

# Assessment and Motivation

## How assessment can be used to motivate and engage staff.

A lot of time and money is spent hunting down and securing the best candidates for your business. You have interviewed, tested, trialled, and made them an offer they couldn't refuse. Your top notch training and development team put together the perfect induction programme, and gave extra support to tackle any weak spots. Your new employee is FANTASTIC – and yet they are doing a terrible job.

What went wrong? It's very likely the problem is down to motivation. A de-motivated employee can feel like a dead-weight, doing just enough to keep their heads above water but failing to show the commitment or promise you saw at that first interview.

There are many theories on motivation, but in essence they can all be boiled down to one basic ideal – find out what your employees want, and then find a way to give it to them. Behavioural assessment gives you the answer to the first question – what do they want?

If you look around a typical office everybody prefers to work in different ways. Some are assertive and goal oriented, others are concerned with maintaining the status quo whilst others are 'people, people'. What motivates and encourages one person will de-motivate and discourage another.

Understanding how people prefer to behave at work, through the use of behavioural assessment, can unlock people's potential.

### Get the environment right

Herzberg's famous two factor theory states that man has two sets of needs; one as an animal to avoid pain (Hygiene factors), and two as a human beings to grown psychologically (Motivational factors). Hygiene factors in the workplace might relate to things such as: policy, work conditions, salary, status and security. Failure to meet these needs will lead the employee to become dissatisfied and uncooperative - fulfilling these needs prevents dissatisfaction, and paves the way for a more motivated individual to emerge. Only once you have the 'hygiene needs' covered you can begin to address the 'motivational' factors affecting the individual, which will be things like: achievements, recognition, responsibility, advancement and personal growth. What environment will people thrive in? One of the hygiene factors is that of social needs – feeling part of the communication process, creating positive attitudes and pushing up performance. People prefer to give and receive communication in different ways and managers need to understand and respond to this. Assessment will give you an accurate insight into your people and how each of them communicate. If you meet their social needs it will lead to more positive abilities to influence others i.e. morale is contagious, and can be positively generated from inside the organisation.

## Find out what your employees want

Different people are motivated by different things. If you can pinpoint what the best motivators are for specific people then you have the best chance of getting them to perform to their potential. One of the quickest ways of accessing this information is through assessment/psychometric personality testing. They are a good way to uncover motivators that individuals may otherwise have found it difficult to articulate. Factors that motivate one person will not necessarily have the same effect on another. Assessment identifies what these motivational factors are. Is it status or recognition or does it relate to security and the status quo? Tailoring your motivational factor to each individual will deliver you the best results.

Behaviour in the workplace can be broken down into four different factors – Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Compliance. A dominant individual wants challenging assignments, opportunity for advancement and new/varied activities. However, a compliant individual looks to be part of the group, the opportunity to perform competently and a focus on their area of expertise. Each has very different needs, which need to be appropriately addressed. Assessment will uncover, and articulate, what each person wants and needs so enabling you to respond in the best way.

## Play fair

As a general rule, punishment for underperformance doesn't work. The 'kick in the ass' theory means that if you fail to cooperate with management you get punished, humiliated, sacked or docked wages. Rather than inspiring employees to work harder this approach merely leads to even more chronic de-motivation. In these circumstances employees will often spend hours dreaming up complex schemes to pretend they are working hard, usually at a level just above basic requirements. You counteract this by treating employees with respect and paying to their strengths. Assessment can play an important part in this process. Self awareness and an awareness of the team creates a common platform of understanding. Each employee brings something different to the party, its not good or bad just different. Understanding each person's strengths, and conversely their limitations builds a fair and open work environment.

## Managers matter

People don't leave jobs they leave managers. At all levels managers have a crucial role to play in the emotional health of a business. Bad relations between managers and their team negatively affects the level and quality of work produced, and can have a knock-on effect on other parts of the organisation who have to deal with individuals who are frustrated by a boss who 'just doesn't get it'. A good manager will inspire his team to work to their potential through good times and bad. You need to equip your managers with the skills they need to communicate and motivate their team effectively. Assessment provides managers with deeper insights into understanding people and how to hone their own skills to master communication. An effective manager is constantly modifying behaviour in order to get the best from others.

If you are to get the best from the people who work for you then you need to understand how they behave and adapt your behaviour accordingly.

## Room to grow

According to research what people find most motivating in the workplace is: a sense of achievement, recognition from colleagues for good work, enjoying aspects of the job itself, a sense of responsibility, a sense of career advancement and a feeling of personal growth. People need opportunities to learn new skills through their work and to be rewarded for the effort they put in. This needn't mean paying for the whole company to go on expensive training courses. It's about discussing with employees where they see their career going and reconciling this with the needs of the business. Sometimes an hour or two with a more experienced colleague, or in a different department learning a new skill, is all it takes for people to feel they are moving forward. Assessment can play an important part in development plans. People development doesn't just happen. It takes a conscious and concerted effort on the part of the Team and managers to support and encourage their people. Behavioural assessment gives them a starting point. They are able to see their behaviour in the role, their strengths and limitations and their potential for development. People want to express how they feel in the role and talking in terms of behavioural requirements takes the subjectivity out of the process.

Assessment really helps with self awareness. People tend to focus on the negatives points, and assessment allows them to see things in a much more positive light. It really puts their strengths into perspective.