

LEADERSHIP INSIGHT

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The Motivation Factors

How Leaders Can Impact Motivation Within Their Teams¹

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In 2022, the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey's Engagement Index concluded that 60% of Service Personnel (SP) felt unmotivated to achieve personal and organisational goals. Similarly, job satisfaction had declined to 56% with less than four in 10 (37%) personnel said that they felt valued by their Service, down from 41% in the previous year. These are important issues with which all Army leaders must engage. The lack of motivation can cause retention problems as well as affect performance and ultimately operational success. It is essential for leaders to understand the two distinct factors that motivate their SP. Positive, high-performing teams are created by the careful application of intrinsic and extrinsic driving factors. Leaders must know and be able to apply different motivation techniques according to the people they work with, the culture of their teams and the goals and task they aim to achieve.

The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is based on the source of the motivation itself. Intrinsic motivation comes from within the individual and may include elements like fulfilment, enjoyment, curiosity, pleasure. Intrinsic motivation may also be linked to a person's values, as they see a certain behaviour or a goal as something good or meaningful in its own right. In our society, intrinsic motivation is often associated with

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genuine passion, a sense of purpose, and personal commitment. It is highly prized as genuine and enduring. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is linked to external factors, which could be rewards, fear of punishment, or need for recognition by the leader or the team. In this case, individuals engage in an activity or behaviour because they are interested in its outcome rather than in the activity itself. Extrinsic motivation can provide people with a reason to engage in useful or necessary tasks that go beyond their personal interest or pleasure.

Military leaders must be confident and knowledgeable about both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors to be able to motivate their teams on operations, in barracks and at staff. Vallerand (2000) argues that the perceived values and benefits of an action, such as rewards, will inspire an extrinsically motivated SP. An intrinsically motivated SP, however, will be motivated by the value of achieving a task or objective rather than the external reward. Intrinsic motivation is crucial for perseverance, project completion, and problem-solving. Sansone & Smith (2000) identify that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are related and produce the best results when they are combined. The degree to which intrinsic and external motivation factors are connected will vary for each individual due to their values, personality, personal circumstances, aspirations, and goals. As a result, a leader should be alert to the individual motivations of their SP to develop them within the high-performing team. This is also supported by John Adair's 50/50 rule that says that '50% of motivation comes from within a person, and 50% from their environment' (Adair 1983). It is therefore essential to create the right balance, both intrinsic and extrinsic factors must be considered and applied according to the specific requirements of the given context and team to ensure that individual and organisational needs are met.

Motivation theories are categorised as either a content or process theory. Process theories are dynamic in nature and focus on how motivation develops and how it works. Process theories examine behaviours and decision-making processes, like why we set a goal and why we want to achieve. This approach implies that SP are constantly evolving, personally and professionally. On the other hand, content theories have a more static nature and focus on elements that are essential motivational triggers. They describe a system of needs or desired outcomes that can be satisfied through effort and work (Rhee 2019). Again, both process and content theories offer helpful food for thought for military leaders. It is not a case of either/or but rather of balance between the two approaches.

Among the many theories of motivation discussed among experts, Vroom's Expectancy Theory and Herzberg's Two Factors Theory are the most relevant for military leaders who wish to motivate their SP. According to Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964), there is a link between employees' motivation and their expectations. In this context, motivation is achievable when there is a distinct link between work performance and results, and when those results are the means to meet requirements. SP will place a high value on performing well if they believe that doing so will lead to personal and organisational benefits and will prevent undesirable outcomes such as disciplinary actions.

The Two Factors Theory by Frederick Herzberg (1964) focuses on what satisfies employees. Herzberg argues that perceived unfairness, poor working environments and problematic relationships with colleagues can lead to employee dissatisfaction. He suggests that to be motivated employees must feel a sense of achievement, recognition, and be given appropriate responsibility. They must also feel comfortable in a working environment that they think is fair and transparent, with good governance and working sound practices. According to Herzberg, these motivational factors come from internal generators and are

fundamental requirements of the job and key to high-performance. Individuals look for the gratification in the form of achievement, recognition, responsibility, professional development. Hence, Herzberg makes a distinction between two factors: motivators and 'hygiene'. Motivators give a sense of satisfaction, such as recognition, achievement, or personal growth. They are intrinsic factors that are linked to the role, or the nature of the job. 'Hygiene' factors are extrinsic factors and include aspects such as company policies, supervisory practices, job security, good working environment. For Herzberg, it is essential to have both motivators and hygiene factors to develop and maintain motivation.

Both content and process motivational theories agree that for SP to feel engaged, motivators must exist. These theories, however, are predicated on different principles. Based on humanistic principles, the Two Factor Theory emphasises the importance of the SP realising their own potential through psychological and emotional development. The Expectancy Theory is predicated on cognitive thought. The JSP 757 appraisal system offers the chance to acknowledge, direct, and support SP in this area. It is vital to ensure that they are competent in their responsibilities by setting realistic objectives that reflect their desires and level of expertise. As a result, leaders can boost motivation by fostering an environment where employees have a clear sense of purpose and a well-defined plan for personal development, which drive them to perform at their best, whilst ensuring the needs of the organisation are met. Neglecting personal and professional development may lead to a demoralised, demotivated and an undervalued individual (Chauhan 2019). This could eventually be detrimental to unit performance and operational readiness and success. Disengaged SP may have a toxic effect on their team as their lack of loyalty and commitment can undermine morale, team cohesion, and derail a mission (Teney 2022).

Recognition and reward can be applied via appraisals and promotions (Kerketta et al. 2019). The *Army Leadership Doctrine* implies that incentives positively reinforce how we value and respect our SP. However, this must be part of a culture that nurture its workforce, not a token gesture. According to Daniel Pink (2009), isolated incentives may not only fail to increase work involvement but – if not applied properly – they may have detrimental effects. Pink argues that the 'carrot and stick' methods of reward and punishment are outdated and inadequate for today's creative and inventive organisations. Delaney et al. (2017) suggest that the key factor in motivation is whether SP can take actions that help achieve their goals and through their engagement, enhance the unit's mission. To create engagement, leaders must empower them and allow their teams to be the best they can be. Zhang et al (2017) suggest that this approach will positively increase the SP's psychological empowerment, which in turn will influence both intrinsic motivation and involvement in the creative process. Graham (2020) agrees that empowerment can foster continual personal improvement, which will ultimately result in increased productivity, performance, and job satisfaction.

Conclusion

Being able to motivate individuals and teams is a crucial component of good leadership. Army leaders must be able to create an environment that results in motivated individuals and teams, with an expanding sense of success and competence. Leaders must engage with coaching and mentoring to understand the individuals in their teams, their skills, potential and motivation. They must understand what each individual needs to feel motivated and to achieve their potential and support them in their development.

Leaders need to find the right balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors and assess what works for each individual, without losing sight of the rest of the team and of the operational context. Leaders must provide regular and continuous feedback on productivity and performance and encourage them to take on new tasks and roles, thus expanding their range of skills and expertise. It is crucial for leaders to fully understand what drives each SP, so they may direct their time, effort, and thinking effectively into the developing their SP and their team.

Questions

1. How can the Army maximise intrinsic forms of motivation to motivate SP?
2. How can leader create a more cooperative culture in their teams in which personal goals and team goals can converge?
3. How can mentoring and coaching technics help leaders motivate their SP?

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