

A summary of motivation theories

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Introduction

Motivation is essential to almost any aspect of life. Nature has an intrinsic motivation; it does what it does in and out of itself, without further reflection. What difference with human activity! There are few humans on this planet who don't question or reflect on their motivation for certain tasks every day.

And yet, it's such an underdeveloped field of research. There are many theories, but from their diversity we can glean their inability to capture the complexity of human motivation in a simple, natural way.

Maybe it's because the word 'motivation' is most often used in reference to work. While activity is an innately human activity, work is not necessarily. Our modern-day work arrangement is a large-scale system aimed (amongst many other things) at creating global productivity and scalability.

We participate in it out of free will, but also because there is little other choice. No work; no pay! This is where human motivation comes in: how do you motivate people that aren't really doing it because it's their birthright and they feel subconsciously compelled to it? That's what motivation theories are all about, and what this publication aims to map out.

I want to stress that this is not an academic work. It's my personal summary of material that I've collected and ordered for my own clarity and understanding. It's aimed at managers, business owners, entrepreneurs, HR-people that want a simple and concise overview of motivation theory. I've aimed at fast and easy reading, and focused on explaining the theories.

If you want more practical advice on how to design your jobs, company and personal management style to instill more motivation in your people, please read my other publication: ['Why financial rewards won't drive your sales up – but this ebook will'](#).

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What actually is motivation?

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Everyone has a different notion of motivation. It's one of those terms, like freedom, that has as many meanings as there are people using the word. And yet, we must have some common understanding of what it is to make sure we understand each other. Here are some definitions that fit into the concept of this ebook:

The dictionary says...

to motivate

[v.] to provide with a motive or motives; incite; impel.

- **S:** (n) **motivation**, **motive**, **need** (the psychological feature that arouses an organism to action toward a desired goal; the reason for the action; that which gives purpose and direction to behavior) *"we did not understand his motivation"; "he acted with the best of motives"*
- **S:** (n) **motivation** (the condition of being motivated) *"his motivation was at a high level"*
- **S:** (n) **motivation**, **motivating** (the act of motivating; providing incentive)

Wikipedia says...

Motivation is the activation or energization of goal-oriented behavior. Motivation may be intrinsic or extrinsic. [...] According to various theories, motivation may be rooted in the basic need to minimize physical pain and maximize pleasure, or it may include specific needs such as eating and resting, or a desired object, hobby, goal, state of being, ideal, or it may be attributed to less-apparent reasons such as altruism, morality, or avoiding mortality.

A succes website¹ says...

Motivation is the inner power or energy that pushes one toward performing a certain action. Motivation strengthens the ambition, increases initiative and gives direction, courage, energy and the persistence to follow one's goals.

Motivation is usually strong, when one has a vision, a clear mental image of a certain situation or achievement, faith in one's abilities and also a strong desire to materialize it. In this case motivation pushes one forward, toward taking action and making the vision a reality.

I say...

Motivation, in its broadest sense, can be defined as forces acting either on or within a person to initiate behaviour. It's what gets you going. And in the context of this ebook: it's what potentially makes you truly enjoy your job.

¹ http://www.successconsciousness.com/strengthen_motivation.htm - Remez Sasson

Kinds of motivation

A few polarities of motivation that you'll find in the theories and that serve to create clarity on one's own motivation. As with all polarities, it's not about either/or, but about the position one has in a certain spectrum.

➤ Positive vs Negative

Motivating forces can be **positive**, as in impelling one to reach a certain goal. They can also be **negative**, as in driving one away from an unwanted situation.

You can be positively motivated about going to work because you like your colleagues and some parts of the work, and negatively motivated because you have bills to pay (moving away from poverty) and you wouldn't dare not show up.

➤ Internal vs External

There is **internal** motivation, or push. It's an internal state that impels one to act towards achieving a certain goal. Then there is **external** motivation, or pull. It's when an external goal influences one's behaviour towards them. Behaviour is a complex blend of internal pushes and external pulls.

You can be internally motivated to go to work because it makes you feel useful and creative. At the same time, it is expected of you by your surroundings and you may be doing something that only partly fulfills your desires.

➤ Basic vs learned

Motivation leans on motives. Motives are often categorized into basic motives and learned motives. **Basic or primary motives** are unlearned and common to both animals and humans. We're talking hunger, thirst, sex, avoidance of pain, and perhaps aggression and fear. The **learned or secondary motives** include achievement, power, recognition, love...

You'll go to work to get food and avoid social exclusion. And you'll also go to work to achieve something, and possibly order others around.

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An overview of motivation theories

There are different theories about what constitutes and creates motivation. I've selected the most well-known ones and summarised them here. I looked up several resources for each and created a short description, as well as practical implications on the workflow. I can't claim absolute correctness or completeness – this is not an academic but an independent publication – but I dare say I've come pretty close.

A. Need Theories

Need theories revolve around the fulfillment of an internal state, that makes certain outcomes appear attractive. These theories form the basic foundations of motivation theories, and are the most straightforward. There are three main needs theories:

Maslow's Pyramid Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's theory states that people have a pyramid hierarchy of needs that they will satisfy from bottom to top. There are deficiency needs, that will stifle any other movement if they're not satisfied, and growth needs, that can be progressively satisfied once the basics have been covered.

Alderfer's ERG Model

Alderfer's model condenses Maslow's five human needs into three categories: Existence (material and physiological), Relatedness (social and external esteem) and Growth (internal esteem and self actualisation).

McClelland's Achievement Motivation Theory

McClelland's acquired needs theory states that an individual's specific needs are acquired over time according to one's life experiences. He described three types of motivational need: achievement motivation (n-ach), authority/power motivation (n-pow) and affiliation motivation (n-affil).

B. Adams' Equity Theory

Equity theory states that people seek to maintain a balance between their inputs and the outcomes they receive, also in relation to the outputs of others. Fair treatment creates motivation. It adds a crucial additional perspective to motivation theory, of comparison with 'referent' others (people we consider to be in a similar situation).

C. Herzberg's Job Design Model

Herzberg's model is the most widely replicated and used in business. It splits hygiene factors from motivation factors. Hygiene factors are related to pain-avoidance and lead to dissatisfaction when they're not satisfied. Motivation factors are related to the ability to achieve and experience psychological growth. The model introduces 'job enrichment' for true motivation, as opposed to 'job loading'.

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D. Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Vroom's theory separates effort from performance and outcomes. It works on perceptions, and assumes that behavior is the result of conscious choices among alternatives aimed at maximizing pleasuring and avoiding pain. He introduces the concepts of Expectancy (increased effort will lead to increased results), Instrumentality (if you perform well you will receive a valued outcome) and Valence (value placed on the expected outcome).

E. Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics model

The job characteristics model focuses on the task itself. It identifies five core job characteristics (Skill variety, Task identity, Task significance, Autonomy, Feedback) that influence three critical psychological states (Meaningfulness, Responsibility, Knowledge of outcomes). These, in turn, influence motivation and work outcomes (job satisfaction, absenteeism...). The theory goes on to suggest one can design the key components of a job for maximum motivation.

Need theories

According to need theories, motivation is *'the willingness to exert high levels of effort toward organizational goals, conditioned by the effort's ability to satisfy some individual need'*.

A need in this context is an **internal state** that makes certain outcomes appear attractive. An unsatisfied need creates tension that stimulates drives within the individual. These drives then generate a search behavior to find particular goals that, if attained, will satisfy the need and lead to the reduction of the tension.

Needs are physiological or psychological deficiencies that arouse behavior. These vary over time and place, as they can be strong or weak and influenced by environmental factors.

1. Maslow – deficiency needs vs. growth needs

Maslow's theory states that people have a pyramid hierarchy of needs that they will satisfy from bottom to top. Starting from mere physiological subsistence, they cover belonging to a social circle to pursuing your talent through self-actualization. Important to this theory is that Maslow felt that unfulfilled needs lower on the ladder would inhibit the person from climbing to the next step.



Pyramid of Needs (After Abraham Maslow)

The needs are divided into two categories: **deficiency needs** (physiological and safety) and **growth needs** (belonging, self-esteem and self-actualisation). If the deficiency needs aren't satisfied, the person will feel the deficit and this will stifle his or her development.

In the workplace

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Maslow's hierarchy of needs applied to work situations implies that managers have the responsibility, firstly, to make sure their people's **deficiency needs are met**. This means, in broad terms, a safe environment and proper wages.

Secondly, it implies creating a **proper climate** in which employees can **develop their fullest potential**. Failure to do so would theoretically increase employee frustration and could result in poorer performance, lower job satisfaction, and increased withdrawal from the organization.

For example, in this theory **job insecurity** and the threat of layoffs, will block the person from their higher growth needs. They might work harder to get security, but without fulfilling their other needs. If security doesn't return they will fulfill their needs elsewhere or burn out.

How to satisfy employee's needs

Need	Examples
Physiological	Cafeterias Vending machines Drinking fountains
Security	Economic Wages and salaries Fringe benefits Retirement benefits Medical benefits Psychological Provide job descriptions Avoid abrupt changes Solve employee's problems Physical Working conditions Heating and ventilation Rest periods
Belonging	Encourage social interaction Create team spirit Facilitate outside social activities Use periodic praise Allow participation
Self-esteem	Design challenging jobs Use praise and awards Delegate responsibilities Give training Encourage participation
Self-actualization	Give training Provide challenges Encourage creativity

The table above shows a few potential ways of satisfying employee needs. Some of these are easy and inexpensive to implement, others are hard and costly. Also, the employees' needs may vary.

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However, if you manage to implement at least some of these strategies you will most likely be looked at as more considerate, supportive and interested in your people's welfare.

2. Alderfer's ERG model

Clayton P. Alderfer's ERG theory from 1969 condenses Maslow's five human needs into three categories: Existence, Relatedness and Growth.

1. **Existence Needs:** includes all material and physiological desires (e.g., food, water, air, clothing, safety, physical love and affection). This corresponds closely to Maslow's first two levels.

2. **Relatedness Needs:** encompass social and external esteem; relationships with significant others like family, friends, co-workers and employers. This also means to be recognized and feel secure as part of a group or family. Corresponds to Maslow's third and fourth levels.

3. **Growth Needs:** internal esteem and self actualization; these impel a person to make creative or productive effects on himself and the environment (e.g., to progress toward one's ideal self). Maslow's fourth and fifth levels. This includes desires to be creative and productive, and to complete meaningful tasks.

Even though the priority of these needs differ from person to person, Alderfer prioritises in terms of the categories' **concreteness**. **Existence needs** are the most concrete, and easiest to verify. **Relatedness needs** are less concrete than existence needs, which depend on a relationship between two or more people. Finally, **growth needs** are the least concrete in that their specific objectives depend on the uniqueness of each person.

Relationships between the concepts

There are three relationships among the three needs:

Satisfaction-progression: moving up to higher-level needs based on satisfied needs.

This is the main movement of Maslow's model. Individuals move up the need hierarchy as a result of satisfying lower order needs. In Alderfer's ERG theory, this isn't necessarily the case. The progression upward from relatedness satisfaction to growth desires does not presume the satisfaction of a person's existence needs.

Frustration-regression: if a higher level need remains unfulfilled, a person may regress to lower level needs that appear easier to satisfy.

Frustration-regression suggests that an already satisfied need can become active when a higher need cannot be satisfied. For example: if a person is continually frustrated in his/her attempts to satisfy growth, relatedness needs can resurface as key motivators.

Satisfaction-strengthening: iteratively strengthening a current level of satisfied needs.

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Satisfaction-strengthening indicates that an already satisfied need can maintain satisfaction or strengthen lower level needs iteratively when it fails to gratify high-level needs.

Differences with Maslow's model

ERG theory differs from Maslow's theory in three ways:

(1) a lower level need does not necessarily have to be gratified for a higher level to become relevant (i.e., a person may satisfy a need at hand, whether or not a previous need has been satisfied);

(2) if a relatively more significant need is not gratified, the desire to gratify a lesser need will be increased (i.e., the frustration in meeting high-order needs might lead a person to regress to a more concrete need category);

(3) ERG theory does have some form of hierarchy according to concreteness, but it also allows the order of the needs to differ for different people (e.g., it accounts for the "starving artist" who may place growth needs above existence ones).

In the workplace

On a work level, Alderfer's model implies that managers must recognize their employees' multiple simultaneous needs. Focusing exclusively on one need at a time will not motivate your people. The frustration-regression principle impacts workplace motivation.

For example, if growth opportunities are not provided to employees, they may regress to relatedness needs, and socialize more with co-workers. If you can recognize these conditions early, steps can be taken to satisfy the frustrated needs until the employee is able to pursue growth again.

3. McClelland's achievement motivation theory

In his 1961 book 'The Achieving Society', David McClelland expounded on his acquired-needs theory. He proposed that an individual's specific needs are acquired over time and are shaped by one's life experiences. A person's motivation and effectiveness in certain job functions are influenced by these three needs.

* achievement motivation (n-ach)

The n-ach person is 'achievement motivated' and therefore seeks achievement, attainment of realistic but challenging goals, and advancement in the job. There is a strong need for feedback about achievement and progress, and a need for a sense of accomplishment.

People with a high need for achievement seek to excel and thus tend to avoid both low-risk and high-risk situations. Achievers avoid low-risk situations because the easily attained success is not a genuine achievement. In high-risk projects, achievers see the outcome as one of chance rather than

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one's own effort. High n-ach individuals prefer work that has a moderate probability of success, ideally a 50% chance. They prefer either to work alone or with other high achievers.

* **authority/power motivation (n-pow)**

The n-pow person is 'authority motivated'. This driver produces a need to be influential, effective and to make an impact. There is a strong need to lead and for their ideas to prevail. There is also motivation and need towards increasing personal status and prestige.

A person's need for power (n-pow) can be one of two types - **personal and institutional**. Those who need **personal power** want to direct others, and this need often is perceived as undesirable. Persons who need **institutional power** (also known as social power) want to organize the efforts of others to further the goals of the organization. Managers with a high need for institutional power tend to be more effective than those with a high need for personal power.

* **affiliation motivation (n-affil)**

The n-affil person is 'affiliation motivated', and has a **need for friendly relationships** and is **motivated towards interaction with other people**. They need harmonious relationships with other people and need to feel accepted by other people. The affiliation driver produces motivation and need to be liked and held in popular regard. These people are team players.

High n-affil individuals tend to conform to the norms of their work group. They prefer work that provides significant personal interaction. They perform well in customer service and client interaction situations.

How to interpret the model

McClelland stated that **most people possess and exhibit a combination of these characteristics**. Some people exhibit a strong bias to a particular motivational need, and this motivational or needs 'mix' consequently affects their behaviour and working/managing style. McClelland's theory also allows for the **shaping of a person's needs**; training programs can be used to modify one's need profile.

McClelland suggested that a strong n-affil 'affiliation-motivation' undermines a manager's objectivity, because of their need to be liked, and that this affects a manager's decision-making capability. A strong n-pow 'authority-motivation' will produce a determined work ethic and commitment to the organisation, and while n-pow people are attracted to the leadership role, they may not possess the required flexibility and people-centred skills.

McClelland argues that n-ach people with strong 'achievement motivation' make the best leaders, although there can be a tendency to demand too much of their staff in the belief that they are all similarly and highly achievement-focused and results driven, which of course most people are not.

In the workplace

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McClelland's needs are found to varying degrees in all workers and managers, and their mix of motivational needs characterises a person's or manager's style and behaviour. Both in terms of being motivated and in the management and motivation others.

People with different needs are motivated differently.

- *High need for achievement* - High achievers should be given challenging projects with reachable goals. They should be provided frequent feedback. While money is not an important motivator in itself. Rather, it is an effective form of feedback.
- *High need for affiliation* - Employees with a high affiliation need perform best in a cooperative environment.
- *High need for power* - Management should provide power seekers the opportunity to manage others.

Relation to other theories

McClelland's concept of achievement motivation is also related to Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (see below). People with high achievement motivation tend to be interested in the motivators (the job itself).

Achievement-motivated people want feedback. They want to know how well they are doing on their job. On the other hand, people with low achievement motivation are more concerned about the environment. They want to know how people feel about them rather than how well they are doing².

An overview of needs theories

A short comparison of the different needs within the theories. Some overlap, most don't. It goes to show that even though all three theories focus on needs, they're still all distinctly different.

Maslow	Alderfer	McClelland
Self Actualisation Needs	Growth	Achievement Motive
Esteem Needs		Power Motive
Social Needs	Relatedness	Affiliate Motives
Safety Needs	Existence	Avoidance Motives
Physiological Needs		-

Equity theory

² http://www.accel-team.com/human_relations/hrels_06_mcclelland.html

Equity theory helps explain why **pay and conditions alone do not determine motivation**. It also explains why giving one person a promotion or pay-rise can have a demotivating effect on others. When people feel fairly or advantageously treated they are more likely to be motivated; when they feel unfairly treated they are highly prone to feelings of disaffection and demotivation.

Employees seek to maintain **equity between the inputs that they bring to a job and the outcomes that they receive from it against the perceived inputs and outputs of others**. The belief is that people value fair treatment which causes them to be motivated to keep the fairness maintained within the relationships of their co-workers and the organization.

Words like efforts and rewards, or work and pay, are an over-simplification - hence the use of the terms **inputs and outputs**. Inputs are logically what we give or put into our work. Outputs are everything we take out in return.

Inputs

This term encompasses the quality and quantity of the employees contributions to his or her work. Typical inputs include time, effort, loyalty, hard work, commitment, ability, adaptability, flexibility, tolerance, determination, enthusiasm, personal sacrifice, trust in superiors, support from co-workers and colleagues, skill...

Outcomes

Outputs are defined as **the positive and negative consequences that an individual perceives a participant has incurred as a consequence of his/her relationship with another**. Outputs can be both tangible and intangible. Typical outcomes are job security, esteem, salary, employee benefits, expenses, recognition, reputation, responsibility, sense of achievement, praise, thanks, stimuli...

Payment however, is the main concern and therefore the cause of equity or inequity in most cases. In any position, an employee wants to feel that their contributions and work performance are being rewarded with their pay.

If an employee feels underpaid then it will result in the employee feeling hostile towards the organization and perhaps their co-workers, which may result the employee not performing well at work anymore.

Equity is all about perception

Adams' Equity Theory is a far more complex and sophisticated motivational model than merely assessing effort (inputs) and reward (outputs). Equity Theory adds a **crucial additional perspective of comparison with 'referent' others (people we consider in a similar situation)**.

Equity does not depend on our input-to-output ratio alone - it **depends on people's comparison between our own input-output ratio and the ratio of others**.

People form **perceptions** of what constitutes a fair ratio (a balance or trade) of inputs and outputs by comparing their own situation with other 'referents' (reference points or examples) in the market place as they see it.

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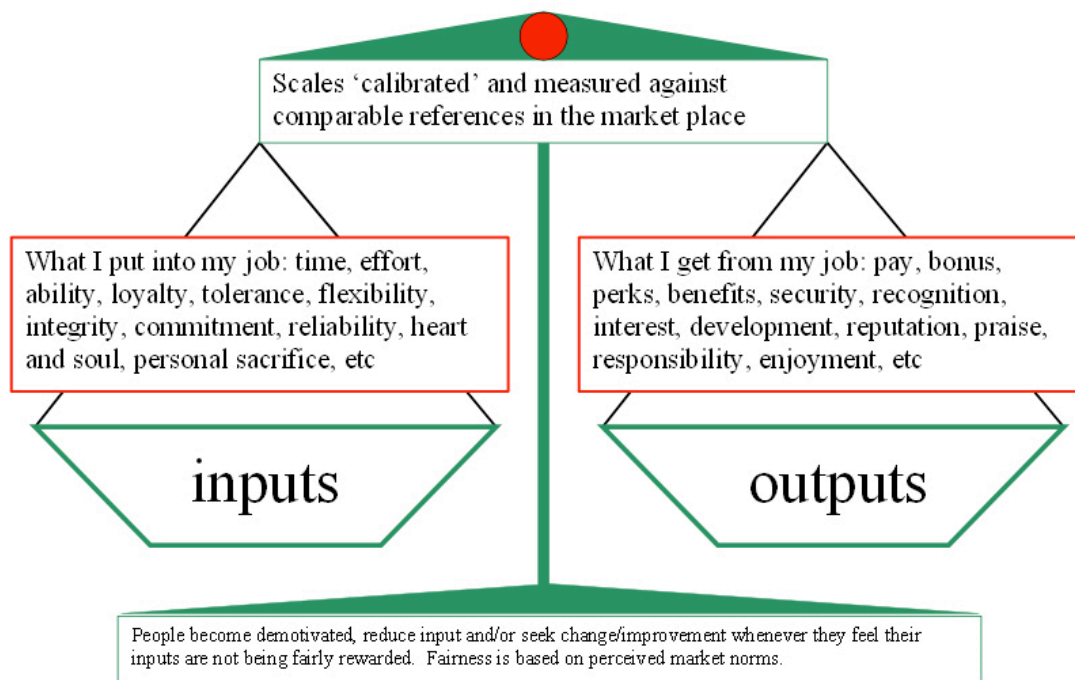
When people feel that their inputs are fairly rewarded by outputs (the fairness benchmark being subjectively perceived from market norms and other comparable references) then generally they are happier in their work and more motivated to continue inputting at the same level.

If they feel, however, that their ratio of inputs to outputs is less beneficial than the ratio enjoyed by referent others, then they become demotivated in relation to their job and employer. **Subtle variables** play an important role for the feeling of equity. Just the idea of recognition for the job performance and the mere act of thanking the employee can cause a feeling of satisfaction and therefore help the employee feel worthwhile and have more outcomes.

Generally the extent of demotivation is proportional to the perceived disparity with other people or inequity, but for some people just the smallest indication of negative disparity between their situation and other people's is enough to cause massive disappointment and a feeling of considerable injustice, resulting in demotivation, or worse, open hostility.

Some people reduce effort and application and become inwardly disgruntled, or outwardly difficult, recalcitrant or even disruptive. Other people seek to improve the outputs by making claims or demands for more reward, or seeking an alternative job.

Adams' Equity Theory diagram - job motivation



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Mechanisms

Equity Theory identifies four mechanisms for (de)motivation:

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1. **Individuals seek to maximize their outcomes** (where outcomes are defined as rewards minus costs).

2. **Groups can maximize collective rewards by developing accepted systems for equitably apportioning rewards and costs among members.** Systems of equity will evolve within groups, and members will attempt to induce other members to accept and adhere to these systems.

The only way groups can induce members to equitably behave is by making it more profitable to behave equitably than inequitably. Thus, **groups will generally reward members who treat others equitably and generally punish (increase the cost for) members who treat others inequitably.**

3. **When individuals find themselves participating in inequitable relationships, they become distressed.** The more inequitable the relationship, the more distress individuals feel. According to equity theory, **both the person who gets “too much” and the person who gets “too little” feel distressed.** The person who gets too much may feel guilt or shame. The person who gets too little may feel angry or humiliated.

4. **Individuals who perceive that they are in an inequitable relationship attempt to eliminate their distress by restoring equity.** The greater the inequity, the more distress people feel and the more they try to restore equity.

In the workplace

Equity Theory in business introduces the concept of **social comparison**. Employees who perceive inequity will seek to reduce it, either by distorting inputs and/or outcomes in their own minds ("cognitive distortion"), directly altering inputs and/or outcomes, or leaving the organization. Thus, the theory has wide-reaching implications for employee morale, efficiency, productivity, and turnover.

It also explains why people can be happy and motivated by their situation one day, and yet with no change to their terms and working conditions can be made very unhappy and demotivated. They might learn that a colleague (or worse: an entire group) is enjoying a better reward-to-effort ratio.

It shows why and how full-time employees will compare their situations and input-to-output ratios with part-time colleagues. These probably earn less, however it is the ratio of input-to-output - reward-to-effort - which counts. If the part-timer is perceived to enjoy a more advantageous ratio, it will have a negative effect on the full-timer's sense of Equity, and with it, their personal motivation.

How to motivate people using Equity Theory

Equity Theory reminds us that people see themselves and crucially the way they are treated in terms of their surrounding environment, team, system, etc - not in isolation - and so they must be managed and treated accordingly.

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Equity theory has several implications for business managers:

- People measure the **totals** of their inputs and outcomes. This means a working mother may accept lower monetary compensation in return for more flexible working hours.
- Different employees ascribe **personal values** to inputs and outcomes. That means that two employees of equal experience and qualification performing the same work for the same pay, may still have quite different perceptions of the fairness of the deal.
- Employees are **able to adjust according to purchasing power and local market conditions**. A teacher from Alberta may accept lower compensation than his colleague in Toronto if his cost of living is different.
- Although it may be acceptable for more **senior staff to receive higher compensation**, there are limits to the balance of the scales of equity and employees can find excessive executive pay demotivating.
- Staff perceptions of inputs and outcomes of themselves and others may be incorrect, and **perceptions need to be managed** effectively. For example, an employee who believes he is **over-compensated** may increase his effort. However he may also adjust the values that he ascribes to his own personal inputs. It may be that he or she internalizes a sense of superiority and actually decrease his efforts.

Relation to other theories

The comparative aspect of Equity Theory provides a far **more fluid and dynamic appreciation of motivation** than typically arises in motivational theories and models based on individual circumstance alone.

There are **similarities with Maslow and Herzberg** in that the theory acknowledges that subtle and variable factors affect each individual's assessment and perception of their relationship with their work, and thereby their employer.

However, awareness and cognizance of the *wider situation* - and crucially comparison - feature more strongly in Equity Theory than in other earlier motivational models.

Herzberg's Job design model

Herzberg's theory is one of the most empirical and compelling theories about motivation. It's the only theory that splits out demotivating factors from motivating factors; it introduces the concept of

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movement vs. motivation. And it “has produced more replications than any other research in the history of industrial and organizational psychology.”³

Kicks In The Ass (KITAs)

Herzberg researched hundreds of employees and companies and determined that most companies use what he unceremoniously refers to as KITA. These are widely used under the erroneous belief that they will motivate their employees. He identified a score of KITAs, in varying degrees of subtlety and impact.

First off, you have **negative physical KITA**. The literal kick up the buttocks and whiplashes may have helped build the pyramid, they’re just not what today’s workers are looking for in a job.

Secondly, there’s **negative psychological KITA**. This entails all kinds of emotional games and manipulations to make someone perform more. This happens a lot, as it can give quite an ego boost to the person administering it. It doesn’t help to get anyone excited to get to work in the mornings though.

And then there is **positive KITA**, meaning any kind of quid pro quo that an organisation may use. A reward, an incentive, more status, a promotion... Many companies believe that these positive KITAs truly do motivate people. As Herzberg shows, they don’t really.

They may create a pull, a kind of “dog biscuit to wave in front of employees to get them to jump” (Herzberg). Positive KITA, Herzberg explains, is seduction. Where negative KITA is truly a practice to be abhorred, positive **KITA makes employees party to their own motivational downfall**. “It’s the American Way. The organisation doesn’t have to kick you, you kick yourself”.

Herzberg goes on to show the ways positive KITA is administered. What Herzberg sees as **true motivation is an engine inside a person**, that makes them keep going out of their own accord, without needing a constant pull from the company.

What’s fascinating about this is that even things like human relations training and job participation don’t intrinsically motivate people. They may charge a person’s battery, but it will run flat again at some point of no real motivation is instilled.

Hygiene vs. Motivators

‘How do you install a generator in an employee?’, Herzberg wonders. He first suggests that “the factors involved in producing job satisfaction (and motivation) are separate and distinct from the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction.” Semantically, this may seem strange but as Herzberg states, these two feelings are not opposites of each other.

Herzberg explains this by turning to the different sets of needs human beings have in a way that is very reminiscent of Maslow’s division of needs into two categories (the deficiency needs, and growth needs).

³ source: Institute for Scientific Information

The first set stems from our animal nature – “the built-in drive to avoid pain from the environment, plus all the learned drives that become conditioned to the basic biological needs. For example, hunger makes it necessary to earn money, and then money becomes a specific drive”.

The other set of needs relates “to that unique human characteristic, the ability to achieve and, through achievement, to experience psychological growth”. The stimuli for the growth needs are tasks that induce growth, in the industrial setting, they are the job content. **Motivation factors** are achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and the work itself.

According to Herzberg, the **factors leading to job satisfaction are separate and distinct from those that lead to job dissatisfaction**. Therefore, manager who seek to eliminate factors that create job dissatisfaction can bring about peace, but not necessarily motivation.

Herzberg suggests that **work be enriched** (or ‘vertically loaded’) for true motivation to spark up. This is different from horizontal job loading, which reduces the personal contribution rather than giving opportunities for growth. Some examples are:

- Challenging the employee by increasing the amount of production expected.
- Adding another meaningless task to the existing one
- Rotating the assignments of a number of jobs that need to be enriched
- Removing the most difficult parts of the assignment

Motivating people with Herzberg’s model

I imagine that after reading about all the ways people AREN’T motivated, you’d like to hear some good news. Well, here you go. Herzberg offers seven principles for vertically enriching jobs:

Principle	Motivators involved
Removing some controls while retaining accountability	Responsibility and personal achievement
Increasing the accountability of individuals for own work	Responsibility and recognition
Giving a person a complete natural unit of work (module, division, area...)	Responsibility, achievement and recognition
Granting additional authority to employees in their activity; job freedom	Responsibility, achievement and recognition
Making periodic reports directly available to the workers themselves rather than to supervisors.	Internal recognition
Introducing new and more difficult tasks not previously handled	Growth and learning
Assigning individual specific or specialized tasks, enabling them to become experts	Responsibility, growth and advancement

Vroom’s Expectancy Theory

Vroom’s expectancy theory emphasizes the mental processes regarding choice, or choosing. It looks at self-interest in the alignment of rewards with people’s wants and the connections among expected behaviors, rewards and organizational goals.

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For organizations, it helps them to relate rewards directly to performance and to ensure that the rewards provided are those rewards deserved and wanted by the recipients.

Vroom's theory assumes that **behavior results from conscious choices among alternatives whose purpose it is to maximize pleasure and to minimize pain**. Vroom realized that an employee's performance is based on individual factors such as personality, skills, knowledge, experience and abilities. He stated that **effort, performance and motivation are linked in a person's motivation**. He uses the variables Expectancy, Instrumentality and Valence to account for this.

Expectancy is the belief that increased effort will lead to increased performance i.e. if I work harder then this will be better. This is affected by such things as:

1. Having the right resources available (e.g. raw materials, time)
2. Having the right skills to do the job
3. Having the necessary support to get the job done (e.g. supervisor support, or correct information on the job)

Instrumentality is the belief that if you perform well that a valued outcome will be received. The degree to which a first level outcome will lead to the second level outcome. i.e. if I do a good job, there is something in it for me. This is affected by such things as:

1. Clear understanding of the relationship between performance and outcomes – e.g. the rules of the reward 'game'
2. Trust in the people who will take the decisions on who gets what outcome
3. Transparency of the process that decides who gets what outcome

Valence is the importance that the individual places upon the expected outcome. For the valence to be positive, the person must prefer attaining the outcome to not attaining it. For example, if someone is mainly motivated by money, he or she might not value offers of additional time off.

Relationship between the elements

The three elements are important behind choosing one element over another because they are clearly defined: effort-performance expectancy (E>P expectancy) and performance-outcome expectancy (P>O expectancy).

E>P expectancy: our assessment of the probability that our efforts will lead to the required performance level.

P>O expectancy: our assessment of the probability that our successful performance will lead to certain outcomes.

Crucially, Expectancy theory works on **perceptions** – so even if an employer thinks they have provided everything appropriate for motivation, and even if this works with most people in that organisation, it doesn't mean that someone won't perceive that it doesn't work for them.

In the workplace

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At first glance this theory would seem most applicable to a traditional-attitude work situation where how motivated the employee is depends on whether they want the reward on offer for doing a good job and whether they believe more effort will lead to that reward.

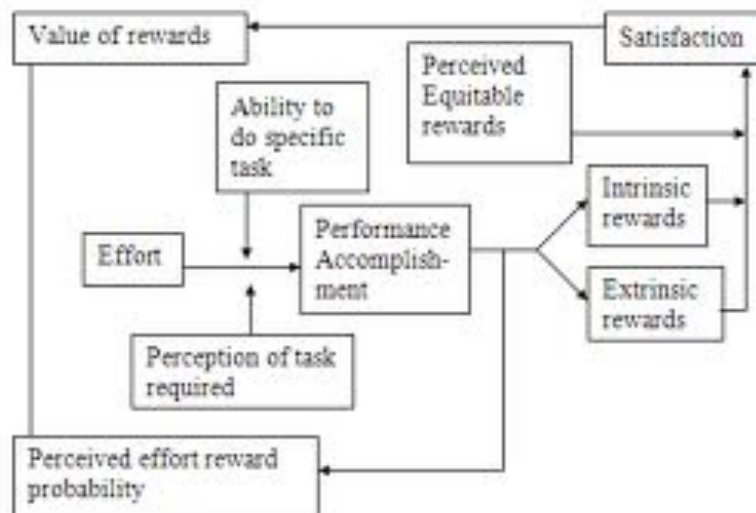
However, it could equally apply to any situation where someone does something because they expect a certain outcome. For example, I recycle paper because I think it's important to conserve resources and take a stand on environmental issues (valence); I think that the more effort I put into recycling the more paper I will recycle (expectancy); and I think that the more paper I recycle then less resources will be used (instrumentality)

So the expectancy model is not about self-interest in rewards, but about the associations people make towards expected outcomes and the contribution they feel they can make towards those outcomes.

Expectancy theory predicts that employees in an organization will be motivated when they believe that:

- * putting in more effort will yield better job performance
- * better job performance will lead to organizational rewards, such as an increase in salary or benefits
- * these predicted organizational rewards are valued by the employee in question.

In order to enhance the performance-outcome tie, managers should **use systems that tie rewards very closely to performance**. Managers also need to ensure that the **rewards provided are deserved and wanted by the recipients**. In order to improve the effort-performance tie, managers should engage in **training** to improve their capabilities and **improve their belief** that added effort will in fact lead to better performance.



Comparison to other models

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Whereas Maslow and Herzberg look at the relationship between internal needs and the resulting effort expended to fulfil them, Vroom separates effort (which arises from motivation), performance, and outcomes.

Vroom's model partly resembles the Equity theory of motivation: people will also compare outcomes for themselves with others. Equity theory suggests that people will alter the level of effort they put in to make it fair compared to others according to their perceptions. So if we got the same raise this year, but I think you put in a lot less effort, this theory suggests that I would scale back the effort I put in.

Other theories don't allow for the same degree of individuality between people. This model takes into account individual perceptions and thus personal histories, allowing a richness of response not obvious in Maslow or McClelland, who assume that people are essentially all the same.

Expectancy theory could also be overlaid over another theory (e.g. Maslow). Maslow could be used to describe which outcomes people are motivated by and Vroom to describe whether they will act based upon their experience and expectations.

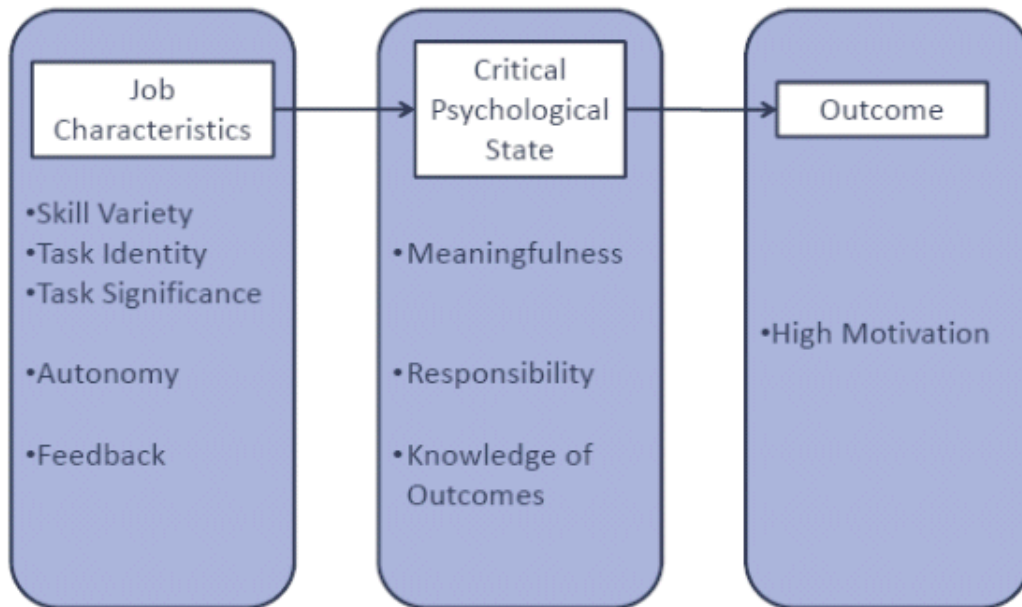
Hackman&Oldham's Job Characteristics Model

Hackman and Oldham's theory is based on the idea that **the task itself is key to employee motivation**. Specifically, a boring and monotonous job stifles motivation to perform well, whereas a challenging job enhances motivation. Variety, autonomy and decision authority are three ways of adding challenge to a job. Job enrichment and job rotation are the two ways of adding variety and challenge.

It states that there are **five core job characteristics** (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) which impact **three critical psychological** states (experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility for outcomes, and knowledge of the actual results), in turn influencing **work outcomes** (job satisfaction, absenteeism, work motivation, etc.). The five core job characteristics can be combined to form a motivating potential score (MPS) for a job, which can be used as an index of how likely a job is to affect an employee's attitudes and behaviors.

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Psychological states

1. **Meaningfulness of work:** that labour has meaning to you, something that you can relate to, and does not occur just as a set of movements to be repeated. This is fundamental to intrinsic motivation, i.e. that work is motivating in an of itself (as opposed to motivating only as a means to an end)
2. **Responsibility:** that you have been given the opportunity to be a success or failure at your job because sufficient freedom of action has given you. This would include the ability to make changes and incorporate the learning you gain whilst doing the job.
3. **Knowledge of outcomes:** This is important for two reasons. Firstly to provide the person knowledge on how successful their work has been, which in turn enables them to learn from mistakes. The second is to connect them emotionally to the customer of their outputs, thus giving further purpose to the work (e.g. I may only work on a production line, but I know that the food rations I produce are used to help people in disaster areas, saving many lives)

Characteristics of the job

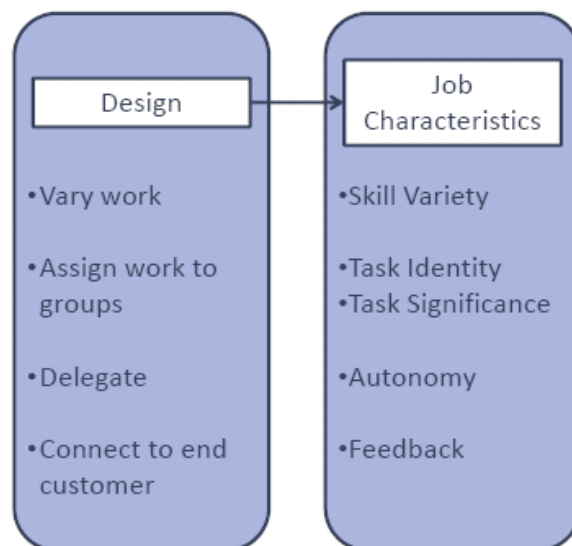
1. **Meaningfulness:** The work must be experienced as meaningful (his/her contribution significantly affects the overall effectiveness of the organization). This is derived from:
 - **Skill variety:** using an appropriate variety of your skills and talents: too many might be overwhelming, too few, boring
 - **Task Identity:** being able to identify with the work at hand as more whole and complete, and hence enabling more pride to be taken in the outcome of that work (e.g. if you just add one nut to one bolt in the same spot every time a washing machine goes past it is much less motivating than being the person responsible for the drum attachment and associated work area (even as part of a group)
 - **Task Significance:** being able to identify the task as contributing to something wider, to society or a group over and beyond the self. For example, the theory suggests that

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I will be more motivated if I am contributing to the whole firm's bonus this year, looking after someone or making something that will benefit someone else. Conversely I will be less motivated if I am only making a faceless owner wealthier, or am making some pointless item (e.g. corporate give-away gifts)

2. **Responsibility** is derived from autonomy, as in the job provides substantial freedom, independence and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out)
3. **Knowledge of outcomes.** This comes from **feedback**. It implies an employee awareness of how effective he/she is converting his/her effort into performance. This can be anything from production figures through to customer satisfaction scores. The point is that the feedback offers information that once you know, you can use to do things differently if you wish. Feedback can come from other people or the job itself.



Key components of the design of a job

1. Varying work to enable skill variety
2. Assigning work to groups to increase the wholeness of the product produced and give a group to enhance significance
3. Delegate tasks to their lowest possible level to create autonomy and hence responsibility
4. Connect people to the outcomes of their work and the customers that receive them so as to provide feedback for learning

Conclusion

While reading this summary, you'll have recognised several aspects that apply to your situation in each theory. How to combine them into a practical framework for more motivation? That's the subject of my ebook: 'Why financial rewards won't drive up your sales – but this ebook will'. Download it here:

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Factors that influence your employee's motivation and how to address them:

- **Needs of the employee** – Employees have multiple needs based on their individual, family and cultural values. In addition, these needs depend on the current and desired economic, political and social status; career aspiration; the need to balance career, family, education, community, religion and other factors; and a general feeling of one's satisfaction with the current and desired state of being.
- **Work environment** – Employees want to work in an environment that is productive, respectful, provides a feeling of inclusiveness, and offers friendly setting.

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- **Responsibilities** – Given that one feels competent to perform in a more challenging capacity and has previously demonstrated such competencies, an employee may feel a need to seek additional responsibilities and be rewarded in a fair and equitable manner.
- **Supervision** – Managers and other leaders more frequently than others feel a need to teach, coach and develop others. In addition, these individuals would seek to influence the organization's goals, objectives and the strategies designed to achieve the mission of the organization.
- **Fairness and Equity** – Employees want to be treated and rewarded in a fair and equitable manner regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, geographic location, or other similarly defined categories. With increased effort and higher performances employees also expect to be rewarded more significantly than counterparts who provide output at or below the norm. The employee's effort and performance at a particular level is influenced by his/her individual goals and objectives and which would vary by each individual. An outcome or reward that is perceived to be highly significant and important can result in a higher level of effort and performance by the individual employee.
- **Effort** – Even though employees may exert higher levels of effort into a position based on a perceived significant reward, this could be a short-term success if the task itself does not challenge or provides satisfaction to the employee.
- **Employees' Development** – Employees prefer to function in environments that provide a challenge, offers new learning opportunities, significantly contributes to the organization's success, offers opportunities for advancement and personal development based on success and demonstrated interest in a particular area.
- **Feedback** – Individuals prefer to have timely and open feedback from their supervisors. This feedback should be an ongoing process during the year and not limited to formal performance reviews once or twice per year. In addition, the feedback should be from both the employee and the supervisor.

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