Motivating Others

Nicole Stedman
Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Education
Texas A&M University

A leader must be able to motivate others to achieve goals, accomplish tasks and complete objectives. Motivation is one key indicator of behavior. We behave in a way that will satisfy a motive based on a need. However, we don’t always have the luxury of knowing what our needs or motives are.

Knowing the kinds of things that may motivate people can help you develop a sense of what motivates others around you.

Steven Covey (2004) once said that “between stimulus and response is our greatest power—the freedom to choose.” In other words, we can decide whether we want to be motivated or not.

Motivation is defined as anything that affects behavior in pursuing a certain outcome. In the motivation process people go from identifying a need, to being motivated to act, to specific behavior, to the consequence of that behavior, and, finally, to satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Three common theories of motivation are Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg’s Two-Factor Model, and McClelland’s Acquired Factors.

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. This theory was developed in 1940 by Abraham Maslow. It is based on these four assumptions:

1. Only unmet needs motivate.
2. People’s needs are arranged in order of importance (basic to complex).
3. Lower level needs must be met first.
4. There are five classifications of need.

- **Physiological**: These are primary or basic needs such as air, food, shelter, sex, and relief or avoidance of pain.
- **Safety**: Once the physiological needs are met, the individual is concerned with safety and security.
- **Belongingness**: After safety needs, people look for love, friendship, acceptance and affection.
- **Esteem**: After social needs, the individual focuses on ego, status, self-respect, recognition for accomplishments, and a feeling of self-confidence and prestige.
- **Self-Actualization**: The highest level of need is to develop one’s full potential. To do so, one seeks growth, achievement and advancement.
The key to Maslow’s hierarchy is the assumption that lower level needs must be met first. It is imperative that leaders understand people’s needs and meet them from the bottom up.

**Herzberg’s Two-Factor Model** – During the 1960s Herzberg developed a motivational model that focuses on two levels of needs:
1. Lower level: hygiene or maintenance
2. Higher level: motivators

This model works by understanding that individuals must look beyond external or extrinsic motivators. Herzberg theorized that lower level extrinsic motivators have to be satisfactory for there to be a higher level of intrinsic motivation.

Here are descriptions:

**Maintenance – Extrinsic Factors**
- Motivation comes from outside the person and the job itself
- Includes: pay, job security, title, working conditions, fringe benefits and relationships
- All factors related to lower level needs

**Maintenance – Intrinsic Factors**
- Motivation comes from within the person through the work itself
- Includes: achievement, recognition, challenge and advancement
- All factors related to higher level needs

**McClelland’s Acquired Needs.** This theory, developed during the 1940s, classifies needs as both traits and motivation and says that needs are based on personality traits. The premise is that all people have the need for achievement, power and affiliations.

**Description of High Achievement**
- Tasks must be challenging with clear, attainable objectives
- Fast and frequent feedback a must
- Continued increases in responsibility

**Description of High Power**
- Need to be able to plan and control
- Inclusion in decision making necessary, especially when affected
- Best performance alone vs. in team
- Assign whole tasks, not parts

**Description of High Affiliation**
- Must work as part of a team
- Satisfaction derived from people, not the task
- Needs lots of praise and recognition
- Delegate responsibility for training and orientation
- Good buddies and/or mentors

**Reference**