

# Motivation

Research suggests that humans are motivated by autonomy, mastery, and purpose. People want to control their actions, receive recognition for what they have done, learn new things, and feel that what they are doing matters.

**1. Ask them.** Explain exactly what you need, by when, and why. Explaining the bigger picture lets others see how their contributions will matter and provides the context needed to make better decisions about how to accomplish tasks.

**2. Involve them.** Ask them what it will take for them to get involved. Everyone is different, and what may be highly motivating for one person could be agony for someone else. Find out what motivates them and tailor your expectations accordingly.

**3. Trust them.** Give them the autonomy to decide how the work will be done, within certain parameters. Give them ownership, but make sure they know you are available for questions.

**4. Inspire them.** Explain why you asked them, as opposed to someone else. List the knowledge, skills, and experiences that make them perfectly prepared for the task. People will often live up to your expectations, so set high expectations, and let them know you expect success.

**5. Appreciate them.** Thank them sincerely. Praise publicly and share positive feedback with their supervisors, as well as with other teammates.

**6. Reward them.** Provide tangible evidence of your gratitude. Send a handwritten note thanking them for the extra effort on a large project. Certificates, gift cards, plaques, public recognition, another interesting project, and more responsibility are all ways to reward people. Even if you have only a tiny budget, you can do something to show your gratitude.

**7. Challenge them.** Start a friendly competition among teams or departments, ideally one in which everyone can win or learn something. Keep the competition among teams, not individuals, to prevent it from becoming too contentious.

**8. Celebrate them.** Celebrate success as a team, but recognize each person's contribution. If it's a really large project, break it down into smaller goals that can be celebrated.

**9. Inform them.** Even after their contribution is complete, let them know how the project turned out. Especially if they aren't part of the project from

beginning to end, make sure they know that their contribution matters for its ultimate success.

If you want to accomplish big things, you need cooperation from others. Motivating others will help bring your vision to life.

### **How to motivate and inspire your people in difficult times**

Tell people exactly what you want them to do.

Motivation is all about getting people to take action, so don't be vague. Avoid generalities like, "I want everyone to do their best." Say, instead, "I need you to come in over the weekend so we can get this project done on time."

#### **1. Limit the amount of time or effort that you're asking for.**

It's easier to ask people to work late work one night or even every night for a week than to expect them to work late indefinitely. Set an end date.

#### **2. Share in the sacrifice.**

Leaders don't ask people to do what they aren't willing to do. Don't tell your people to work over the weekend if you've got plans for a spa day. Roll up your sleeves and share the load.

#### **3. Appeal to their emotions.**

Fear focuses people's attention and can be an effective motivator. ("If we don't get this done right now, we'll all lose our jobs.") But if you keep resorting to fear, you'll end up de-motivating people. People are also motivated by and prefer to be motivated by-positive emotions like excitement, pride, a sense of belonging, and the thrill of achievement.

#### **4. Give people multiple reasons for doing what you want them to do.**

You can give your reason or the organization's reason for requesting the action. "If we don't get this project completed on schedule, we'll lose the contract." But the best reason of all is always personal. It would be nice if you could give your people extra days off or even a bonus. Or, you may talk about something as intangible as the camaraderie that comes from having achieved something important together. But things being what they are these days, the best you may be able to offer is the hope that no one will lose a job.

Inspiration, on the other hand, involves changing the way people think and feel about themselves so that they want to take positive actions. It taps into people's values and desires.

Commencement speakers – the best ones, at least – inspire their audiences. They talk about the challenges the graduates will face, either personally or collectively, and the possibilities of making a difference. Inspiration appeals to the best aspirations of people, and its underlying, the often unspoken message is “You can become what you want to be.” No reward is promised, other than the reward that comes from the sense of personal satisfaction.

As a leader, anytime you talk about values, identity (either the corporate identity or each person's identity), and long-term goals, your intent – whether you know it or not – is to inspire.

**Use these 5 steps to inspire your people:**

**1. Be the change you want to inspire.**

Your reputation, your character, and your behaviour will inspire people more than anything else. The only way to call the best out of others is to expect the best from yourself.

**2. Tell a story.**

Stories don't tell people what to do. They engage people's imaginations and emotions. They show people what they're capable of becoming or of doing.

**3. Appeal to people's value system.**

Ask them to act in a way that is consistent with the values they profess.

**4. Trust people.**

When you're inspiring people, you're not telling them exactly what to do or giving them precise directions. You're empowering them to be their best, trusting that they will then do the right thing. And the right thing they do may not be what you were expecting; it may be something beyond your wildest expectations.

**5. Challenge them.**

People aren't inspired by doing the ordinary or by meeting expectations. They're inspired by the exertion, creativity, and sacrifice needed to exceed what they thought possible.

Motivation and inspiration are not the sole provinces of professional speakers and preachers. They're tools leaders use all the time – in one-on-one conversations, in meetings and in formal presentations – to bring out the best in their people. It's just a matter of knowing the right time and the right situation.

When there's an immediate, short-term and specific goal that you want your people to achieve, you need to motivate them. When you want to shape people's identity and their long-term aspirations and commitments, you need to inspire them.

**References:**

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