

# Creating Motivation through Discovery

by Richard Lannon — “Be SET – Structured, Engaged, Trained”

I am often asked by business analysts, consultants, supervisors, managers and leaders, how do you motivate people? My responses are often the similar. Motivation is an endless process. People, teams and organizations are motivated for different reasons. Your job as business analysts, supervisors, managers and leaders is to leverage your own leadership attributes to understand what motivates the people around you.

The reality is people are motivated because they are motivated. Not because you just rewarded them a date night movie pass for 2, popcorn and coke included. One size does not fit all. Motivation is all about asking the right questions, listening and understanding— and then to the best of your ability, facilitate the needs of that person, team or organization. That is good leadership.

You need to ask the right questions to understand what motivates who. Consider it requirements gathering and documenting. Take these ten questions into consideration.

1. What are the primary objectives of your organization? The people around you, your clients and resources might show more motivation if they understood what is going on. Ask clear questions of the organization to establish clarity of mission, values and objectives. Specifically, what is on the strategic agenda of the organization? You should know the answer to that question.
2. What obstacles inhibit us from moving forward, getting the information we need and hinder people from doing their best? People have lives, professional and personal. Consider inquiring about what people are tolerating personally and

professionally. Maybe you can destroy motivation-sucking activities.

3. What motivates the people you are dealing with? Interestingly, they will tell you, people are motivated by a whole range of different things. Motivation could include tending to family needs, reward and recognition, freedom from structure, competition, security, community service or maybe financial reward. The potential list is huge, but on an individual basis, it is most likely only a handful of items.
4. How empowered do people, teams and the organization feel? Do people feel like they have autonomy, independence, room to make decisions or are they controlled, manipulated and the life sucked out of them? These are important considerations.

5. What changes have you proposed or put into place that just killed motivation? Maybe you are investigating the feasibility of implementing a new system that will increase efficiency for management but give administration more work. People are just not interested in helping. In this case, go after the FUDs (fears, uncertainties and doubts) about the future or present event. Give people the freedom to express their concerns with respect. Ensure they feel heard and understood. You may not be able to leverage or act on anything they say, but if they feel you are listening to them and you have captured their needs and requirements, it goes a long way for motivation.



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6. What are the motivational patterns of your people and teams within the organization? Check out motivation from the perspective of your best people and teams. Start to develop some lessons-learned data that can be leveraged to perform gap analysis, best practices and training opportunities.
7. Are the goals of the individual, team and organization aligned? As a professional, you need to recognize where the organization wants time spent. Establish the valued focus areas. Then consider whether resources are focused on those items and their motivation levels based on their activities, whether right or wrong.
8. What do people think about this place they hang out at for 40, 50 or 60 hours a week? This is a loyalty and commitment question. Take generations into consideration when answering this question.
9. When it comes to individual, team and organization involvement, how involved are your people in the strategic, tactical and operational development of the organization? Do people get randomly transferred or assigned to committees? When they talk or tell you something do they feel listened to and heard? When putting a program together are they consulted? Consider this stuff— you may have to leverage the leadership skills and attributes of your business analysts or a person who is recognized as a leader to find out.

10. How consistent is the organization internally and externally? Maybe externally you are the “green technology company” and people joined because they thought it was true. If the internal reality is inconsistent with the external appearance, this will cause motivation problems. Again Gap analysis is needed to determine the problem and challenge ahead.

These are just some areas to consider when it comes to motivation. I recall a situation when I was a Senior Manager some years ago in a large international company. I had an employee whose performance was suffering. I knew the person had the talent and knew their job but not the drive. Unfortunately, they received poor performance reviews for a few years due to this. It took several one-on-one discussions regarding their performance and more importantly, their personal life circumstances and interests for us to discover that they loved to travel. Once we clued into the travel option we set up a career path where the person was able to travel about twice a quarter to help the organization on various initiatives. The best part is that we dove-tailed their professional development with another senior person who hated to travel but loved to develop other people using telecommunication technology. In the following two years, both people flourished and were promoted two levels above their original.

Ask questions and discover the needs of the individual, team and organization and facilitate it. That is how motivation is created.

*Richard Lannon aligns the enterprise and technical skills to common business objectives. Working with professionals, he identifies what is important, establishes direction and builds skills that positively impact the bottom-line. He provides the blueprint for clients to be structured, engaged and trained. That is why his clients call him the **setability expert**.*

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