

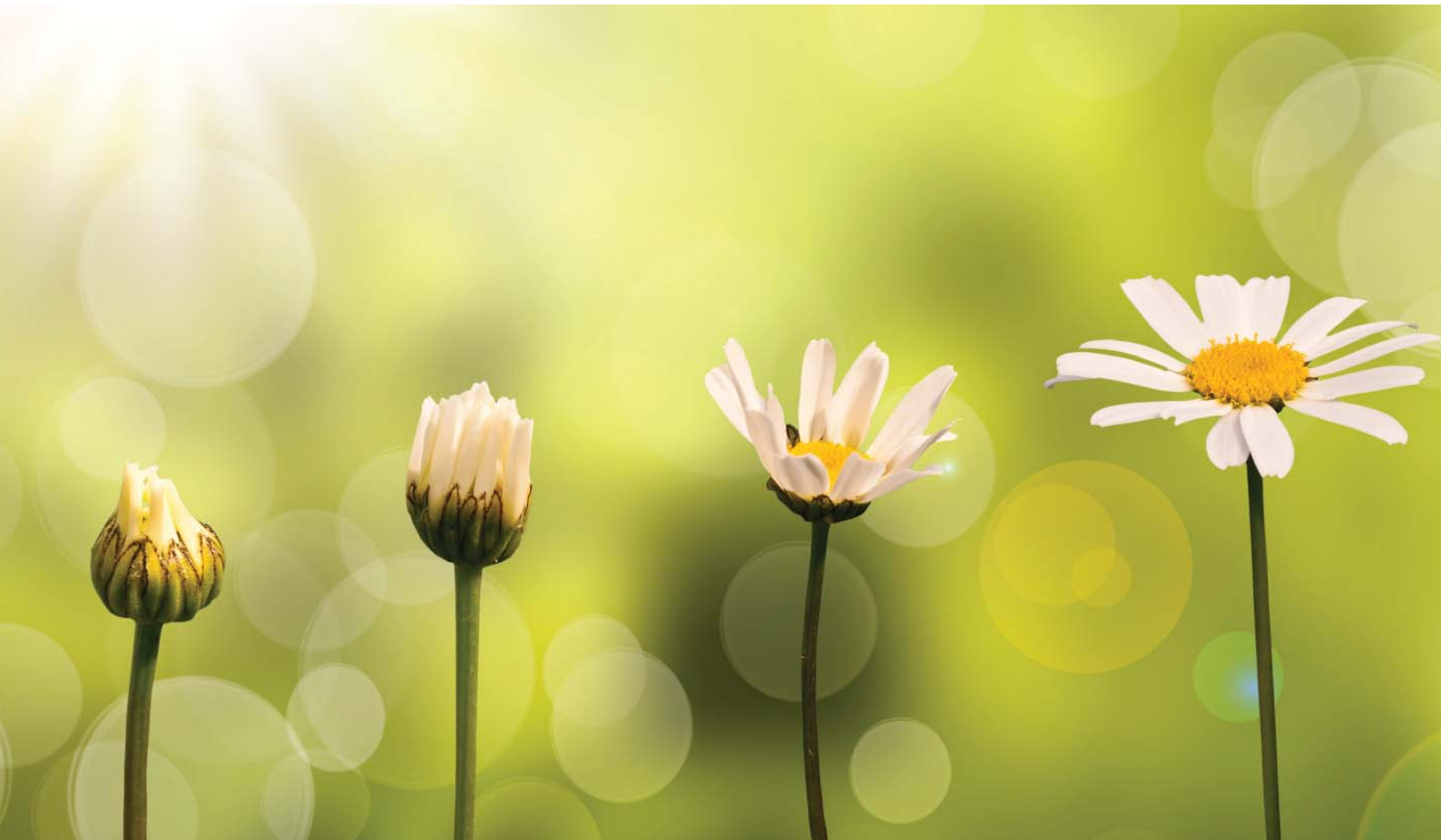
WHITE PAPER

# Motivating Your Managers

## What's the Right Strategy?



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## Contents

Maximizing Motivation	1
About Our Research	2
Know Your Motives	3
A Different Way of Looking at Motivation	4
Managers' Motivational Profiles	6
Which Profiles are the Most Favorable?	10
How Can We Help Managers Develop Favorable Profiles?	11
Three Levers to Unlock Internal Motivation	12
Conclusion	15
References	16
About the Authors	17

# Maximizing Motivation

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Is your organization struggling to be more productive? The advancement of modern technology should be leading us to higher and higher levels of productivity; however, this is not the case. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, US productivity growth is slowing from 2.6% per annum in 2010 to 1.3% in 2015 (Blinder, 2015). The reasons why the United States is suffering from a decline in productivity growth are not clear.

As leadership specialists, we'd like to suggest a potential explanation: Organizations do not fully understand how to motivate and grow managers. This is one human problem that technology has not yet eased.

**Optimizing managers' motivation is not as simple as implementing a one-size-fits-all incentive system. To truly optimize motivation, organizations must understand and address the wide range of motives that managers have for tackling their jobs.**

When many organizations think about motivating and growing their managers they think about compensation. Salary, bonuses, stock options, and promotions are often thought to be tools for driving productivity. Such extrinsic rewards are clearly motivators for many managers. They are an expected part of organizational life.

Intrinsic rewards such as psychological well-being, joy, learning, and fulfillment matter as well. Many organizations recognize this and try to connect their managers with jobs they care about and enjoy through systemic interventions that target employee engagement. In reality, the links between managerial motives and organizationally desirable outcomes are quite complex. When it comes to motivation, managers have a variety of tastes.

A prominent theory of motivation states that there are actually four types of motivations to consider. Given that each manager has a mix of motivations, we suggest the different combinations of motives matter in understanding attraction, retention, and engagement. Perhaps productivity would increase at a quicker rate if organizations rewarded managers according to what is motivating to them instead of what organizations think managers want. One way to foster productivity is to go back to the basics and look at how four basic human motivations combine to influence the hearts and minds of top talent. This report shares findings from one of the very few studies to look at how the different motives of managers work in concert to influence their job attitudes.

## About Our Research

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Three hundred twenty-one US managers (165 men, 156 women) who attended leadership development programs provided by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®) took part in this research study. They worked at the middle, upper-middle, and executive levels and came from numerous organizations.

Managers completed CCL's World Leadership Survey, which provides information on trends in leadership. The survey is administered online in 15 different languages. It includes items measuring the four types of motivation, job attitudes (i.e., job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, intent to turnover), and the work environment (e.g., supervision, organizational politics). You may use the following link to participate in the World Leadership Survey: <https://surveys.clearpicture.com/ccl/>

We used responses from the World Leadership Survey to

- identify the motivational profiles that are common across managers.
- determine which profiles are associated with the most positive job attitudes.
- examine how the work environment influences managers' profiles.

For more information about our research, please see: Graves, L. M., Cullen, K. L., Lester, H. F., Ruderman, M. N., & Gentry, W. A. (2015). Managerial motivational profiles: Composition, antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 87, 32–42.

# Know Your Motives

Before learning more about the different types of motives, take a minute and complete this short assessment. The questions below are designed to help you think about your own motives.

Motives represent the reasons why we act the way we do. Individuals' motives vary across different areas of their lives (e.g., work, family, hobbies, health behaviors, and educational programs). They are affected by the setting. At work, factors such as the boss's leadership behaviors, the reward system, and the organization's political environment are likely to impact motivation. In educational settings, the instructor's teaching style and the grading system might influence motivation. We suggest that you answer the questions for two different areas of your life (e.g., your job, your family, a hobby, a community activity) to gain insight into what your motives are and how they vary across situations.

I spend time on this activity because:		Life Area 1					Life Area 2				
		<i>Strongly Disagree</i> → <i>Strongly Agree</i>					<i>Strongly Disagree</i> → <i>Strongly Agree</i>				
External	1. I get rewarded for doing it.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	2. I get approval from others.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
		TOTAL					TOTAL				
Introjected	3. I would feel bad if I didn't do it.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	4. It helps me to feel good about myself.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
		TOTAL					TOTAL				
Identified	5. It fits my personal values.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	6. It allows me to achieve goals I consider important.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
		TOTAL					TOTAL				
Intrinsic	7. I enjoy it.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	8. I find it interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
		TOTAL					TOTAL				

Calculate your score for each of four types of motives: external, introjected, identified, and intrinsic motivation. Get your score for external motivation by taking the sum of Items 1 and 2. Put this number in the box below those items. Then do the same for introjected motivation (Items 3 and 4), identified motivation (Items 5 and 6), and intrinsic motivation (Items 7 and 8). Read the explanation of each type of motive in Table 1 (page 4) after you have calculated your scores.


For each life area, which types of motivation are highest? Which are lowest? How do your scores differ across the two areas? Keep this information in mind as you read more about these different types of motives in the next section.

# A Different Way of Looking at Motivation

Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Koestner & Losier, 2002) suggests individuals possess four different types of motivation at work. The four types of motivation are external, introjected, identified, and intrinsic. Table 1 provides an overview of the types and gives examples of each. As we move from left to right across the table, the nature of the motivation is initially other-directed and becomes increasingly self-directed.

Table 1 **Four Different Types of Motivation**

Motivation	External	Introjected	Identified	Intrinsic
	<i>Other-directed</i>			<i>Self-directed</i>
<b>Key Driver</b>	Rewards from others	Self-image	Values	Innate interests
<b>Motivating Force</b>	Seeking rewards and approval from others, or avoiding punishment and disapproval	Seeking to maintain your self-worth or avoid negative feelings (e.g., guilt, anxiety)	Pursuing personally important values and goals	Pursuing personally interesting or enjoyable activities; mastering a challenge
<b>Example 1: Physical Fitness</b>	Exercising to get approval from others (e.g., physician, trainer, significant other)	Exercising because you will feel guilty or upset with yourself if you don't	Exercising because you believe in the value of exercise for maintaining your health	Exercising because you enjoy it; getting satisfaction from mastering a physical challenge
<b>Example 2: Education</b>	Studying to get approval from family or to earn a good grade	Studying because performing well at school helps you feel good about yourself	Studying because you believe learning is important for your career success	Studying because you find the matter interesting or enjoyable
<b>Example 3: Workplace</b>	Working to obtain financial rewards, promotions, or approval of others	Working because your self-image is tied to your accomplishments	Working because your job allows you to fulfill your values or goals	Working because you find your job fascinating or enjoyable



In **external motivation**, individuals are driven by external rewards (e.g., money, promotions, stock options, and praise) or the threat of punishment (e.g., demotion, termination); they want to satisfy others in order to gain benefits for themselves. Organizations commonly use external motivators to promote attendance, productivity, resourcefulness, and sales. In **introjected motivation**, the pressure to act is within the individual; individuals are responding to their own “brain chatter” regarding what they should or ought to accomplish. In other words, they want to maintain their personal sense of self-worth and avoid feeling guilty or anxious because they failed to do something they “should” have done. These “shoulds” are often based on organizational norms that the individual has only partially “bought into.” In both external and introjected motivation, behavior feels obligatory. Individuals experience a sense of tension and pressure, leading to negative emotions that interfere with the individual’s attitudes toward the job and the organization, as well as their performance.

The other two types of motivation feel quite different. In **identified motivation**, individuals are driven by work that allows them to fulfill values and goals that are personally important to them. For instance, an individual might be motivated by the desire to provide a product that helps others or addresses an important problem (e.g., environmental sustainability, retirement security). In **intrinsic motivation**, individuals are driven by their innate interests; they do something because they find it enjoyable, thrilling, or fascinating. In identified and intrinsic motivation, the individual’s behaviors feel voluntary and personally authentic—it is truly self-directed. They experience positive emotions that boost their attitudes toward the job and the organization and facilitate performance. Organizations often rely on identified motivation and intrinsic motivation to foster creative, collaborative, and innovative behaviors. In essence, employees who work to feel good, or accomplish personally important goals tend to perform at a higher level.

## Managers' Motivational Profiles

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It is common for people to have different types of motivation operating at the same time in varying amounts. Individuals' experiences are not the result of just a single motive, but depend on their entire pattern of motives or their motivational profile. An individual may be high on all motives, low on all motives, or high on some motives and low on others. Looking at motivational profiles provides a holistic picture of an individual's motives and their impact on that manager.

To better understand managers, we examined their motivational profiles. For more information about this study, see the About the Research section. In what follows, we summarize what we learned about the following questions:

- What motivational profiles do managers exhibit?
- Which profiles are best or most favorable?
- How can organizations and leaders help managers develop favorable profiles?

The managers who participated in our research had six different motivational profiles. The pie chart shows the percentage of those managers who possessed each profile.



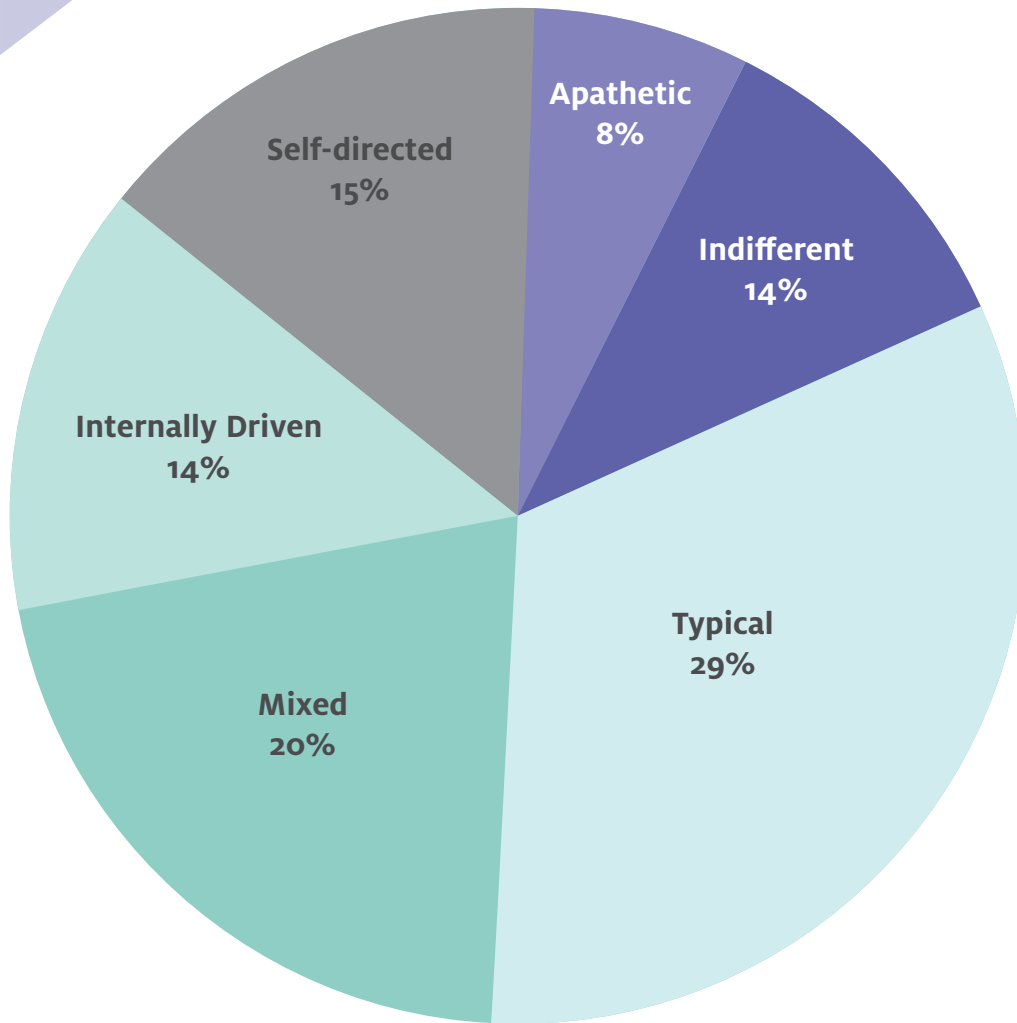




Figure 1 provides an overview of the six profiles. The two profiles on the far left side are the **apathetic** and **indifferent** profiles. Managers who display these profiles have average levels of external motivation, and well below average levels of introjected, identified, and intrinsic motivations. These managers seem to get most of their motivation from external rewards. They have very low levels of internal motivation (introjected, identified, and intrinsic motivation are considered “internal motivation” because the motivation comes, at least in part, from within the manager). Apathetic managers aren’t working to enhance self-worth, or pursue values and goals, or experience excitement. Indifferent managers may not lack these motives to the same extent as apathetic managers, but still cannot be described as working for internal reasons.

The third profile is the **typical** profile; it described the largest number of managers. In this profile, managers are again motivated by an average amount of external motivation. However, their internal motivation is only slightly below average. These managers seek external rewards and have some internal motivation driving their actions.

The fourth profile is the **mixed** profile. Managers who possess this profile are somewhat above average levels of all four motives. They are motivated by a moderate amount of all types of motivation, but none of the sources plays a dominant role.

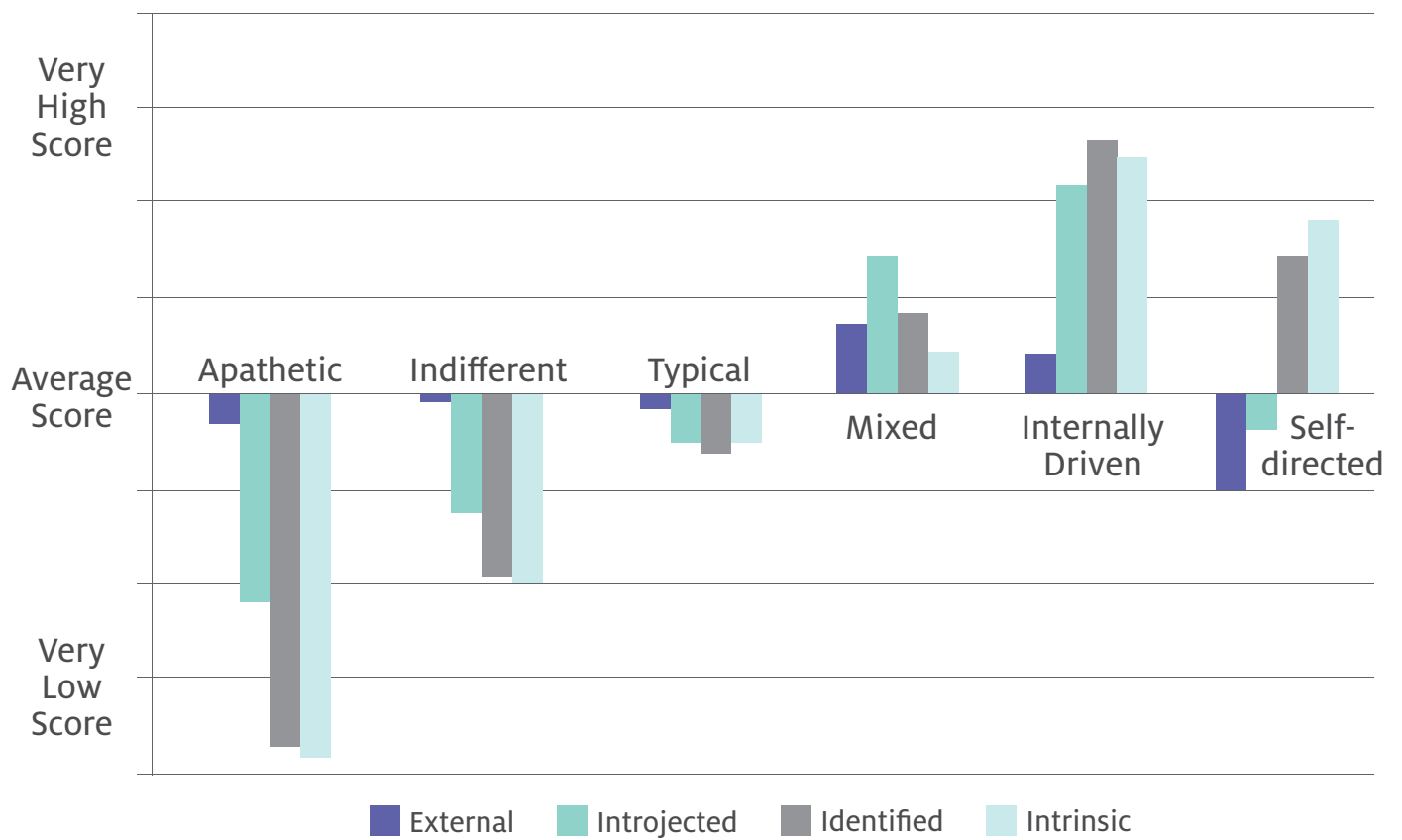
The fifth profile is the **internally driven** profile. Managers in this profile have very high levels of the three internal motives and just slightly above average external motivation. Their motivation comes primarily from within; they are motivated by a desire to maintain their self-images, pursue their values and goals, and engage in enjoyable or interesting work.

The sixth profile is the **self-directed** profile. Managers in this group have low external motivation, slightly low introjected motivation, and high identified and intrinsic motivation. Their primary sources of motivation are pursuing their personal values, goals, and interests. These managers do what is personally important to them or enjoyable. They are less concerned about pursuing rewards or maintaining their self-images.

For each profile, Figure 1 shows the combinations of the four motives.

Figure 1

### Six Manager Motivational Profiles



## Which Profiles are the Most Favorable?

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We determined which profiles were most favorable to the organization by looking at differences across the profiles in terms of attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to turnover.

We found that the self-directed and internally driven profiles were the most favorable, meaning that employees feel good about their work and want to stay with the organization. Managers who had these profiles were the most satisfied with their jobs and committed to their organizations. They also expressed the lowest intent to leave their organizations. Thus, managers whose motivation came from within were the happiest in their jobs and organizations. They focused on fulfilling personally important goals and values and doing interesting and enjoyable work, and, in the case of the internally driven profile, maintaining a positive self-image through their work. It did not seem to matter whether their external motivation was slightly above or below average.

Managers who had the mixed profile also had relatively positive job attitudes. However, their feelings about their jobs and organizations were not as positive as the self-directed and internally driven profiles. Thus, managers who have a moderate amount of all four motives feel fairly good about their organizations and jobs.

The managers who had the lowest job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and the highest intent to turnover were those who had apathetic and indifferent profiles. These managers were the least happy with their jobs and organizations, and reported the highest likelihood of leaving. Managers who had the apathetic profile were especially at risk for turnover. It appears that a lack of internal motivation is particularly problematic for managers' well-being. Managers who displayed the typical profile also had relatively unfavorable job attitudes, although their attitudes were less negative than those of the apathetic and indifferent profiles.

The bottom line: Managers need internal motivation to unlock productivity. When considering employees' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to turnover, external motivation isn't necessarily damaging, but it needs to be paired with internal motivation. Being simultaneously internally and externally motivated is related to more positive outcomes than solely being externally driven. In today's competitive market, organizations can no longer afford to be uninspiring and soulless, even if they pay well.

## How Can We Help Managers Develop Favorable Profiles?

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Managers' profiles are not set in stone. Organizations and leaders can encourage favorable profiles that include internal motivation by creating a nourishing and supportive work environment (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, & De Witte, 2008). A nourishing environment provides managers with a sense of safety and self-worth that allows them to pursue their own values, goals, and interests. It also encourages people to work cooperatively with colleagues and share knowledge. In contrast, a threatening work environment (e.g., excessive competition, unreasonable job demands, lack of job security) leads managers to focus on satisfying others to keep their jobs or maintain or advance their status. Managers in a threatening situation are trying to protect and defend themselves.

Organizations that want to create a work environment where internal motivation thrives should pay attention to bosses, reward systems, and organizational politics. We should note that focusing on bosses, reward systems, and politics does not eliminate the need for a solid compensation system; a solid compensation system remains a critical factor in motivation. However, by focusing on these three levers, organizations can foster internal motivation as well.



## Three Levers to Unlock Internal Motivation

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### 1. Bosses who provide support and encourage self-direction

Managers' immediate bosses play a critical role in facilitating their internal motivation. Managers must believe that their bosses support them (i.e., value their contributions to the organization and care about their well-being). Managers who are supported by their boss have a sense of security and self-worth that allows them to draw on internal motivation. In contrast, when support is lacking, managers feel threatened and insecure and will find it difficult to express their true goals, values, and interests and will draw on less internal motivation.

Further, bosses must exhibit leadership behaviors that encourage self-direction instead of attempting to control or dictate the managers' actions (Hardré & Reeve, 2009). For instance, bosses should try to understand managers' interests and preferences and find ways of aligning opportunities, projects, and job assignments with these interests and preferences. This will increase the likelihood that work will

be personally meaningful to managers and encourage internal motivation. Bosses should also communicate and provide feedback in a manner that is informative and flexible, and encourages problem solving (Burton & McDonald-Mann, 1999; Weitzel, 2000). They should avoid imposing solutions. It is also critical that bosses listen to managers' ideas and feelings, rather than discounting them. All of these behaviors will allow managers to use their inner resources and encourage internal motivation.

Organizations must pay close attention to the capacity of bosses to facilitate internal motivation. Bosses may be selected carefully for their ability to provide support and engage in appropriate leadership behaviors. Leadership development programs should educate bosses about the importance of internal motivation and facilitate their ability to provide leadership and coaching that encourages such motivation.

## 2. Rewards systems that affirm, not manipulate

Extrinsic rewards are a fundamental part of organizational life. Although some have argued that extrinsic rewards such as compensation can actually demotivate employees and suppress the impact of intrinsic rewards, they are not inherently detrimental. The impact of external rewards depends on how the rewards are designed and administered. Rewards can be manipulative or affirming (Eisenberger Pierce, & Cameron, 1999; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Graves, Sarkis & Zhu, 2013).

Manipulative rewards create substantial pressure for managers to achieve specific outcomes and reduce their sense of self-direction. For instance, a bonus system that pits managers against one another may feel quite oppressive; managers' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are dictated by the rewards rather than their own values, goals, and interests. They don't want to "come up short."

In contrast, affirming rewards recognize managers for fulfilling important, challenging goals. Being rewarded for achieving such goals boosts managers' feelings of competence and task mastery. Managers' sense of their own capabilities is enhanced, thereby increasing their internal motivation. Affirming rewards don't create undue pressure or dominate managers' thoughts, feelings, and actions. They get managers focused on pursuing challenging organizational goals that they believe are important. Common rewards such as pay increases, bonuses, stock options, promotions, and recognition are affirming if they are tied to important goals and are not administered in an oppressive manner (e.g., extremely large amounts of compensation at risk, encourage cut-throat competition between managers).

Organizations should strive for affirming rewards. This can be accomplished by assigning challenging (but, not impossible) goals that are important to managers. To ensure that managers view the goals as important, organizational leaders must communicate and build consensus around organization values and goals.

### 3. Minimize organizational politics and promote fairness

In many organizations, the environment is highly politicized and rewards and promotions are a function of subjective factors (e.g., power, relationships) rather than actual performance (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). Managers feel that they must engage in political behavior (e.g., connecting to players with clout, manipulating others, stifling honest criticism, going along with others' ideas and actions) to maintain or advance their own status. Such an environment interferes with managers' internal motivation. Their behaviors will be based on a desire to maintain their image and get ahead. They will focus on gaining external approval rather than acting from within.

Although organizations can't eliminate politics, they can reduce their intensity by implementing fair policies and procedures (Kacmar, Andrews, Harris, & Tepper, 2013). In particular, organizations should ensure that rewards and promotions are based on valid measures of qualifications and performance rather than connections to powerful people.

Paying attention to bosses, fine-tuning reward systems, and limiting organizational politics will help organizations create a work environment that facilitates managers' internal motivation. In addition, organizations should **pay attention to the managers themselves**. Organizations should provide development programs and coaching to help managers understand the various types of motivation, identify their own motivational profiles, and develop strategies for enhancing their internal motivation. Strategies for enhancing internal motivation include seeking projects and opportunities that fit their own values, goals, and interests. Managers may also want to develop expertise that allows them to better pursue their values, goals, and interests. For instance, a manager who is passionate about environmental sustainability may seek education and training that allows her to contribute to managing the organization's sustainability initiatives.



## Conclusion

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Our research on managerial motivation takes a holistic approach recognizing that managers have multiple motives operating simultaneously. We identify six different motivational profiles (combinations of motives) that are common across managers and examine the links between these profiles and managers' job attitudes. Our results indicate it is critical that managers' profiles include some internal motivation. External motivation per se is not bad, but lack of internal motivation appears to be problematic. Managers who lack internal motivation are likely to have unfavorable job attitudes and may leave the organization. If organizations want to develop and energize their management talent, they must recognize individual differences in managers' motives and create the conditions that lead to favorable motivational profiles.

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