



## Maintaining Performance

### Learning Outcomes

**By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:**

- ✓ Explore motivational tools and techniques.

## Maintaining Performance

Maintaining good performance is as important as improving weak or substandard performance. Good performers want to continue to be good performers, and so they need work that keeps them interested and engaged. If we ignore good performers, even though they are doing well, we run the risk of them losing interest and moving on to another job.

Be careful of avoiding conflict. We see supervisors who are apt to be overly critical of good employees in the belief this keeps them growing and engaged, and at the same time they are overly lenient with poor employees because they don't want to go through the conflict necessary to have poor employees improve.

If you are a supervisor and you want to be fair and just, you must prepare and deal with both sets of circumstances. When it comes to improvement, if there is a good measurement system in place for the type of work they do, then raising the standard and offering training or development will both improve and challenge (unless they feel you are being unfair and asking them to do more than everyone else).

Remember: don't wait until the performance review to handle problems.

### How to Modify Work Behavior?

Modifying work behavior usually has a four-step approach.

1. Begin the session with one positive work performance of the employee.
2. Describe the problem behavior to the employee.
3. Provide a rationale for why this is problem behavior, as well as the impact it has on the work team overall, and you as the supervisor.
4. Explain what has to be done to meet acceptable behavior measures.

Close the session by informing the employee that they are expected to change and that their progress will be monitored. Tell them what improvements you have noticed. Make sure the employee understands the consequences if the behavior changes are not made.

## Handling Performance Problems

### Make the Commitment

We typically get hired because we have strengths that will help the organization, but we all have weaknesses too. If things are not going well, the supervisor's job includes acting on it right away so the problem doesn't get worse. We know from experience that if problems are not acted on, they do become worse and can easily become chronic.

In case you are wondering, it is rarely too early to react to a performance problem. Looking the other way or wishing the problem didn't exist, are not on the supervisor's list of options. Bringing a performance problem to an employee's attention can easily generate a defensive reaction, even if the focus is on performance and behavior rather than on personality and attitude, but the supervisor can use some techniques to reduce a negative reaction.

In productive discussions, the focus is kept on the problem behavior, not on the employee. Most of the time is spent talking about the future and the solution, as opposed to the past and the cause.

### **Key Action Steps**

- Focus on the performance, not the employee.
- Ask the employee how they can solve the problem.
- Use probing questions and active listening to help identify solutions.
- Agree on an action plan and gain commitment to the next steps.
- Agree on a follow-up date and time.
- Express your confidence in the employee.

Keep in mind that even if your intent is good, attempts at change are doomed unless reviews and feedback are perceived as well-intentioned, constructive feedback by your employees.

### **Behavior Contracts**

Despite our best efforts when it comes to performance management, some employees choose not to perform their duties at an acceptable level. When this happens, and your feedback sessions and coaching still do not lead to the desired results, we recommend that you use a behavior contract (sometimes called a disciplinary plan, behavior improvement plan, corrective action, disciplinary letter, etc.) to define the change in behavior that is required, the consequences for a failure to improve, and who will provide the consequences (usually a supervisor).

Here are some tips for making behavior contracts work.

- Select only a small number of meaningful behaviors for the contract. These should be observable behaviors.
- While a failure to comply is normally negative consequences (up to and including demotion or dismissal), depending on the circumstances you can also include reinforcement contingencies that are important to the worker. Does the worker want recognition, feedback, or something that visibly reminds them of accomplishments (being careful not to negatively impact other workers' morale, of course)?
- Include an action plan that outlines the desired behaviors the employee will adopt.
- The contract must be signed by both employee and supervisor. If you are in a unionized workplace, the union business partner representative normally receives a copy as well.
- Provide attention, and immediate reinforcement, when the targeted behaviors are demonstrated. That reinforcement may only be a "thank you" but provide it immediately.

- As the action plan gets underway, determine if parts of it need to be revised. Nothing is ever written in concrete. If part of the contract is working very well, but another part is not improving at all, perhaps you need to try a different approach. Remember that in unionized workplaces you may need to check the wording of the collective agreement to ensure you are approaching things to meet the terms of that agreement.
- Record and share progress made by the worker. Positive recognition is often fine to do in public, but constructive criticism should always be done in private. Most employees do not want their colleagues to know that they are on a “disciplinary” plan.

## The Part Where Someone Gets Fired

### If You Have To Let Them Go...

While it can make things rough for the employee, the supervisor, and the team left behind picking up the extra work, firing an employee is not actually the worst thing that can happen. It can be particularly rejuvenating for a team that has been putting up with the employee’s poor behavior or negative attitude. They can actually complete more work – at least in the short term while a replacement gets hired – because of the relief that comes with a toxic person being removed.

For a supervisor, the firing can be a relief too, once it is all over. Choosing to fire someone is a very big decision to make, and can create some inner turmoil when you feel you have done a lot of work to help them be successful there — from setting goals with the employee, coaching, offering constructive feedback, giving regular performance appraisals, developing behavioral contracts—and the employee still can’t improve.

If you decide that this step is necessary, make sure it really is the last option and that you have the legal authority to fire this person. If those factors are in place, and you have to do the firing, remember that this is a good thing for everything involved, even the employee. This match is simply not working; it’s time for the employee and the company to find someone that fits each of their needs better.

Once you’re prepared emotionally, make sure you have the facts straight and your documentation all in order.

- What is the official reason for termination? (If this is a layoff, provide details about unemployment insurance, or let the person know where they can get this information.)
- What (if any) severance pay is being offered?
- Will the employee be able to continue medical benefits?
- When will the employee’s last day be?

If you’re the one determining when the last day is, keep the following points in mind:

- First, check the employee’s contract for any obligations.
- If possible, some sort of notice is a good idea to allow the employee to wrap things up and to look for another job (i.e. in the case of a layoff due to a work slowdown). However, you will

have to balance the notice period with the potential for sabotage from the employee. Generally if someone is being fired, it's best to remove their access to property and equipment at the time of the termination meeting.

- If the firing is due to a serious incident (theft, fraud, criminal activity, refusing treatment for substance abuse, ongoing personal issues with others in the office that this employee incites), it's probably best to end their employment then and there. Severance may reduce the likelihood the employee will file a complaint, but is entirely up to you and the usual practices of the company.
- If the employee has access to proprietary or confidential information, or has access to the company's internal e-mail, internal computer drives, etc., it's also probably best to end their employment then and there. This practice protects you from sabotage and them from suspicion if anything does go wrong.

## Role Play

Read the appropriate situation. The employer must decide whether to try a behavioral contract or fire the employee. Use the space provided to prepare your notes.

### Test Your Knowledge

#### Quickee Documentation Ltd.

**Despite your efforts, your new employee keeps trying to introduce new technology into the workplace. They even went so far as to get quotes for outfitting the company with computers. This shows initiative, but you have repeatedly told the employee to keep the ideas to themselves.**

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#### Ace Laboratories

**Despite your efforts, the issue with the receptionist has worsened. You have gotten complaints from customers and other employees about the constant chaos.**

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**Acme Airlines**

**Sales have increased since your last meeting with the cargo department manager, but they're still not up to where you had agreed they would be by now. There are other areas, such as personnel management and employee development, that have also not been addressed by the employee.**

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**Leaky Pipes**

**Your employee has missed four days of work this month and has been late for 12 other days. This is despite all the effort you have put in.**

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**Sunshine Travel**

**One Monday morning, you arrive in the office to find your desk in the back of the room. In fact, the whole office has been re-organized; it looks like a tornado swept through the place. The janitor comes out of the washroom and asks how you like the new design, which reflects the concepts of Feng Shui.**

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## Performance Management Checklists

Please keep the three fundamentals in mind at all times and review the checklist through each phase of the process. Throughout the year, as you talk to and coach your employees, refer to the ongoing support and feedback checklist. And finally, as you prepare for the review phase, use the Performance Review Checklist to make sure you are properly completing the performance management process for the period.

### The Fundamentals of the Process

- Do your employees understand what you expect of them?
- Do your employees know how well they are performing?
- Do your employees have what they need to improve their performance?

### Objectives and Results Checklist

- Are your organization's objectives/goals reflected in the objectives and results expected of the employee?
- Is it clear what is expected of the employee? Are objectives specific, accurate, and results oriented?
- Is it clear how performance will be judged through the results?
- Are these expectations realistic? Achievable? Timely?
- Have you planned for no surprises by the end of the process?

### Support Plan Checklist

- Are there any obstacles to the employee meeting your expectations of objectives and results?
- Can these obstacles be overcome with specific training, equipment, increased feedback from the supervisor or other means?
- Is there any other obstacle in the way of achieving the goals?
- If so, can it be overcome by re-prioritizing or re-assigning some tasks without sacrificing performance in other areas?
- Does the support plan accommodate all the requirements needed for the employee to meet the objectives you have set?

### Meeting with Your Employees Checklist

- Will the employee understand how performance will be judged?
- Has the employee raised any objections to the proposed objectives and corresponding results expected?
- If so, have these been resolved?
- Have you explained what performance management means to your employee and outlined the phases of the process?
- Does the employee understand the benefits of the process?

- Does the employee understand the importance of his or her job to the goals of the team/unit/dept.?
- Does the employee understand your expectations in terms of both objectives and results expected?
- Does the employee feel she/he has all the resources required to achieve these results? Is the support plan complete?
- Do your employees understand that they can return to you at any time to discuss your performance expectations, particularly if they are encountering problems?
- Have you answered all the employee's questions?
- Have you heard your employees and taken their concerns and comments to heart?

### **Ongoing Support and Feedback Checklist**

- If you were to perform a review today, on any of your employees, would there be any surprises for them?
- Have you set a goal for yourself to informally, but regularly, touch base with each of your employees to ask how things are going, ask whether there are any problems, and discuss any difficulties in the achievement of their performance?
- Do you correct performance problems immediately?
- Do you congratulate successes immediately? (And remember that success is relative: getting a supply requisition in on time can be a major success for a chronic procrastinator!)
- Have you reviewed the employee's work plans and objectives at least once during the period?
- Have you updated or modified those work plans and objectives that require revision? Have you done so with the employee's input and agreement?

### **Performance Interview Checklist**

- Did you give the employee a copy of the self-assessment and your appraisal draft one week before the meeting?
- Have you set an appointment at a convenient time for the employee? Have you allowed sufficient time for your interview? Have you made sure there will be no interruptions?
- Did you brief the employee before the interview so the employee knows to come prepared to discuss past performance and future performance?
- Has the employee been able to complete those sections for which he or she is responsible?

### **Performance Review Checklist**

- Will there be any surprises for the employee?
- Have you provided factual information where appropriate on the form?
- Are your comments specific and accurate, making reference to original goals established under objectives and results?
- Can you support the judgments you make and record them on the form with specific examples of the employee's performance during the period?
- In cases where the employee's performance met the objectives set, have you acknowledged the employee for a job well done?

- Have you both signed the report?

## What is Motivation?

**What's the only real way to motivate?** The only way to get a person to do something is to make the person want to do it in order to get something they want or avoid something they don't want.

## Supervising and Motivation

### Why is Motivation Important?

Some definitions of motivation:

- Motivation is a force that leads people to attempt to satisfy their important needs.
- Motivation is a drive from within that prompts or incites an action.

If motivation comes from within, what can a supervisor do to motivate others? Supervisors need to create a climate in which internal motivation will activate performance. In order for this to happen, supervisors need to know their staff, what motivates them, and how to create a motivating climate.

There are three main types of motivators: the carrot, the whip, and the plant. Let's move onto the next session and take a closer look at them.

## Identifying Motivators

We've pretty well established that we can't motivate other people: motivation has to come from them. However, what we can do is provide the right atmosphere for employees to feel motivated. What do you think is the right atmosphere?

Motivation is a complex subject. As managers, we used to talk in terms that said the only way to get a person to do something was to make them want to do it in order to get something they want or avoid something they don't want. In other words, we would pay them or punish them. This discussion included terms of managing people with a whip, a carrot, and a plant.

### Test Your Knowledge

**Describe what type of motivation each object represents, when that type of motivation is required, and give examples of that type of motivation for your employees.**

#### The Carrot

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The Whip

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The Plant

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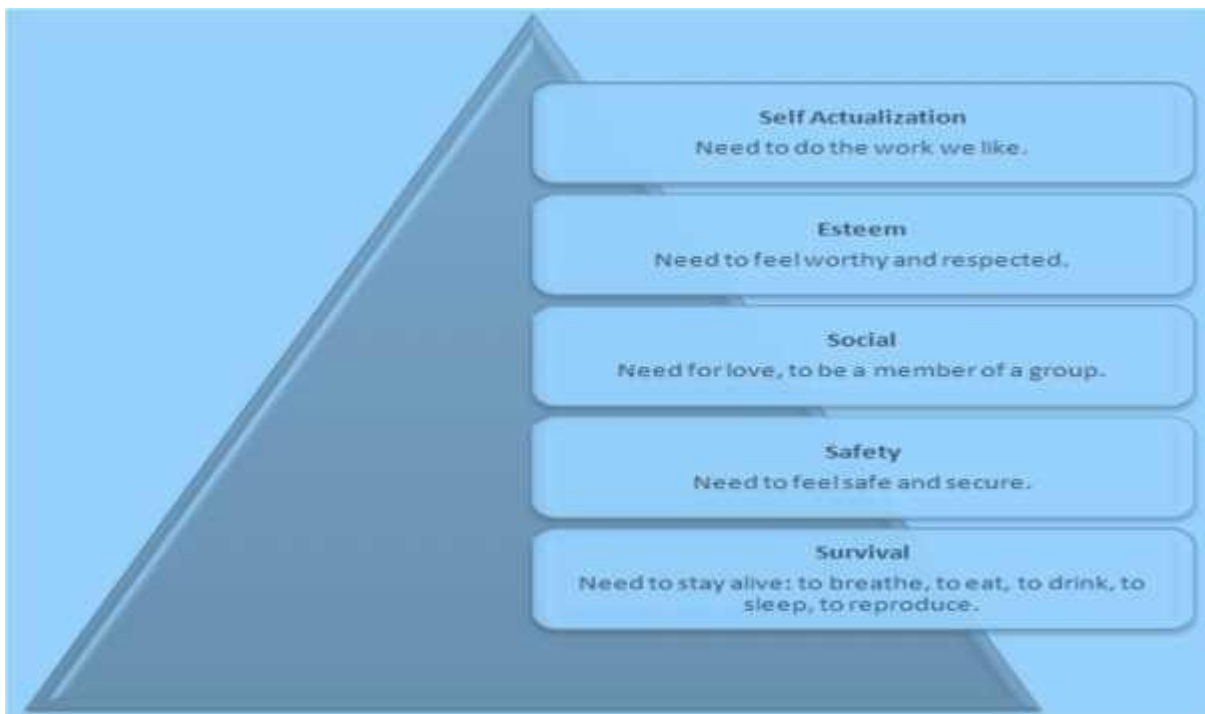
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## Motivational Theories

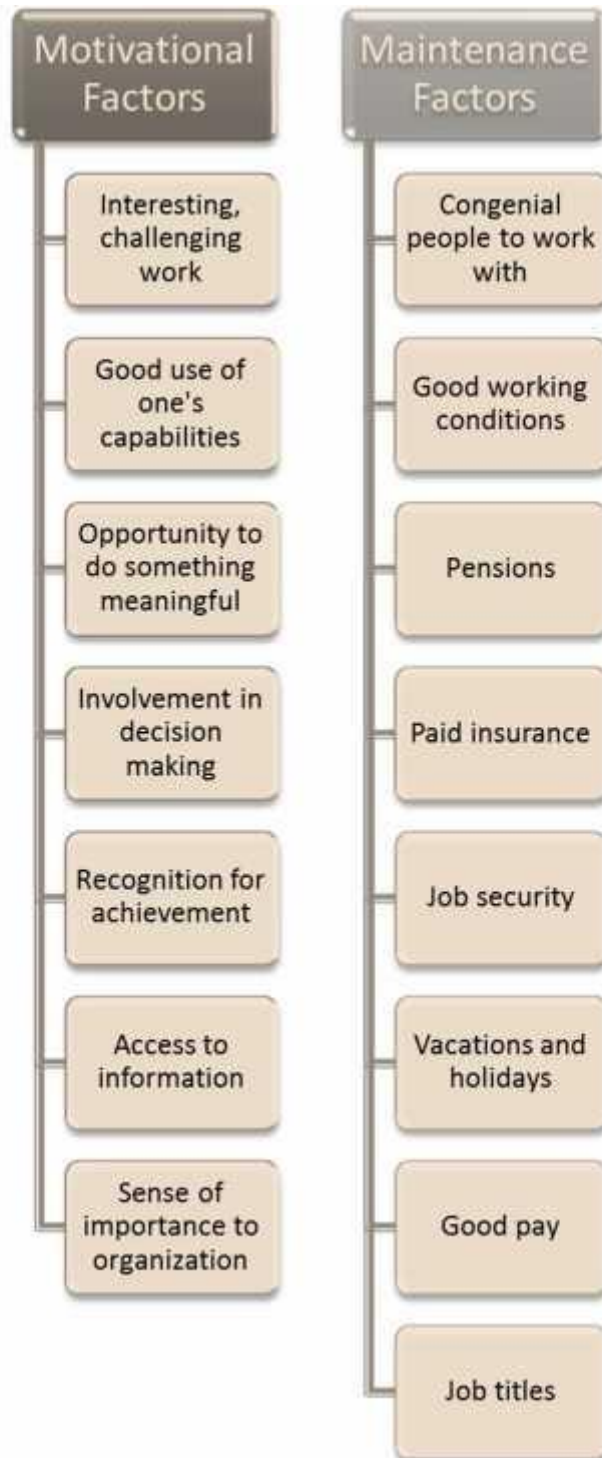
### A Look at Theory

Two theories that are often referred to are Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Frederick Herzberg's Dual Structure Theory.



Maslow's Classic Hierarchy of Needs

## Herzberg's Motivational versus Maintenance (or Hygiene) Factors



## Supervisor's versus Higher Management's Role



### Why do you think there are so many theories on motivation?

Human behavior is very complex. No single theory seems to explain all human behavior. Theories are essentially different sets of glasses for looking at life. Some glasses seem to provide a better view of some things but don't seem to work as well as a different pair for looking at other things.

The purpose of this session is not to learn theories but to become more aware of different ways of looking at motivation, because the more ways we can look at something, the better the chances we will get a good understanding.

## Setting Goals

### Setting Goals with SPIRIT

Most of us can't hit a target if we can't see it. Before you can develop plans, you have to know what you want to accomplish (your goals or targets); how you want to accomplish those goals or targets; what resources of time, money, and materials you have; and who will carry out the work. So set some targets for yourself that you can see, and then take the first step on your journey to reaching them, and the next step, and so on.

### SPIRIT

Each objective should be broken down into several small, achievable goals that will help you get where you want to go. Good goals should have SPIRIT!

## **Specific**

Be specific about what you want or don't want to achieve. The result should be tangible and measurable. "Look gorgeous" is pretty ambiguous; "Lose 20 pounds" is specific.

## **Prizes**

Reward yourself at different points in the goal, particularly if it's long-term. If your goal is to save \$1000 for a weekend vacation, for example, you might cook a special meal when reach the halfway mark.

## **Individual**

The goal must be something that you want to do. If your supervisor wants you to take on an extra project and you are not interested in it, you're not going to want to work towards the goal. Link the goal to something that interests and motivates you, like how great it feels to finish a large assignment.

## **Review**

Review your progress periodically. Does the goal make sense? Are you stuck? Do you need to adjust certain parts of it?

## **Inspiring**

Frame the goal positively. "I don't like the way I look. I need to get into shape," won't inspire you, but "I am working out four times a week and I feel fantastic!" sure can. Make the goal fun to accomplish. You could make a poster of the end result, frame it, and post it on the wall.

## **Time-Bound**

Give yourself a deadline for achieving the goal. If it's a pretty big objective, split the goal into small parts and give yourself a deadline for each item.

## **Test Your Knowledge**

### **Goal Setting and Goal Getting!**

**Use the space below to draw up a goal with SPIRIT.**

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## The Role of Values

### Work Values

Motivational speaker Denis Waitley has said that life is a “do it myself” project. Each of us must take the blame or the credit for our performance. We personally have the power to control many more personal aspects of our lives, both mentally and physically, than we have ever thought possible.

### Test Your Knowledge

**What are some other things you do, or could do, to keep yourself motivated?**

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**Do you think any of these things would also be effective for motivating your employees?**

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**What are some of the things your employees can control in their work life?**

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**Is there any way you can give them more control?**

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## What Do We Value In Work?

### The Importance of Values

Do you know what you value about work? People vary widely in their values, and it becomes an important part of the supervisor’s role to understand what their employees value. When an individual’s values are markedly different from the organization, it is more likely that the individual will become disconnected from the workplace and they will look for something new, or become disengaged but stay if they think they don’t have many options.

It's important for a supervisor to know the values of the organization, and to determine their individual values.

## Test Your Knowledge

Write down your company's values below.

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## Identifying Your Values

The list below reflects some common values. **Choose the ten that are most important to you as a person (meaning that they apply both at work and at home).** You can customize the wording, or add your own to the list.

Ability to make decisions and implement them	Ability to persuade and influence others	Achieving excellence
Achieving fame and recognition	Adventure and excitement	Behaving ethically
Being challenged by pressures and deadlines	Being organized and dependable	Being skilled and capable
Building a family	Building meaningful relationships with others	Competition with others
Contributing to society	Cooperation with others	Demonstrating expertise
Diversity in daily tasks	Doing something meaningful	Efficient and effective
Enjoying what you do	Environmental rights	Establishing a reputation
Expressing creativity	Feeling excited and stimulated by life	Feeling independent
Feeling of belonging and community	Feeling of inner harmony	Feeling of patriotism
Financial security	Financial wealth	Free speech/human rights

Freedom to set your own pace and goals	Having a feeling of security	Having power and control
Having privacy	Helping those in need	Religion and/or spirituality
Leading others to success	Moving at a fast pace	Moving at a slow pace
Being productive	Reliability	Self-development
Sense of accomplishment	Serving the public	Spontaneity
Truth and integrity	Working as part of a team	Working individually

We cannot focus on too many things at one time and remain effective, so look at the ten values you selected and **select the five that are most important to you**. Cross the others off. Be firm with yourself if you need to be. Remember, you are focusing on what is really important to you.

**Next, reduce the list to just three values.** These are the things at your very core. Cross the other two off your list. Put circles around the three items that are your core values.

## Bringing It All Together

### Step Two: Define Your Values

#### Test Your Knowledge

Now, outline what success for each of those values would look like.

#### Value One

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#### Value Two

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## Value Three

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### Step Three: Put It All Together

Finally, bring the three statements together into one paragraph. You may feel that you need to go back and re-evaluate your values, or you may want to re-work some sentences to create what is meaningful to you. That's OK! Above all, this should be a reflection of your innermost thoughts and a roadmap for how you would like to conduct your life and your work.

**Write your value statement here.**

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## Creating a Motivational Climate

### Behavioral (Reinforcement) Theory

#### A Focus on Feedback

We respond to praise and positive feedback, almost regardless of where it comes from or for what. Success is a very powerful force and it seems most of us can never get too much praise or too many compliments. We need to feel we are capable, competent people, and positive feedback provides this.

On the other hand, criticism and negative feedback takes the wind out of our sails. We feel less good about ourselves and lose interest in continuing what we are doing. Again, criticism is a very powerful force and even when it is not justified or when the person giving it is not in a position to criticize or judge us, we can still become de-motivated.

While this appears to be a case of external motivation or de-motivation, it really isn't. We decide whether to listen to the person's praise or criticism and how to react to it, although we are strongly conditioned to react almost automatically to praise and criticism.

Reinforcement doesn't only apply to external reward and punishment. If we tell ourselves that we are doing a good job, we reward ourselves and feel good. If we criticize ourselves (even when our performance is good), we tend to feel bad and become de-motivated.

## Reinforcement Theory

**Reinforcement theory** (also called the **behavioral theory**) says that people do, and are motivated to do, what gets rewarded. We avoid doing, or become de-motivated, when we get punished for what we do.

How can you, as a supervisor, use this theory to provide a motivational climate in the workplace? By praising, giving positive feedback, congratulating people when they perform well. As Ken Blanchard puts it, catch people doing things right and praise them.

## Test Your Knowledge

**What are some other methods of rewarding people for good performance?**

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## The Big Question

**Should you, as a supervisor, praise mediocre work?**

Generally, no, as you will reinforce mediocrity. However, when people are unwilling or unable to perform at a high standard, you should begin by praising progress. Set your expectations and standards low and then move them higher as the person's performance improves.

This is the same process that is described in Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model. In this model, support (which is viewed as positive) is increased and direction (which tends to be viewed more negatively) is decreased, as individuals or groups increased their task readiness (ability and willingness to accept responsibility for setting and achieving high performance targets).

## Expectancy Theory

Expectancy theory was developed by Victor Vroom. It assumes that people, when faced with the need to make a decision about how to behave, will be influenced by the possible costs and benefits of each course of action. Individuals will select the course of action with the greatest perceived expected net (positive minus negative) outcomes.

Obviously, if you can get a person to change their perception of the value of a particular outcome or change their estimated likelihood of achieving an outcome, you would change their estimated utilities or expected net outcomes. If, for example, a person began to see more value in a promotion than they previously did, the attractiveness of that outcome (and therefore the motivational "pull" of that outcome) would increase. Perhaps the supervisor could point out some things about getting a promotion that the person had not considered. Likewise, if the supervisor could get the person to modify their expectation of receiving a promotion, they would change the person's level of motivation toward that outcome. Perhaps the person does not consider the likelihood very high of getting a promotion. If the

supervisor can (honestly) convince the person that his/her chances are better than they think, the motivational pull will increase.

This theory tends to put things in a pretty simplistic light, and has sometimes been criticized. Even Vroom admits to the simplicity of his theory. However, it does give us a good platform for discussion, and even a debate about how some of the things we try can backfire. For example, if a person works hard to get a raise, but they know the raise will bump them into a higher tax bracket and they will actually take less pay home, then the money itself is not a motivator and the raise could actually be a demotivator.

## McClelland's Needs Theory

David McClelland developed the theory that humans were motivated by three major needs (later expanded to four). These are:

- Need for Achievement: Desire to accomplish something worthwhile, need to set and achieve difficult but realistic goals
- Need for Power (Authority)
- Need for Affiliation: Feeling part of a group, being accepted by others.
- He later developed the notion that the Need to Avoid Failure also plays a major motivation role for some people.

### Test Your Knowledge

How could you use McClelland's Needs Theory to create a positive motivational climate?

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## Applying Your Skills

### Situational Analysis

### Test Your Knowledge

#### Scenario One

The Acme Airlines Company was in big trouble. With a global recession going on, sales were down, and their largest airplane was frequently grounded for inspections and repair. Imagine the CEO's surprise when the company's employees joined forces, raised \$30 million, and bought the company a new plane.

**What do you think motivated them to do this?**

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**Scenario Two**

The Acme Manufacturing Company has a line of exceptionally prepared organic baby food. One day a factory employee was shopping in the local supermarket and she came across a shelf full of jars of baby food from her factory, and all the labels were crooked. She bought all of the jars that the store had and took them to work with her the next day.

**What do you think motivated her to do that?**

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**Scenario Three**

Up to about 1970, piecework was the most common form of payment in the Swedish engineering industry. But in the late 1960's companies came under a lot of pressure to adopt fixed-wage systems, mostly from people in politics and trade unions who felt that piecework was demeaning, undemocratic, and unnecessary when dealing with an educated, responsible workforce. A lot of companies did change. A study of 73 of these, carried out in late 1971, revealed that, on average, productivity had fallen 10-20% in the three months following the change from paid piecework to fixed salary.

**Can you draw any conclusions about motivation from this?**

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## Scenario Four

Car factories are the original and best known examples of production line work. People who work in them stand beside a constantly moving track, repeating the same task over and over again. The pace of their work is dictated by the speed of the line. Suppose that everyone on the line was provided with a button which they could use, at their own discretion, to stop the track running.

**What would you predict would happen? Would it motivate people? Would it affect productivity? Why?**

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## Designing Motivating Jobs

### Test Your Knowledge

#### Designing My Job

**Think of a job that would meet your motivational needs. What are some characteristics of that job?**

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There are five key characteristics of motivating jobs.

#### Diversity

A motivating job challenges the employee by drawing on different skills and abilities. Not very many people want to do the same single task over and over again each day. Even basic jobs, like operating a cash register at a grocery store, have different components. (Think of all the different things that a grocery store cashier does: scanning items, doing math, providing customer service, and interacting with their teammates.)

#### Completion

Most people like the satisfaction of completing a project from start to finish. Even if some pieces are done by others, it's nice to see the final result of your hard work.

## Importance

We all want to feel like our work matters to others and the organization. To make jobs motivating, show employees how their work counts.

## Independence

Giving employees control over their work environment and processes can be very motivating. We've spoken to call center employees whose greatest complaint wasn't the stress, difficult customers, or high workload. Their biggest issue was that their washroom breaks were mandated down to the second.

## Guidance

Earlier, we paraphrased a quote from Ken Blanchard: catch people doing things right and praise them. Constructive, consistent feedback is an essential motivational element for any job.

## Techniques for Job Design or Redesign

### Test Your Knowledge

List some specific techniques that you could use to incorporate the five key characteristics into a job.

Characteristic	Techniques
Diversity	
Completion	
Importance	
Independence	
Guidance	

### Further Reading:

