

How Do You Motivate YOUR Team?

Research in motivation theory has been dedicated to the discovery of how to stimulate performance in the workplace.

Most theories line up with the notion that there are intrinsic and extrinsic factors that lead to the motivation of a worker. There is a strong research foundation in motivation theory found in psychology, anthropology and even economic theory (Rational Man).

Jesus directly addressed motivation theory in His Sermon on the Mount. He taught that even good things could be done with the wrong motives. Jesus taught specifically about giving, prayer and fasting and our driving motivations.

The Sermon on the Mount certainly applies in the workplace. We hope that workers are self-motivated, but leaders give considerable thought and planning the “how-to’s” of motivating workers.

As a lifelong student of motivation theory, I tremble at the notion of suggesting I have something to add to the literature on motivation. But, I think I understand one of the essential elements that must be present for motivation to occur.

Before I offer my suggestion, first consider the “corporate convention” as a tool of motivation. I’ve gathered in many convention cities, been housed in multiple starred hotels, and eaten the finest foods. I’ve been entertained at conventions by Chicago, Neil Diamond, Tony Bennett and various other high-level song and dance peeps. I’ve heard from the finest motivational speakers including Tony Robbins, Lou Holtz, Zig Ziglar, Joe Girard and many other pontificators.

I’ve endured pompoms, balloons, circus acts and

cheerleaders. My list is only a sampling of things I've seen done in conventions to motivate teams and their leaders.

Aside from the obvious spiritual vacuum, most conventions lack content or substance. Conventions are targeted to make me "feel motivated." I may leave the convention floor with more zip in my hip, but energy fades away before the convention invoice has been paid.

The music stops, balloons pop and motivation drops to a baseline level.

Motivation recipes must include method.

When we teach or demonstrate HOW to do a thing, it's more likely for motivation to improve and sustain. It's hard to get excited about a job function I do not understand. Error leads to a conditional "give up."

Leaders motivate their teams by providing the ways and means of improved performance. I love watching a toddler learn a new thing. The response of a child should be instructional to leaders:

"I can do it. Let me do it."

Those screams seem to be the fruit of a motivated worker. Motivation becomes sustainable by continuous training. Effective leaders teach and model continuous improvement.

What about the worker who isn't motivated to learn or improve?

Well then, there's the circus. Someone has to ride the elephant out of town.

"Be sure that you not do your charitable deeds before men to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Therefore, when you do your charitable deeds, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored

by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do your charitable deeds, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deeds may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly" (Matt. 6:1-4).