

A Useful Guide to Motivating



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ISBN 978-1-906460-50-1

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Published by Pansophix Online
Sterling House, 10 Wheatcroft Business Park,
Landmere Lane, Edwalton, Nottingham, NG12 4DG

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This edition published April 2013 (a)

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ISBN 978-1-906460-50-1

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There are a number of checklists and templates for you to complete on your computer - just click [here](#) to download the MS Word Toolkit.

Introduction

This Useful Guide is all about Motivation. A word we are all familiar with, but do we fully understand what motivation is and how it works? Why for example are some people more motivated than others? Why is it sometimes difficult to motivate ourselves or others to do something? Why do some things motivate us while others don't? These are just some of the many questions that come to mind when we think about motivation. By reading through this Useful Guide and working through the exercises and checklists, you should find answers to these and other questions relating to motivation. In this Useful Guide we will explore the following:

- What is motivation?
- The importance and benefits of motivation in your personal and professional life.
- How motivated are you?
- What things motivate people?
- What things motivate you?
- Strategies and tools to motivate yourself and help others to become motivated.

The Useful Guide focuses primarily on motivation in the workplace, but you will find that all the information and exercises are equally valuable to your personal life too. So whether you want to motivate yourself to get rid of those extra pounds around your waistline, have a clear out and get organised, sign up for a course of study to enhance your career prospects, or improve performance, motivation levels and productivity within your team, you will find something in this Useful Guide which will help you to achieve this.

After reading through this Useful Guide and working through the checklists and exercises you will ...

- Have a clear understanding of motivation and its benefits to individuals and organisations
- Be aware of the things which motivate people
- Have a greater awareness of the things which motivate you as an individual to achieve your goals, both personal and professional
- Know what action to take to increase your own motivation
- Have knowledge of different strategies and tools which you can use to help others become more motivated

Chapter 1 - Understanding Motivation

So what is motivation? In short, motivation is the force or the will-power which drives people to do things, to take action, to achieve goals, to make changes, etc. This force may be a need, a desire or an emotion and we will explore this later on in the Useful Guide.

If you lack motivation it can be hard and sometimes impossible to do something. You may procrastinate for ages to avoid doing it, undertake the task with reluctance, do it very poorly or avoid doing it completely.

You may find that you have a lot of motivation for some things but not for others, and dealing with the latter can sometimes be extremely difficult, especially when the task cannot be avoided or has to be done to a specific deadline, as in John's case below.

John's Case

John was a full time secondary school teacher who enjoyed teaching his subject and interacting with his pupils, but he disliked the increasing amount of paper work associated with his job. He saw it as time consuming, pointless and bureaucratic, and as a result found it very hard to motivate himself to complete this aspect of the job and to do it well. He was often scolded by his Head of Department for the late submission of his paperwork and his lack of attention to detail.

Whilst it is not uncommon for people to have different levels of motivation for different things, some people are generally more highly motivated than others.

Carry out the following exercise on the next page to assess your general motivation levels.

How Motivated are You?

Read through each of the statements in the table on the next page and give yourself ...

- 2 points if you agree with the statement
- 1 point if you partly agree with the statement but feel there is room for improvement
- 0 points if you disagree with the statement

Click [here](#) if you prefer to do the questionnaire online.

For Best Quiz Local Results: The following table has 11 rows and 9 columns. In row 2 to 11 the right hand column cells are blank.

	Statement	Score
1	When I wake up in the morning I feel generally positive about the day and some of the things I want to do.	
2	I regularly set and review goals in my personal life and/or at work.	
3	If I am involved in tasks/activities with other people, I like to participate fully and make a useful contribution.	
4	I have lots of staying power and do not give up easily if I come across a problem.	
5	I believe there is a solution to every problem and will explore different possibilities and, if necessary, seek external expertise in order to solve the problem.	
6	I have the confidence to step outside my comfort zone and if necessary take some considered risks in order to achieve something which I think is important or worthwhile.	
7	I believe that learning is a lifelong process, and there are always new things for me to learn.	
8	I am happy to learn from my mistakes in order to improve and get better at what I do.	
9	When I undertake a task I try to focus on the interesting, exciting or worthwhile aspects.	
10	When I undertake any task I always give 100%.	

Scores/Assessment

15- 20 points

You are a highly motivated person with a positive outlook, enthusiasm and lots of tenacity. You put a lot of effort into what you do and you certainly have the willpower to be successful.

Higher levels of motivation are often associated with people who have a more positive attitude to life and are prepared to try things out, make mistakes and put more effort into the things they do.

10 – 14 points

This is still a respectable score and you have a reasonably good level of motivation.

Under 10 points

Your motivation levels are quite low and there is much room for improvement.

If you scored under 15 points, you might find it useful to look at the areas in which you achieved lower scores or scored nothing at all. Are there things you could do to improve your scores in these areas? It might be useful to revisit this exercise after you have read through the rest of the Useful Guide, as you may find some useful ideas further on in the text.

But whatever your score, do bear in mind that even people who are generally highly motivated may not be motivated all the time. We all have our off days, things which don't particularly interest us, and difficult times in our life which may challenge our motivation levels from time to time. Similarly our motivation may be affected by external factors over which we have little control. What is important is that we are able to find ways to regain our motivation when we need to, i.e. in order to undertake certain tasks, achieve goals or simply to feel more positive, creative and productive. If we are unable to motivate ourselves when we need to, then we can become despondent, disillusioned and stagnant, both in our personal and/or professional life.

Alan's Case

Alan was a graduate accountant who started his career with lots of enthusiasm, motivation and ambition to achieve great things professionally. He got on really well with his first boss Pam, who was very knowledgeable and supportive. She gave him opportunities to work on interesting projects which helped to develop his skills, confidence and experience. Pam left at the end of his first year with the company and was replaced by a new manager called Steve. Unfortunately Alan was not comfortable with Steve's management style and personality, and the two of them did not gel particularly well.

Over time Alan started to feel that Steve was overlooking him for interesting work, projects and responsibilities which would have raised his profile and propelled his career. He applied for two higher graded posts in the department and was rejected for both. He started to feel despondent and began to question his own ability, and this affected his confidence, motivation and performance. It also affected his mood at home, and this was picked up and highlighted by his parents and his partner.

After a couple of years in the doldrums, Alan took up martial arts as a leisure activity, and really benefited from the spiritual side of the sport. It uplifted his spirits and helped him to regain the confidence and motivation to get his career back on track. He successfully applied for a higher level accountancy job with another company, and from there moved onwards and upwards.

So Alan regained his motivation through getting involved in martial arts, an activity which lifted his spirits and increased his confidence. Would that work for you? Later in the Useful Guide we will explore different ways to motivate or increase motivation levels, and hopefully you'll find some ideas which will work for you!

Motivation in the Workplace

A lot of importance is placed on motivation in the workplace these days and you often see reference to motivation as a requirement in job adverts and job descriptions. Here are a few examples ...

- **'Motivation and inspiration are essential to communicate the way forward and continue the restaurant's success'** (Job advert for a Chef)
- **'Must have high levels of performance and motivation'** (Job description for Software engineer)
- **'Self motivation and capability to work to tight deadlines'** (Job description for a research fellow)
- **'You need to be a team player, able to motivate others'** (Job advert for Crew Manager for a Fire and Rescue Service)

So why is there this emphasis on motivation in the workplace, and the ability to motivate yourself and others?

In our highly competitive world, organisations are always striving to be better; more effective, more efficient, more productive, more competitive and more profitable. Research and development into different aspects of commerce and industry are constantly looking for ways to achieve this. Both past and recent research into motivation has shown how important it is in the workplace, because it helps to increase efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and achieve targets. Where there is a lack of motivation, it is unlikely that staff will give of their best in terms of quality and quantity of work, and this may hamper productivity and development. If individuals are motivated they usually have an interest in doing something, and will put in more effort, attention and commitment.

Organisations want to employ individuals who are motivated so that they can get on with things and make useful contributions to the company and its development. They want staff who have ideas and/or use their initiative. They are looking for people ...

- who have interest and enthusiasm in the job and the work.
- with energy and tenacity who don't give up easily.

You can see why can't you?

Just imagine employing someone who was the complete opposite of this? They would have to be told what to do all the time, and supervised and managed quite closely.

Earlier in the Useful Guide you did the short exercise 'How Motivated Are You?' This assessed your general motivation levels and hopefully you scored quite well. So now let's have a look at the team you work in or manage and see how motivated the team is.

How motivated is the team you work in or manage?

Read through each of the statements in the table below and score as follows....

- 2 points if you agree with the statement
- 1 point if you partly agree with the statement but feel there is room for improvement
- 0 points if you disagree with the statement

Click [here](#) if you prefer to do the questionnaire online.

	Statement	Score
1	Team members are happy working together.	
2	There is a lot of creativity and ideas within the team.	
3	Team members work together in a co-operative and productive way.	
4	Team members support each other to complete team tasks and goals.	
5	Team members accept responsibility for their work and do not blame others.	

	Statement	Score
6	All team members contribute equally but in different and complimentary ways.	
7	There is very limited absenteeism amongst team members.	
8	The team's output and productivity is high.	
9	The quality of work produced by the team is high.	
10	Tasks are completed by the team on time.	
11	There is no gossip or spreading of rumours amongst team members.	
12	When required team members will put in that extra time or effort to meet deadlines or achieve team goals.	
13	There is a high level of trust amongst team members.	
14	Team members have a positive and respectful relationship with the team leader and/or manager.	

Scores/ Assessment

24 - 28 points

This is a highly motivated team which works well together. There is a high level of trust, respect and co-operation which should help the team achieve its goals.

18 - 24 points

There is a reasonable level of motivation in this team but scope for improvement. The items which scored one point or zero highlight the areas for development, so these will need to be explored in depth to determine the cause and find appropriate solutions.

18 points or less

Motivation levels in this team are quite low and this will affect morale, working relationships and the output and productivity of the team. Look at the items which scored one or zero to identity the problem areas. These will need to be explored in depth to determine the cause and find appropriate solutions.

To help you develop your low scoring statements work through some of the team development activities in [A Useful Guide to Managing Teams](#).

We can see from the points above that teams which lack motivation do not in general perform as well as those that have a high level of motivation, and that is why organisations want motivated individuals, motivated teams and managers who can help to inspire others to raise motivation levels.

So how do managers help others to become motivated?

'They encourage, influence, inspire and stimulate people, providing them with a reason for doing something and doing it well'

The ability to help motivate staff is today high on the list of requirements for most team leader, supervisor and management positions. Interestingly enough, many people holding these positions have had little or no training in how to do this. If you find yourself in this position or you have aspirations to move into management, then you'll find information and ideas in the following sections of this Useful Guide which should help you.

Chapter 2 - What Are The Things Which Motivate People?

In this chapter we will look at the things which motivate people, and you will also have the opportunity to pick out the things which work for you. Again the focus will be on the workplace, but there will also be information which is relevant to motivation in your personal life.

We will begin by looking briefly at 3 of the key classic ideas and theories on motivation, many of which were formulated in the earlier part of the 20th Century, when a significant amount of research was carried out looking at how people feel about work, and what things stimulate or motivate them to produce results. Most of this work was carried out by American social scientists and in this chapter we will focus on the ideas of [Douglas McGregor](#), [Abraham Maslow](#) and [Frederick Herzberg](#).

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y

So let's start off by looking at McGregor's ideas, often referred to as Theory X and Theory Y. He identified two noticeably different sets of assumptions made by managers about their employees, and these affected their style of management. The first set of assumptions known as Theory X, were based on the belief that the average employee is lazy, avoids responsibility and basically dislikes work. Employees work for money to provide security for themselves and their family. Based on these assumptions, the Theory X manager employs a very controlling and authoritative style of management, using coercion, demands and threats.

Theory Y assumptions see employees in a more positive light. They believe that employees like work and they don't have to be coerced or controlled, provided that they understand and believe in what the organisation is trying to achieve. Given the right conditions they will demonstrate interest and commitment to the company, with a willingness to seek out and take on responsibility, and the ability to contribute useful ideas and problem solving skills to grow and develop the organisation. Based on these assumptions the Theory Y manager delegates authority, gives responsibility, involves and engages with staff.

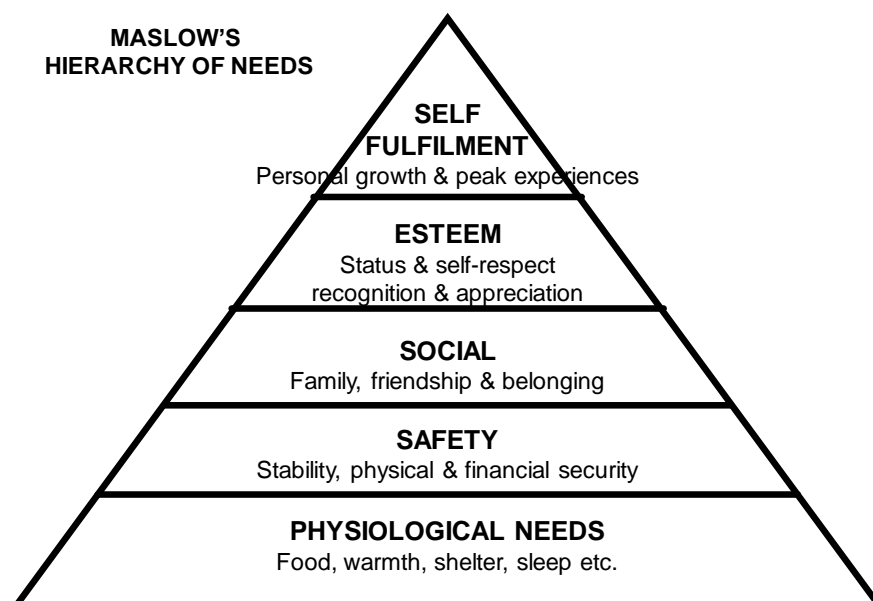
From an employee point of view which of the above assumptions and styles of management would work for you? Which would be most likely to engage, stimulate and motivate you in the workplace and why? Certainly for the majority of people in today's society, Theory Y would be the preferred option as it is more aligned with our expectations in the workplace, and the ability to help motivate and engage us. However, there are probably still some people out

there who would argue that the only way to get employees to deliver, would be to use Theory X management techniques!

Maslow's Hierarchy of Need

Another very well known theory on motivation is Abraham Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs*. Maslow's theory which is illustrated in diagrammatic form below was that people are motivated by need, and that these needs are at different levels on a scale from the most basic to the highest level. He believed that people's needs are satisfied progressively, so that it is like going up a ladder, starting at level 1 and working up to level 5. Level 1 starts with the most basic physiological needs, i.e. having food, drink, warmth, shelter and rest. From an employment perspective this means earning enough money to provide these things for the individual and their family.

Once these basic needs are met, then people are motivated by level 2, the need to gain safety and security. From a work perspective this would include job security and protection of salary. The next level, level 3, relates to our social needs, which would include things like being associated with other people and groups, friendships, social contacts. The working environment provides a social environment, one in which people can interact with each other in undertaking work related tasks, and during rest periods. It is in fact one of the key places where people meet friends, husbands, wives and partners.



The next level of need, level 4, is our need for self esteem, respect, appreciation and recognition from others. In the workplace this could include a wide range of things such as 'thank you' letters and comments from customers, colleagues and bosses, recommendations, pay rises and promotion.

The final and highest level of need, level 5 is called Self Fulfilment, also known as Self Actualisation. This is the need for self fulfilment, realising ones full potential, achieving personal goals and objectives.

According to Maslow's theory, it would be pointless trying to address a need at level 3, if level 2 needs have not been met. So for example, someone facing redundancy because their post is being deleted, is unlikely to have much interest in being part of a select working group developing future projects for the company, or indeed going out and socialising with work colleagues. This person is much more likely to be preoccupied with concerns about job security, and being able to provide for themselves and their family in the immediate future.

Although Maslow's hierarchy of need is one of the most commonly known and studied theories on motivation, some regard his theory as too simplistic, not taking on board all the different variables, individual preferences, expectations, and changes over time in the way we live our lives and organise work. However, whatever view you have on Maslow's theory, it does provide a useful and logical framework to explore different needs that people have, and the relationship between these needs and what motivates us.

Herzberg's Motivation & Hygiene Factors

Hertzberg's exploration of motivation concentrated on the things which affected our attitude towards work, and made us feel satisfied or dissatisfied. His research concluded that certain things: *motivators* or *satisfiers*, make us feel satisfied about work, and certain things: *dissatisfiers* or *hygiene factors* made us feel dissatisfied.

The main motivators or satisfiers are factors related to the content of the work and include:

Motivators/Satisfiers

- Achievement
- Recognition
- Work itself
- Advancement

The main dissatisfiers/hygiene factors are the external, contextual and environmental factors which include:

Hygiene Factors/ Dissatisfiers

- Company policy and administrative processes
- Supervision
- Working conditions
- Salary
- Security
- Relationship with colleagues and managers
- Status
- Personal life and the way in which work impacts on this

Herzberg concluded that the motivators were the things which can bring about positive satisfaction, whilst the hygiene factors prevented dissatisfaction but did not create positive satisfaction. So when hygiene factors are in keeping with the individual's requirements, they help to smooth things along, create a healthy environment, but are often taken for granted. If the hygiene factors are not in line with the individual's requirements then they can cause dissatisfaction and upset the individual's sense of well being.

Herzberg's theory is useful in helping us to understand the various factors which help to create a positive working environment in which staff feel content, valued and motivated. The distinction between motivators and hygiene factors is also helpful in recognising the difference between things which satisfy and motivate us, and those which do not positively motivate us, but whose absence or poor quality can cause dissatisfaction. It is helpful in indicating where to place the emphasis and effort when addressing motivation issues, but it also highlights the importance of paying attention to both sets of factors.

If the hygiene factors are in order, this will help increase the impact of the motivators, making them more effective and impactful as described in Jan's case below. Similarly if the hygiene factors are not conducive, then they may have a limiting impact on the potential motivators as in Mark's case below.

Jan's Case

Jan worked in the customer service section of a large retail company and was quite happy in the company but didn't really enjoy the job itself. She found it rather monotonous and unchallenging. She was content with her work colleagues, had a good relationship with managers, and found that the working

hours and flexibility provided by the company fitted in with her personal requirements and domestic responsibilities. Despite the positive aspects of working for the company, and her undisputed ability to carry out her duties effectively, her increasing lack of motivation led to a decline in the quality of her work. She was starting to feel despondent and thought the best thing to do was to look for another job. So she started to look for jobs at a similar level and grade, but which offered more of a challenge and variety. Around the same time her manager invited her to a 1:1 meeting to discuss ways to improve her performance.

After a lengthy meeting with her manager, a number of actions were agreed. This included Jan taking part in a small action learning team to look at improving the speed and accuracy of customer enquiries, taking responsibility for collecting and analysing the weekly statistics for the small team in which she worked, and undertaking a short supervisory skills course. Within a relatively short space of time Jan's interest and motivation started to increase. This increase together with the fact that she was already happy with the environmental factors, resulted in improved performance and increased contentment at work

Mark's Case

Mark worked in computer software and wanted to make a successful career for himself, but he became unhappy with both the job content and the environmental factors of his position when he was moved to a new department. Initially he tried to ignore the dissatisfying environmental aspects, i.e. colleagues who didn't share his work ethic and spent too much time gossiping, ineffective management, and bureaucratic policies and procedures which hampered development. As time went on, these things started to get him down and he lost his motivation for the job, particularly when changes to his job role meant less responsibility and scope for growth. After discussing his dissatisfaction with his line manager, he was offered a secondment opportunity in the same department, which appeared to offer all the things he wanted from his job, i.e. a higher profile, more responsibility, autonomy, creativity and potential for advancement. He was delighted with the offer, took up the secondment straight away, and his motivation levels shot up through the roof. But after about 2 months his motivation levels started to sink. He became frustrated with the environmental factors which hadn't changed, and which were starting to hamper the scope and opportunities within his secondment. He decided it was time to look for another job in another company, and 3 months later he handed in his notice, leaving both the job and the company.

Two criticisms of Herzberg's theory are that it doesn't take on board individual preferences or circumstances, and that it is perhaps less relevant to manual and unskilled workers than to white and blue collar workers. Not everyone seeks the motivators e.g. responsibility, growth, recognition, from their employment. They may get these elsewhere or they may be of no importance to them. There are many people who just want to do their job, get paid the going rate, and then go away and get on with their personal life. Perhaps for these people, dissatisfaction with the hygiene factors will have more impact on how they perform and feel about work, than the presence or absence of the motivators.

Another point worth highlighting about Herzberg's theory is that salary/pay, is listed as one of the hygiene factors and not one of the motivators. People are often surprised by this because most of us would probably be delighted to receive an increase in our salary, which would suggest that money would be a motivator. But, Herzberg's theory considers money to be a dissatisfier. If we feel that we are not being paid enough for the job we do, or if we find out that someone else is getting more money than us for doing the same job, then we are likely to become dissatisfied.

High levels of pay can certainly attract people to a job. But the motivational force of money can be limited if other important aspects of the job are not in place, and this continues for an extended period. We can probably all put up with differing levels of negativity in a job where the pay is extremely high. But many of us would probably only be able to tolerate this for a period of time before we said; *"Enough is enough, I'm going to have to get another job, I can't take it anymore, it's just not worth the money!"* But we do have to remember that we are all different, and for some people whose circumstances are different, money may be paramount. They may tolerate the negative aspects of the job because they need the money. So money would be their reason for staying, but would it be their motivator?

Research into what motivates us as human beings is still ongoing, and most of the work that has been carried out to date has approached the subject in different ways. It is a complex subject with no one conclusive answer or solution, since we are all unique individuals with different experiences, needs, wants, expectations. Because of these differences we are all affected in different ways by external and environmental factors, hence the saying "One man's meat is another man's poison".

Another point to bear in mind when we are looking at motivation is that there are two categories of things which can motivate us, and these are often referred to as; *Towards Motivation* and *Away From Motivation* .

Towards Motivation

Towards motivation is all about wanting to move towards something. There is a strong desire to do, attain, gain, accomplish or get something, and that is what drives and motivates the individual to do something. Let's look at a couple of examples of towards motivation:

Mel is getting married in 4 months time to John, the love of her life. She wants to lose 2 stone in weight so that she can fit into her mother's beautiful wedding dress and look gorgeous on the day. In order to do this so she joined a gym and changed her diet to reduce her fat and carbohydrate intake.

The owner of Hepton Town football team wants his team to be the best in the League, so he replaced the existing team manager who hadn't been terribly effective, and also invested more money into the club to buy some top players.

Away from Motivation

Away from motivation is often connected to fear or dislike. There is a strong desire to prevent or avoid something from happening, and that drives or motivates the individual into doing something. Let's look at a couple of examples of away from motivation:

Mel is getting married in 4 months time to John, the love of her life. She wants to lose 2 stone in weight so that when she wears her mother's beautiful wedding dress people won't say that it looks too tight and that she has put on loads of weight.

The owner of Hepton Town football team doesn't want his team to be at the bottom of the league table and regarded as losers, so he replaced the team manager who hadn't been very effective, and invested more money in the club to buy a couple of top players.

Both of these categories of motivation are powerful and useful in helping us to take action and achieve things. As we have seen in the examples above, they can both achieve the same results. It is sometimes argued that **motivation towards** is a more positive approach because it is something that you want, and may therefore have the edge in being slightly more powerful or impactful as a motivator. **Away from motivation** is sometimes less immediate, and we may

wait until the threat becomes more real before we are motivated into action. But again it depends on the individuals, their circumstances, needs, requirements etc. Wanting to avoid something at all costs can be extremely powerful, particularly if it would result in a significant loss of money, pride, possessions, power, prestige, etc, and these things are important to you.

The research which has been carried out on motivation over the years has identified a number of things which can affect motivation levels to differing degrees, either in a positive way (increasing our motivation levels), or in a negative way (making us feel demotivated by their insufficiency or absence). We can use this information in different ways to identify the factors which are specifically applicable to ourselves and /or others.

The checklist on the next page will to help you to identify the things which affect your motivation levels in the workplace. If you are a manager, you might find it useful to ask individual staff members to work through the checklist, after you have worked through the exercise yourself, of course!

What Things Affect Your Motivation In The Workplace?

Print out this page and the next page and then read through the items in the table and score each item according to how important it is to you in your job and working environment, i.e. to what extent does it affects your interest, performance and commitment to the job. Use the sliding scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being low and 5 being high.

No	Item	Score	Score
1	I need to get a sense of achievement from the work I do.		
2	I need to feel that the work I do is making a useful contribution in some way.		
3	It is important for me to get recognition and reward for my achievements at work.		
4	It is important that I am given support and encouragement in my work.		
5	I like to be given responsibility for my own work, e.g. take decisions, set goals.		
6	I need to enjoy the work that I do.		

7	I like to be good at my job.		
8	My job needs to have variety.		
9	My work needs to provide me with stimulation and challenge.		
10	My job needs to provide me with the opportunity to grow and develop.		
11	My job needs to provide me with the opportunity to improve my career prospects.		
12	My job needs to involve working with others.		
13	It is important that I have a good working relationship with my manager.		
14	It is important that I have a good working relationship with my colleagues.		
15	It is important for me to have opportunities to socialise with colleagues during and /or after work.		
16	A good work/life balance is really important to me.		
17	Good working conditions are very important to me.		
18	It is important that I have a 'good' salary appropriate to the job I do.		
19	A job with status is really important to me.		

Now you have completed the exercise, what conclusions can you draw?

The items which you have scored a 4 or 5 are obviously the ones which are of most importance to you in the workplace, and are therefore likely to have the most impact on how you think, feel and perform in the workplace. The ones you gave a lower score may also impact on you in the workplace, but probably to a lesser extent.

Now go through the above items again and put a score in the far right column – to represent the extent to which each item is provided in your current job and workplace. Again use the same scoring system with 1 being low and 5 being

high. These scores should indicate the extent to which the things which are important to you are being provided in your current job/ workplace.

If you feel generally satisfied and motivated in your job then it is likely that the items you gave a 4 or 5 to in the left hand column, have also scored a 4 or 5 in the right hand column. If your scores in the right hand column are lower than the left hand column, this suggests that there may be some dissatisfaction regarding this item, and this may be affecting the way you think, feel and perform at work. Let's look at Rick's situation below.

Rick's Case

Rick had been in his job for 5 years. He was basically content in his job but started to feel that he was losing his motivation and getting in to a bit of a rut, and he couldn't understand why because he had always been a bit of a go getter. He had certainly started out with a high ambition to succeed, and he actively sought out opportunities to facilitate this. He liked the work he did and the working environment, and he got on well with his boss and work colleagues. He was well liked by everyone and he often socialised with colleagues outside of working hours. His boss was very laid back and accommodating, so the odd late arrival at work after lunch or on a Monday morning was never a problem.

When Rick undertook this exercise he found that he gave a high score of 4 or 5 to most of the items on the above list, because he felt they were all quite important to him. When he did the exercise a second time to complete the column on the far right, he found he had 4s and 5 for most items, but noticed for some of the items i.e. 9,10,11,19 he had scored them very low with a 1 or 2.

The exercise had been a bit of a wake up call for Rick, and it helped him to understand why he was losing his get up and go. He enjoyed the work involved in his job, but it no longer gave him the challenge, nor did it offer him the opportunities for career progression, that it had 5 years ago when he started with the company. Rick had ignored this unfulfilled need for a while because he liked the company he worked for, and valued the relationships he had with his line manager and colleagues. He realised that he had a tough decision to make. He could either continue in his contented rut, or apply for a job with another company which offered him the challenge he sought and regain his motivation and ambition to succeed.

Later on in this Useful Guide we will look at some strategies to help you address things which are having a negative effect on your motivation levels at work, as highlighted in the exercise above.

What Things Affect Your Motivation In Your Personal Life?

In the previous section, we looked at the things which affect motivation in the workplace, but what things affect motivation levels in our personal life?

How many times have you thought I need or I'd like to do this or that, but never found the will or taken the action to achieve it? Write down a list of the things you would really like to do, or personal goals you would like to achieve, but haven't yet found the motivation to do so. We are not referring to great feats of achievement such as climbing Everest or sailing round the world on your own, though include these by all means if they are relevant to you. We are really looking at the more every day things which would make your life easier, more organised, happier, or help you to achieve your true potential. The list of common personal goals below might help you.

If you haven't got a set of personal goals [A Useful Guide to Goal Setting](#) may be helpful.

My Personal Goals/Things I would like to do or achieve

- I would like to lose some weight.
- I would like to have a clear out and organise my room /house/ study.
- I would like to stop smoking.

- I would like to write a short story/or a book.
- I would like to learn a musical instrument.
- I would like to have a healthier life style.
- I would like to undertake a course of study.
- I would like to learn a new skill.
- I'd like to organise my time better.
- I'd like to be more confident.
- I'd like to stop watching so much TV.
- I'd like to expand my social life.

Now you have identified some of the things you would like to do or achieve in your personal life, why haven't you found the motivation to do them? You might find some answers to this question in the list below. This list highlights some of the things which can impact negatively on our motivation to get things done or achieve personal goals ...

1. I'm afraid of failure.
2. I don't know how to go about it.
3. It's not really that important, I can get by without it.
4. I haven't got the time.
5. I've got other priorities.
6. I need some support.
7. Others keep saying that I'll never do it.
8. I'll do it after I've done this or that.
9. It's too difficult.
10. I just can't do it.
11. I've tried before and not managed to do it.
12. I just can't be bothered.
13. Low self esteem.

In order to understand and overcome your lack of motivation to achieve certain things in your personal life, you need to identify what factors are holding you back and having a negative impact on your motivation. Why don't you start by trying the following exercise which focuses on just 3 key personal goals or tasks which you have not been able to motivate yourself to achieve.

Begin by identifying and writing down in the space below your 3 key personal goals or tasks.

Personal Goal/Task 1

Personal Goal/Task 2

Personal Goal/Task 3

Now complete the form on the next page by taking each of your personal goals/task, one at a time, and working through the list of items in the right hand column. Tick the items which are relevant for each of the personal goals you have identified.

For example, you might find that your motivation to lose 2 stones in weight is affected by the fact that you've tried to lose the weight a couple of times before and failed, (i.e. items 1 and 12 from the above list). On the other hand, your lack of motivation to undertake a course of study which would help to progress your career, might be affected by lack of time and other priorities, (i.e. items 4 and 5 from the above list).

Feel free to add any additional items/factors relevant to you that are not included in the list.

For Best Use, Read Instructions. The table has 4 columns and 17 rows. The cells in rows 15, 16 and 17 are blank. The cells in rows 2 to 14 in columns 1, 2 and 3 are blank.

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Item/Factor
			I'm afraid of failure.
			I don't know how to go about it.
			It's not really that important, I can get by without it.
			I haven't got the time.
			I've got other priorities.
			I need some support.
			Others keep saying that I'll never do it.
			I'll do it after I've done this or that.
			It's too difficult.
			I just can't do it.
			I've tried before and not managed to do it.
			I just can't be bothered.
			Low self esteem.

The three blank rows above are for you to include any additional items relevant to you, but which have not been included in the list above.

So what conclusions can you draw from the above exercise?

Fear of failure, lack of support, not knowing how to go about doing something, self doubt and negative thinking are some of the common factors which affect our motivation levels. We then often find excuses and procrastinate which exacerbates the problem. There may of course be practical obstacles which prevent us from doing something, but we need to distinguish between practical

problems which cannot be overcome, those which can be overcome, and those which we use as excuses.

You will find some useful ideas and suggestions to help you deal with these blocks and challenges to motivating yourself in the following two chapters. These focus on ways to increase motivation levels in both the workplace and in your personal life.

Now let's have a look at some of the things which affect our motivation levels to achieve things in our personal life in a positive way. Write down a list of things which you found the motivation to do or achieve in your personal life. You might find it helpful to revisit the list on page 23 and 24.

Things I found the motivation to do or achieve

What was it that motivated you to do or achieve these things? Use the list below which is divided into *motivation towards* and *motivation away from* items to help you.

Item	✓
Motivation Towards	
I wanted to prove something to myself.	
I wanted to prove something to others.	
The end result would improve the quality of my life.	
The end result would make me feel good about myself.	
The end result would improve the way others felt about me.	
I would gain something that I really wanted, e.g. money, status.	
I wanted to help others or improve things for them.	
I wanted to be the best.	

Motivation away	
I didn't want to disappoint others.	
I didn't want to be a failure.	
I didn't want to stay in a rut.	
I didn't want to be unsuccessful.	
I didn't want to be the only person who hadn't got or done....	
Not doing it was worse than doing it.	
I didn't want to be at the bottom of the pile.	

So what conclusions can you draw about the things which motivated you to take action or achieve in your personal life? Did you find you had more ticks under the *motivation towards* or *motivation away* from items? Could any of the things which helped to motivate you in the past help to motivate you again in the future?

In the next couple of chapters we will look at things you can do to motivate yourself in both your work and personal life. We will also look at the things we can do to help or inspire others to become motivated. Whilst this will obviously be useful for those of you who manage or supervise staff, it will also be useful to those who want to help or inspire others to become motivated, e.g. a partner, friend or a colleague, who might just need a bit of help and support in this area.

Chapter 3 - How to Motivate Yourself in the Workplace

In this chapter we will focus on how to motivate yourself in the workplace. The following chapter will focus on improving your general outlook and motivation levels, and this will be particularly relevant to your personal life.

Motivating Yourself in the Workplace

Whether you are generally quite a motivated person or not, you may find yourself demotivated or lacking in motivation at some point in our working life, as nothing stays the same. You may have been really happy and motivated in your job and with your employer for a number of years, only to find that this changes dramatically when new colleagues, management, or ways of working are introduced. Similarly, relationship or family problems could occur which might impact negatively on your mood and performance in the workplace.

We have already explored many of the things which can impact on our motivation levels, and these may be internal factors, external factors, or a combination of both. When people find themselves demotivated or lacking in motivation in the workplace, it often affects them in the following ways ...

- Negativity in mood and outlook.
- Changes in levels of performance and /or productivity.
- Upset or conflict with colleagues and /or manager.
- Frustration, irritation or impatience with customers.
- Frequent or long term absences from work.
- Seeking alternative employment and leaving the organisation.

Unless the motivation issue is picked up and addressed fairly early on, it may manifest itself through errors, mistakes or accidents in the workplace, poor quality of work produced or reduction in output. It not only affects the individual, but can also have a negative effect on colleagues, the performance of teams due to lack of co-operation and commitment from all members, and on customer relations and the retention of clients and customers.

From a business perspective, demotivated staff or staff lacking in motivation can have a detrimental effect on the growth and profitability of an organisation.

So whose responsibility is it to ensure that you remain positive and motivated in the workplace?

Is it a shared responsibility between employer and employee, or is it the responsibility of one or the other?

Well, motivated staff are certainly important for the health and prosperity of any organisation, and many of the hygiene factors or things which demotivate us in the workplace, are arguably things which a good employer in the 21st Century should provide for employees, i.e. good working conditions, decent salary, proper supervision etc.

The days when managers used 'the stick' to get employees to do things are in the main behind us, along with the theory X style of management which is now seen as outdated. Employees in the 21st Century expect to be managed in a fair, respectful and inclusive way. However, employees also need to take some responsibility for how they think, feel and perform at work. It's not all down to the employer. Employees are after all paid a salary to do a specific job to a certain standard, and they need to fulfil their part of the bargain. At the same time, being positive and motivated about your job and place of work has got to be in your interest too.

How would you rather be at work?

1. *Bored, miserable, negative and unproductive*

or

2. *Busy, happy, positive and productive*

I know which one I would prefer. And if by your own efforts you could move from 1 to 2 (above), would that not be preferable to doing nothing because you felt it was your employer's responsibility not yours?

So let's now focus on what you can do to improve your motivation levels at work. If you find yourself demotivated or lacking in motivation you should first of all spend a bit of time working out why you are feeling this way. Only then can you start to work out how to address the problem.

In this chapter we will look at strategies to overcome some of the common problems/issues which affect motivation levels in the workplace. Some of these will be external factors, i.e. things which are not of your making and over which you may have limited control, whilst others will be internal factors, i.e. things which are within yourself or over which you have some control. But do bear in mind that although external factors may be out of your direct control, you do have control over how you react or respond to them. You can do this in a positive way to maintain or boost your motivation, or in a negative way to have the opposite effect.

Problems and possible solutions

Problem 1 - Poor relationships with colleagues

Possible Solutions

If you have been in employment for a number of years you may have experienced this. It may be that good relationships turned sour because of a misunderstanding or something which you or another person said or did. It may be that you have good relationships with a number of colleagues but a difficult relationship with the odd one or two people. Or it could be that you have never been able to relate to your colleagues or welcomed into the team, and so things have always been strained or difficult. So why would this impact on your motivation levels at work? Well most of us need some kind of interaction with others at work, for both social reasons and for a sense of worth and belonging. Similarly most jobs involve work or co-operation with other individuals and/or teams within the organisation. Most people do not work in complete isolation.

So how do we go about trying to address this problem? Well here are some possible solutions for you to consider. But before you do, remember to sit down and try to work out the reason for the problem. Do this in an honest and objective way. Step back and look at your own behaviour too. In what way might you have contributed to the problem, even if this was unintentional? The other thing to consider is that even if you have tried to address this, or any other problem for that matter, before and it hasn't worked, don't give up, try a different approach until you find something that works.

- Speak to your colleagues, either individually or as a team. Let them know that you would like to look at ways to build more positive working relationships with them. Ask for their ideas and/or suggest some things of your own. Don't blame anyone for the situation and be prepared to accept some responsibility.
- Speak to your line manager or HR officer about the problem and ask for their help in resolving things. If you want them to treat your request confidentially, then let them know.
- Be supportive to colleagues but don't be ingratiating! Offer to help them out with something where you can. Let them see that you are making an effort and trying to improve things.
- Try and organise a social activity which you think most people would find enjoyable, e.g. going for lunch, a meal, bowling session or other team activity after work. If you are celebrating something e.g. a birthday,

winning an event or passing an exam, bring a cake or some chocolates into work and invite colleagues to share in your celebration.

Problem 2 - Poor relationships with manager/s

Possible solutions

Try to identify the reasons for this poor relationship with your manager by considering some of the following questions:

Have you always had a poor relationship with your manager?

If not, when and why did things change?

What is the nature of the problem? Is it about lack of support, lack of communication, being overlooked for opportunities, unfair allocation of duties?

- Arrange to have a 1:1 meeting with your manager to discuss your concerns and ways in which you can develop a more productive relationship.
- Talk about the problem in confidence with trusted colleagues or friends to get their advice and suggestions.
- Speak to HR or a more senior manager and ask for their help in resolving the problem.
- Try to be more open and communicative with your manager.

Problem 3 -The work is monotonous and boring

Possible solutions

Has the work always been monotonous and boring or has it become that way? Why is that? Is it because the work or way of working has changed, have you just outgrown it or are other problems outside of work preventing you from concentrating on and enjoying your work?

- Speak to your manager and let him or her know how you feel. Ask if there are opportunities to take on new and more interesting pieces of work or projects.
- Perhaps you could suggest and volunteer to set up a small project or scheme which would benefit the work of your team or company, e.g. something which would increase sales, save time or improve quality. Of course this is likely to require more of your time, but it would give you something interesting to do and might also improve your career prospects too.

- If problems outside of work are affecting the way you feel about work, then try to get help from professionals, e.g. your company's employees assistance scheme, the staff welfare service, the trade union, or supportive friends.
- Consider whether it is time for you to move on by applying for a secondment, transfer, or a new job.

Problem 4 - There is a lack of reward or recognition for the work you do

Possible solutions

Putting in effort and hard work but getting no recognition or reward can be disheartening for many of us. Sometime a verbal or written thank you will suffice, but in other situations we would might want or expect to have monetary rewards, eg. an honorarium, salary increase or bonus.

- Let your manager know that you would welcome some recognition for your efforts and achievements. Some managers need to be reminded about this.
- If it is the norm in your organisation to pay additional money for additional work then try and negotiate this.
- Try and get the recognition yourself by promoting what you have done in appropriate situations. Don't hide you light under a bushel. Use it to promote yourself and further your career prospects.

Problem 5 - Limited opportunities for development and promotion within the job and/or company

Possible solutions

This is an increasing problem in times of recession when job and promotion opportunities are limited. You might become frustrated and/or bored by the desire to move on and progress, but the lack of opportunity to do this.

- Look for opportunities to set up and develop new initiatives and schemes which will provide you with a challenge, and enable you to develop new skills or enhance your career profile, whilst simultaneously benefitting the company.
- Seek out and let others know that you are looking for a secondment, transfer, or new job opportunities within the company.

- If opportunities do not exist within the company then be prepared to look outside. Sign up with appropriate employment agencies to boost your job search and send speculative letters to companies who offer the opportunities you are looking for.
- You will find other useful ideas to address this problem in [A Useful Guide to Career Development](#).

Problem 6 -The working environment and conditions are poor

Possible Solutions

Try to identify what exactly the problem is. What aspects of the working environment and conditions are dissatisfactory?

- Speak to your manager and let him or her know how you feel. Discuss possible solutions.
- Talk to your colleagues. Do they share your views?
- Is there something which you and your colleagues could do collectively to improve things?
- It might be useful to raise your concerns with the Trade Union and get their help and support.

Problem 7 - No job security

Possible Solutions

The days of a 'job for life' have long gone, and no one has ultimate job security anymore. It's now just a fact of life. However, we do need to have a certain amount of security about the job we are in, i.e. that our job and/or the company we work for will continue for the next year or 2 years or 5 years etc. If there are imminent threats to our job or the survival of the company we work for, then we are likely to feel anxious or stressed and this negativity will affect our motivation levels.

In these situations there is often little we can do to alter things because it is outside our control, unless of course the threat to your job is related to your performance at work. In the case of the latter, you should seek help and support to improve your performance to hold on to your job, but where the situation is outside your control, you could try the following:

- Make a note of all the positive experiences, skills and knowledge you have gained from your job and working for the company.

- Whilst still in your job, look for opportunities to improve your skills, knowledge and experience to help you find alternative employment, e.g. take the opportunity to go on training courses, or volunteer for short term projects.
- Start searching for your next post whilst you are in your current post. It is always easier to find a job when you already have one!
- Stay positive and believe in your own strengths and abilities.

Problem 8 - Unhappy with the company's policies and procedures

Possible Solutions

There is not a great deal you can do to solve this problem other than go through the company's appropriate procedures to register your concerns. Make your concerns known to others as it may be more effective to raise concerns collectively with colleagues, or through a staff association or union.

If you are strongly opposed to the company's policies and procedures, you may come to the conclusion that working for the company is not for you, and that you would be happier working for a different organisation. But remember that the grass is not always greener on the other side, so think wisely and do some research before moving on. Sometimes we have to accept certain policies and ways of doing things in the workplace which we don't like, but this depends on the extent to which they clash with our personal values and beliefs or cause us to feel compromised, uncomfortable or unhappy.

Problem 9 - Unable to achieve work /life balance

Possible Solutions

There are different reasons why some people are unable to achieve a good work life balance, and if this is a problem for you, you need to identify the reason for your problem in order to find the right solution. For some people it may be the excessive demands of the job which are eating into their personal life. For others it might be poor time management and organisation skills, excessive demands at home, lack of support and help, inability to delegate or unwillingness to let go.

If your problem is one of the above here are a few things you could try ...

- Speak to your manager or HR about the demands of the job and try to secure some extra help or support to relieve your load, or manage your time and workload more effectively.

- Go on a time management course, or work through [A Useful Guide to Time Management](#), and then put into practice what you have learned.
- Find ways to get extra help and support with your domestic responsibilities. Let your family and friends know you need their help and support.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. There is no shame in it and we all need help from others from time to time.
- Learn to let go of responsibilities you don't need to take on.
- Learn how to delegate tasks, both personal and professional.
- Don't be a martyr.

You may find working through [A Useful Guide to Work Life Balance](#) helpful.

Problem 10 - Personal problems having a negative effect on your motivation and performance at work.

Possible Solutions

When we go to work, we may sometimes have personal issues or worries which occupy our thoughts from time to time during the day, but if we become pre occupied with these concerns, and they begin to impact negatively on our outlook and performance at work, we've got a problem. Some people have no difficulty separating their personal and professional life. They are able to switch off and on as they move from one setting to another. But other people have more difficulty with this, particularly if the concern is of a serious nature, or if it affects their well being or the well being of people they love. The type of personal problems we are referring to are wide ranging and might include things like sickness/ill health, relationship or marital problems, financial issues, bullying and harassment, etc.

The best way to deal with this problem is first of all to acknowledge that there is a problem and then talk to someone about it, whether it's a friend, family member, work colleague, line manager, HR manager or the organisation's confidential counselling service. 'A problem shared is a problem halved', can often be relevant in this type of situations. Not only will it help you to understand the problem and look at it objectively, it may also help you to identify solutions and /or further sources of help.

Problem 11 - Lack of belief in yourself and your ability to do the job effectively

Possible Solutions

This is a difficult area and one for which there is probably not a quick fix. The cause of your problem and the remedy might be very different to someone else's, so you have to look at your own particular problem and work with that.

Start by trying to identify why you feel the way you do about yourself and when this feeling started. There is often a catalyst for this type of problem and it would be helpful to identify what the catalyst was. How long have you felt this way about yourself? Has the feeling been triggered by a particular event or person? Was this something at work or in your personal life? Whatever the reason you need to take some control for how you think and feel about yourself, no one else can really do it for you.

Think about some of the things you have achieved and done successfully in your current job, whilst working for the company, and in other positions you have held in the past. This will help to remind you that you are a capable person and have various abilities and skills which are useful in the job you do. Get support and confirmation by talking to friends and colleagues who you respect, and who are aware of your strengths and abilities. Try to look at yourself in an objective way and be honest about your strengths and areas of weakness. What do you need to develop, improve or strengthen, and what are the ways in which you could do this? You might also find it useful to read through the next chapter for some additional ideas.

Problem 12 - General lethargy

Possible Solutions

We can all get a bit lethargic from time to time, but hopefully we snap out of it by finding inspiration from somewhere, something or somebody. Your lethargy might be caused by one or a combination of the problems discussed above. If that is the case read through the accompanying solutions to find some possible strategies to address your lethargy. You might also find it helpful to read through the following section which looks at ways to improve your general outlook and motivation levels.

Chapter 4 - How to Improve Your General Motivation Levels

In this chapter we will look at ways to improve your general outlook and motivation levels. Whilst the focus will be on your personal life, any improvements in your general outlook and motivation levels are likely to have positive repercussions on other aspects of your life, including how you think, feel and behave in the workplace.

So what would you personally gain by improving your general outlook and motivation levels? The list below highlights just some of the ways in which you might benefit ...

- A happier disposition
- Attract more positive people into different aspects of your life
- Increased energy levels
- Become more of a doer than a dreamer
- More motivation to get things done and achieve things
- Reduce stress levels
- Improve your general health and well being

Sounds good doesn't it? And the added bonus is that your increased motivation levels and positivity might influence others in a positive way too, e.g. your children, partner, colleagues, friends, etc.

So let's now have a look at some of the things you personally can do to bring about these changes and improve your general outlook and motivation levels. Read through the list and decide which ones are appropriate and appealing. Then it's over to you to take the action and make the changes happen!

1. Set some personal goals

Write down a list of things you would like to do or achieve in your personal life which would bring you happiness and/or fulfilment, e.g. learning to swim or speak another language, renovating your house, gaining more confidence, time management etc. Start by jotting down everything which comes into your head no matter how unrealistic some of your ideas may appear, as this helps you to be as creative and imaginative as possible. When you have created a long list, work through this list, identify the items which are realistic and achievable, and then put these into order of priority. From your prioritised list, identify 1 or 2 items which will become your personal goals. Now devise a plan for each of

these personal goals, setting out what actions you need to take to achieve them and by when. You will find some useful ideas to help you with this in [A Useful Guide to Goal Setting](#).

Once you have set out your plan of action remember to review your progress, goals and actions on a regular basis, as things may change and your plans may need to be tweaked from time to time. Also make sure that you acknowledge and reward yourself for your achievements along the way, and refer back to them if you come across difficulties or set backs on your journey, to remind yourself of what you already achieved and what is possible.

2. Get inspiration by breaking old routines and coming out of your comfort zone

Give yourself some inspiration and a challenge by breaking out of old routines. We stick to some routines because they are tried, tested and safe, but in some cases we are not even aware of the routines and habits we perpetuate. We are all creatures of habit to a greater or lesser extent, and these habits and routines can sometimes limit our thinking, experiences, motivation etc. Let's break free of these and welcome more inspiration, zest and motivation into our life. Below are a few simple ideas that might work for you or inspire you to break out of routines or habits which you have fallen into ...

- Leave your house earlier in the morning and walk or cycle to work instead of taking the car. Experience the outdoors and use the time to listen to some music or a language tape on your iPod, do some walking meditation, plan your day, or just enjoy the walk. If your journey to work is too far to walk or cycle and you have to take the car, take a different route so that you can see and experience different things.
- If you are on a training course, why not sit in a different seat when you come back from your lunch break. Why you may ask, what's the point? Well you will get to know and work with some different people, and this might help you to see things from a different perspective, learn some new facts and ideas, and give you a different experience from what you had in the morning.
- Go and have lunch or a coffee break in a cafe you have never been into before, rather than stick to the same one.
- Start a conversation with someone you have never spoken to.
- Move the furniture around in your office or home to create a different look and feel.

3. Positive thinking

Are you a glass half full or half empty person? If you are the latter can you change to the former? Is it more advantageous to be one or the other? People who 'always look on the bright side of life', are often happier, more positive and more motivated people. They focus on the benefits, the opportunities and the possibilities, rather than the disadvantages, the blockages and the problems, which preoccupy the glass half empty people. Whilst we need to be realistic about situations or challenges we are faced with, having a positive attitude can help to spur us on and give us the boost we need to keep going in the face of problems and challenges.

For some of us positive thinking is something that is easier said than done. But it is well worth the effort, whether we are trying to think positively about a problem or challenge we are faced with, or whether it is to do with our own image, self esteem or ability. When we focus on the negative we are using up our energy and emotions to make ourselves feel bad or worse than we already feel, so why waste our valuable resources in this way?

So how do you think positively?

We'll start by looking at the concern/issue you are dealing with, and write down a list of all the positives relating to this, i.e. advantages, strengths, possibilities and opportunities. Then write a list of the negatives, i.e. disadvantages, weaknesses, threats, blockages. When you have done this look at your list of negatives and write down a list of actions which would help to eliminate, reduce or weaken the negatives. If you now focus your attention and put your energies into the positive solution focused actions on your list, this should help you to move away from the negative and focus more on the positive.

4. Avoid procrastination

Do we procrastinate because we are lacking in motivation, or does a lack of motivation cause us to procrastinate? Either way, procrastination isn't helpful because it means we are putting off doing something which we need or want to do. So how do we deal with procrastination? Well first of all we need to be clear about what it is we want to do, why we need or want to do it, (i.e. what benefits we would get), and what is actually stopping us from doing it. The action you need to take will depend on your particular situation and circumstances, but you might find it helpful to look at Sue's situation below.

Sue's Story

Sue wanted to take a part –time degree with the Open University in Art History, but kept putting this off because she wanted to organise her huge spare room which was full of rubbish into a study, before registering on her course. Sue insisted that it was important for her to have a clear and organised space to undertake her studies, away from her children and domestic duties.

*Unfortunately she could never find time to clear out the spare room, and as a result kept putting off registering for her course. This carried on for some months and years, until Sue read '**Feel the Fear And Do it Anyway**', by Susan Jeffers. This was a book which inspired and motivated her, and made her realise that she was creating obstacles that didn't need to be there. She took action immediately and within a few days had secured a place on an Art History course. She decided that she could use the local library to do her studies, and also clear just a small space in the spare room to create a study area. Several years later she now has her degree and teaches a couple of art history classes at an adult education centre. However, she never did get round to sorting out the spare room properly. It's still a chaotic mess!*

5. Lack of confidence and self belief

Lack of self confidence or belief in your ability to do or achieve something can have a negative effect on motivation levels. You might think what's the point in trying if you don't have the skills or ability, and this negative thinking can lead to procrastination, avoidance and failure. So how do you address this problem? Well there is no easy answer or magic formulae. You need to find out why you lack self confidence and belief in your ability, and then work out if this is due to lack of specific skills and experience, or if your lack of confidence is due to self doubt and negative thinking. If it is due to the former, then work out if and how you can acquire the necessary skills and experience. Don't put unnecessary blocks or barriers in your way, but at the same time be realistic about what can be achieved if you put in the effort and get the right support. If your lack of confidence is due to the latter, then you will need to work hard to change from negative to positive thinking. You might find some useful ideas in the previous sections. It might also be helpful for you to focus on all the things in favour of you achieving what it is you would like to do, and remember your past successes, in particular things you achieved which you previously thought were beyond your capability.

6. Adopt a healthy life style

Adopting a healthy life style will help to keep you energised, positive about yourself and motivated. Think about the foods you eat. Are they on the whole wholesome and nutritious, rather than highly processed and packed with saturated fats, sugars and additives? The latter are going to slow you down, make you feel heavy and sluggish, even if you get an initial buzz from consuming them. And what about exercise? Do you do some form of exercise on a regular basis, e.g. yoga, walking, going to the gym, tennis? Do you regularly take part in activities which give you enjoyment, e.g. make you laugh, enable you to engage with others, stimulate your brain? A healthy life style is a happy life style, and you don't need to go to extremes to have a healthy life style. You may only need to change one or two things or add something to your daily/weekly routine.

7. Get rid of clutter

De-clutter your life, and we are talking about people as well as things, in order to raise your motivation levels. Are there people in your life who are draining you of your energy or weighing you down? Are there people who are holding you back with their negativity, i.e. they put a dampener on everything you suggest, or they discourage rather than encourage you to do things which would help you to progress? Perhaps it's time to either limit the amount of influence they have on your life, or exclude them from your life altogether. And what about other types of clutter, e.g. paperwork, unused clothing, furniture etc, which might be taking up your space, time, energy? Set aside some time to go through these items and decide what action needs to be taken with each. In some cases this might include taking things to the tip or recycling centre.

8. Improve your problem solving skills

Sometimes we may lose our motivation to do something if we come across problems or difficulties. For example, we may want to accomplish something but have no idea how to go about it, or we may begin a task with relative ease, but then abandon it because we come across problems or difficulties. Sometimes it may seem easier to give up on something, than to spend time and effort trying to find a solution or overcome a difficulty. When you are faced with this type of situation, try looking at the problem from a different perspective, or try to detach yourself from the problem by thinking about how you would advise a friend to deal with it. Another useful strategy is to break the problem down into small more manageable parts, and then to deal with one part at a time. Don't give up on something until you've tried different approaches, and /or sought

help or advice from others. You'll find lots of other helpful ideas to assist with problem solving in [A Useful Guide to Problem Solving](#).

9. Get organised

Although some people can achieve great things surrounded by or living in chaos, most of us are probably at our most productive when we have some degree of order around us. So getting organised could have a very positive effect on our general motivation levels. What do you need to organise in your life? Is it your spare room like Sue's from the previous section, or is it something more fundamental like the way you live your life and how you allocate your time? Sit down and work out a realistic plan to get organised. Break it down into small manageable steps and review it from time to time.

10. Build up a supportive network

If you want to make progress with any of the above suggestions, or you have ideas of your own which will help to inspire or motivate you, then make sure you have supportive friends, relatives or colleagues you can call on in times of need, i.e. when you are faced with problems and difficulties which might upset your plans or require you to rethink your strategy, or you just need some moral support. It's also a good idea to avoid or spend less time with friends, associates or family members who are critical or unsupportive of what you are trying to achieve, as this will just bring you down and have a negative effect on your motivation.

Chapter 5 - How to Help Others Become Motivated

In this chapter we will look at some of the different ways in which you can help others to become motivated. You will be interested in this chapter if you have management or supervisory responsibilities for individuals or teams. But don't worry if you don't, a lot of this information will also be of value to those who simply want to know how to get the best out of others, whether it's colleagues, friends or family members. Once again, the focus will be on motivation in the workplace, but information will also be of value to other areas of life.

In order to inspire or help others to become motivated we need to first of all spend some time getting to know and understand the individual.

Who are they? What is important to them? What are their values? What makes them happy? What makes them sad? What do they enjoy doing? What do they want to achieve?

The answers to these and other related questions are going to vary for each person, since we are all individuals, with different needs, wants, circumstances, experiences etc.

But how do we get to know individuals and find out this information about them? Well we can make start by engaging with them, talking to them, asking them questions and most of all listening, hearing and observing them. You might find it helpful to go through the list of motivators and demotivators we looked at earlier in the Useful Guide, and determine the extent to which each of these factors is important to individual members of your team.

As a manager and/or supervisor you may have an extremely busy work schedule and you may be thinking, *'how on earth am I going to find the time to get to know all my staff as individuals, with the targets and tight timescales we have to work to?'* In fact, I would guess that many of you do know something about your individual team members and what makes them tick, but may argue that you haven't got the time to spend with them to address their particular needs in order to help motivate them. There is no easy answer to the problem, it's a case of having to find the time and it will be worth the investment in the end, as motivated staff are more positive and productive and it could save you a lot of time and effort further down the road.

So let's have a look at some of the things you could do to help raise the motivation levels of your staff. Read through the suggestions and strategies outlined below, and decide which ones would be appropriate for different

individuals, different circumstances and the different ways in which you manage your staff, whether it be face to face or remotely.

Be a good listener

Good listeners help individuals to feel that they are being heard and valued and it's a crucial step in helping people to feel positive and gain or regain motivation in the workplace. If your staff have problems or concerns and you don't give them the opportunity to voice these, nor do you take the time to listen to them, they are going to feel more and more despondent. This is likely to have a negative effect on their motivation levels and performance at work.

As a good listener you will do the following ...

- Demonstrate empathy, i.e. that you have heard and understood how they feel and how certain things have impacted on them.
- Show that you are listening with attentive and appropriate body language.
- Ask appropriate questions which are based specifically on what has been said.
- Make sure there are no interruptions.
- Allow space and time for the speaker to get their point across.

Communicate effectively

... when the news is bad. Depriving them of this information can result in speculation and rumour, which are sometimes even worse than the real situation, and it may lead to feelings of anxiety, worry, exclusion and not being valued by the organisation. Such feelings will obviously impact negatively on the motivation levels of individuals.

Managers need to ensure that they communicate with staff in a regular and systematic way. Whilst some managers operate an open door policy, i.e. that staff can come into the office and speak to the manager at any time, an alternative is to allocate a regular day/s and time/s when you are available for staff to drop in.

The information managers give to staff needs to be timely, honest, and accurate and, in many cases, delivered with some degree of sensitivity. Effective communication also needs to be two way, i.e. from managers to staff and from staff to managers, so make sure you put in place a mechanism for this.

Whilst team meetings and group discussions are a useful way to ensure effective two way communication, managers also need to make time for regular 1:1s with individual staff members. These 1:1 sessions not only provide an effective and

confidential means of communication, but can also form an integral part of your performance management strategy.

Effective feedback

Along with communication, staff need to be given regular feedback on their performance to keep them motivated, interested, challenged, and to make any necessary improvements to performance. How and when that feedback is given is of great importance, as it needs to be constructive and supportive, particularly when it is of a critical nature. To make your feedback constructive, consider the following ...

- You need to demonstrate to others that you are motivated too!
- Recognise and praise skills, good points, successes and contributions.
- Make feedback simple, clear and concise.
- Give feedback in an objective way, with the focus on behaviour or actions rather than the individual.
- Be specific, give examples and descriptions.
- Make feedback useable.
- Involve the individual by seeking their views, opinion, etc.
- Don't use put downs.
- Explore, identify and agree actions to improve or rectify.
- Identify and address any support needs.
- Make sure the time and place is appropriate, e.g. in a private space or situation when others aren't around.

For additional ideas on how to give feedback effectively, you might like to refer to [A Useful Guide to Feedback](#) and [A Useful Guide to Managing Performance](#).

Make sure that constructive feedback is provided on a regular basis so that staff know they are being observed, appreciated and developed. Whilst constructive feedback should be built into regular appraisals and 1:1s, where individuals sit down with their manager and go through a number of items in a systematic way, some feedback can also be given in an informal and ad hoc way, as and when the situation occurs, e.g. coming out of a meeting or passing a member of staff in the corridor.

Set goals

For some individuals having a purpose or something to aim for can help to raise motivation levels. Where this is the case, work with the individual to identify

appropriate goals they can work towards, and build in milestones, timescales and regular reviews. Try to make these goals not only relevant to the individual's developmental needs and the work of the department, but where possible, try to link them into the future aspirations of the individual, and/or any personal interests. Demonstrate your interest and provide ongoing support as appropriate.

Identify Challenges

Some people like routine, steady work, whilst others seek more of a challenge and like to be pushed. Those in the latter group can easily become bored, disinterested and demotivated if there is nothing in their work which stimulates or challenges them, or if they have been in their job for so long that the challenges are no longer there.

Your first task would be to find out what type of challenges would be appropriate for the individual/s and then try to find or create an opportunity for them. Sometimes creating these types of opportunities is easier than it sounds. You can create an opportunity by identifying a project to research ways to reduce wastage, to save time or to help the team to do something more effectively. Perhaps you might get some inspiration from Graham's experience below:

Graham's Story

Graham managed a team of customer services officers whose work was quite routine, dealing with customer enquiries and solving or referring on customer complaints. Simon, one of his customer services officers, who had been in the job for 2 years was beginning to get bored. Although Simon enjoyed the job initially when it was new and he had lots to learn, he began to feel differently after he had been in the job for a couple of years. Graham noticed the change in Simon's attitude to work, and the negative way in which he spoke about the job to new starters joining the team.

Graham arranged a meeting with Simon to discuss his concerns. At the meeting it was agreed that Graham would try to find an interesting project which Simon could get involved in. It was hoped that this would help to break the monotony, give Simon something which was of particular interest to him and something which would benefit the work of the team. It was agreed that Simon, having a keen interest in computers and statistics, would assist the senior customer services officer, 2 half days a week, on a special project related to the statistical analysis of customer enquiries and complaints.

Give responsibility/ empower your staff

The lack of responsibility or the power to make decisions at appropriate levels can have a negative effect on the motivation levels of some individuals in the workplace, particularly if they have to constantly refer to someone more senior when they have the knowledge and experience to make an informed decision themselves. If you are dealing with this situation as a manager, you need to find ways to give your staff some responsibility. If you are able to make changes to local practices and procedures to facilitate this, you should consider doing so. However, there may be situations where this is just not possible, because the procedures are corporate or determined by the government or legislation. In these cases you will need to be more creative in finding ways to give individuals more responsibility in the work place, at a more local level. Below are a few examples to get you thinking ...

- Give staff responsibility on a rota basis for preparing and/or chairing staff meetings
- Give someone responsibility for school/ work liaison within the section, i.e. they become the named contact person for the local school to liaise with in organising visits, work placements and shadowing for pupils and /or teachers
- Encourage staff and give them time to take part as volunteers in community/ educational projects which your organisation supports
- Let staff know that you value their experience and knowledge and refer to their expertise or use it as often as you can

Incentives

An incentive is something which motivates someone to achieve a particular task or goal. When we think of incentives in the workplace we often think of money related initiatives, e.g. a bonus scheme or performance related pay, in which individuals are paid additional amounts based on the quality of their work and/or productivity. But not everyone is motivated by money, and whilst these schemes can be very successful, they can also have little impact on motivation levels for some individuals for whom money is not a key motivator. Similarly these schemes can also be ineffectual in raising motivation levels if the required hygiene factors are not simultaneously in operation.

As a supervisor/manager you will probably not have the authority to introduce incentive schemes like this which tend to be corporate initiatives, so let's look at a few examples of incentives which are more appropriate to the level at which you operate ...

- Offering paid time off
- Opportunities for job enhancement or promotion
- Opportunities for further training and qualifications
- Improved working conditions or working environment
- Recognition for hard work, e.g. an email, letter, award, certificate
- Job security
- Staff discounts

Do remember that all individuals are different, and that an incentive which works for one person might not necessarily work for another. It is important that you spend time getting to know the people you manage in order to use appropriate incentives.

Recognition and rewards

Most people like to be recognised or rewarded for their efforts, achievements and successes in some way or other, particularly if they have put in extra effort or excelled in their achievements. Recognition or rewards can help to motivate and spur people on because they feel valued and appreciated. It can also help to boost people's confidence and belief in themselves and their abilities. If on the other hand their efforts and achievements are constantly ignored or taken for granted, some people may become despondent and lose their interest and motivation.

Good managers will always find ways to acknowledge the efforts and achievements of their staff. Whilst there may be a cost attached to some forms of reward and recognition, others require very little in terms of time, money or resources. Here are some examples of ways to acknowledge and or reward individuals ...

- Say '**thank you**' for the work which has been done or the effort that someone has put in.
- Tell the person that you are impressed what they have done. Give them praise.
- Write an email, letter or card to express the above.
- Write an email to appropriate senior personnel highlighting what the person has done or achieved, and copy them into the email.
- Award bonuses or financial rewards.
- Offer additional perks.

- Set up a scheme within your team/department for the 'best employee' of the week, month, year etc. Agree the criteria for 'best employee', so this could be the most improved or the most productive etc. Purchase a small trophy or item which can be passed on to successive winners. If money is a problem then this could just be a paper certificate which is put up on a board in the office for everyone to see.
- Take the individual or team out to lunch, at your own or the company's expense.
- Bring in a box of chocolates or sweets and present it to the individual or team.

Walk the talk

Remember that emotions are contagious and as the manager or supervisor, your mood and disposition will have an effect on those you manage. It is highly unlikely that a demotivated leader or manager will have a team of highly motivated staff. You, therefore, need to keep a check on your own motivation levels, and be particularly aware of what you put out to your staff. There is a clear link between what you think, feel and do, and leaders and managers can have a strong influence on the mood and performance of individuals in their teams.

Be open to constructive criticism

As in the case above, the way managers operate can have positive or negative effects on the individuals and teams they manage. Managers need to seek and be receptive to feedback from their staff on their management style. Sometimes even small changes can have a significant impact on the motivation levels and performance of others. Here are just a few questions relevant to staff motivation that you might want to consider in relation to your management style

...

- Are you inclusive? Do you consider different ways to include everyone?
- Do you delegate enough?
- Do you seek and act on the views and opinions of staff?
- Do you make the effort to get to know individuals within your team/s? Do you know their strengths, weakness, interests and goals?
- Do you regularly update your management skills?

Be proactive

As a supervisor or manager it is likely you will have limited power within the organisation to bring about changes to corporate policies, procedures and

processes, but you may still be able to influence decisions to some degree. If the way in which things are being done is unhelpful or problematic for your staff, don't sit back and just accept things, look for ways to make improvements. Perhaps you can feedback these views through committees or networks, and suggest alternative approaches. You may even be able to make some minor changes to practices at a local level to help alleviate some problems or make things a bit easier for staff.

We have to accept that there are some things we can't change, but it can be extremely demotivating when we see someone with more power and influence than ourselves, appearing to sit back and do nothing.

Social activities

Taking part in social activities can be a good way to get to know and bond with people. For some individuals having good social interaction with others at work, and/or through after work social activities is a vital requirement, and this may impact on how they feel about their job and the organisation they work for. For others this does not have the same importance. However, we all want to work in an environment which is pleasant and positive. Formal and informal social activities can help to increase motivation levels of individuals and teams in the workplace, but this needs to be approached with sensitivity and an awareness that it may not be for everyone. Below are just a few ideas you might want to consider ...

- Going for a coffee or lunch together
- Having a group lunch in the office with everyone bringing a different dish/contribution
- Taking part in an organised quiz, competition, sporting event
- Organising a lunchtime yoga, singing, head massage, meditation session in the workplace

And on a final note...

Hopefully you've found some useful information and ideas on motivation by reading through this Useful Guide, or dipping in and out of the individual chapters. There is a massive amount of information out there on motivation which can help you to develop your knowledge and skills further. Most of this is easily accessible via libraries, bookshops, and the internet.

Below are a few resources to get you going ...

Motivate to Win

(How to Motivate Yourself and Others)

Richard Denny

How to Motivate People

Patrick Forsyth

How to Be Better at Motivating People

John Allan

www.businessballs.com

www.cipd.co.uk

www.amazon.co.uk

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About the Author



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After returning to England, she trained and worked in careers and adult guidance for a number of years, and then moved into research, policy and management jobs in education. Through this work she also developed an interest and expertise in equality and diversity.

Since 1996, as an independent training consultant, Eve has worked with a wide variety of organisations in both the public and private sectors, ranging from blue chip companies and government departments, to housing associations and voluntary sector organisations.

In addition to her BA, she also has an MSc in Urban Policy Studies, a Diploma in Careers Guidance, a Diploma in Training Management and a Certificate in Workplace Mediation.

Eve is the director of Kairi Training and Development Ltd - www.kairi.co.uk , a small training company which specialises in the following areas ...

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When she is not writing or delivering training Eve enjoys exercising, being in the great outdoors and enjoying life with family and friends.