

Leading Your Team to Work Together Part One: Motivation

How do you help your staff work together as a true team, not just a collection of individuals?

Mention the word “team” and most people think in context of a sports activity. That may be the primary association with a team – a group of people we observe or cheer for, but in some way, everyone works together with others to achieve a goal: families, schools, businesses, non-profits – these are all teams.

Your church staff is a team as well. Are your leaders functioning in unison as a team or operating individually as a collection of individuals?

When you are part of a team, you’re not giving up your individual goals or sacrificing your personal success. Instead, team members set their sights on an even higher goal in order to magnify greater success.

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [Payoff](#), by Dan Ariely

Bestselling author Dan Ariely reveals fascinating new insights into motivation—showing that the subject is far more complex than we ever imagined.

Every day we work hard to motivate ourselves, the people we live with, the people who work for and do business with us. In this way, much of what we do can be defined as being “motivators.” From the boardroom to the living room, our role as motivators is complex, and the more we try to motivate partners and children, friends and coworkers, the clearer it becomes that the story of motivation is far more intricate and fascinating than we’ve assumed.

Payoff investigates the true nature of motivation, our partial blindness to the way it works, and how we can bridge this gap. With studies that range from Intel to a kindergarten classroom, Ariely digs deep to find the root of motivation—how it works and how we can use this knowledge to approach important choices in our own lives.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

As leaders, you should understand how your team members are motivated. That process begins with understanding what you can do as a leader to keep them motivated. Motivation is often defined as “getting someone moving.”

One of the more difficult challenges for a leader is to learn how to effectively motivate those working for them. Mastering motivation is difficult because the triggers for motivation are so individual and personal.

For example, inexperienced leaders often believe that the same factors that motivate one team member, or the leader themselves, will have the same effect on others too. The reality is that nothing could be further from the truth.

Human motivation is not simple, but if we seek to understand it more, we will be able to better handle ourselves, our work, our relationships, and our teams. Knowing what drives us and others is an essential step toward enhancing the joy and minimizing the confusion in our lives.

Whatever our official job descriptions, we are all part-time motivators.

To motivate ourselves and others successfully, we need to provide a sense of connection and meaning – remembering that meaning is not always synonymous with personal happiness. Arguably, the most powerful motivator in the world is our connection to others.

Ultimately, this book asks you – whether you're an executive, a parent, a salesperson, a teacher, a government official, or anyone else who seeks to motivate yourself or others – to think deeply and broadly about the effects of your approach. By understanding some of the hidden forces of motivation, we will find it easier to deploy the positive, intangible drives that affect us. After all, if a kind word can do wonders to impel people to do better, what other hidden treasures of energy, dedication, and commitment might we find if we only looked for them?

When it comes to human motivation, we can have perpetual energy as long as we invest in a sense of connection, meaning, ownership, and long-term thinking. And, if we correctly use these forces, the return on investment in human motivation will be immense.

Dan Ariely, [Payoff](#)

A NEXT STEP

If you are like most leaders, occasionally you will find yourself bored and unmotivated at work. Like Sisyphus in Greek mythology, condemned to lifetime of rolling a boulder uphill only to watch it roll back down, we end up doing the same humdrum, unrewarding task over and over.

What can we do to change the situation when it is impossible to change the circumstances?
The answer: change your mental framing.

Designing a new frame around the same circumstances allows new perspectives and ideas to emerge.

If you find yourself bored and unmotivated at work, think about your situation like an onion. There are layers, and it's best to peel one layer at a time. It's not that one problem is more important than the other, or even that you have to go in a particular order. Just decide on a particular layer that you are trying to solve today.

Create a problem brief containing four parts: the problem space, the goal space, the consequence, and the gaps and barriers.

The Problem Space: Spend time thinking about the way things are currently being done – the status quo. What is the reality or condition preventing the goal from being achieved?

The Goal Space: What is your vision of how things would work in a perfect world?

The Consequence: What's going to change if I solve this problem?

The Gaps and Barriers: What are the reasons why the problem hasn't been solved already? What's missing?

These four components – what could be, what is, why it matters, and what is missing – lead to a simple, powerful beginning to reframing your current state. Once you have worked through this exercise, model and lead your staff to apply it as well. Set a future date to discuss how this reframing revealed depth of personal motivation.

Find areas of similarity to build-on or maximize, and note areas of divergence to be aware-of or minimize.

- adapted from [Reframe](#) by Mona Patel

Excerpt taken from SUMS Remix 60-1, published February 2017.

*This is part of a weekly series posting content from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix** Book Summaries for church leaders.*

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