



Leadership Handouts

Personal Development Series

Activites Resource Center
Department of Campus Activities
University of Houston

Motivation

A MOTIVE is an internal desire or drive that pushes an individual to strive to attain a goal.

MOTIVATION is fulfilling or satisfying the needs, wants, or drives of an individual, so that he/she is activated or moved. Motivation increases performance and productivity. You cannot motivate another person, but you can provide ways to satisfy personal needs so that another person acts.

What can you as a leader do?

Leaders must provide ways to satisfy members' internal needs. Different individuals have different needs or are motivated by different things. Some of these are:

ACHIEVEMENT. Success means excellent performance. Individual is concerned with doing personal best and leaving a unique mark. Might be motivated by the chance to develop a new program or to extend the group's activities.

AFFILIATION. Gets involved to meet people and socialize. Person values being liked and accepted. Could be motivated by the chance to interact with people- social chair or recruitment chair.

REWARDS. Success is measured by obtaining something. Rewards may be tangible (certificates, food, a higher position) or intangible (thank yous, respect, prestige). Would get involved in many projects- as long as there is a reward upon completion.

POWER. Success is measured by perceived influence over others. Individual is concerned about control and getting his/her way. Might be motivated by achieving an officer position or managing external relations.

SELF-FULFILLMENT. Success is measured by personal development. Person values new challenges, new experiences and personal growth. Could be motivated by coordinating a program they believe in or by experiencing challenges.

STATUS. Success is equated with reputation and prestige. Individual desires to be respected and known as talented. Might be motivated by an external relations position in which "hobnobbing" occurs.

The environment of your organization – its meeting climate, activities and member interactions – can provide opportunities for members to maximize strengths and minimize weaknesses. As a leader, you can help create an environment that encourages members to succeed.

Know your members. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each? What areas does each want to develop? What kind of work does each do well/poorly? What kinds of rewards does each respond to? What does each need to be successful?

Build trust within your organization. Make yourself visible and available to members. Listen and respond to your members' concerns and feelings. Seven ways to build trust:

1. Provide low threat situations and listen to others.
2. Pair inexperienced members with experienced people to build skills.
3. Remember and use people's first names.
4. Divide projects into manageable parts before asking for volunteers.
5. Get a sense of what people want from you and the organization.
6. Encourage cooperation and teamwork.
7. Be informal and personable; share personal and organizational information.

Communicate openly. Share your vision, your expectations and your plans with group members. If they know information and feel involved, they are more apt to participate. Be aware of body language and non-verbal signals and watch for signs of hostility or boredom. Spoken language is another crucial motivator; remember the following phrases:



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“I think you are wonderful”
“Great job”
“Thank you for helping”
“I made a mistake; I’m sorry”

Solicit participation. Ask for members’ ideas; self-involvement motivates. Delegate responsibility; people who have a hand in creating the organization will feel some “ownership”. Foster self-confidence within the membership; if the organization and the leadership builds members up, more will want to join.

Recognize member contributions. Public recognition is vital because it shows each individual proof that contributions are valued, but offers all members a standard to attain. Even the smallest contribution deserves some recognition – and might lead to a huge contribution later on! Positive feedback, praise and rewards reinforce participation.

Confront with a caring attitude. People deserve to be told (privately) if their behavior or performance does not meet expectations, but do so with empathy. If leaders show genuine concern for members and support attempts to contribute, members will enjoy their group experience.

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