encourage and inspire? Or do they meddle, dissuade and ignore? Or somewhere in between? In either case, are they consistent and predictable?

The challenge for many leaders (and organizations) is that they don't understand the flip side of motivational tools they try to create often with great fanfare.

For instance, a company may avow that they --

Embrace people showing initiative, but how do they handle the mistakes that might (will) happen?

Empower their people, yet are they willing to cede control?

Foster open communication, however what happens if it conflicts with the a superior's/ organization's viewpoint?

Value their people, but do they make time (and money) available for the individuals development?

If companies don't recognize that "flip side", then the published policy becomes a hollow promise debilitating the employees and creating a lack of trust in their leadership.

A recent study that crossed multiple industries wasn't too kind...

82% of leaders fail to provide appropriate feedback, praise or direction

81% fail to listen or involve others

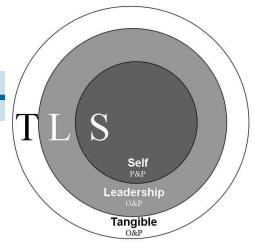
76% fail to set clear goals and objectives

59% fail to train/develop their people

Poor leadership is also very expensive. A survey performed by Right Management in 2008 showed that 2 out of 3 people left the organization due to some type of leadership issue.

Whereas, if you have a great manager who supports your efforts, truly empowers you, makes you feel valued and part of a team, the employee is likely to be more positively motivated to perform better and be a strong contributor to the organization.

What Motivates People



The third and most important key factor is **Self**, both Professional & Personal.

How is this job/career aligning with what I want to do with my life?

Is their opportunities that help me where I want to grow?

Do I feel valued or just another cog in the machine?

How does this effect my personal life?

Do I get the time I want with my family/friends?

Am I stretched/challenged?

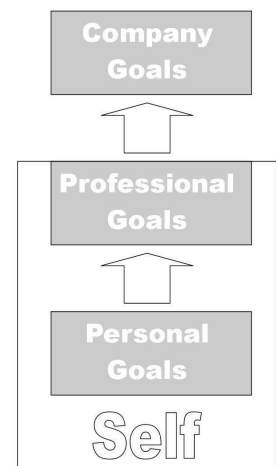
Is this an environment that I enjoy?

All sorts of questions, that the individual may not know they are even asking!

The strongest motivation for any individual will always be the WIIFM factor (What's In It For Me?), that Personal Self. If a company is not meeting my Personal Self requirements, the best salary/benefits/leadership can be offered, but I'm not likely to stay. Or if I am staying, chances are my attitude/motivation is not where it needs to be for anyone's success.

As illustrated on the right, the optimal situation is my personal goals directly aligning with my professional goals which should directly align with the company's goals. If aligned, there is a higher likelihood of the individual being strongly motivated to support the organization. The alignment allows them to see the benefit to themselves.

Conversely, a poorly aligned individual will find it difficult to even care how the company is doing as they don't see any connection of the company's success to their own.

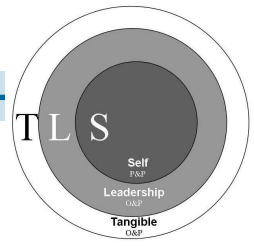


There are tons of stories of individuals who were outwardly successfully, great career track, blah, blah, blah and they walked in one day and said "I'm outta here". In every single case, you will see that there Self needs changed and the company was no longer able to meet those needs.

But what do you do with the individual who hasn't a clue what there goals are? This admittedly is a challenge for many people. Vague ideas, dreams. Working and living "day to day". If the individual doesn't know what there own goals are, why would they be motivated to ensure the business succeeds? Once again, lack of alignment.

You may have a hard worker that isn't clear on what their goals are. They may be a hard, dependable worker. The challenge will then be that moment where the needs of Self does become clearer to them and at that time they will consciously (or unconsciously) view their alignment. If it naturally aligns, it's "all good". If not, you will either physically lose the employee or if they stay, may lose the motivation.

If the primary motivator is WIIFM, the needs of Self, is the organization powerless?
Absolutely not!



Lets return to the 3 key factors to motivation, **Tangible, Leadership & Self**.

Certainly you need to have a competitive offering, those **Tangibles**.

Secondly, you must have an Organizational **Leadership** that supports those Tangibles. A management that is consistent, positive and predictable.

The individuals **Personal Leadership** needs to recognize the individual and understand what motivates each person. That doesn't mean "catering" to them, but knowing that each employee has different needs and wants. How do they react to rewards and consequences? One employee may work harder for a pay bonus, another will favor time off, a third may just be happy with an "atta boy". Same with consequences. Some people may be embarrassed if a group goal isn't achieved, others may just yawn. Even threatening their jobs may work (at least short term) for some, yet others, due to their financial situation may just laugh.

An effective leader knows and understands what makes their people tick. They encourage the best and support them in working on their weaknesses. Leaders can make or break an organization. They just do it one individual at a time.

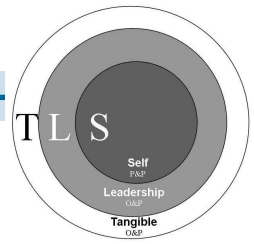
Moving to **Self**. This is Personal right? How can a company have any influence in this? We talked about aligned Personal and Professional Goals. This is all out of the company's hands, right?

Not at all. First of all, as stated earlier, an effective leader works to understand their people, what motivates them. The manager may not be able to "change" what's going on in the individuals personal realm, but they can influence it. An example, could be a person going through a divorce. The Manager may provide a shoulder to cry on, a willing ear. They could just offer insight to services available, etc.

Many organizations offer "goal setting" programs, where the individual learns not only how to achieve professional tasks and goals, but identify and achieve personal ones as well. By providing the employee with the tools to greater understand their goals, the employer acts as a partner in helping the employee by able to measure whether the are in the right position or not.

I have been both a participant and facilitator of various types of goal identification workshops. They typically begin with vague ideas, confusion and "I don't knows". As the workshop progresses and clarity of each persons personal and professional goals develops, you see each person get excited, re-energized and looking forward to each new day.

By helping people understand what they wish to achieve (whether through formal goal achievement programs or not) in their personal and professional life, we help them clarify their Self needs. And with that understanding they can better understand whether they are aligned with the organization and will be motivated to put forth their best efforts for success.



Real **Tangible** offerings. A **Leadership** that supports the organization and individual along with a **Self** aligned with the business goals. These are the key factors for each individual that drive the commitment and motivation to their work. By recognizing these factors, we can create the environment that encourages each individual to be a productive member for the company.

However just like fresh air being pumped into a building needs to be an ongoing process, providing a motivating establishment also needs to be a continuing program. Holding a goal setting workshop is good, yet creating a consistent culture that supports each individual reaching their goals and empowering their professional lives will create an environment where people want to be and support.

By providing the framework that offers the individual what they need to fulfill their goals, respecting their presence along with valuing their contribution you establish a company in which each person is motivated to do well and their organization to do well. It just takes a little TLS.

About the Author of this White Paper

Terry Bass has been a busboy, sailor, air traffic controller, field service engineer, facilitator, trainer, manager and national training manager. Some positions and companies he was highly motivated to work for and some not so much.



Terry is now a business coach and the founder of CHADONS Resources, a company focused on *helping people succeed*. He does that through coaching, speaking, workshops, and development programs. He also works with businesses on helping their business and people reach their fullest potential. More can be found at www.chadons.com

He is author of the book **Relationship Networking 3.0** and his most popular presentations are on this subject. The book can be found online through Amazon and Barnes and Noble Terry also is the creator of the DOCS 4 (Developing Outstanding Customer Service for...) Program that provides a cost effective and complete system for any organization to provide outstanding customer service. More on that can be found at www.docs4.com.

His logo is a bit unconventional, the flamingo dude on the right relaxing on a beach. It represents the fact that whether we are a single person, a couple or a million person organization, we all have ideas, visions and dreams of where we would all like to head towards.



So what's your dream?