

Theories of Motivation

**A Brief practical guide towards the understanding and application of
Motivational Theories for future Leaders**

"The ones who are crazy enough to think they
can change the world, are the ones who do."

Steve Jobs

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1) ERG

Theory of Motivation: What Is It? and How Does It Work?

Clayton Alderfer's ERG theory of motivation from 1969 converges Maslow's five human needs into three categories: Existence, Relatedness, and Growth.

1.

Existence Needs: This need includes basic survival and physiological needs like air, water, clothing, safety, intimacy, and affection. This equates to Maslow's first two levels.

2.

Relatedness Needs: This need encompasses social and external esteem, and relationships with family, friends, coworkers, and employers. This need recognizes the human need to be seen as a part of a group or family. This equates to Maslow's third and fourth levels of the motivation pyramid.

3.

Growth Needs: Growth needs account for Maslow's internal esteem and self-actualization needs. This means to make a person creative and productive. In a nutshell, this need helps to person to do meaningful tasks.

The needs differ from person to person. ERG's theory of motivation focuses on terms of concreteness of categories.

Existence needs have the strongest foundation and are easy to verify while relatedness needs are less concrete than existence needs. The concreteness depends on the relation between two or more people.

At last, growth needs are least concrete in specific objectives depending on the uniqueness of each person.

The satisfaction of need for the ERG theory of motivation and Maslow's hierarchy

occurs from motive to act. This means the pursuit of satisfaction. The motivation here is the driving force.

For example: When Rahul is not fact-checking stories, he spends time doing social activities and also hangs around the editor's office. His motivation is to be accepted by his coworkers. He is working on relatedness needs.

This is the need to connect with people and to be accepted by the preferred group.

For Rahul, it is to be accepted by the editors' group and to be socially accepted by the other hand. The need for satisfaction comes from the motivation to act.

Relationships Between Alderfer's ERG

Theory Concepts

There are three relationships among the different categories in Alderfer's ERG theory:

- **Satisfaction-Progression:** This means moving into higher satisfaction needs after achieving one. For Maslow, satisfaction-progression played a very critical role. As an individual, one always must motivate themselves to move up the need hierarchy due to satisfy lower-order needs. The progression upward from relatedness satisfaction does not already assume the need for satisfaction from existing needs.
- **Frustration-regression:** If higher needs that a person vies to achieve go unfulfilled, the individual might regress to lower-level needs that may appear easier to satisfy and achieve. Frustration-regression means that already satisfied needs can become active when the higher needs cannot be satisfied. Thus, if a person is frustrated and cannot progress to satisfy his higher needs, relatedness needs can resurface as key motivators.
- **Satisfaction-strengthening:** This is strengthening already satisfied needs. The current needs can be satisfied through various iterations of it. This concept means that already satisfied needs can still create satisfaction and strengthen lower needs iteratively. Strengthening becomes helpful when higher-level needs cannot be achieved.

Differences Between ERG Theory and Maslow's Model

ERG's

theory of motivation differs from Maslow's theory of motivation hierarchy in the following ways:

- 1. The lower need does not need to be satisfied, that means if the person satisfies the needs at hand, does not take into consideration the satisfaction of a previous need.**
- 2. If the relatively significant need is not satisfied, the ability and motivation to gratify a lesser need increase. This incurs frustration in meeting high order needs which might lead a person to regress to a more concrete need category.**
- 3. ERG's theory of motivation allows the order of the needs to differ for different people. This means that it accounts for a starving artist who places growth needs above existing ones.**

The ERG Motivation Theory Work in Situations

In the battle of people which means the workplace, the managers must recognize the various needs of the employees.

As per the ERG theory of motivation, the focus shall be on one need at a time that may not motivate the people. This approach of frustration-regression impacts workplace motivation.

Growth opportunities must be provided to employees. If they are not provided, they may regress to relatedness needs which is not good for the overall zeal and enthusiasm for the workplace.

If employers recognize these conditions early, steps can be taken to satisfy the frustrated needs until the employee is able to pursue growth again.

Financial Incentives in ERG Theory of Motivation

Financial incentives satisfy the need for growth and recognition by others. This will fulfill human needs indirectly, through perceived value and effect on other values.

So, Hence, as per the ERG theory of motivation, financial incentives can be provided as a measure if people's needs are not met. This works in case of distress.



2) McClelland's Human Motivation Theory

When your team members succeed, you might be tempted to show them off to the rest of your organization. But while some people thrive in the spotlight, others dread being "paraded around."

Managing a group of people with different personalities is never easy. But if you're managing or leading a team, it's essential to know what motivates your people, how they respond to feedback and praise, and what tasks fit them well.

David McClelland's Human Motivation Theory allows you to identify people's motivating drivers. This can then help you to give praise and feedback effectively, assign them suitable tasks, and keep them motivated.

Note:

McClelland's Human Motivation Theory is also known as Three Needs Theory, Acquired Needs Theory, Motivational Needs Theory, and Learned Needs Theory.

Understanding McClelland's Theory

In the early 1940s, Abraham Maslow created his theory of needs. This identified the basic needs that human beings have, in order of their importance: physiological needs, safety needs, and the needs for belonging, self-esteem and "self-actualization".

Later, David McClelland built on this work in his 1961 book, "The Achieving Society." He identified three motivators that he believed we all have: a need for achievement, a need for affiliation, and a need for power. People will have different characteristics depending on their dominant motivator.

According to McClelland, these motivators are learned (which is why this theory is sometimes called the Learned Needs Theory).

McClelland says that, regardless of our gender, culture, or age, we all have three motivating drivers, and one of these will be our dominant motivating driver. This dominant motivator is largely dependent on our culture and life experiences.

These characteristics are as follows:

| Dominant Motivator | Characteristics of This Person |
|--------------------|---|
| Achievement | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has a strong need to set and accomplish challenging goals.• Takes calculated risks to accomplish their goals.• Likes to receive regular feedback on their progress and achievements.• Often likes to work alone. |
| Affiliation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wants to belong to the group.• Wants to be liked and will often go along with whatever the rest of the group wants to do.• Favors collaboration over competition.• Doesn't like high risk or uncertainty. |
| Power | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wants to control and influence others. |

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Likes to win arguments.• Enjoys competition and winning.• Enjoys status and recognition. |
|--|--|

Note:

Those with a strong power

motivator are often divided into two groups: personal and institutional. People with a personal power drive want to control others, while people with an institutional power drive like to organize the efforts of a team to further the company's goals. As you can probably imagine, those with an institutional power need are usually more desirable as team members!

Using the Theory

McClelland's theory can help you to identify the dominant motivators of people on your team. You can then use this information to influence how you set goals and provide feedback, and how you motivate and reward team members.

You can also use these motivators to craft, or design, the job around your team members, ensuring a better fit.

Let's look at the steps for using McClelland's theory:

Step 1: Identify Drivers

Examine your team to determine which of the three motivators is dominant for each person. You can probably identify drivers based on personality and past actions.

For instance, perhaps one of your team members always takes

charge of the group when you assign a project. They speak up in meetings to persuade people, and delegate responsibilities to others to meet the goals of the group. They like to be in control of the final deliverables. This team member is likely primarily driven by power.

You might have another team member who never speaks during meetings. They always agree with the group, work hard to manage conflict when it occurs, and visibly become uncomfortable when you talk about doing high-risk, high-reward projects. This person is likely to have a strong need for affiliation.

Step 2: Structure Your Approach

Based on the driving motivators of your workers, structure your leadership style and project assignments around each individual team member. This will help ensure that they all stay engaged, motivated, and happy with the work they're doing.

Examples of Using the Theory

Let's take a closer look at how to manage team members who are driven by each of McClelland's three motivators:

Achievement

People motivated by achievement need challenging, but not impossible, projects. They thrive on overcoming difficult problems or situations, so make sure you keep them engaged this way. People motivated by achievement work very effectively either alone or with other high achievers. When providing feedback, give achievers a fair and balanced

appraisal. They want to know what they're doing right – and wrong – so that they can improve.

Affiliation

People motivated by affiliation work best in a group environment, so try to integrate them with a team (versus working alone) whenever possible. They also don't like uncertainty and risk. Therefore, when assigning projects or tasks, save the risky ones for other people.

When providing feedback to these people, be personal. It's still important to give balanced feedback, but if you start your appraisal by emphasizing their good working relationship and your trust in them, they'll likely be more open to what you say. Remember that these people often don't want to stand out, so it might be best to praise them in private rather than in front of others.

Power

Those with a high need for power work best when they're in charge. Because they enjoy competition, they do well with goal-oriented projects or tasks. They may also be very effective in negotiations or in situations in which another party must be convinced of an idea or goal.

When providing feedback, be direct with these team members.

And keep them motivated by helping them further their career goals.

Comparative Theories

McClelland's theory of needs is not the only theory about worker motivation. Sirota's Three-Factor Theory also presents three motivating factors that workers need to stay motivated and excited about

what they're doing: equity/fairness, achievement, and camaraderie.

Sirota's theory states that we all start a new job with

lots of enthusiasm and motivation to do well. But over time, due to bad company policies and poor work conditions, many of us lose our motivation and excitement.

This is different from McClelland's theory, which states

that we all have one dominant motivator that moves us forward, and this motivator is based on our culture and life experiences.

Use your best judgment when motivating and engaging your team. Understanding a variety of motivational theories will help you decide which approach is best in any given situation.

Note: You may also see these abbreviations for McClelland's three motivators: Achievement (nAch), Affiliation (nAff), and Power (nPow).

Key Points

McClelland's Human Motivation

Theory states that every person has one of three main driving motivators: the needs for achievement, affiliation, or power. These motivators are not inherent; we develop them through our culture and life experiences.

Achievers like to solve problems

and achieve goals. Those with a strong need for affiliation don't like to stand out or take risk, and they value relationships above anything else. Those with a strong power motivator like to control others and be in charge.

You can use this information to

lead, praise, and motivate your team more effectively, and to better structure your team's roles.



3) Locke's Goal Setting Theory of Motivation

Does this quote sound familiar? It is vital to modern goal-setting theory, even though it is over 2,500 years old.

When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps.

Confucius 551-479 B.C.

If you are new to this quote, it may be time to write it down and memorize it.

Most goals are possible to achieve, but people are unsuccessful at goal setting when they omit to consider the most essential ingredients to any given goal.

Perhaps you made a resolution over a glass of wine on New Year's Eve, or while you were sitting on the subway coming back from work, determined to maximize your company's outputs.

You were taken by the belief, then, that you would train for a couple of months before running that summer marathon; that your team-building exercises would strengthen the bonds between your employees and in turn, positively impact their performance at work; that you would write 500 words a day and complete your first novel.

Without a doubt, you have already been exposed to countless inspirational quotes.

As one example, J. K. Rowling has a great inspirational quote. After all, she drafted Harry

Potter on the back of a napkin in a cafe in Edinburgh. She believes that:

“Everything is possible if you’ve got enough nerve.”

If this quote inspires you, that is fabulous. It is not always enough, however, to read a quote like this and change your goal-driven actions. Even with someone as inspiring as In 90% of the cases, reading a motivational quote and promising yourself to work harder, change this or that habit, or improve an aspect of your life guarantees failure. Why is this? If setting goals and succeeding is part of what makes ‘human,’ then how do we address this fail-prone tendency?

It matters, to achieve your goals, as working towards meaningful goals provides us with a sense of direction, purpose, and meaning in life.

The more goals we set—within healthy boundaries—the more likely we are to build self-confidence, autonomy, and happiness.

It is time to explore the science behind goal setting. Let’s flip that 90% failure rate on its head.

Goal-Setting Research: Findings and Statistics

Many studies on goal setting reveal that the habit of making goals is strong, cross-culturally; however, the rate of attaining those goals via small, manageable changes is weak.

The following findings summarize the last 90 years of goal setting:

- **Cecil Alec Mace conducted the first study on goal setting in 1935;**
- **People who write their goals are more likely to achieve their goal than those who don’t by 50%.**
- **Motivation experts agree that goals should be written down, and carried with oneself, if possible.**
- **92% of New Year resolutions fail by the 15th of January.**

- Carefully outlined goals, which can be measured and set within specific timeframes, are more effective.
- Explaining your goals to someone you are close to, or making the commitment public, substantially increases your chances of reaching your goal.
- By contrast, goals that are kept to oneself are more likely to be mixed up with the 1,500 thoughts that the average person experiences by the minute.
- Often, achieving a goal means sacrificing something or putting aside certain habits, or beliefs about yourself—it may even result in an emotional or physical toll.
- Harvard research documents that 83% of the population of the United States do not have goals.
- Goal setting typically yields a success rate of 90%.
- Goals have an energizing function. The higher the goal, the greater the effort invested (Locke & Latham, 2002).

Theoretical Definition(s) of Goal setting

To provide context, here are a few definitions of goal setting defined by experts in the field:

Broadly defined, goal

setting is the process of establishing clear and usable targets, or objectives, for learning.

(Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012)

Goal-setting theory is summarized regarding the effectiveness of specific, difficult goals;

the relationship of goals to affect; the mediators of goal effects; the

relation of goals to self-efficacy; the moderators of goal effects; and the

generality of goal effects across people, tasks, countries, time spans,

experimental designs, goal sources (i.e., self-set, set jointly with others, or

assigned), and dependent variables.

(Locke & Latham, 2006)

Edwin Locke's goal-setting theory argues that for goal setting to be successful with desired

outcomes, they must contain the following specific points (Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011):

- **Clarity:**
goals need to be specific.
- **Challenging:**
goals must be difficult yet attainable.
- **Goals**
must be accepted.
- **Feedback**
must be provided on goal attainment.
- **Goals**
are more effective when they are used to evaluate the performance.
- **Deadlines**
improve the effectiveness of goals.
- **A learning goal orientation leads to higher performance than a performance goal orientation.**
- **Group goal setting is as important as individual goal setting.**

Practically speaking, the role of precision is key for employees to fulfill any task.

To make the memorization of these points easier, the acronym **SMART may help you recall what the most important attributes of effective goal setting are:**

- **Specific.**
- **Measurable.**
- **Assignable.**
- **Realistic.**
- **Time-based.**

How do this work out in practice? In short, the answer relates to specificity, which we will address next.

Examples of the Goal-Setting Theory of

Motivation in Practice

Put aside the irresistible need to make your goal as vague and romantic as possible and stick with the raw stuff. What action items do you need to do, to achieve this goal?

The anagram

“SMART” is here to assist you in this process.

Getting SMART

The first point of the anagram says that goals should be ‘specific.’ All you need to do is make sure you are clear about what your goal is concretely going to deal with.

For example,

instead of saying, “*I must become more social*” (if say, you are a lonesome cat lady who receives visits once a month), first define what you mean by being social, what your expectations are of social life and the ways in which you feel a greater social presence in your life would enhance it.

Then, sketch out a plan to put into action immediately, tackling instances of daily life you can work on (in the workplace, in already existing relationships, during daily encounters) and the extra incentives you can take to get out of your way to meet new people and enjoy new experiences and activities.

Write down what you are aiming to achieve and what you can do that may positively impact your socializing efforts (e.g. becoming more hospitable, relaxed, caring, kind, compassionate, empathetic).

Alternatively, specificity can also refer to setting specific dates, times, locations at which you will commit to spending time dedicating yourself to your goal.

Next, we need to consider what measurable goals mean.

‘Measurable’ is that you should be able to measure in one way or another whether you have completed your goal or not, or still in the process of doing so.

How your goal should be measured is up to you. Still, you should have a clear idea and expectation as to how your goal, once completed, would look like.

If your goal was to become more social, that could mean to build strong friendships with two new people and to commit to attending one social event every week for an entire year.

Keeping track through ‘measurement’ helps to give you a sense of where you currently find yourself in relation to your goal and where you are heading next.

Goals ought to be ‘acceptable’ to you. That means that you must not only identify with them but also, feel like they are in line with your value system and that they won’t lead you to

transgress your sense of integrity in any way.

If the goal is to be more social, the ‘acceptability’ part comes into play at the level of what you feel an adequate friendship would look like.

Whether its sharing fun activities, emotional and intimate conversations, cooking or playing sports together, it’s important to be self-aware, to know what you are after and how your beliefs and feelings are entangled with the goal you are about to set for yourself.

Your goal must be realistic. In other words, you must work with what you have while pushing yourself slightly beyond in order to change your current reality.

Going back to the instance of the lonesome cat lady (nothing wrong about that), a realistic goal would be to make efforts to develop at least two new friendships over the next six months, and not, say, to become a popular member of the community, as achieving this may take considerably more time.

We have just briefly mentioned the time framework, but nonetheless, it’s totally worth re-emphasizing as much as necessary. The timeframe is all about setting a fixed deadline by which you should have completed your goal.

Regardless of what you have decided to do, make sure you interconnect your goal with your calendar, and that you make the necessary adjustments in your daily life so that working on your goal happens smoothly and gradually.



4) Reinforcement Theory of Motivation

Reinforcement theory of motivation is based on law of effect, where behaviors are selected by their consequences and overlook the individual's internal state.

The law of effect is the idea that behaviors are selected by their consequences, i.e., individual's behavior with positive consequences tends to be repeated, but individual's behavior with negative consequences tends not to be repeated.

Reinforcement theory of motivation overlooks the internal state of the individual, i.e., the feelings and drives of individuals are ignored by Skinner.

This theory focuses totally on what happens to an individual when he takes some action.

Thus, according to Skinner, the external environment of the organization must be designed effectively and positively so as to motivate the employee.

This theory is a strong tool for analyzing controlling mechanism for individual's behavior.

However, it does not focus on the causes of individual's behavior.

Managers use the following methods for controlling the behavior of the employees.

Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement implies giving a positive response when an individual shows positive and required behavior.

***For example* – immediately praising an employee for coming early for the job. This will increase the probability of outstanding behavior occurring again.**

The reward is a positive reinforcement, but not necessarily.

If and only if the employees' behavior improves, the reward can say to be a positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement stimulates occurrence of a behavior. It must be noted that more spontaneous is the giving of reward, the greater reinforcement value it has.

Negative Reinforcement

Negative reinforcement implies rewarding an employee by removing negative/undesirable consequences. Both positive and negative reinforcement can be used for increasing desirable required behavior.

Punishment

Punishment reinforcement implies removing positive consequences so as to lower the probability of repeating the undesirable behavior in future. In other words, punishment means applying undesirable consequence for showing undesirable behavior.

***For instance*, suspending an employee for breaking the organizational rules, punishment can be equalized by positive reinforcement from an alternative source.**

Extinction

Extinction reinforcement implies the absence of reinforcements. In other words, extinction implies lowering the probability of an undesired behavior by removing reward for that kind of behavior.

***For instance* – if an employee no longer receives praise and admiration for his good work, he may feel that his behavior is generating no fruitful consequence.**

Extinction may unintentionally lower desirable behavior.

Implications of Reinforcement Theory

Reinforcement theory explains in detail how an individual learns behavior.

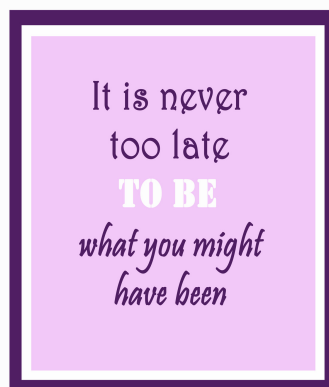
Managers who are making attempt to motivate the employees must ensure that they do not reward all employees simultaneously.

They must tell the employees what they are not doing correctly. They must tell the employees how they can achieve positive reinforcement.

The reinforcement theory suggests that managers should try to structure the contingencies of rewards and punishments on the job in such a way that the consequences of effective job behavior are positive while the consequences of ineffective work behavior are negative or unpleasant.

The focus of this approach is upon changing or modifying the behavior of people on the job. That is why it is also regarded as organizational behavior modification.

The basic notion underlying reinforcement theory is the concept of reinforcement itself. An event is said to be reinforcing if the event following some behavior makes the behavior more likely to occur again in the future.



5) Equity Theory of Motivation:

Components, Importance & Examples

What is Equity Theory of Motivation?

One of the most widely used motivation

theories in workplaces is the equity theory. What is the equity theory? The equity theory is defined as a framework stating that employees motivation is determined by how they perceive the fairness of the treatment and compensation they receive for their input at work. The definition of equity theory emphasizes fairness perceptions. It was developed by John Stacey Adams in 1963. According to this theory, people also consider their input-output ratios and then compare them to the input-outcome ratios of other referent groups.

A referent group is an individual or

group of people, such as employees, used in the comparison. It means that if an employee notices that another employee is earning more money while doing the same job, they may adjust the work done to make the situation fair in their view. Therefore, demotivation is enhanced by perceived unfairness, whereas motivation is

encouraged by fairness. It is from such comparisons that individuals adjust their behaviors. Thus, the equity theory dictates that fairness is the main source of inspiration for individuals, and they change behaviors to orient their input-output ratio with their referent group.

Components of Equity Theory

The equity theory of motivation

contains certain components that affect motivation, including inputs, outputs, and input-output ratios. Inputs are considered activities done by an individual to receive outcomes. They constitute an individual's contribution to a company, such as hours worked by an individual, personal sacrifices, experience in the role, commitment, and loyalty to the organization. On the other hand, the output results from inputs to an organization. They may be intangible or tangible. Examples include pension, salaries, promotion, holiday allowance, bonus, and recognition.

According to the equity theory of motivation, referent groups entail a collection of people used for comparison.

Individuals compare themselves to these four referent groups:

- **Self-outside: This is where the individual compares their experience with other organizations.**
- **Self-inside: This constitutes the experience of an individual being compared within their organization.**
- **Others-outside: This entails a comparison between an individual with others outside the organization.**
- **Others-inside: This is a comparison between an individual and other people within the organization of work.**

The input-output ratios serve as a

means of comparison in work environments. Individuals within organizations tend to compare their input-output ratio with the input-output ratios of referent groups. For example, "That professor is paid one hundred and fifty percent more than we do, but does he do one hundred and fifty percent more research surveys?" This type of comment from a graduate assistant to a fellow graduate

assistant is known as the output-input ratio. This comparison can act as a source of motivation or demotivation.

Importance of Equity Theory

The equity motivation theory mainly

focuses on core equity and justice assumptions which are demonstrated by a balanced scale. The theory emphasizes that people expect equitable and fair returns for their inputs, a concept of equity. It also notes that individuals focus on personal rewards and the rewards of others for comparison.

Another assumption is how individuals focus on how an equitable output should compare to the inputs and outputs of other people within an organization.

Ultimately, employees who perceive inequity will attempt to lower the level of injustice by altering and distorting their inputs.

They can also distort outcomes

psychologically or quit the organization. Consequently, it is true to say that according to equity motivation theory, an individual cares more about what transpires to someone else while assessing justice and equity.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an example of equity theory?

Sandy thinks she

works more intensely than Shelly, while they have a similar salary. The situation causes her performance to be affected, and she becomes unmotivated.

Her motivation was influenced by comparing her input-output ratio to that of Shelly.

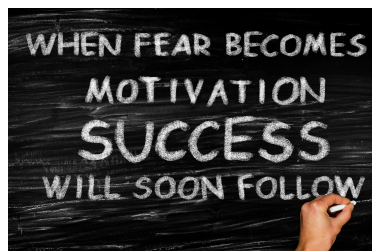
What are the basic principles of equity theory?

The equity motivation theory is anchored on the principle of **justice and equity.**

Individuals expect fair returns for their inputs, such as salary after work is done. Also, individuals focus on equal input-output ratios with their colleagues, demonstrating equity.

What is equity motivation theory?

Equity motivation theory is a motivation theory that focuses on fairness as a motivating factor for employees. According to the theory, individuals adjust their behavior based on the input-output ratio they perceive regarding their referent groups.



6) Expectancy Theory

What drives you to go the extra mile to bring in a project on time? Or to deliver the highest-quality customer service?

Chances are, it's the belief that you'll be rewarded for your effort. The harder you work, the higher your performance level, and the greater your reward.

This simple chain of perceived cause and effect is the basis of Expectancy Theory. It advocates creating and maintaining strong links between high effort, high performance, and proper reward.

What Is Expectancy Theory?

Victor Vroom, business school professor at the Yale School of Management, introduced Expectancy Theory in 1964, in his book "Work and Motivation." More

recent studies indicate that it remains one of the most comprehensive explanations of motivation.

Expectancy Theory argues that the strength of our motivation to act in a particular way depends on the strength of three expectations:

- 1. That making more effort will improve performance.**
- 2. That a high level of performance will bring a reward.**
- 3. That the outcome – your reward – will be attractive.**

So, as a manager, you need to create and demonstrate the reality of two links: first, between high effort and high performance; and second, between high performance and a positive outcome. These automatically create a third link – between high effort and a positive outcome – and so help to motivate your people.

Note:

How exactly you implement

Expectancy Theory will vary depending on your workplace's culture. This is because, at its core, the theory is a framework that tries to explain the thinking behind people's motivation. It's not a series of defined steps to follow.

How to Link Effort and Performance

First, team members need to know that they're putting their time and energy into the right things. So, make sure that they know what counts.

Share your company's vision and values, agree clear goals that will help to deliver organizational objectives, and set regular review and measurement points.

Ask yourself these questions:

- **What is the definition of "doing well"?**
- **What quality or quantity of work do you require, by when?**
- **How do people need to behave with one another?**
- **What personal traits would you like them to develop?**

Note:

Be sure not to set unrealistic or

unfair goals: you want to motivate your people, after all, not to demoralize them. Make sure that the goals, though stretching, are likely achievable.

Next, your team will need the right knowledge, skills and resources to turn its effort into high performance. So, support a learning culture, enable cross training and collaboration, foster initiative, and provide appropriate project- and time-management systems.

Expectancy Theory is based on an assumption that people can choose how to behave. Build on this by coaching and encouraging your team members. This will help them to believe that they can control the factors that determine success.

Note:

One way to develop this first link is to praise good performance when it's been created by hard work. Alternatively, Dweck's Growth Mindset depends on praising the effort itself.

How to Link Performance and Outcome

Rewards don't have to be financial. Positive outcomes for your people might include great working relationships, opportunities for development, more autonomy, or simply a satisfying match between the job and an individual's skills.

Make sure that roles are designed so that you can apply

Expectancy Theory. For example, when you're setting goals for each team member, be sure to talk to each person as an individual to find out what motivates (or demotivates) him or her,

and associate achievement of those goals with a specified reward.

Use these questions to help you to think carefully about each reward:

- **Does the person value the reward you offer? Is it something he wants?**
- **How can you make the reward more valuable to him?**
- **What other reward can you offer that has higher value to him?**

Managing Expectations

Sometimes, despite your best efforts to establish the links that are central to Expectancy Theory, circumstances beyond your control can get in the way of team motivation.

For example, you might not have the resources to provide the rewards that people want, or, there might be a shortage of suitably skilled people in the market, so your existing team members risk overload.

In these situations, be sure to recognize everyone's hard work, to explain the lack of success, and to revise your strategy for the future.

On the other hand, if performance becomes mediocre through lack of effort, give prompt and effective feedback that shows how both performance and outcome can improve.

Warning:

Take care to avoid demoralizing your team through excessive or unfair criticism.

Key Points

Expectancy Theory is a

comprehensive and well-respected explanation of motivation. It highlights the idea of linking effort and performance to reward.

For the theory to be useful, your

team must understand what counts as high performance, be equipped to deliver it, and value the rewards on offer.

The theory is concerned with

individual expectations, so beware assuming that people have the beliefs, knowledge, tools and confidence to do a good job – and be sure to spend time finding out!

