

# Converting Ordinary People into Extraordinary Performers

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There's a popular myth that successful sales reps are born, not made. While certain personality types adapt more readily to sales and service roles, your success will rise dramatically when you implement an Internal Marketing Plan that educates, stimulates, guides and leads your reps to higher levels of performance and gratification.

Assuming you've hired the right people, your first "motivational" challenge is to learn what each of them wants. Your second challenge is to show them how to get what they want through you. It's a double-win negotiation. You help them get what they want; they help you get what you want.

There are five elemental conditions that dictate your ability to boost performance and gratification. Consider these when planning and evaluating your management & motivational strategies.

Everyone is motivated. Poor performers are motivated - so are drug addicts, con artists and idol worshippers. The word "motivation" is derived from two other words: motive and action. Put simply, there's a purpose behind everyone's every action – but it isn't always conscious and it isn't always healthy.

Whether positive or negative, people's motives are based on their wants which include, but aren't limited to, attention, power, material items, leisure, challenge, fun, growth, security, spirituality, feeling needed and being understood.

If you're having difficulty getting some or all your staff meet or exceed certain standards, you want to examine whether their motives are congruent with the environment in your center. On the other hand, you may have hired exactly what you need but the conditions in your center may not be congruent with the needs of the right people. Either way, please notice that I'm referring to what your people "need" – not "want".

When you listen to your staff describe what they "need", they may really be describing wants. Those wants may not be what's in their best interests or yours. You have to be able to separate needs and wants. Example: many call center reps will complain that they're micro-managed. The truth is most are just trying to make their jobs easier or want to look better by avoiding mistakes being discovered

While constantly seeking "easier" as a path to "better", most call center reps thrive on challenge. But how often do they tell you that?

Your reps will act on their motives, not yours. Have you ever been frustrated because your reps didn't respond to a specific challenge, directive or contest? Quite often, that's a result of your acting from your own frame of reference. Example: most of your best reps are short-term thinkers. This is one key reason why long term contests or incentives rarely work no matter how large the prize.

Successful managers are better long term thinkers and are probably compensated based on longer term results. Naturally, they might think the long term incentive will keep their callers "motivated" longer.

You have to know more about them than they know about you. While certain ideas or techniques may stimulate an entire team, you will never get the most out of each member without personalization. The key issue is the discipline required to know and understand people when you're being driven for results.

This idea is simple in nature yet difficult to integrate. Most people are unlikely to disclose their innermost thoughts, feelings and beliefs without deep-seeded trust.

You have to invest lots of time asking questions to simply understand them without judging or assessment. You might actually have to invest thinking time to consider what they said, determine what they meant and of course, what you're going to do or not do with that information.

This power comes with a huge responsibility. You need to decide what's ethical and honorable to use and that by using it, you're acting in the rep's best interests. There's one additional risk. If you ever use confidential information to motivate and the rep believes you're taking advantage of them, it might take forever to recover their trust.

You can motivate your reps for short time periods only. This is good news and bad news. Here's the good news. The nature of their position creates a need to live in the present. Your reps have to react to lots of different needs and lots of different personalities in the short term in order to be successful.

The bad news: Your reps have a whimsical nature. Their motives, priorities and emotions are constantly changing. So, just when you think you're beginning to understand them, they change their minds or their situations change. If you're not careful, you can confuse and frustrate them. All victories are temporary.

Therefore, your attempts to stimulate require constant consideration and attention and a substantial amount of discipline and empathy. If you want them to repeat positive behavior and eliminate negative behavior, rewards and penalties have to follow performance closely. Management would be an easy job if there weren't people involved. Of course, then, you'd be unnecessary.

Motivation can be sustained longer with an environment built for achievers. Not all of your better performers are extremely driven or ambitious; many succeed because their wants are congruent with the benefits the position. Put simply, when you've hired representatives whose motives and values are consistent with the physical, mental and emotional environment in your center, they can thrive.

If your people aren't thriving but just surviving, if turnover is rampant or if you aren't breeding leaders, have the courage to look within instead playing the blame game. While there are always conditions you cannot control, it's always your responsibility to create outstanding performers from ordinary people.



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