

Leadership and Motivation

“I start with the premise that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.”

Ralph Nader

There are at least two major influences that affect how individuals perform in their environment. These influences include: i) the type of leadership that exists, and ii) personal motivation. While neither is scientific in nature, there is significant research that identifies some theories and general conclusions about why people perform, how they perform, and why some people display different behaviours that puts them in positions of leadership.

In addition to addressing leadership and motivation as theories rather than as scientific fact, there are other issues about personal behaviour that must be considered. The most basic concepts are that every person is (a) like every other person; (b) like some other people; and (c) like no other person. A further explanation may help clarify this statement. Every person is like every other person in that we have a need for food, water, shelter, etc. We are like some other people in that we have similar personality traits which cause us to be more dominant and aggressive, while others may be more passive and submissive. Finally, we are unique in that no other person has the same genetic make-up, past experiences, or view of the world. It is these differences that suggest an analysis of leadership and motivation can result in general conclusions about behaviour and performance.

Human behaviour is as much a reflection of the differences between individuals as it is a reflection of their similarities. These individual differences are caused by a number of influences and characteristics. For example, personality traits focus on individual differences that make each person a unique human being. Our biological make-up concentrates on how we function as a result of our evolution and human inheritance. Our behaviour is largely influenced by the system of rewards and punishments that are present in our environment. Our cognitive approach focuses on how our thinking and memory affects our behaviour. The fact that we are here at this time with immediate influences, and the ability to express a free will, may present the greatest influence of all.

Any theories about leadership and motivation can be contradicted since these theories have many exceptions. It is important that these theories are considered general statements that have been confirmed through observational studies and are applicable only to the extent that they reflect and are influenced by individual behaviour. We might ask: “Why should we even pursue these topics if there are so many inconsistencies, exceptions, and variables that affect conclusions?”. If we are searching for scientific evidence that is universally applicable, we may be wasting our time, but if our goal is to better understand human behaviour and its impacts on personal performance, the insights gained from such theories and studies are invaluable.

Systems formerly made up of rules, regulations, and procedures are being replaced by requirements for flexibility and customer service resulting in personal initiative, empowerment, and greater levels of individual decision-making. To achieve this, it is important to better understand human behaviour and some of the things that impact our actions and reactions.

Motivation

Motivation can be defined as “*the extent to which persistent effort is directed toward a goal*” (Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler & Weick).

Effort: The first aspect of motivation refers to the amount of effort being applied to the job. This effort must be defined in relation to its appropriateness to the objectives being pursued. One may, for example, apply tremendous effort to inappropriate tasks that do not contribute to the achievement of the stated goals.

Persistence: The second characteristic relates to the willingness of the individual to stay with a task until it is complete. For example, an important task that gets accomplished with effort but allows the person to rest on their laurels for an extended period does not display persistence.

Direction: Is the effort directed towards the organization's goals or related to the individual's self-interest? Direction is therefore measured in terms of how persistent effort is applied in relation to the goals being pursued.

Goals: There are two different kinds of goals being pursued simultaneously. They are individual goals and organizational goals which may produce quite different results if they are not compatible.

Next we should distinguish between motivation and performance. While there may be little doubt about the motivation of the individual in terms of effort, persistence, and direction, there may be a lot of questions about the individual's performance as it relates to the organizational goals. The worker may be really busy and factors such as skill levels, task understanding, and aptitude may negatively impact performance. On the other hand, self-interest may create its own motivation not related to the organizational goals.

People may be motivated by factors in the external environment such as pay, supervision, benefits, and job perks. This is referred to as *extrinsic motivation*. They may also be motivated by the relationship between the worker and the task. This type of motivation is called *intrinsic motivation*. These factors often exist simultaneously, but we will distinguish between them as they relate to specific levels of motivation.

We will explore three theories of motivation that are based on human needs. In assessing these theories, we will try and identify *what* motivates people.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow developed a theory that humans have five sets of needs that are arranged in a hierarchy. He contends that people start by trying to satisfy their most basic or compelling needs and progress toward the most fulfilling. These needs are as follows:

1. *Physiological needs:* These include the need for food, water, shelter, clothing and money. Until an individual has access to these necessities, there can be no further progress. These needs are very basic, and for the most part, society and our social network have ensured that they are present. Intrinsic values include personal comfort and satisfaction, while the extrinsic values are most often provided by the organization, the community, or society.
2. *Safety needs:* These include security, stability, and a structured environment. Here, the individual expects and pursues job security, a comfortable work environment, pension and

insurance plans, and freedom to organize in order to ensure continuation of these benefits. Individual's main objective is to ensure that benefits are protected or employment needs are being met rather than contributing to long-term organizational goals. Again, we see a dependence on the external environment to provide these supports. Personal motivation may include the peace of mind that can be provided as a result of these needs being secured.

3. *Relationship needs:* Relationship needs include socialization, affection, love, companionship, and friendship. The individual at this level participates for personal or intrinsic rewards. Since no person can live for extended periods without interaction with other people, the individual may be drawn to participate simply to fulfill this need. Organizations that provide these opportunities include social clubs, singles clubs, seniors clubs and service clubs, depending on the level of personal need. The organization can assist by ensuring that the opportunity for social and relationship expectations are created and met.
4. *Esteem needs:* These include feelings of adequacy, competence, independence, confidence, appreciation, and recognition by others. Again, the individual is driven more by internal or intrinsic needs. The external environment is needed more to provide recognition than to provide material rewards. At this point, the intrinsic value is more important than that which can be provided by outside influences. The ego seems to take over here and the need is to ensure that it is satisfied.
5. *Self-actualization:* This area is the most difficult to define and therefore, may be the most difficult to explain. Why does the successful business person need to pursue further wealth when they have already accumulated more than they will ever need? The answer may lie in the fact that motivation is more internal and therefore, even more individualistic. Different people have different ideas about what they need to achieve in order to obtain true happiness. For the wealthy person, money may no longer be the motivator, it may now be a need to exercise power or the adventure and adrenalin rush created as a result of playing "high stakes games". This becomes the intrinsic motivation. People who pursue self-actualization are more accepting of reality, themselves, and others. Organizational requirements may include the opportunity for creativity and growth. Frequently, individuals aspiring to this level often operate outside existing organizations and instead build their own structures to suit their individual needs.

In discussing this theory, it appears that the further up the scale an individual moves, the more the rewards or motivators move from the external environment to an internal need. It also becomes more difficult to influence motivation, since material rewards become less relevant and internal

rewards become more difficult to identify and address. In order to enhance organizational performance, it is important that the organization recognize the individual need and provide opportunities for satisfaction.

Alderfer's ERG Theory

Clayton Alderfer developed another needs-based theory that supports in many ways, the theory developed by Maslow, but consists of three rather than five basic needs. Alderfer also sees his three levels which includes existence, relatedness, and growth (ERG) needs as being hierarchical, and thus, influenced by personal growth and extrinsic and intrinsic rewards.

1. *Existence needs:* These include needs that are satisfied by material substances or conditions. They correspond closely to the physiological needs identified by Maslow and those safety needs that can be satisfied by material rather than interpersonal rewards or conditions. They include the need for food, shelter, pay, and safe working conditions.
2. *Relatedness needs:* These are needs that may be satisfied by communication, or exchange and interaction with other individuals. There is a dependence on feedback from other organizational or community members to fulfill these needs. Thus, the motivation is provided by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. These rewards include accurate and honest feedback, which may involve direction and advice rather than unconditional pleasantness or agreement.
3. *Growth needs:* These are needs that are fulfilled by strong personal involvement that fully utilizes our skills, abilities, and creativity. They include Maslow's self-actualization as well as esteem needs that rely on intrinsic rewards.

Both theories are also similar because they are hierarchical, and individuals will concentrate on the achievement of the lowest level of need that is not fully satisfied. Maslow contends that the lowest level of need must be satisfied before an individual can proceed to the next higher level. Alderfer theorizes that if a higher level need is unsatisfied, the individual will regress to a desire to satisfy lower-level needs. Maslow believes that once a need is met, it is no longer motivational. Alderfer theorizes that while an individual may have met a higher-level need in one's personal life, for example, they may still be operating much lower on the scale where skills, aptitude, and knowledge may affect performance and confidence.

McClelland's Theory of Needs

Psychologist David McClelland contends that we develop a relatively stable personality early in life that, once acquired, remains unchanged. McClelland, therefore, does not see motivation as

hierarchical. He does not address the issue of growth, but has been more concerned with the behavioural consequences of need. The three areas of need he has identified include the need for *achievement*, the need for *affiliation*, and the need for *power*.

1. *Need for achievement:* Individuals in this category have a strong desire to perform challenging tasks well. They have a preference for situations where personal responsibility can be taken for successful outcomes. The goals they set provide for moderate and calculated risk, and the individual seeks performance feedback to allow for modification and to ensure success.
2. *Need for affiliation:* People in this category display a need to establish and maintain friendly, compatible relationships. They have a need to like other people and want others to like them. They have an ability to create social networks that will result in meeting these needs.
3. *Need for power:* People in this category have a strong need to have influence over others. They wish to make a significant impact and impression on those with whom they come in contact. This need for power corresponds in many ways to Maslow's esteem needs where power is used to get attention or to build personal prestige.

Since this theory is non-hierarchical, the growth pattern between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that are a major part of the earlier theories, do not appear to contain the same significance. McClelland contends that people will be motivated to seek out and perform well in jobs that match their needs. These needs may include either of the three categories identified above and are not contingent on any progression from one category to another.

The testing of these three theories has resulted in some conclusions that help us identify the strengths and limitations of each approach. While Maslow's theory is complicated and contains more steps than the others, there is recognition of the progression from one level to the other. Alderfer's three levels seem to be simpler, less rigid, and therefore, may be more satisfactory to those who wish to understand and apply a model to individual behaviour. Results of McClelland's research has been applied in organizational settings and have been supportive of the idea that particular needs are motivational. Our former theme, 'when all else is consistent, the individual is different', suggests that the application of any theory of motivation has strengths and weaknesses that allow insight into individual motivation and provide escapes for those times when the theory will let us down. All theories contribute to a better understanding of human behaviour in general, but specific application of theory depends on factors that respond to individual needs.

Motivational Goals

Carol Dweck theorizes that all goals a person might pursue fall into two distinct categories: performance goals and learning goals. A *performance goal* is one in which the individual is concerned with acquiring favorable judgement from his or her peers, supervisors, or authority figures. A *learning goal* is one in which an individual uses feedback to increase his or her competence.

If this theory is correct, it contains some further implications for motivation. Firstly, it provides for a much better understanding of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards in relation to performance. While favorable judgement from peers provides extrinsic rewards, the intrinsic rewards come from both the acceptance of this judgement, and the direction that it provides for further learning. The performer sees learning as a life-long process, thus creating even greater levels of motivation.

Secondly, this theory provides a better understanding about failure and its impact on the individual. Since we all fail sometimes, our ability to respond is an important factor in motivation. A person with a learning goal will respond to failure by trying even harder to succeed the next time. In contrast, a person with a performance goal may respond to failure by concluding that they cannot complete the task and may therefore, give up.

Dweck further theorizes that some people believe that personal qualities such as intelligence and ability are fixed and unchangeable. This belief may lead people with performance goals to conclude that they don't have what it takes, and as a result, give up, while others believe that intelligence and ability can change with time, education, and experience. Their goal, therefore, is not to prove their competence but to increase it, thus success and failure are learning experiences that cause them to try even harder next time. Failure may even be seen as creating a greater challenge.

Leadership

In many circles, there is continuous debate about whether leaders are born or developed. If we reflect on our earlier discussion about motivation, we will see that humans are very complicated and are made up of a number of traits. As with motivation, these influences are both inherited and acquired from our environment and influences, and consequently, leadership theories will continue to be debated in the future. We will continue this discussion on the assumption that leadership can be developed. Furthermore, for the purpose of this unit, we will not distinguish between leaders and managers, but will use the term leader to apply to any earned or appointed role that carries with it the exercise of power and influence over others.

Leadership may be defined as: *the influence that particular individuals (leaders) exert upon the goal achievement of others (subordinates) in an organizational context.* An earlier unit on Board Governance addresses in a limited way, the impacts of leaders on performance. We stated that leaders have an ability to see how different aspects of a situation fit together and influence each other. They seek out alliances, opportunities, and approach goals in a proactive way. They have a positive effect on others, which attracts support from those who have similar needs for accomplishment. Their self confidence creates a belief in other people's abilities, therefore, emphasis is placed on empowerment and freedom.

If we agree with these statements, then leadership has two distinct aspects: i) the individual who exerts influence, and ii) those who are the objects of this influence. Successful leadership depends, to a large extent, on the environment and situation in which these dynamics exist.

There are other issues that must also be acknowledged. There are two types of leaders: *emergent leaders* - those who earn leadership positions through their expertise, skills, abilities to influence others, or personal acceptability by the group; and *assigned leaders* - those who are given power to exercise influence through appointment.

In general terms, both emergent and assigned leaders fulfill two different functions. They must be able to provide social and emotional support to the group by listening, acknowledging, team building, and supporting other members in the group. This is referred to as *social-emotional* support. The second factor is to provide direction and assistance to the group in accomplishing their tasks. Successful leaders have the ability to identify and apply the appropriate strategy at the right time. A group that is confused about the goals of the organization, for example, will not respond well to a social-emotional approach, nor will a group that is experiencing internal conflict and in need of team building skills respond very positively to a request to improve individual performance.

The Search for Leadership

What are the qualities that make successful leaders? The lack of able officers in both the First and Second World War led to a search for leaders. This continued after the war to see if there were personality traits that distinguished leaders from followers. While some general characteristics of leaders emerged, there were no conclusions whether personality traits made up the leader or if the opportunity for leadership produced the traits. The biggest weakness in the trait approach to leadership identification is its failure to take into account the task, the subordinate, and the setting or environment in which work is performed.

The study of emergent leaders gives some good clues to what qualities appointed leaders must have to be successful. Emergent leaders hold their position as a consequence of their appeal to

their subordinates. Their role is safe only as long as the group is attracted to these attributes and conditions. Should these positions change, or the group finds other influences, a lack of support or outside forces may undermine the leader's role. The role, therefore, is dependant on performance and any real or perceived faltering will quickly translate into lack of support. The present incumbent after losing support becomes "dethroned" or replaced.

This fledgling type of leadership is what we most often observe in community groups and organizations, politics, and citizen-led efforts. The leader is responsive to the group agenda and is secure only as long as he or she remains responsive. Since most people are easily influenced and may change their minds as a result of immediate or emerging needs, support is difficult to maintain. Leaders who find themselves in this position tend to try and "ride out the storm" before subjecting themselves to any formal leadership review.

Assigned leaders draw their power and influence from sources outside the group, and in most cases, have been given some power to assign tasks, and hand out rewards and punishments based on performance. Rewards may include compliments, tangible benefits, and deserved special treatment. When well thought out, with clear criteria rewards that compliment individual needs can be very motivational. On the other hand, leaders who have no authority to provide rewards may attempt to create them by giving compliments and praise and making promises they can't deliver. Over time, this tends to demotivate, leads to a loss of loyalty, creates dissension and eventually causes the group to become dysfunctional.

Punishments may include reprimands, unfavorable task assignments, and withholding of raises, promotions, and other rewards. At best, punishments seem to have minimal impact on satisfaction or productivity. At worst, punishments are seen as random, not contingent on behaviour or performance and most often poorly administered. Leaders who have access only to punishments often resort to identifying degrees of unfavorable behaviour, and dole out punishment accordingly.

House's Path-Goal Theory

According to Robert House, the most important activities of leaders are those that clarify the path to various goals of interest to subordinates, thus effective leaders form a connection between subordinate goals and organizational goals. Since leadership is about increasing group performance through motivation, the leader must be more concerned with job satisfaction and the

creation of a clear picture of how subordinates can gain rewards based on performance. House's theory is concerned with four different kinds of leader behaviour. These include:

1. *Directive behaviour*: This includes scheduling work, maintaining performance standards, and letting subordinates know what is expected from them.
2. *Supportive behaviour*: A leader displaying this behaviour is friendly, approachable, and concerned with pleasant interpersonal relationships.
3. *Participative behaviour*: Leaders who practice this behaviour consult with their subordinates, and consider their opinions.
4. *Achievement-orientated behaviour*: This behaviour encourages subordinates to exert higher efforts and strive for a higher level of goal accomplishment. Leaders demonstrating this behaviour express confidence that subordinates can reach these goals.

Situational Factors

Subordinate characteristics and environmental factors greatly influence the success, and create the opportunity for successful leadership. Firstly, individual characteristics affect the achievement levels that can reasonably be expected. Secondly, subordinates have individual needs that must be met if their performance and motivation level is to remain high. Thirdly, subordinate's aptitude and abilities will affect both the performance and the response of other co-workers.

Environmental factors that impact on leadership include the following:

1. The appropriateness of the leader's style to the situation will have a major impact on the behaviour of the group.
2. Task clarity, urgency and subordinate empathy will affect performance and motivation.
3. Leader qualifications and knowledge will build group confidence and loyalty.
4. There is probably no substitute for being in the right place at the right time.

Successful leaders will take advantage of the motivating and satisfying aspects of jobs while offsetting or compensating for those factors that demotivate or dissatisfy. There is evidence that this theory works better in predicting job satisfaction and leader acceptance than increasing subordinate performance.

Participative Leadership

We have seen in an earlier unit (Public Participation) that there are differing degrees or levels of participation. These range from total involvement of subordinates in planning, implementation, and evaluation to simple requests for assistance where such participation is a necessary ingredient for success. Given this fact, we can easily see that participation will not be successful in all situations. While public or community involvement will provide much better results in compiling a strategic plan for the community, you would not apply a public participation model if you were trying to escape from a burning building.

Public or community participation can contribute to the following:

1. *Motivation:* Participation can contribute to identifying and establishing group goals and how they can be accomplished. It can also contribute to intrinsic motivation by enriching subordinates jobs through variety, autonomy, and empowerment.
2. *Quality:* There is an old saying that “two heads are better than one”. In many cases this is true of participation. Subordinates have knowledge and expertise that the leader may not have, thus this combination of leader and subordinate expertise can lead to higher quality processes and solutions. In addition, the qualities of empowerment allow employees to take direct action to solve problems.
3. *Acceptance:* Participation can increase subordinates acceptance of the decision since they were involved in making the decision in the first place. There is also a better chance of subordinates seeing decisions as being more fair when they have had input into these decisions.

Participative leadership can also create problems. The time and energy spent in calling meetings, soliciting ideas and training participants may affect deadlines. The involvement of subordinates may be perceived as a loss or sharing of power, thus creating resentment at the leadership level. This may affect the performance of leaders which in turn, may affect subordinate performance. Some workers may not want to be involved in the decision-making aspects of jobs. When the leader is distrusted or when a poor labor relations climate is present, subordinates may see their participation as “doing management’s job”. When governments attempt to involve the community in education reform, health care, economic and social development, it may be perceived as “down loading”, especially if these activities are undertaken in conjunction with other programs and economic cutbacks.

It appears that broad-based participation in short-term projects may not be as advantageous as implementing a participation model among a group of employees that will be part of the same

team for an extended period, and have become very knowledgeable and proficient at their job. Inability to recognize this can lead to a lack of confidence in the process, the leaders, and create resistance to participation.

Vroom's and Jago's Leadership Styles

What are some of the options available to leaders? Victor Vroom and Arthur Jago maintained that there are three different types of leader behaviour. Leaders use either an *autocratic*, *consultative*, or *group* decision-making style.

1. *Autocratic*: This style states that the leader solves the problem or makes the decision using information available to him or her at the time. In some cases, the leader may consult with subordinates to obtain information, but at no time does subordinate input include decision-making. The decision is passed on to subordinates for implementation.
2. *Consultative*: The leader shares the problem with subordinates and gets their input. Subordinate involvement is seen as either a collective or individual request for information which may or may not influence the decision. The leader reserves the right to make that decision.
3. *Group*: The leader shares the problem with subordinates as a group, obtains their collective input and tries to reach consensus on the solution. The leader acts as a facilitator or chairman, trying not to influence input and accepting any solution that the group may suggest.

With these three different approaches, we can also see that there are differing degrees within this spectrum that the leader may apply. According to Vroom and Jago, the approach depends on the situation or problem at hand. The leader's goal should be to make the highest quality decision with the highest level of subordinate support.

Leader Qualities

It is apparent that leaders must possess many qualities in order to be successful and maintain the support of subordinates. The following is a partial list of these qualities.

1. **Intellectual stimulation:** People are stimulated to think of problems and solutions in new and different ways. This depends on creativity, novelty and the ability to help people empathize with a new situation.

- 2. Energy:** The leader must be willing to exert the energy and effort that is necessary to see the task through to completion. Leaders show by example.
- 3. Self-confidence:** Leaders are self assured and possess a confidence in the task, their ability to perform, and the abilities of subordinates to contribute.
- 4. Assertiveness:** Leaders express their feelings honestly and directly in appropriate, spontaneous, and non-manipulative ways. Assertiveness communicates respect for others while acting in one's own best interest.
- 5. Dominance:** When appropriate, successful leaders must be able to take control and dominate an issue, environment or situation. The successful leader also knows when to relinquish control and involve others.
- 6. Motivation:** Successful leaders know what they want, have a clear path to achieving it, and are "driven" by intrinsic rewards. Whether it's Maslow's need for self-actualization, Alderfer's growth needs, or McClelland's need for power, leaders are driven by a need for success and achievement.
- 7. Honesty and Integrity:** To be recognized for the right reasons, leaders must be seen as being above reproach. Honesty and integrity are two factors that allow leaders to enjoy the support of subordinates. Without these qualities, there is a perception of mistrust which leads to a lack of confidence.
- 8. Charisma:** Charismatic leaders possess the personal qualities that give them the potential to have extraordinary influence over others. They tend to command strong loyalty and devotion and in turn, inspire enthusiastic dedication and commitment to the leader and his or her mission. Dedication is inspired from an emotional commitment and followers come to trust and identify with the leader. Charismatics tend to possess all of the qualities noted above, and there is some argument that charisma is in itself a style of leadership.

A single theory of motivation in isolation may provide some understanding of human behaviour, but by combining these theories, one may see patterns that assist in understanding why some people participate as they do. For example, the works of Maslow and Alderfer to some extent may provide understanding of why some people participate at higher levels than others and identify some of the rewards that may help this level of participation to continue. Our observations of leaders when combined with the leadership styles discussed in this unit will help us understand why some leaders perform successfully, why some encounter difficulties and still others struggle with low levels of support while displaying high technical abilities.

Understanding leadership and motivation opens our minds to new thought processes of how people behave and why, helps understand some general principles of human behaviour and allows us to use these theories as a guide for our participation, analysis and understanding of group behaviour. This understanding can serve us best in selecting individuals who display some of these qualities to fill specific roles in our organizations and communities.

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