Getting the Best from people at work:
A Guide for ACTPS Supervisors and Managers

Getting the best from everyone at work involves:

- understanding what motivates (and therefore what de-motivates) people; and
- recognising successful performance and then making the most of it when it happens.

What motivates people?

There are many theories about what motivates people. Most acknowledge that:

> *Different people are motivated by different things, at different times and in different ways.*

In simple terms we are usually motivated to perform at our best by:

- pull factors: what we need or want; and
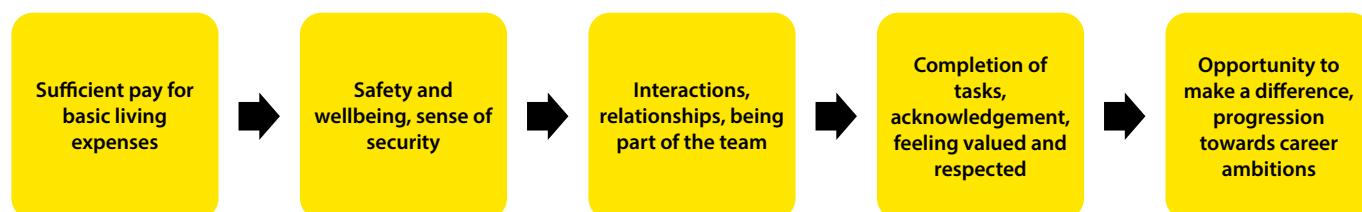- push factors: what we don't want (or what we want to avoid).

Examples of pull factors*		Examples of push factors
'Internal' pull factors	**'External' pull factors**	
• A sense of satisfaction.	• Pay and conditions.	• Conflict.
• Feeling valued or needed.	• Recognition.	• Poor reputation.
• Interesting work.	• A good reputation.	• Negative feedback.
• Being challenged by learning new skills.	• Praise.	• Loss of job.
• Working in a way that is consistent with our values.	• Security.	• More work.
• Making a contribution or difference.	• Promotion or advancement.	• Having to change.
	• A good referee report.	• Making decisions.
	• Status.	• A penalty or punishment.
		• Loss of status.

*Some motivators are internal i.e. they come from within ourselves while others are external to ourselves.

Stages of motivation

One theory about motivation recognises that everyone has basic needs that must be met before we can be motivated by higher level needs. The following diagram which is derived from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs[1] shows how our needs at work change at different stages:

Needs at work at different stages

| Sufficient pay for basic living expenses | ➤ | Safety and wellbeing, sense of security | ➤ | Interactions, relationships, being part of the team | ➤ | Completion of tasks, acknowledgement, feeling valued and respected | ➤ | Opportunity to make a difference, progression towards career ambitions |

Motivation at work

Current thinking about what motivates and engages people at work highlights three key factors[2]:

	How to motivate and engage
Autonomy	Having 'a say about' their own work or time gives employees a greater sense of control and will often lead to innovation. **As far as possible** let employees: • decide when they do tasks – let them prioritise and organise their work • let your staff members work in a way which is comfortable or logical for them • why not introduce a **team planning day** to talk about what work lies ahead and how best to do it? Risks of not doing this: • they will rely on others to tell them what to do • they won't be confident enough to show initiative, solve problems or make decisions.

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[1] Maslow, A.H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. Psychological Review
[2] Daniel H. Pink. Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us

	How to motivate and engage 3
Mastery	Allowing an employee to feel like they have 'mastered' all or part of their role will help them feel more confident at work and encourage them to develop even more: • get into the habit of providing positive feedback or saying thanks for a job well done • as far as possible let staff members become totally at ease with their role before moving them on to other duties, projects or assignments • give tasks that will 'stretch' the employee's skills and build their experience • don't provide tasks that are too hard and where they are likely to fail. Risks of not doing this: • they may become bored • they won't use or develop their skills • they will be reluctant to take on tasks that 'stretch' or challenge them because they don't believe they can succeed.
Purpose	Help employees understand 'why we're all here'- how their work makes a difference to broad strategic goals and outcomes for the ACT community: 'the big picture'. • talk about what the team and organisation is trying to achieve and why – use real life examples, ie, "we are developing these regulations so that all of us in the ACT can have a better standard of….." • talk to employees about how their role contributes or makes a difference, ie, "your role helps people in the ACT community lead healthier lives" • use terms like 'we' and 'us' that create a sense of being in it together (being part of the team and organisation), ie, "we are all here to help people in our community travel around safely" Risks of not doing this: • employees won't feel like they are using their time to 'make a difference' in the world. • they don't have the context to make a call about what is important or to make decisions • they may not identify with what the ACTPS tries to deliver and achieve.

Working out what motivates your staff

Don't assume your staff are motivated by the same things as you.

Observe

Some sample questions:

- When they are engaged, motivated and productive OR when they are unhappy and de-motivated:
    - » What type of work are they doing?
    - » What is their role?
    - » What are they achieving?
    - » What is the benefit to them?
    - » What are the consequences of it not being done well?
- What tasks or activities do they enjoy, choose to do first or volunteer for?
- Which motivators have a positive impact on their performance? (ie: feedback, working under time pressure, praise from you, peer recognition)

Ask

Some sample questions:

- What do you like/least like about your job and why?
- How do you like to work? Do you prefer to start the day early? Do you tend to save all your energy for a deadline?
- What do you want to achieve in your job?
- You make such a difference to our customers when you do X. What do you find rewarding or interesting about doing that?
- You are so motivated and productive at work. I'm really glad you are part of the team. How can I help you keep going?

Ideas for motivating staff: Recognising and acknowledging successful work performance

Valuing the contributions of individuals and teams helps to build a high performance culture. This involves:

- acknowledging everyone's contribution
- recognising when people go over and above
- ensuring good ways of working are promoted and shared
- helping everyone understand what good performance looks like
- celebrating successes.

Recognition needs to be consistent. Recognition needs to be done in a way that is valued.

Supervisors/managers can acknowledge and recognise success in a number of ways.

A thank you	• a personal thank you given at any time. • in an email or letter. • a fun or symbolic token of appreciation.
Positive feedback	• as part of everyday discussions. • as part of performance discussions.
Public acknowledgment or formal rewards/awards	• at a team meeting. • at a morning tea. • in a team email or newsletter. • nomination for Directorate or ACTPS awards. • team based award (can be a fun or symbolic award) - first take time to discuss with the team how they would like to celebrate success.
Targeted development opportunities	• on-the-job development e.g. mentoring, working on a project. • formal development activities. Refer to *Planning for Learning and Development for more ideas.*

Supporting and maintaining your team's successful work performance: some general tips

The following tips are adapted from John Adair's Framework for Motivation[3]:

• be motivated yourself.
• treat each employee as an individual. Get to know what their goals and aspirations are and what motivates them.
• set realistic and challenging goals and show confidence in their abilities by not 'micro managing' when you don't need to.
• remember that 'nothing succeeds like success'. Acknowledge your team or staff member's successes and provide achievable tasks to help build their confidence.
• create a motivating environment. Provide autonomy, support and feedback. Don't burn people out by expecting a very high level of performance without some 'peaks and troughs'.
• support ongoing professional and career development. Refer to Planning for Learning and Development.
• take a coaching approach with staff (refer to *Having good quality performance discussions: a guide for supervisors and managers* for guidance on coaching).

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[3] Adair, John, Leadership and motivation: the fifty-fifty rule and eight key principles of motivating others, 2006