

## Motivation, Recognition, Rewards

By Linda Westfall (lwestfall@westfallteam.com)

<https://www.softwareexcellenceacademy.com/>

According to Blohowiak, “if people believe that what they are doing has meaning—that it makes a contribution, that someone appreciates it—then they are motivated.” *Motivation* requires two key elements:

1. For people to be motivated, they must have a clear understanding of what is expected of them
2. Meeting that expectation (or not meeting it) must be reinforced

According to Ryan and Deci, there are two types of motivation.

1. *Extrinsic motivation* is the motivation that comes from a desire to obtain an external outcome or reward. The reinforcement for extrinsic motivation comes from the satisfaction of psychological or material needs by others through incentives or rewards. For example, external reinforcement might come from public recognition, a raise, a promotion, or a bigger office.
2. *Intrinsic motivation* is a self-motivating process in which the individual seeks out new things, experiences, or knowledge, or takes on tasks because that individual enjoys or is interested in the activity itself. The individual obtains internal reinforcement through personally valuing the characteristics of the situation itself. In intrinsic motivation, the internal reinforcement might come from gaining a sense of achievement or power, feeling creative, feeling a sense of belonging, having the satisfaction of making a contribution, or from self-actualization.

Westcott discusses three motivational theories specifically related to rewards:

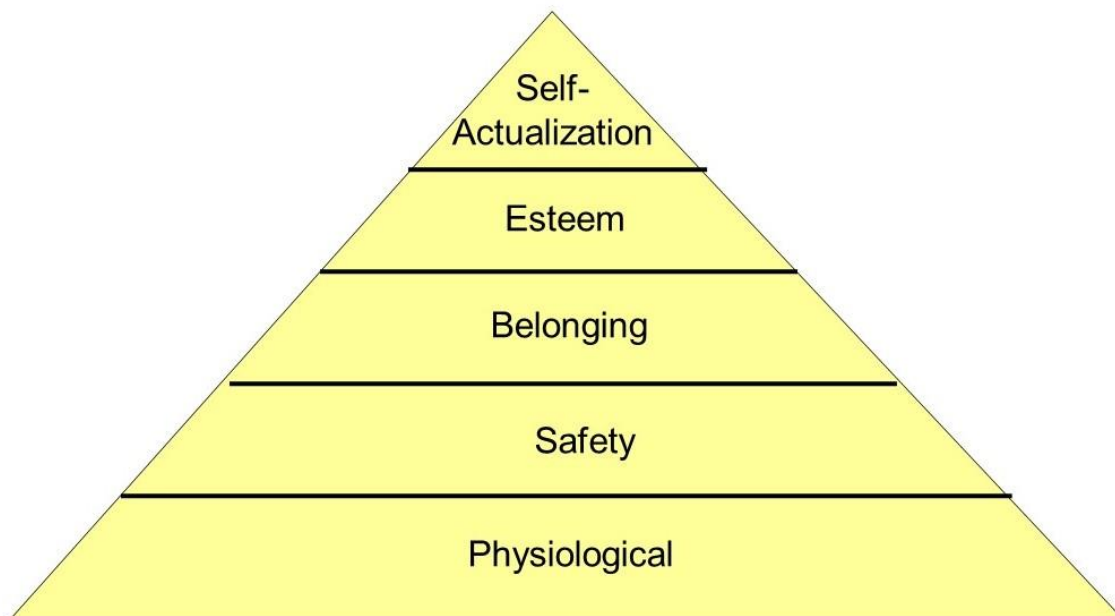
- *Equity theory*: For rewards to be motivational, people have to believe that rewards (and punishments) are being equally distributed as deserved. People seek equity between the amount of effort (input) they put into a task and the rewards (output) they receive for doing it. For example, if everyone on the team gets the same reward no matter how much or little they contributed, then those rewards can actually demotivate team members.
- *Expectancy theory*: A person will be motivated to perform an activity based on his/her belief that:
  - Putting in the effort will actually lead to better results
  - The extra effort will be noticed, and those better results will actually lead to personal rewards
  - Those personal rewards are valuable
- *Reinforcement theory*: People will be motivated to perform an activity based on their perception of a trigger (a signal) to initiate the behavior and the historic consequences of that behavior.

Different types of extrinsic and intrinsic forces motivate different people. Therefore, “one size does not fit all” when it comes to using recognition and rewards as reinforcement.

Examples of different types of *recognition* and *rewards* include:

- Public praise and appreciation
- Thank-you letters or notes
- Compliments from important people while receiving the undivided attention of those people
- Gifts and other tokens of appreciation
- Conference or training opportunities
- Teaching or mentoring opportunities
- Special projects, or time for pet projects
- Time away from work
- More independence or autonomy
- Money, promotions, better office

As illustrated in Figure 1, Maslow defines a hierarchy of needs that prioritizes the types of rewards that motivate people. For example, if basic physiological needs for food, water, air, and shelter are not met, people will be motivated to fulfill those needs first. People will put themselves in danger or leave their social groups, if necessary, to meet those basic physiological needs. At the next level, people need to feel physically and economically safe. Once physiological and safety needs are met, people will be motivated by the need to belong, to be accepted by family and friends. Higher-level needs include self-esteem and self-actualization (the need to perform at one’s best and self-improve).



**Figure 1 – Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs [From Westcott]**

Herzberg's *motivation-hygiene model*, also called the *two-factor model* asserts that the factors that drive employee work satisfaction (motivators) are fundamentally different from the factors that cause employees to be dissatisfied at work (hygiene factors). For example, salary is a hygiene factor, which means that promises of salary increases will not typically satisfy or motivate an employee. However, if employees feel that they are not being paid enough for the work they are doing or that their salary is inequitable compared to other people's salaries, those employees will become dissatisfied or demotivated. Herzberg's hygiene factors include:

- *Salary and benefits*: Income, fringe benefits, bonuses, and vacation time
- *Working conditions*: Work hours, overtime, infrastructure, office space, facilities, and equipment
- *Company policies*: Formal and informal rules, restrictions and regulations
- *Status*: Rank, authority, and relationships with others
- *Job security*: The degree of confidence the employee has regarding continued employment
- *Supervision and autonomy*: The degree of control the employee has over the content and execution of their work
- *Office life*: The level and type of job-related interpersonal relationships the employee has
- *Personal life*: Work restrictions on the time the employee has with family, friends, and their interests

Herzberg's motivation factors include:

- *Achievement*: Reaching or exceeding work and task objectives
- *Recognition*: Acknowledgement of achievements by leaders, managers, and others
- *Job interest*: The matching of the job to the employee's personal interests so that the job provides positive, satisfying pleasure
- *Responsibility*: Opportunity to exercise authority and power including leadership, risk-taking, decision-making, and self-direction
- *Advancement*: Promotions, career progress, and increased rewards for achievement

## References:

- Blohowiak Donald Blohowiak, *Mavericks! How to Lead Your Staff to Think like Einstein, Create like da Vinci, and Invent like Edison*, Business One Irwin, Homewood, Illinois, 1992.
- Heller Robert Heller and Tim Hindle, *Essential Manager's Manual*, New York, NY: DK Publishing, Inc. 1998.
- Westcott Russell T. Westcott, Editor, *The Certified Manager of Quality/Organizational Excellence Handbook, Third Edition*, ASQ Quality Management Division, ASQ Quality Press, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2006.
- Westfall Linda Westfall, *The Certified Software Quality Engineer Handbook, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, ASQ Quality Press, Milwaukee, WI, 2017.