

What Really Drives Employees?

Learn about
Intrinsic Motivation

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What is Intrinsic Motivation?

Many people are more creative when they are driven by interest, enjoyment, satisfaction, and a sense of personal challenge in the work they are doing.

It's been deeply ingrained in us for the longest time that if we want the people we lead to perform well, we dangle a reward in front of them as an incentive, in hope that what's good will be achieved and gets repeated. Likewise, we put up a system of punishment in its various forms, in hope that what's bad will be avoided and not get repeated.

This is the carrot and stick principle, which is very much *extrinsic* in nature. By whatever name we call it, it's been practiced everywhere: education, workplace, sports, games, family and relationships. What worked in the assembly lines and factories doesn't fit in our creative world we live in today.



In Dan Pink's book *DRIVE: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, he suggests three essential elements of motivation:

1) Autonomy – the desire to self-direct our own lives

2) Mastery – the urge to get better and better at something that matters

3) Purpose – the yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves

In place of the carrot and stick principle of yesteryear, give meaning and purpose to our pursuits and journey of accomplishments.

Beyond the basic monetary/material reward system in place, allow your self (and the people you lead) to have more autonomy, mastery and purpose, and watch what happens to your performance and overall happiness at work and life.

Pink reminds us that workers need to be paid adequately, but after a certain point monetary incentives don't work as well as other options.

Video:

Autonomy

What is Autonomy? First, let's establish what it is NOT...

First of all, autonomy is not going rogue or ignoring people, and is different from independence. It's not the rugged, go-it-alone, rely-on-nobody individualism of the American cowboy.

It means acting with choice—which means we can be both autonomous and happily interdependent with others.

A sense of autonomy has a powerful effect on individual performance and attitude.

According to several behavioral science studies, autonomous motivation promotes greater conceptual understanding, better grades, enhanced persistence at school and in sporting activities, higher productivity, less burnout, and greater levels of psychological well-being.



Some employers have gone to extremes to promote autonomy. Here are two examples:

ROWE: Results Only Work Environments—where people are only responsible for the output; not the place, people, or time it takes to do it. Best Buy corporate offices implemented this strategy of autonomy with great results.

“FedEx Days” (because people have to deliver something overnight) or 15-20% time—Business leaders give people a portion of their paid time to explore other ventures, side gigs, projects they are not assigned to, etc. 3M did this and got the post-it note among other products. Most of their products they rely on today were devised in 15% time. Other companies boast of great innovations, bug fixes and more being developed during these types of autonomous work arrangements.

Small Group Discussion: *Think of a time when you were allowed autonomy in your own work. Discuss with a neighbor, and take brief notes on his or her story to tell the group.*

In particular, people desire autonomy over four aspects of work: what people do, when they do it, how they do it, and whom they do it with. Thus, intrinsic behavior emerges when people have autonomy over the four T's:

Task, Time, Technique, and Team.

Task: “Hire good people, and leave them alone.” Some choice in task can allow for more motivation and job satisfaction.

Time: Without sovereignty over our time, it's nearly impossible to have autonomy over our lives. Flex time, working from home, weekend hours, less overall hours but task is completed (output-only results).

Technique: Allowing freedom in how something is done. Creativity and innovation flourish when you invite others for input on technique.

Team: The virtues of offering people some amount of freedom over those with whom they work. Ample research has shown that people working in self-organized teams are more satisfied than those working in inherited teams.

Examples from the group?

Think of famous artists and painters in our past: Picasso and Pollock: If they were told to start at 8:30am each day, only use certain brushes, and work with the artist down the street, they would not have been as successful. In fact, they may have failed to produce at all.

One thing to clarify: encouraging autonomy doesn't mean discouraging accountability. People are still responsible to deliver results.

In DRIVE, Pink says, "Studies have shown that perceived control is an important component of one's happiness. However, what people feel like they want control over really varies, so I don't think there's one aspect of autonomy that's universally the most important. Different individuals have different desires, so the best strategy for an employer would be to figure out what's important to each individual employee."

What's your currency as far as autonomy is concerned?

What do you think your employees desire? Have you ever asked?

Mastery

The biggest motivator at work is making progress.

Solving complex problems requires an inquiring mind and the willingness to experiment one's way to a fresh solution. Where extrinsic motivation sought compliance, intrinsic seeks engagement. Only engagement can produce mastery. In our workplaces today, we have way too much compliance and way too little engagement.

The desire for intellectual challenge—that is, the urge to master something new and engaging—is a best predictor of productivity.

Give them flow!

Flow is the mental state of operation in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity. For people to find a sense of flow the relationship between what a person needs to do and what he can actually accomplish is aligned for them.

First, provide employees with what Pink describes as “Goldilocks tasks”—challenges that are not too easy, nor are they too difficult. Flow will develop when they are challenged slightly, but not overwhelmed with heavy challenges.

People also lean toward mastery by incorporating play into work (or turning work into play). When work looks like play, we are more likely to be productive and work toward mastering the task.

Businesses afford employees the freedom to sculpt their jobs in ways that bring a little bit of flow to otherwise mundane duties. In housekeeping roles, staff was allowed to branch out from their low autonomy job responsibilities by interacting with visitors, helping other employees with tasks, and more. This presented more challenges and made their job more interesting, boosting productivity.

Mastery is a mindset, yet something you never quite achieve, thus you continue on your quest. Sports figures are perfect examples of this idea; no matter how good one gets, he or she always wants to achieve more in a constant pursuit of mastery.

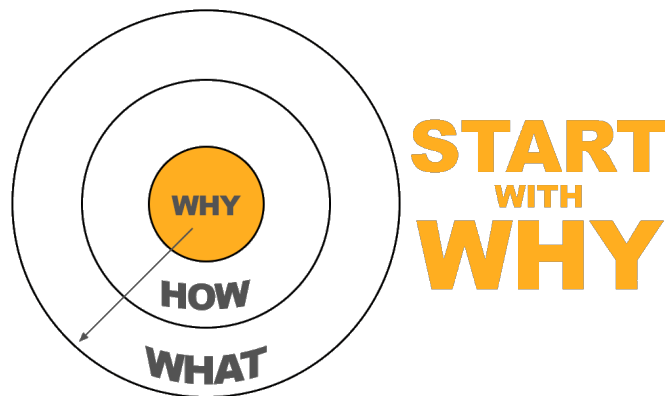
Can you think of examples of staff members in your unit demonstrating mastery in their work ethic and behavior?

Purpose

The first two parts of intrinsic motivation, autonomy and mastery, are essential. But for proper balance we need a third aspect—purpose—that provides a context for its two mates.

People at work are thirsting for context, yearning to know that what they do contributes to a larger whole. And a powerful way to provide that context is to spend a little less time telling how and a little more time showing why.

Pink sites an example of fund raising in his book: people tasked with calling for donations to a cause were twice as productive and successful when they were told ahead of time what the results of the fundraising would accomplish and how the funds changed the lives of its recipients. The ‘Why’ was much more powerful as a motivator than the ‘How’ of a task in this situation.



Employees also feel more valued, and display more motivation in the workplace if, and when, they understand their exact role in the greater purpose. O.C. Tanner is an employee recognition company, who says, “When employees understand how their efforts play a part in something much bigger than themselves, they feel more valued by their leaders and by their organization.”

This university has a basic purpose—to serve the students and others who attend classes—through all of the services and programs it provides. But how does your unit or department fit into the bigger picture of the Wisconsin Idea?



We know—if we’ve spent time with young children or remember ourselves at our best—that we’re not destined to be passive and compliant. We’re designed to be active and engaged. And we know that the richest experiences in our lives aren’t when we’re clamoring for validation from others, but when we’re listening to our own voice—doing something that matters, doing it well, and doing it in the service of a cause larger than ourselves.

Ending thoughts:

1) Now that you see that motivation is deeper than just carrot and stick, what has changed in your thinking?

2) What new awareness has arisen about the way you work and the people you lead?

3) How can you listen more to your intrinsic motivations and allow them to drive you?

4) How can you give more meaning to your work?

5) What is the bigger purpose that your work serves?

6) Besides autonomy, mastery, and purpose, what could be your other intrinsic drivers?

Additional Resources

Online Videos:

For a review of the RSA video on Dan Pink's concepts, visit
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6XAPnuFjJc>

Pink Interview on Money Watch
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=feDJ3zL23qw>

Melissa Hughes: Think money is the biggest motivator for employees? Think again.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFjyGE3hC4c&feature=youtu.be>

Dan Pink's TED talk from 2009 about DRIVE:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrkrvAUbU9Y&feature=youtu.be>

More Articles:

Article: 10 Things Only Exceptional Bosses Give Employees
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140630120036-20017018-10-things-only-exceptional-bosses-give-employees/>

10 Easy Steps To Ensure All Your Employees Feel Valued At Work by O.C. Tanner
https://www.octanner.com/insights/articles/2019/10/3/_10_easy_steps_to_en.html

Autonomy Audit

HOW TO CONDUCT AN AUTONOMY AUDIT:

How much autonomy do the people at your organization really have? If you're like most folks, you probably don't have a clue. Nobody does. But there's a way to find out—with an autonomy audit. Ask everyone in your department or on your team to respond to these four questions with a numerical ranking (using a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning “almost none” and 10 meaning “a huge amount”):

1. How much autonomy do you have over your tasks at work—your main responsibilities and what you do in a given day?
2. How much autonomy do you have over your time at work—for instance, when you arrive, when you leave, and how you allocate your hours each day?
3. How much autonomy do you have over your team at work—that is, to what extent are you able to choose the people with whom you typically collaborate?
4. How much autonomy do you have over your technique at work—how you actually perform the main responsibilities of your job?

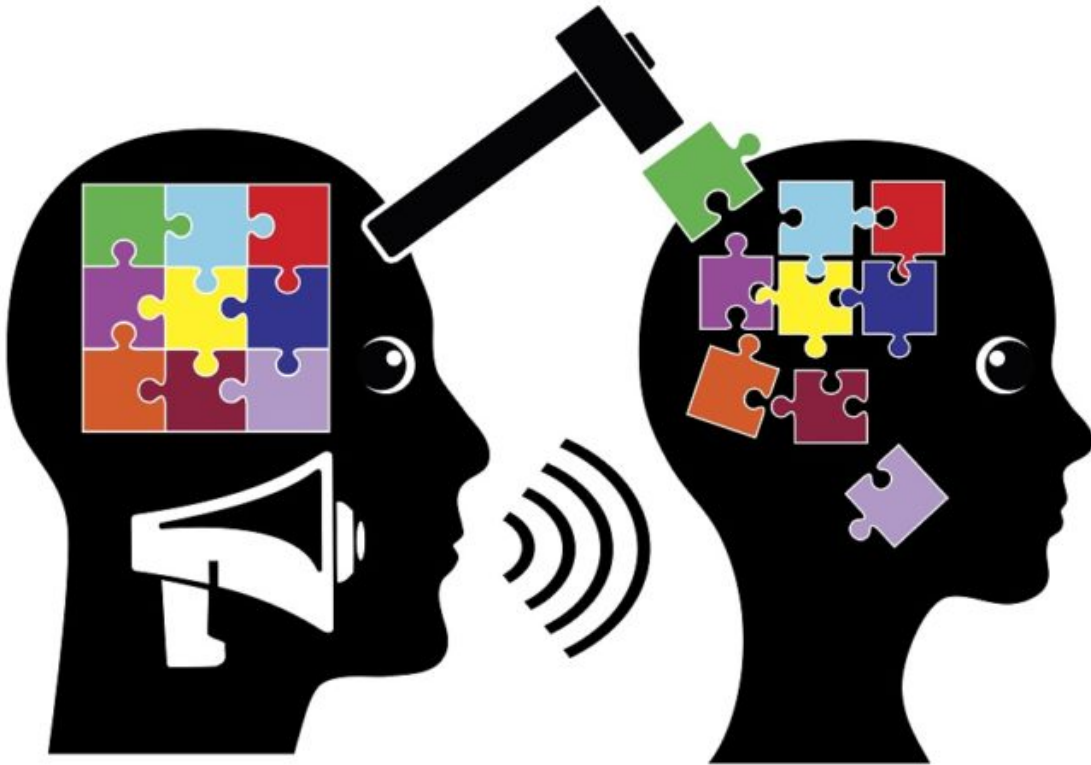
Make sure all responses are anonymous. Then tabulate the results. What's the employee average? The figure will fall somewhere on a 40-point autonomy scale (with 0 being a North Korean prison and 40 being Woodstock). Compare that number to people's perceptions. Perhaps the boss thought everyone had plenty of freedom—but the audit showed an average autonomy rating of only 15.

Equally important, calculate separate results for task, time, team, and technique. A healthy overall average can sometimes mask a problem in a particular area. An overall autonomy rating of, say, 27 isn't bad. However, if that average consists of 8 each for task, technique, and team, but only 3 for time, you've identified an autonomy weak spot in the organization.

It's remarkable sometimes how little the people running organizations know about the experiences of the people working around them. But it's equally remarkable how often leaders are willing to do things differently if they see a little data. That's what an autonomy audit can do. And if you include a section in your audit for employees to jot down their own ideas about increasing autonomy, you might even find some great solutions.

Autonomy Gets What Micromanaging Never Will

By [Gustavo Razzetti](#) March 28, 2019



Micromanagement is pervasive — in a 2014 [RobertHalf survey](#) 59% of the workers said they'd been micromanaged at some point in their career. Last year, 39% of the 2,000 employees [Comparably surveyed](#) said micromanagement is the worst offense a manager can commit.

But it's not a need for control that drives this behavior; it's a need for survival. We live in a connected and empowered society, where employees want autonomy. This is incompatible with the fact that 4 out of 10 people [taking an online quiz](#) showed a strong desire for power.

This doesn't make them micromanagers in the traditional sense, where they observe and control *everything* their subordinates do. Rather, they simply like to be seen as experts and authority figures. Employees' demand for autonomy creates an existential crisis among these executives, who believe their expertise and authority are no longer needed.

So executives delegate tasks, but not necessarily *authority*. Teams own projects but, in the end, have to wait for "The Boss" to make the final call. There's a cost to this tactic. Employees wait around for the green light rather than moving a project forward. They lose excitement and commitment in the process.

On top of that, many companies micromanage employees indirectly by expecting them to do things in a specific way. The *how* seems to matter more than the *what* — often for reasons unknown to employees (and executives).

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Micromanagement is not scalable. If organizations want to grow and become more agile, it's crucial that employees are empowered to take the reins.

The benefits of autonomy

“Autonomy is the antithesis of micromanagement.” — Joan F. Cheverie

Autonomy is our desire for choice. It's the feeling that we manage our own actions. And it's not just about the ability to choose — it's also about creating the options. There's little that even money can do to offset feeling oppressed at a job, as described in this [Quartz](#) piece.

When a workplace enables autonomy:

- **People feel more valued** — Having a say in how things are done creates a sense of ownership — employees are committed, not just transactional.
- **It alleviates negative emotions** — Neuroscientist Steven Maier of Colorado University [found](#) that it's easier to manage our emotions when we're in control. Stressors we can't control are far more damaging than stressors we feel we have some control over.
- **It makes the job more attractive** — “People were nearly two and a half times more likely to take a job that gave them more autonomy than they were to want a job that gave them more influence” in one study, as [reported](#) in *New York Magazine*.
- **It drives loyalty** — Motivation expands when people feel in control, as described by Harry E. Chambers in his 2004 book, *My Way or the Highway: The Micromanagement Survival Guide*.
- **It increases productivity**: [Studies have shown](#) that autonomy makes people more efficient.

Autonomy and accountability

The opposite of control is not total independence. Autonomy is not total independence — it's a collective mindset that increases team performance.

Not understanding the critical distinction between autonomy and independence makes managers afraid of delegating authority. They associate “freedom” with lower performance and accountability. Though it sounds counterintuitive, genuine autonomy amplifies both freedom *and* responsibility.

To help managers and employees see this, we must reframe the reward system at work. We need to move from a carrot-and-stick approach to an intrinsically motivated approach. As Daniel Pink describes in his book [Drive](#), we must [focus on three elements](#): Autonomy, Mastery, and Purpose.

As Pink explains, our brains are wired to self-direct. We don't want others telling us how to do things; we want to feel in control. We need to have autonomy over our tasks (what we do), our time (when we do it), the team (who we do it with), and the technique (how we do it). Spotify, for example, is organized in small cross-functional teams known as “[Squads](#)” — each has the autonomy to decide what to build, how to build it, and how to work together.

Autonomy and accountability are not opposing forces that must be balanced. Promoting autonomy encourages people to become more accountable to themselves and others. It creates a virtuous cycle.

Belonging drives accountability

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“Great leaders don’t want the attention, but they use it. They use it to unite the tribe and to reinforce its sense of purpose.” — Seth Godin

We are social animals. Our culture is shaped by the groups, or tribes, we belong to. In his book [Tribes](#), Seth Godin defines a “tribe” as a group of people who share interests and communication styles. Members of a tribe are connected to one another, connected to a leader, and connected to an idea.

What does your company know about Employee Experience?

A new research report from [TLNT.com](#) says only 1 in 5 agree the employee experience is as important as customer experience. Is it a priority for your company? What are you doing about it?

[Download the report!](#)

Great teams are like tribes. People want to connect with a leader and an idea. They want to join a mission, not just a job, as I wrote [here](#). People want connection and growth. They want to be accountable to something larger than themselves.

When teams behave like tribes, they increase their chances of success. They become tighter and more fluid entities. They become great at recruiting and immersing newcomers. They also become skilled at identifying and rejecting those who lower the bar.

Spotify’s “Squads” define their own missions, develop their own goals, and how they work — they are tribes with end-to-end responsibilities.

Godin describes how great leadership creates the conditions for tribes to form and thrive: “A leader can help increase the effectiveness of the tribe and its members by transforming the shared interest into a passionate goal and desire for change; providing tools to allow members to tighten their communications; and leveraging the tribe to allow it to grow and gain new members.”

When a team becomes a tribe, the role of the leader doesn’t lose importance — it evolves into something much more meaningful.

Getting started

How managers introduce a challenge or kick off a new project can encourage the *feeling* of autonomy, or hinder it — and perception matters as much as reality.

Here are some tips for leaders who want to [foster strong, autonomous tribes](#):

- **Recognize that your job is to lead *people*, not to manage tasks.** You must [work through others](#) to accomplish a mission.
- **Start small.** Promising full autonomy and then cutting back on “freedom” not only backfires, it erodes trust and credibility. It’s always better to surprise than to overpromise.
- **Set expectations up front.** For every project, be clear on what you want to achieve and on the rules of engagement. What’s the mission? How much accountability will the team have? Will they need to check in with you at certain stages? If you have doubts or fears, share those with your team — change is navigating uncertainty. People expect leaders to be honest, not to be perfect.
- **Be patient.** It takes time for a team to turn into a high-performing tribe. People sometimes turn into “dictators” when they receive more power; through time, they’ll find balance. Be ready for some chaos at the beginning of the process.

- **Reframe mistakes as learning moments.** To experiment with “new ways of crossing the river,” people must make mistakes. Create a habit of [turning errors into lessons](#). At WD-40, mistakes are called “[learning moments](#)” — they can be positive or negative, but are never considered bad. Employees openly and freely share mistakes because they understand that though mistakes come and go, learning is forever.
- **Promote collective autonomy.** Providing people with more freedom to speak and make choices doesn’t mean they’ll do what they want. It’s always about what’s better for the tribe, not for a particular individual.
- **Focus on the mission.** [Leading change](#) by delegating authority involves specifying the desired outcome, putting a team in charge, and letting them design a way to get there. Challenge your team to find a way to cross the river rather than asking them to build a bridge.
- **Focus on accountability, not just goals.** Autonomy and accountability are two sides of the same coin. Expectations for each role must be clear and aligned with the distributed authority. In Holacracy, a self-management practice, accountability usually begins with an -ing verb to convey that it’s an ongoing activity (and not a one-time project or action). [Check out this post](#) on for more on crafting accountabilities.
- **Set level expectations.** Clarity is critical. Educate your team on the power of autonomy and how to implement it throughout your organization. Most importantly, focus on the *why*: What are you trying to achieve?
- **Simplify your rules.** Most organizations build their policies with a micromanagement mindset. Take a close look at both your employee handbook and the unwritten rules you mention in meetings. Is everything forbidden unless it is permitted? Or is it everything allowed unless it’s forbidden? General Motors’ CEO narrowed down its dress code policy to [just two words](#): “dress accordingly.”
- **Include your team along the way.** Promoting autonomy with a top-down approach would be ironic. Your team should be involved from the beginning, especially when setting up expectations, clarifying the problem to be fixed, and aligning on the ideal outcome. Early involvement not only minimizes resistance and noise down the line, it promotes ownership.

Autonomy is more rewarding than money. People want to join a mission and become part of a tribe, not to be told how to work. They want to be the source of their own action.

Letting go of power may make many leaders nervous, but micromanagement is what really hinders an organization’s potential. It cannot be scaled. The same applies when implementing autonomy at your company: there’s no universal solution, no one-size-fits-all method for developing strong, agile, high-functioning tribes. Every company must find its own way.



[Gustavo Razzetti](#)

Gustavo Razzetti is the CEO of [Liberationist](#), a change leadership consultancy that helps organizations become more innovative. His human-centered approach liberates the 'change gene' within every team.

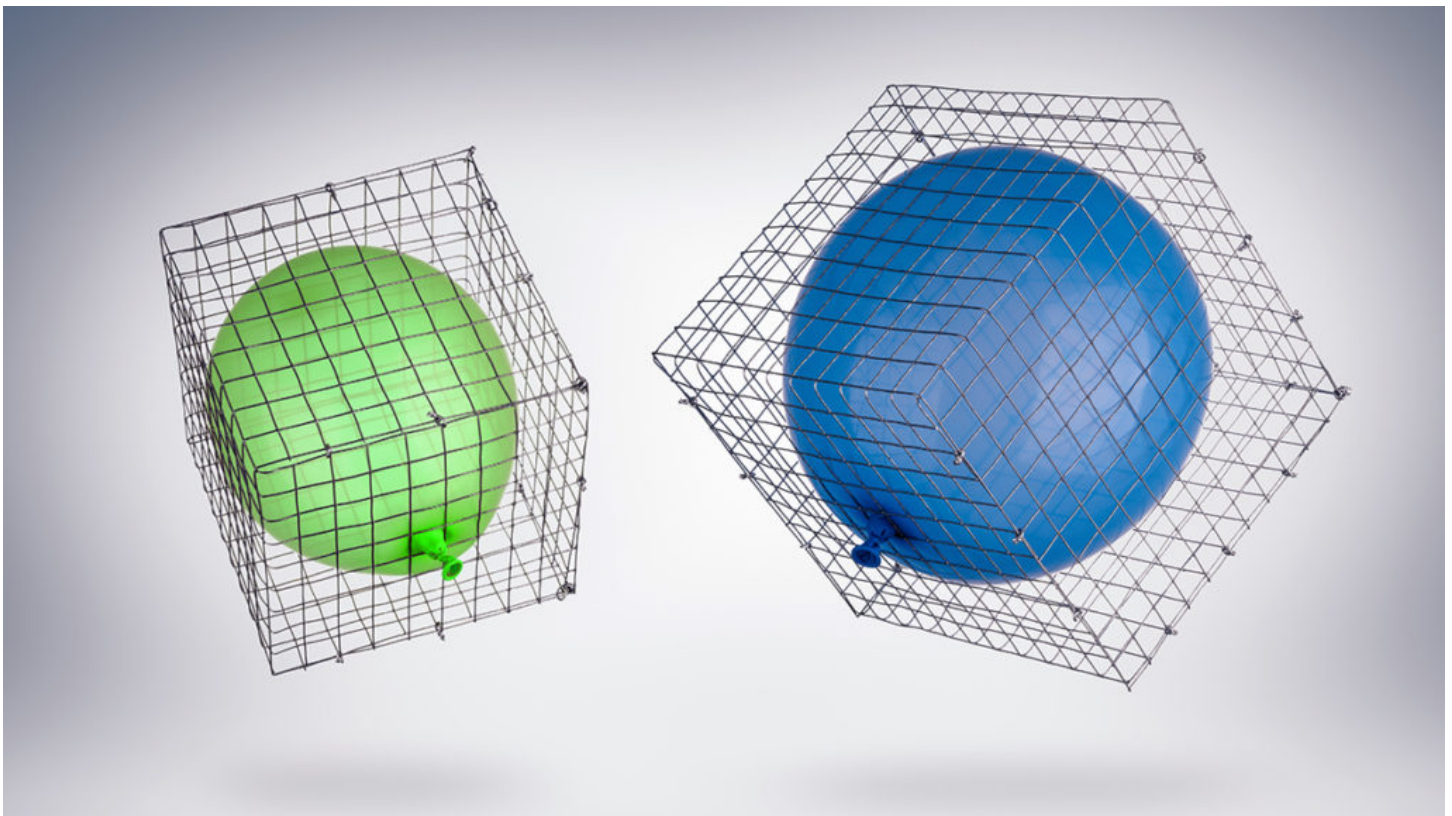
Razzetti has over 20 years of experience transforming human behavior at the intersection of Neuroscience, Design Thinking, Mindfulness, and Creativity.

INNOVATION

How to Give Your Team the Right Amount of Autonomy

by [Deborah Ancona](#) and [Kate Isaacs](#)

JULY 11, 2019



MIRAGEC/GETTY IMAGES

Leaders often say they want to empower autonomous teams and free the front line to innovate, but they also fear the chaos that might be unleashed if they do. What if people go off in too many directions? How will people make decisions? What about resources? Who gets what, and how do you mitigate all of the risks? It's possible to create alignment and control — while also giving your employees more freedom — by putting guardrails in place. These guardrails can help leaders make a real change.

*If you fear that people will go off in too many directions — that they won't be aligned with strategic priorities — here's a guardrail: **Cultivate a strategic mindset.***

To address the fear of chaos, leaders can instill a strategic mindset. This means that everyone, even people lower down in the organization, have a sense of the business model, strategic plans, and how their work could push the organization forward.

W.L. Gore has learned a lot about how to equip its people with a strategic mindset. Early on, the company depended on midlevel leaders to cascade strategic information to their people. But the information was often misinterpreted or didn't get communicated at all. Now senior leaders go directly to employees and use videos, slides, webinars, and in-person forums to communicate strategy and financials. "We joke that the half-life of anything we communicate is the midpoint of the plane ride back home," said Tom Moore, a senior leader at Gore. "You have to do it again and again, keep making it simpler and more crisp, make sure it's clear for nonnative English speakers, and tell people how it connects to their jobs."

*If you fear that throwing out bureaucratic rules will mean that people don't know how to make decisions, here's a guardrail: **Simple rules.***

Simple rules, a term coined by Donald Sull and Katherine Eisenhardt, are just-in-time structures that help leaders deal with blockages and behavior run amok. When a bottleneck arises, leaders at all levels identify the problem and come up with a simple rule to help address it, and then step out of the way.

Microsoft recently implemented a simple rule to handle bugs that build up during the software development process. Engineers used to wait to fix bugs until the end of the development cycle. But inevitably, after they fixed the first set of bugs, they would discover more — and more. Morale would plummet, and launch timelines dragged out. The simple rule of a "bug cap" was put in place, calculated by the following formula: # of engineers x 5. If the bug count ever rises above the cap, the development team stops working on new features and gets the bugs under the cap. Now the company can get products out the door faster, because the software is always in a healthy state.

*If you fear that the freedom to innovate will result in too many poor-quality initiatives and take resources away from the best ideas, here's a guardrail: **Funneling.***

A lot of ideas bubble up in organizations, but not every idea can or should move forward. There has to be a funneling process. First, product developers have to attract talent to their teams and partner with others to get resources. In

attracting talent, some ideas get refined and improved, while others die a quiet death when no one signs up to follow.

Second, seasoned leaders who have a broad view of the organization may point to similar projects or synergies with other teams that push for further integration and refinement. These “enabling leaders” ask questions to help the team discover problems and improve strategic alignment. Add the need to prove to others that the project is a good strategic bet and deserves organizational resources, and soon the number of projects is much smaller.

Southwest Airlines uses a choice committee with members from all levels in the organization for this purpose. They know that not every idea can or should get full company resources, so committee members decide which ones to pursue and implement. The unique boarding process at the airline started out as an idea that made its way through the choice committee.

*If you fear that there will be too many risky ventures without multiple levels of oversight, here's a guardrail: **Distributed risk mitigation.***

In nimble companies, there aren't a lot of quality control people watching to ensure that products meet standards, or PR people worrying about reputational issues. This is because risk mitigation is everyone's job. Just like in manufacturing firms where anyone who sees a problem can pull a lever and stop the assembly line, anyone can order a “stop” for a project that is risky in terms of revenue or reputation. Everyone is responsible for not exposing the company to risk that could hurt it.

Harvard Business School's Amy Edmondson, who focuses on psychological safety in the workplace, points to how the mining company Anglo American used a traditional South African village assembly, a *lekgotla*, to make it safe for miners to share their ideas for creating a work environment of care and respect. Over 30,000 workers were trained in the new safety protocols. Fatalities plummeted as a result.

The aviation industry has used distributed risk mitigation to transform its safety record, following decades of fatal plane crashes, 70% of which were attributed to human error. The key: creating a new culture in which risk is everyone's responsibility and equipping all employees with training on assertiveness and the benefits of advocating the best course of action even though it might involve conflict with others.

With guardrails in place, it's a lot easier to let go and shift to a nimble organization. Guardrails give employees the structure they need to work smarter and better and are far more effective at safeguarding a company's strategy than detailed bureaucratic controls.



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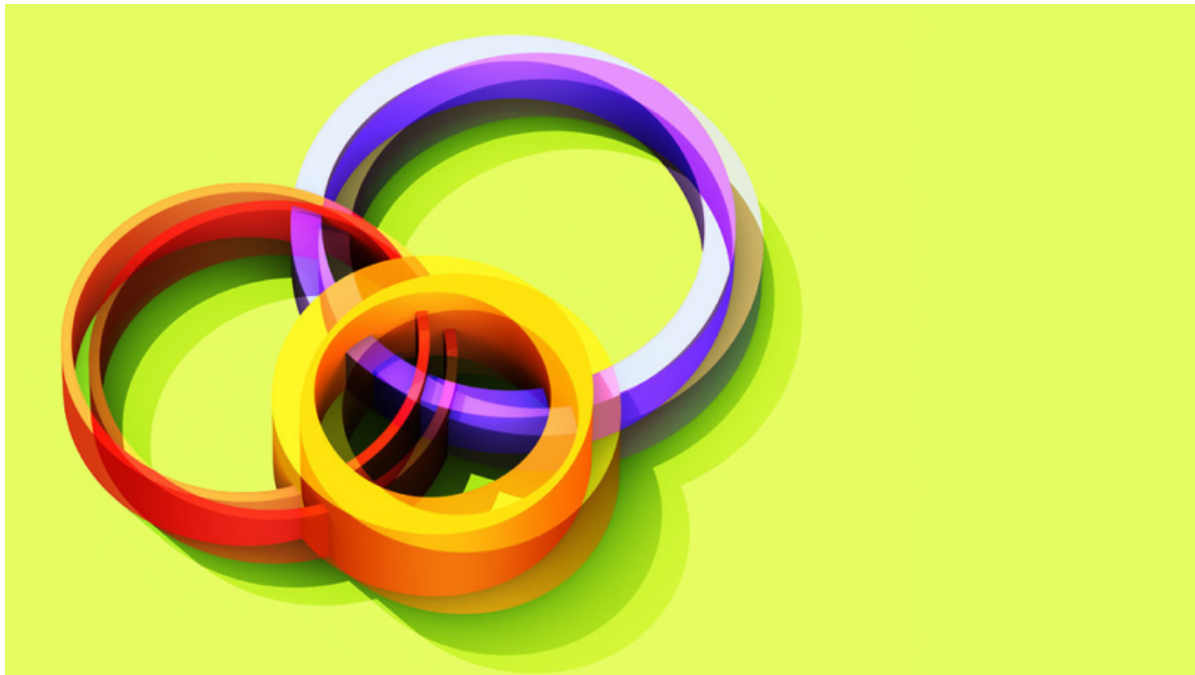


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The 3 Things Employees Really Want: Career, Community, Cause

by [Lori Goler](#), [Janelle Gale](#), [Brynn Harrington](#), and [Adam Grant](#)

FEBRUARY 20, 2018



JORG GREUEL/GETTY IMAGES

Strike up a conversation about work values, and it won't be long before someone brings up a pyramid – a famous psychologist's best-known theory. Abraham Maslow's big idea was that we all have a hierarchy of needs: once our basic physiological and safety needs are fulfilled, we seek love and belongingness, then self-esteem and prestige, and finally self-actualization. But that pyramid was built more than half a century ago, and psychologists have recently concluded that it's in need of renovation.

When you review the evidence from the past few decades of social science, it's hard to argue with Maslow's starting point. If your basic needs aren't met, it's hard to focus on anything else. If you have a job that doesn't pay enough, and you're up all night worrying about survival, chances are you won't spend much time dwelling on self-actualization.

But Maslow built his pyramid at the dawn of the human relations movement, when so many workplaces in the manufacturing economy didn't have basic physiological and safety needs covered. Today more companies are operating in knowledge and service economies. They're not just fulfilling basic needs; they're aiming to fulfill *every* need, providing conveniences like meals and gyms, and competing to be the best places to work (from 1984 through 2011, those that won outperformed their peers on stock returns by 2.3% to 3.8% per year). In those environments, survival isn't in question.

And once you get past that layer of the pyramid, the rest of it falls apart. People don't need to be loved before they strive for prestige and achievement. And they don't wait for those needs to be fulfilled before pursuing personal growth and self-expression.

If Maslow were designing his pyramid from scratch today to explain what motivates people at work, beyond the basics, what would it look like? That's a question we set out to answer at Facebook, in collaboration with our people analytics team.

We survey our workforce twice a year, asking what employees value most. After examining hundreds of thousands of answers over and over again, we identified three big buckets of motivators: career, community, and cause.

Career is about work: having a job that provides autonomy, allows you to use your strengths, and promotes your learning and development. It's at the heart of intrinsic motivation.

Community is about people: feeling respected, cared about, and recognized by others. It drives our sense of connection and belongingness.

Cause is about purpose: feeling that you make a meaningful impact, identifying with the organization's mission, and believing that it does some good in the world. It's a source of pride.

These three buckets make up what's called the psychological contract – the unwritten expectations and obligations between employees and employers. When that contract is fulfilled, people bring their whole selves to work. But when it's breached, people become less satisfied and committed. They contribute less. They perform worse.

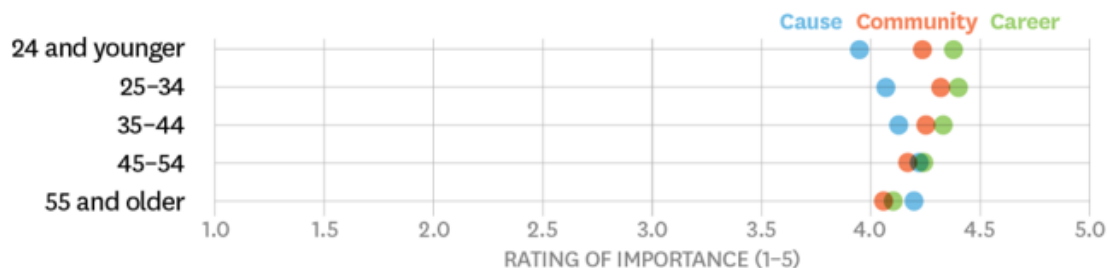
In the past, organizations built entire cultures around just one aspect of the psychological contract. You could recruit, motivate, and retain people by promising a great career or a close-knit community or a meaningful cause. But we've found that many people want more. In our most recent survey, more than a quarter of Facebook employees rated all three buckets as important. They wanted a career and a community and a cause. And 90% of our people had a tie in importance between at least two of the three buckets.

Wondering whether certain motivators would jump out for particular people or places, we broke the data down by categories. We started with age.

There's a lot of talk about how different Millennials are from everyone else, but we found that priorities were strikingly similar across age groups.

Motivators by Age Group at Facebook

Older workers care a little more about meaning and purpose than everyone else does, including Millennials.



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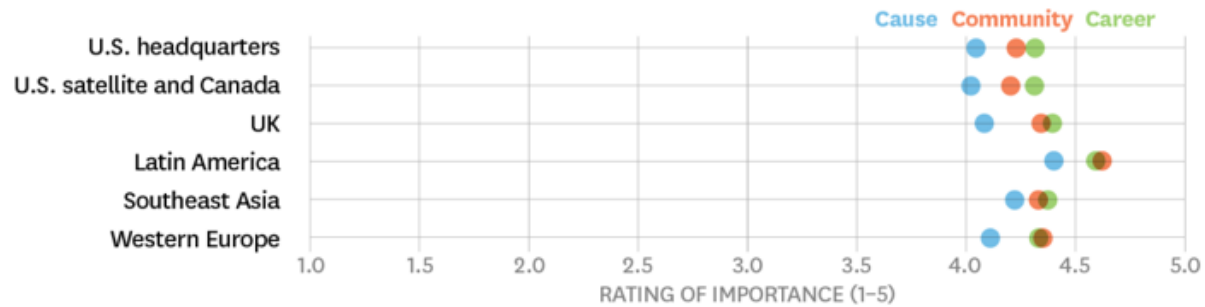
Contrary to the belief that Millennials are more concerned with meaning and purpose, we found that younger people cared slightly less about cause – and slightly more about career – than older people. In fact, people ages 55 and above are the *only* group at Facebook who care significantly more about cause than about career and community. This tracks with evidence that around mid-life, people become more concerned about contributing to society and less focused on individual career enhancement.

But overall, the differences between age groups were tiny. And that's not just true at Facebook. In a nationally representative study of Americans across generations, Millennials, Baby Boomers, and Gen Xers had the same core work values – and tended to rank them in the same order of importance. As we've said before, Millennials want essentially the same things as the rest of us.

We also didn't see any major differences by level, or by performance reviews: people valued these three motivators whether they were exceeding, meeting, or falling short of expectations. And when we compared office locations, it was clear that career, community, and cause were all prized around the globe.

Motivators by Location at Facebook

They're strikingly similar across the map.



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Finally, we turned to function. “If it weren’t for the people,” Kurt Vonnegut once wrote, “the world would be an engineer’s paradise.” Survey says: false. Our engineers care a lot about community, giving it an average rating of 4.18 on a 1-5 scale. And just as we saw with age and location, across functions people rated career, community, and cause as similarly important.

“To know what one really wants,” Maslow argued, “is a considerable psychological achievement.” Our data suggest that people are very clear on what they want at work – and they fundamentally want the same things. When it comes to an ideal job, most of us are looking for a career, a community, and a cause. These are important motivators whether you’re 20 or 60, working in engineering or sales, in Luleå or São Paulo or Singapore or Detroit. We’re all hoping to find a what, a who, and a why.

Motivators by Function at Facebook

Engineers care more about connecting with others than you might think.



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Your Employees Have All the Creativity You Need. Let Them Prove It.

By [Nilofer Merchant](#) · November 01, 2019

If your team could get more than one hundred creative new ideas, ranging from revenue-generating market expansions to ways to improve the health of your employees and reduce insurance costs, would you ask for them? What if virtually all those ideas could be executed and positively impact the bottom line... for a measly \$2 million? Isn't this what every management team wants? Of course it is.

Creativity matters, but how best to enable it? Generating creativity is, in itself, a creative act. Yet most leaders try to scope creativity by defining the path — who should contribute and how — rather than defining the goal and asking for anyone to contribute.

This is evidenced by current job structures. Richard Florida's [Creative Class work](#) categorized jobs by those which require independent judgment, decision making and idea generation, and found that nearly 60% of US jobs (77% worldwide) require little to none of these three creative acts. This doesn't mean that 60% of American workers are not creative but instead that their creativity is not being tapped. For many leaders, seeing each employee as a potentially creative contributor is difficult. At one company I worked with, executives told me that they thought opening the aperture to access everyone's creative potential could be chaotic.

Here's how they overcame that concern: The company had an unexpected windfall of \$2 million, which they wanted to allocate proportionately to existing budgets, as in "peanut butter spread across the organization," or preferentially to projects already deemed key to the company's future. As their innovation consultant, I proposed an alternative: a hack-a-thon for creative ideas, or an idea-a-thon. We would ask anyone — quite possibly everyone — in the firm to surface a new idea and tell management how it could work.

At first, the leadership team thought the only result would be a big mess. They seemed to believe they already knew who could or should be creative and what strategic opportunities were possible. A defined path was far more efficient. Opening up the gates would lead to a lot of dead ends, costing the company everyone's time, they argued. My job was to show them otherwise.

We sent a company-wide email explaining that we had an unexpected opportunity to invest in new things, we wanted to learn what ideas everyone would want to fix/make/solve, and we had to act fast. We asked for three things within three weeks. First, for people to form teams. Collaboration enhances innovation, so we asked employees to band together to submit ideas. This saved us from having 38 far-too-similar suggestions and made related ideas stronger. Next, we told them to map out a plan? Ideas could be revenue generating, market growing or cost saving, but it was up to the team to decide how to size it. We had asked all the business analysts spread throughout the organization to put their time into helping where they could, if asked. Rather than assigning roles, we wanted teams to choose to use resources. Finally, teams had to tell us why their idea mattered to the business.

Crew by crew, employees gave their presentations. Chaos did not ensue. Creativity came from the most unexpected corners.

One buttoned-up employee in market research — white shirt, khaki pants, Supercuts haircut, and usually carrying an armload of folders — suggested reinventing the cafeteria service. Many colleagues didn't think of her as the "creative type," but unbeknownst to nearly all of them, she was a "foodie," watching nearly every Top Chef, Good Eats, and Samin-Nosrat-type Netflix series. She loved making new recipes every

night and presenting tasty and healthy meals to her family. She found others at work with the same hobby, and together they went to the on-site food service team to ask if they could conduct an experiment or two. Their first suggestion was to flip the cafeteria design so that healthy foods could be presented before less healthy ones. At first, the food services team was worried about margins — pasta is cheap and long-lasting while fresh fruit is more expensive and perishable — but they soon saw that the changes were an improvement without costing too much.

Another employee — inspired by a recent health scare — suggested putting signs near the elevators to encourage the use the stairs at lunch time. Combined, these creative ideas would reduce the company's insurance payments by about 20%, without additional funds. These were just two of the many ideas green-lit as a result of the idea-a-thon.

The senior executives were genuinely surprised that they already had the talent and even the funds to drive big, meaningful change. The likelihood is that your organization is similar. But how can you — like the company I described — break through? Most leaders have been taught to focus rather than be inclusive. To shift from one mindset to another requires reassessing three myths about creativity:

Myth #1: Not everyone can be creative.

Many think creativity requires [deep expertise](#) or that you have to [hire the “right” people](#). This filters out all the people whose fresh perspectives — [which only they own](#) — are needed and limits the scope of results. Break the barriers of roles, credentials, and qualifications by asking everyone, “What would you like to change for the better?”

Myth #2: Process kills creativity.

Many think of process as [limiting creativity](#). This is only true if your process is broken. A good process can serve as guardrails to clarify goals (timeline, resources available, and desired outcomes) yet leave the “how” open. The capacity to direct one's own work enables teams to share responsibility, self-organize, generate ideas, and collaborate.

Myth #3: Pay drives creativity.

Many have long thought that we need to [financially reward](#) creativity to get more of it. Money, while necessary, motivates neither the best people, nor the best in people. More than a motivational carrot, finding and fulfilling a purpose is a fundamental human need. Think back to that analyst. Being able to draw on her passion for food and change the cafeteria was reward enough.

Leaders need to abandon and dispel these myths, and break down the barriers to creativity by instead believing in the core capacity of their people.

When we allow more employees to contribute their own ideas and energy at work, companies benefit in both the near- and long-term. The [US Department of Education](#), [World Economic Forum](#), and [Bloomberg](#) indicate that tomorrow's jobs (those still left after the robots and AI take over) will all demand “creative problem solving skills.” If we're going to do more meaningful work, or work at all, we've got to fix this gap between what we value — creativity — and what we enable.

So we have to start seeing creativity as a capacity that all of us contain. Ideas do not come from specialized skills or because of carrots and sticks. Ideas come from ingenuity, from the Latin *ingenuus* or *inborn*. Thus creativity is not something just a few of us do or found in certain ranks or created by certain functions like engineering or marketing. Each of us has a unique perspective that needs to be liberated. This can be done by using a process that lets people find their own effective solutions and strategies. Invite people to bring their full selves to work, knowing that every quirky passion or hobby can serve to inspire new ideas. No matter your position on the org chart, you can bring your creativity to bear at work — including finding new ways to tap the creativity of others.