

Dr Lynda Shaw

The motivated brain



When we are motivated our brains release dopamine which reduces stress and increases feelings of pleasure and perseverance. This feel-good chemical is so powerful it affects our behaviour, motivation, thinking and some forms of memory. It is also implicated in reward. No wonder the motivated brain is galvanized into action.

Motivation ultimately stems from the individual themselves but specifically is largely influenced by self-confidence. You were hired because the employer felt you were capable and this should be a real driving force for motivation. If we lack confidence or self-esteem, our motivation is affected because we believe we will do a bad job anyway and so lack the energy and drive to ensure we produce our best work.

Undeniably it is also partly the employer's responsibility to keep their team motivated. Colleagues appreciate feelings of self-worth, being of value and that they are a key member in the organisation. It is important to remember monetary rewards aren't the only way to make a team member feel appreciated; an authentic thank you for all their hard work and praise for excellence helps continued motivation in the long run.

A lack of motivation can come from a lazy attitude, boring atmosphere and a lack of drive in

the company. More often than not, people find a lack of motivation results from their company's apathy towards making colleagues feel valuable. Unrealistic expectations coupled with a lack of resources and team conflict is often the sole reasons of demotivation at work.

This is a cocktail for low productivity, stress and perhaps depression or anxiety. When we are in a negative state such as this, the feel good neurochemicals in the brain are compromised and hormones such as cortisol in effect enhance a stress response and a negative cycle spirals us into an even lower state which is highly counterproductive for both our health and our work.

The brain often lacks motivation when there is no clear career goal. It is in your interest to identify, what you enjoy and where you would like your future to develop. Speaking to colleagues and senior personnel about your concerns helps company growth, prevents conflict as well as enables motivation. People who coast rarely put their all into any job but a 'can do' attitude inspires team motivation.

Top Tips on How to keep your employees or team motivated

1. Speak to your team – Find out what motivates them and what their future career goals are



and make a plan to work towards this.

2. Give the team variety – Nothing is more demotivating than doing the same thing day in day out. Convert an undesirable task into a positive challenge. Mix teams and roles up.

3. Reward – Always remember to verbally praise high performing team members. Organise something nice for the team as a whole when a big goal is reached.

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About the Author

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