

Brian Clegg



Instant
Motivation

sample

*Encourage others
to achieve more*

now

First published 2000

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1 - Motivation

Empowering or brainwashing?

It can be so depressing - you know that your staff, your peers, your boss, your friends and family can achieve more, and yet they don't. Often all that is lacking is the motivation to succeed. This book contains a toolkit of tried and tested techniques to increase motivation. Because motivation has to be applied on the spot, whenever needed, it is a natural subject for the Instant formula of providing a package of quick to read, quick to implement ideas that can be started right away. Instant Motivation contains over 70 exercises, each short enough to fit it into a few spare minutes at any time of the day. As part of the Instant series (including *Instant Teamwork*, *Instant Creativity* and *Instant Time Management*) it is a handy resource for individuals, team leaders, managers and trainers.

Motivation is one of those terms that can mean very different things depending on exactly where you sit. According to the dictionary it's about giving someone a motive or an incentive or rather more darkly, about inducing something. If I am motivating someone else, it's easy to see that it is positive. When was there ever anything wrong with an incentive? If I am on the receiving end of motivation, there is a danger of feeling manipulated - not so much given an incentive as forced into a particular behavioural pattern by sleight of hand. And because we are dealing with human behaviour this is a particularly sensitive issue.

Part of the skill of motivation is ensuring that there is a win-win outcome. You should feel that you are achieving your goals by motivating others - if you have staff, for example, you might hope to get better quality work out of them by motivating them. Those who are being motivated should either not notice it all (and thus be pleased with their own success) or consider it a positive support, increasing their job satisfaction. Because of the fine line between support and manipulation, motivation isn't a skill that can be codified as set of rules. Instead, like many of the Instant books subjects, it is based on guiding principles and practical experience at putting those principles into action.

Who can we motivate?

The target of your effort could be anyone - anyone can be motivated, and you can be the one to do it. In fact the potential for motivation starts with yourself. Self-motivation is very important - but though there are some overlaps with motivating others, it is probably best treated separately, alongside other self-development skills like assertiveness.

If we confine ourselves to looking outwards, motivation is an extremely powerful tool reaching far beyond the traditional image of motivating your staff at work. You can motivate your family when a holiday is flagging. You can motivate an individual to greater efforts, or a team to pull together. You can motivate a whole company to buy into the board's dreams and aspirations - or you can motivate a huge, diverse group like 'your customers' to buy more of your product. Advertising and marketing fall outside the scope of this book, but there is a strong overlap between some of the mechanisms of motivation and best practice in these disciplines.

What's the point?

The cynical view of motivation is that it is a matter of subtle manipulation. That motivation is a just a way of getting other people to do what you want them to do, ideally without them realising that this is your aim. This is the view of motivation of a manager I once knew who thought that staff were more productive if they thought you cared about them and so maintained that it was very important to fool them into thinking you cared. Insincere, faked motivation will deliver to a point, for a while - but then it will founder.

To have a deep, lasting effect, motivation has to be something more - something of benefit to all involved. Yes, those involved in doing the motivation want to get something out of it, but not just more efficiency or better quality output - and certainly not a set of robots who respond automatically to the party line. They want those who are being motivated to get real satisfaction out of what they are doing. Like it or not, truly effective motivation can't just give lip service to the feelings and desires of those being motivated, it has to have real concern for the recipients as people.

This can make motivation sound painfully woolly and touchy-feely. If you are reading this book, you are looking for a practical business tool, not a social worker's charter. Don't worry - practical business applications are what it's all about, but it is always necessary to bear in mind that motivation is about people, not numbers or data or machinery. The human element will always be present. Hopefully, for most people involved in leading or managing staff this won't be a problem - isn't it part of why you wanted to be a manager in the first place? Part, in fact, of your own motivation.

Who is Instant Motivation for?

Being primarily a business book, *Instant Motivation* is aimed at anyone who has to work with anyone else. They don't have to be people you manage, or even people who work for the same company. The targets of your motivation could be your boss, or the queue at your check-in desk - or anyone else who comes into the sphere of your work activity. As

we have seen, good motivation is an important tool, not to impose your will, but to bring out the best in people. Unless you work alone on a subsistence-level croft on a remote island, *Instant Motivation* is for you.

Using this book

The techniques and introductory chapters look at motivation at three different levels, each with different requirements. The first level of motivation concerns the individual, giving someone the encouragement to make that extra mile. The second focuses on the team, pulling together a group with a common aim to achieve success. The third is large-scale motivation - working with a whole set of people at a conference or other large gathering. Such a group hasn't the same focus as a team, but needs more general motivation. The techniques in the book are inspirational and fun without adopting the over-the-top style that makes some motivational material of the 1970s and 1980s seem artificial to a modern audience.

Each exercise in *Instant Motivation* is presented in a standard format, with brief details of any preparation required, running time, resources used and the timescale of its application, followed by a description of the exercise itself. Next come suggestions for feedback, comments on the outcome and possible variations on the technique. The final part of the entry is the star rating. This is a quick reference to show how the particular exercise impacts on motivation of individuals, teams and large groups - and how much fun it is likely to be. As much as possible, to keep with the 'instant' theme, the exercises require minimal preparation, but some exercises requiring a little more work beforehand are included as they can sometimes be particularly effective. Note that timings are a minimum - you can take longer over most of the exercises if it is appropriate.

How you use the exercises very much depends on your approach to life. There is nothing wrong with working through the whole book in sequence. Alternatively, the tables in the Appendix offer a number of ways of picking an exercise. There is a random selection table as a way of dipping into the exercises without getting into a rut. And there are tables arranging the exercises by how well they scored in the various star ratings. Use the exercises however they best fit with your schedule with the proviso that becoming effective at motivation requires regular practice, and that you shouldn't skip an exercise because it hasn't an immediate application - you might not have the chance to go and read a book next time you need to employ some motivation. With motivation, spontaneity is extremely important - it's a classic *Instant* topic.

2 - One to one

The individual

One of the hardest motivational challenges is dealing with an individual. You may be coaching an under-performer or helping someone with low self-esteem. You may be dealing with a very talented individual who is under-using those talents. Whatever the need for motivation, the starting point has to be that you are dealing with an individual. I've intentionally used that word a lot in this paragraph. That's because in most companies, there's a lot of historical baggage to overcome. Let's spend a moment looking at it.

Those who have seen re-runs of the sixties cult TV show *The Prisoner* will recall the recurrent cry of Patrick McGoochan's central character Number Six - 'I am not a number'. This reduction of the individual to a faceless component was not just a feature of fantasy TV settings, but the devastatingly costly outcome of one of the biggest mistakes humanity has ever made. (If this all sounds too philosophical for you, skip the next couple of paragraphs, but remember we are dealing with people, and people issues are at the core of motivation.)

Until very recent times, those in charge have been happy to regard the rest of humanity as a set of interchangeable pawns. The general attitude to war, to slavery, to much of the class system prevalent until very recently (and still common in some parts of the world) makes this very obvious. Despite the entirely contrary ethics that form the basis of Western society, the ruling classes have managed to ignore the individuality of the rest.

When mechanisation transformed business, there was no reason to challenge this picture. In fact the new world of production lines and mass manufacturing seemed to require the picture of the worker as just another cog in the great machine. Films from the period when mechanisation was sweeping business, like Fritz Lang's still powerful *Metropolis*, portray the workers quite literally as parts of the machine. Of course no one thinks like that any more, do they? Yet the legacy of that past is still with us.

Consciously or unconsciously, most companies still do a lot to make sure that their employees realise that they are cogs in the machine. They issue them with staff numbers and job descriptions and organization charts and scores that show the relative value of their jobs. When looking at pay rises they give ratings, perhaps normalised to make sure there's a fair distribution, and make sure that different managers aren't dealing with their staff differently - as if, perhaps, they were individuals.

But that's an unfair picture, isn't it? All these things are done for very sensible reasons. Because the computer needs a number, or the system will only work if we have a uniform system of ratings. Yet most of these sensible reasons are derived from a senseless value structure that comes back to thinking of people as interchangeable components. All too often still, senior managers think of an organization, then fit people into it (we've got x analysts, y admin staff and z managers) rather than building the organization round the people. Why? Not because it delivers the best results; it doesn't. It's because of that historical baggage and because it's easier to do.

Now, though, we live in a world where what is easiest isn't always good enough. We need to get the best out of people, which means treating them as individuals, not as components. It's trite, but it's true - everyone really is different, and so getting the best out of them means treating everyone differently. If that presents a problem for the systems, tough. If you want to survive you are going to have to change the systems. Ideally you also want to do it because you want people to actually enjoy their work - but even if you don't, the pragmatic truth is that you need to deal with each person differently. They are individuals.

One size fits all

Taking the message of the previous section, we've immediately got a problem when looking at motivating an individual. If everyone is different, and we can't treat them as interchangeable components any more, how is it possible to make any progress? Doesn't this mean you need a book called *Instant Motivation of Jean Rutter* this morning, and another completely different book called *Instant Motivation of Dennis Taylor* this afternoon?

Thankfully, things aren't quite that bad. While it is true that it is essential when motivating to consider the very personal needs of the individual, it is also possible to define a set of practices that will work across the population provided that you are prepared to establish just which elements an individual needs and the particular way of meeting those needs that fits best. It's a bit like running a clothes shop. The traditional, interchangeable component view says that you only need stock one size and style of each type of garment (and we aren't talking stretch material here). On the other hand, the sensible response isn't to design a whole new type of garment for each person. Whether you make to measure or sell off the peg, you will have the standard set of products like shirts, trousers, skirts and dresses.

One approach to tailored motivation is the Maslow hierarchy, developed by Abraham Maslow. This provides a five-tier view of the factors that motivate people. Maslow's theory was that, once one tier was satisfied it ceases to be a motivator and we move up to the next tier. The five stages are basic physiological needs, safety from fear, social needs,

appreciation and pecking order, and realizing your potential. While Maslow's sequence seems much too structured for reality, these five elements all contribute to an individual's need for motivation, and at any one time and individual is likely to be more in need of certain elements - being in tune with this requirement can help a lot.

A relationship

The need to choose an appropriate approach to motivation of an individual implies having a relationship with them. You need to know the individual to best be able to motivate them. This doesn't mean you have to be drinking buddies or soul mates - just that knowing them is an essential to tailoring the motivation to fit. Inevitably, then, motivation is particularly difficult when you have just moved into a new job. You don't know the people around you; there is suspicion from all sides. If you are at an early stage in a job, building these relationships - with your staff, your peers, your superiors - is an essential step towards making individual motivation possible. This is why you will quite often see social activities as part of the exercises - not just because the social activity can be a motivation in itself, but also because it gives you an opportunity to build a relationship and open the door to more focussed individual motivation. As that relationship builds, you can see which type of motivation is best suited at the moment (needs aren't static, they will change over time). Although there is actually a spectrum of styles of motivation, they can broadly be described as coaching, counselling, transforming and mentoring.

Coaching

All the ways you can motivate an individual are about enhancing performance and developing job satisfaction, but coaching takes the specific approach of bringing on an under-performer or helping someone who simply hasn't got the experience to do a job well. To be a great coach you don't have to be able to do the job yourself - but you do have to have an understanding of what it is about. The 1990s fad for general-purpose managers (once more ignoring the individual) overlooked this benefit of having expertise in your business area.

The coach has to be aware of the requirements of the job and must be able to assess what is lacking in the individual. It may be a matter of training or practical experience. It may be that there are particular aspects of the role or individual that need bringing on. It may also be that the individual is attempting a role or task which they are totally unsuited for. While this can sometimes be developmental as a one-off experience, the coach needs to be able to say that enough is enough and direct the individual away from this area. Here

motivational skills rest in identifying other positive directions, so the individual is encouraged into a positive alternative use of their time, rather than being told that they are incapable of doing the original task.

A particular distinction the coach has to make is between stretch and over-stretch. Everyone benefits from being stretched. Often failure is the only route to success. There are many tasks which can only be achieved well after repeated, sometimes painful failure. To maintain motivation the coach has to keep the individual aware of what is happening - that they are undergoing a learning process where failure is an inevitable step along the way, rather than hitting an absolute barrier. However, everyone has limits. These will change over time, but at any one point, the coach has to be sensitive to the individual's break points and not push beyond them.

Counselling

Coaching generally assumes there is some skill or experience missing from the individual's performance. Sometimes all that is missing is self-esteem. The sheer belief in self that can allow an individual to soar. Some individuals come with a natural self-confidence that carries them through, meaning they can take on a new role and act as if they were born for it. Others will be hesitant, either because they have a low opinion of themselves in general, or because they 'know' that they can't do this particular task.

When counselling someone who believes themselves incapable of the task, it is important to understand why they think this. It is often the case when an individual has less academic qualifications than their peers, or is very new to a job while surrounded by experts. The aim is not to make the person over-confident, and hence derided by their peers, but to give them the confidence to try (and potentially try several times in the face of failure).

Often an early step to counselling can be to look objectively at the causes of low self-esteem. If the problem is lack of qualifications, discuss how limited the practical application of the qualifications actually is (almost always the case with higher education), and emphasise the benefits of real experience. If, on the other hand the problem centres around being a very inexperienced person in an experienced crowd, emphasise how a fresh point of view can bring benefit to those who have been doing things 'the way we do it' so long that they can't see how things can be done better.

Watch out for the influence of others when counselling. I once had a very talented person working for me who was moving from a largely administrative job to a technical one. She felt intimidated by some of the others in her team, especially her team leader. He was not at all sure of her abilities, thinking she had got the job on her customer service skills, while he wanted to be sure of her technical ability. This initial reaction from the team

leader had a negative effect on her self-esteem. However, when she had some achievements under her belt, a positive reaction from the same team leader was highly motivational - she had succeeded despite his concerns. It would have made it easier if he had taken an unbiased stance at the beginning, but his change of heart helped in the end.

Transforming

Like it or not, some tasks are boring and unattractive. They are naturally de-motivating. It can also be the case that individuals bring an external problem into the workplace that can undermine any natural enthusiasm for the job. In such circumstances, the motivational role is one of identifying the problems and fixing them. This is a lesson from leadership - where a manager's role is often seen as making sure the staff do the right things, one of the leader's main tasks is getting the obstacles out of the way so that staff can get on with the real work.

Where the problem is centred on the job in hand, it is often within your capability to make changes which will transform the attitude to the task. Here motivation can take a wide range of forms. It might involve restructuring the task. A classic example would be moving from the soul-destroying repetition of undertaking a single action to involvement in the whole process of constructing a part or assembly. Such a change of direction gets better buy-in and results in better quality output. Similarly, other repetitious tasks can be varied by interlacing a range of activities.

Equally, motivation might involve special incentives. If there is no way break up the tediousness of the task, find ways to add a side attraction. Extra pay at the end of the week or month aren't particularly good for this, as they are invisible and distant. Special incentives need to be obvious and immediate. Perhaps a prize for the day's best performance, or even a lottery with entries dependent on the products of the task. When we want children to undertake a task they don't enjoy, we try to turn it into a game to motivate them. A similar approach can work just as well with adults. If you can overcome the long-standing fear most companies have of employees actually enjoying themselves, you have a chance of ramping up motivation on these unpopular tasks. This sort of approach can even help in the not uncommon position of motivating upwards, getting your boss to undertake something he or she doesn't particularly enjoy, like authorising your expenses claim.

Sometimes the demotivating factor is external to work. You might feel that it isn't your place to get involved. After all you are a manager (or team leader, or whatever), not a social worker. Yet the fact is that leaving a festering problem outside the workplace isn't helpful to either of you. Counselling in such circumstances requires tact and care. The temptation might be to hand over to some professional counsellor, like a human resources professional if your company has them, but it is often not the right answer. The message

this may give to the individual is that you don't really care yourself, so you are handing it over to HR. Instead, it is best to try to handle it yourself, supported discretely by HR if necessary.

You are unlikely to be the one who actually sorts out the problem in this circumstance. Unless it is a simple case of needing to write a letter from a position of authority, the chances are it is only the individual who can untangle things. But your positive support can be extremely beneficial, producing a lasting motivational factor.

Mentoring

Probably the hardest individual motivation is dealing with the high performer, someone who is already doing the job well. So why bother to motivate them at all? In part because of retention. Just because someone does a job superbly well, doesn't mean that they want to stay in it. They are susceptible to outside lures that makes positive motivation to stay a real benefit for the company. Also, however good they are, it doesn't mean that they can't be motivated to do more. The true high performer doesn't work at ten percent above the average, but hundreds of percent. Fine tuning reaps significant rewards.

There's another factor to motivating the high performer too, which paradoxically conflicts with the first argument. It may be that you need to motivate them out of their present job into something bigger and better. This is a difficult one for those who see motivation only being about getting the most out of a resource - how can encouraging someone to leave their job do this? A major reason has to be concern for the individual - you should want them to go onto something better, just as you would your child, even if it hurts when they leave the home. However, there are less altruistic motives too. Keep a high performer down and eventually they will turn on you, becoming more and more destructive and devious. Worse still, a true high performer will eventually escape, and may end up as your boss or your key customer. Would you rather be remembered as the person who gave them their big break, or the one who held them back?

Achieving motivation in this type of situation involves a role that may sound rather like coaching, but is actually quite different - mentoring. Mentoring doesn't put you in a position of authority, or even necessarily of expertise. As a mentor you are a sounding board for the individual's ideas and thoughts. You give them a chance to think things through with an intelligent audience. You can suggest different ways of going forward, and ways of assessing those opportunities. You can even say what you would do in such circumstances. But in the end, your role is as an un-threatening, trusted person to discuss options with. This can be a highly satisfying role for you, and will be greatly valued by the individual. You may even end up in a mutual mentoring relationship, though you often find that your own mentors are different from those for whom you provide mentoring.

Avoiding demotivation

Motivating a person is not just about enhancing the positive - often it is about removing the negative. Whatever the positive needs of the individual, there are dangers of demotivation from sources that are common to everyone. In fact, a number of common factors that are often regarded as motivational actually aren't. Instead they are elements which will demotivate if absent. A classic example is a good level of pay. Despite the gut reaction, paying people above the odds does not motivate them to do better - this is borne out by study after study. However, not paying people enough is a powerful demotivator. Pay isn't a motivational factor, it's a demotivation suppressor. These tranquillisers of the negative are sometimes referred to as hygiene factors, a term devised by psychologist Frederick Herzberg, but I find this term confusing and worryingly medical sounding.

The frightening thing once you start to look at which factors actually motivate and which just suppress demotivation, is that almost all the traditional ways that companies use to reward their staff are not motivational. Options like salary and perks, working conditions, job security and seniority all fall into the tranquilliser class. Much more motivational are actually achieving something (an outcome many bureaucracies seem devised to avoid), recognition, having true responsibility (not the same thing at all as seniority), having somewhere to go - the realistic potential to go further, and doing something interesting. Is it any wonder that motivation is a problem in many businesses? We've got our priorities skewed. Not upside down, because we still need to tranquillise the demotivators before we can get on with the positive, but certainly skewed the wrong way.

3 - Team spirit

What is a team?

If the business world still hasn't really got a handle on the individual, it can hardly be said to have ignored the team. Teams have been fundamental to the business approach of the last 20 years of the 20th century and don't show any signs of disappearing in the 21st. You only have to compare the implied praise or criticism in the comments 'she's a real team player' and 'he's a bit of a loner' - we all know that teams are good. Yet knowing that something is good is not the same thing as understanding it, or being able to make it work. Pulling a team together to succeed is a complex activity. You are dealing with a group of individuals, with individual needs, yet it's not possible to take such a specific line as it is in a one-to-one. Having a broad understanding of how the individuals in the team will work together is essential. Most important of all is making the aims of the team something each member strives for, bringing synergy to their individual efforts.

It's worth taking a few moments first, though, just thinking about what a team is. A team is a minimum of two people, working together towards shared goals. They may involve similar people working in parallel, where the team benefits are mostly about minimising costs by sharing information and resources. Most white-collar teams, though, are designed to produce synergy - bringing together complimentary skills to provide an outcome that is equal to more than the sum of the parts. This synergy derives from the interplay of thoughts and the ability to work together on a challenge rather than sequentially. The power of a team is in part down to the nature of knowledge. It is not simply an accumulation of information but the mental structures needed to use that information - a team has a richer mental structure and a deeper pool of information to work with.

Working together ... and not

If a team is to gain those benefits of synergy it needs to be able to interact smoothly. This is often illustrated by using the image of well-oiled cogs in a machine, or a sporting team - but neither presents the ideal image. A business team is much more like a living organism. It needs the basics of survival, which are similar to a machine - the fuel of appropriate tasks and the internal communications to make teamwork possible, but it also needs growth and fun. Growth, not in the sense of growing a team larger and larger (the empire builder does not make a good team leader), but constantly growing in capabilities

- a learning team. Fun, because a team thrives on positive interaction, which implies a fun atmosphere.

Part of making a team work together well is about providing all those essentials. Appropriate tasks - setting a team tasks which are achievable but stretching. Internal communications - if a team can't be physically co-located it needs superb communications support across the whole spectrum. Growth - regular courses and reading, always pushing the boundaries of the team's capabilities. And fun - opportunities for social interaction and a working environment where fun isn't frowned on. It also helps to have an understanding of team roles. Different individuals, with different psychological profiles, will take on different roles in the team and will interact with other members of the team in different ways. This isn't the place to go into profiles in any depth, but the use of a recognised test like Myers Briggs or the Insights Colour Wheel can provide a valuable understanding of how a team will work together, and can give team members assistance in making it work.

The almost universal support for the team approach has resulted in one unexpected demotivating factor, which is rarely mentioned in the literature. Teams are not creative. This sounds like heresy. We all know the valuable innovation that comes from a team throwing an idea around, combining different inputs and building on them. The fact remains, though that teams are not creative. The old joke about a camel being a horse designed by committee is based on fact. When you look at the evidence, it is individuals that create ideas, while teams are good at refining, combining and enhancing them. Edward de Bono has argued that this is why the UK has produced so many new inventions, while the USA has made money out of them - the UK has more of a tradition of the (quite possibly eccentric) individual, while the USA has had a longer love affair with the team.

The lesson this provides for team motivation is that we need to give individuals, especially creative individuals, the space to get away from the team to hatch ideas, but to ensure that they also are encouraged to work with the team to develop and combine ideas. There are few more frustrating and demotivating factors for a creative individual than to force them into teamthink at a point where a new idea is emerging. The keys are to make space for individual thought available - if you have an open-plan team room there should also be a room where individuals can lock themselves away - and to make sure that the role of the team is understood. To put across the message that while it is essential to be part of the team, it is equally important to give the other members of the team the space they need, when they need it.

Team goals

An important step towards understanding teams and making them work is having clear goals. This doesn't have to involve a formal system of cascading mission and goals and objectives and tasks - it can be as simple as a regularly revised list of bullet point tacked up on the wall. The important think about team goals is that they are visible, understood and bought into. Failure in any of these requirements can demotivate and reduce the team's effectiveness.

Buy-in is an essential from a motivational viewpoint. If individuals in the team don't support the goals, they will undermine the motivation of the whole team. It's worth making sure that individuals aren't just giving lip service to the goals but actually believe that they are worthwhile. One way to increase buy-in is to make sure that the team members have an input to the goals. They should not expect to say 'this goal is rubbish', but they should have a sympathetic hearing if they say 'why don't we change this goal like this, it will improve it'.

Part of the process of confirming buy-in should be testing understanding. You can't be fully behind goals you don't understand. Misunderstanding can lead to friction between team members, a powerful blockage to motivation. It is only a shared understanding between team members that will bring the goals alive.

Visibility has two aspects. The goals need to be visible to the team members. This allows them to compare their activities against the goals, to check that what they are doing has appropriate value. They goals should also be visible to people outside the team, so they can be aware of what the team is trying to achieve. This will motivate the team to perform better (provided the goals are appropriate and stretching) and will encourage others to support them.

Team blockages

There are a number of circumstances and problems that can block a team's effectiveness and reduce its motivation. We have already seen the possibilities of misunderstandings within the team and of poorly understood goals. Other contributory factors can be lack of energy or tunnel vision, physical comfort, security, esteem and development.

The first two problems can be overcome with appropriate team exercises. They are covered in the companion volume *Instant Teamwork* - see chapter 6 for more details. A strong team can work in physically unappealing surroundings and still be highly motivated. A team that is lacking in motivation will still fail despite a beautiful office. Yet some aspects of location can have an effect on motivation. Bad lighting, poor air conditioning, cramped space can all reduced motivation. Bearing in mind that office

space is very much 'home territory', it is not surprising that external changes also come across badly. Frequent enforced moves of office (implying low esteem), rigid control over décor and other commandments from on high can easily demotivate.

Within a team, office space can also result in internal strife. Simple matters like who sits nearest the window can be blown up out of all proportion - take office space seriously. In terms of esteem and development, you can almost treat a team as if it were an individual. A team expects recognition for what it achieves and the opportunity to develop and grow (not necessarily in size). Some companies have reward schemes with a performance pay component for team performance, but few recognise the strength of feeling that attaches to how a team is regarded by others in the company. There is a big opportunity here both for motivation and demotivation - the choice is yours.

Inside out, not outside in

There's a world of difference between the phrases 'you are a team' and 'we are a team'. Teams are almost impossible to motivate from the outside. Most of the motivation has to come from within. Demotivation, on the other hand, can come in very easily from the outside - it's a one-way barrier. That's not to say that motivating factors can't be initiated from the outside. If your director gives your team an award, it will have a motivating effect, but most of the motivation will come from the reaction within the team. This means that any recognition for a team ought to have a team flavour to it. If an individual gets a glowing write-up in the in-house magazine it will have a big impact. For a team it will be less effective. However, if the team goes out for a meal on the boss, even though the visibility level of the recognition is much lower, it will have a big impact, because it is a team event and gives the team a chance to build on the morale boost.

If you want to bring a team on, it is important that the team regards you as 'one of us' not 'one of them'. Unfortunately, this isn't as simple as just stating the fact. When a large company's chief executive tells the staff that 'we're all one big team' he might be trying to achieve this sense of joint purpose and buy-in, but it simply doesn't work. Teams form by interaction, not by organizational structure. You have to earn your position in the team before you will be 'one of us' - and that goes for everyone, even the CX. This doesn't mean you have to do one of the 'ordinary' jobs on the team, but that the team members have to consider your contribution relevant and meaningful.

Motivating the team

When looking at the motivation of the team, you are working at two levels. The individual considerations still apply, but there are team factors as well. Teams still have demotivational tranquillisers and motivational uppers, but the flavour is rather different. Elements like pay and seniority disappear from the negatives to be suppressed, while factors like working conditions often increase in importance. As already discussed, positive motivational factors that can be appreciated by the team as a team have a greater impact than motivators which apply to each individual in the team as individuals.

Although all the roles of coaching, counselling, transforming and mentoring that applied to individuals can also be applied to the team, again there is a different weighting. Counselling may still be about self-esteem (there is a pecking order to teams, and some will consider themselves of low importance), but it is often about internal relationships. As we saw in Team blockages above, relationship problems can cripple the working of a team, destroying its motivation from within. The team motivator needs to be a good relationship counsellor. But the team also adds a fifth motivational role - leading.

This isn't the book to go into the details of leadership (see chapter 6 for more details of the companion volume *Instant Leadership*), but the nature of the leadership provided is central to the motivation of a team. Leadership rather than management is the key word. If you accept the crude distinction between leadership and management that good leaders provide a combination of very stretching goals with high support, while good managers provide well-defined tasks with excellent monitoring, leadership is an inevitable requirement for team motivation. A leader will feel part of the team, even though setting the direction. A leader will provide clear principles and make sure everyone understands exactly what their priorities are - but will let the team get on with getting something done. A leader will be focussed on outputs - what is delivered by when, not inputs - who works the right hours wearing the right suit. I would go so far as to say that you can't effectively motivate a team without good leadership.

4 - Large scale

Big groups

Whatever reason a large group of people has for getting together - a conference, an in-house training day, a company forum - there is likely to be a mix of attitudes from the enthusiastic to the cynical. Without the right motivation, a huge investment in time is likely to be wasted. As always with motivation it's not a one-way thing either. The people attending the event, or forming part of the body will get much more out of it if they are properly motivated. But getting such a group motivated takes a broader brush approach than a team - it's less personal, more oriented to the underlying influences that motivate everyone. That isn't to say that we've returned to the picture of interchangeable components. Members of a large group are still individuals, and it's often the input of one or more individuals that will influence the motivation of the group as a whole. There is no magic super-psychology, like Isaac Asimov's fictional psychohistory that allows us to consider a large group as a single complex entity. Yet there are considerations which make them practical to deal with.

Why are they here?

The reasons for attending a large group are varied, but they fall broadly into four categories. Knowing the type of attendee you have at a large group session can influence your approach to motivation.

Some attendees will be there because they have been sent. They wouldn't choose to be present, but their boss has told them to, or there's a company-wide edict. Often they will feel that the session is a waste of time that would be better spent on their normal working activities. Motivating this type of people is particularly hard - it requires a lot of effort, but without getting them on-board they are likely to be disruptive and uncooperative.

Some attendees may simply be there for a break. Because it's a great excuse not to work. This can sound harsher than it is - we all need to get away from things occasionally, and a large group session might be a good opportunity to recharge the batteries. Such people may never get fully behind your intentions, but will generally be easy to motivate as they have already achieved what they wanted.

A third type of attendee has a specific agenda. They know exactly what they want to get out of the session. Nothing else will do. If you are pretty close to their requirement motivation will not be an issue, but anything that strays away from it (and such a closed picture is fairly unlikely to match a whole session) will be ignored, sometimes in a very obvious way. In

those circumstances this group are just as much of a challenge as those who have been sent involuntarily.

The final type has a general passion for learning and developing. It doesn't really matter what the subject is as long as they are growing. The only motivational danger with this group is if your session doesn't have enough content. If it is all froth and no substance the people in this group will start getting itchy feet, but otherwise they are easy to please.

Why do you want them there

Just as there are a small number of reasons for attending a session, there are a small number of reasons for organising them. You might want to get information across, you might be engaging in training, or simply trying to influence the mood of a group. Although there are plenty of other labels attached, these three categories cover most large sessions. It's quite possible, of course, for a session to switch between categories during the event. For instance, a departmental awayday may start with information on the company, move on to a training session on a new way of working and end up with cheerleading to send the department out on a high. Even so, the different sections have different requirements.

Informing

In an information session you want the attendees to be motivated to listen to your message and to take it away in a form that will be remembered and used appropriately. Classic informing sessions are management briefings and press conferences. Some of the motivational factors apply also to the other categories. I have attended so many events (especially press events) where you are made to wait around for at least half an hour after the published start time, often kept out of the auditorium where the event is about to take place. This is not a good start to encourage constructive listening.

Once into the session, good use of support media (to illustrate rather than to be flashy for the sake of it) and an engaging speaking style make a lot of difference. If your presenter drones unmercifully, usually talking incomprehensible jargon, you will have lost your audience in minutes. Make sure you have a decent speaker, and a run through the presentation in advance to catch glitches.

A great speaker or an exciting video can put across a message very effectively without anything else. Yet the retention capabilities of the brain will still start to limit what is taken in unless specific steps are taken. One requirement is frequent breaks, carving up the message into manageable chunks (it is also pretty demotivating if you are desperate to get to the bathroom). Another requirement for retention is the ability to revisit the input. For this reason, a good way to motivate the attendees to revise your information is to give them an interesting way of doing it. This might mean just having a handout of the slides, but this is

the bare minimum (and an awful lot of packs of handouts spend the rest of their life on the shelf, never being looked at again).

Consider other, more fun ways to carry the message home. Can you put it on a laminated card to go in their personal organisers? Can you give away a proper book that puts across the message? Real books always have more impact than handouts. Can you give them the information to take away in a different medium? Beware, by the way the illusion that high-tech is necessarily the answer. Although, for instance, you can build a very fancy CD-ROM with your message presented as a dramatic multimedia presentation, a lot of people won't look at it. They might not have drives or, like me, they may be swamped with CD-ROMs from different sources and never get round to do anything with your masterpiece.

Sometimes you can get more benefit from a more tangential approach. Give them something which is attractive in its own right that will remind them of your message. It might be a bag or a T-shirt with an appropriate message. It could be a penknife or practically any other gift that can have a few words printed on it. The important thing, though, is to judge your audience and the kind of give-away that is likely to appeal.

Training

In a sense, training is a special case of informing, but it is different enough to treat independently. For our purposes the difference in a training session, whether it's a seminar or a workshop or a conventional training course, is the complexity of the message that has to be got across. Usually it will be more detailed and will often involve practical experience rather than just being talked at.

All of the motivational tricks that apply to informing can be brought over into training too, but some extra ones apply. Making the exercises enjoyable, and ensuring that the content is relevant to the training requirement are essential. Generally, hands-on experience in training is particularly motivational, though it can have a negative effect if it is very exposed - most people don't like their learning mistakes to be viewed by everyone. Because training often involves breaking the group into small teams, many of the team aspects of motivation discussed in the previous chapter apply here too.

Although it is potentially a problem in all three forms of group exercise, training is particularly susceptible to boredom. There is a phenomenon where regular attendees of training sessions become fed up with the format. I have seen groups rebel because they had had enough of being broken up into syndicate sessions who then reported back to the full group - they wanted something different. Bear this in mind. If you do want to break up into teams, make them as different as possible. If you do want reporting back, don't make it a case of everyone giving a two-minute presentation, go for something outrageously different. This is particularly important if you are running a session over several days and want to keep the motivation level up.

Cheerleading

A cheerleading session has pure motivation as its prime goal. You don't want to send people away informed or trained, but with a warm glow about your subject. A classic cheerleading event is a sales conference, where the salespeople (delicate flowers one and all) are encouraged and led on by the successes of others. Less obvious, but equally cheerleading in nature are celebrations. It might be your annual company barbecue, your Christmas party or a meal to celebrate completing a project - whichever, motivation is its *raison d'être*.

Motivating in a cheerleading session is usually blatant and works mostly at a gut level. Anything from actual cheerleaders to special effects, videos, lavish prizes and razzmatazz can contribute to a cheerleading session. This is fine as long as it is done in a style which is appropriate for the group taking part, and isn't seen as over-costly or celebration in a time of difficulty. Otherwise there could well be problems as discussed in *Avoiding farce* below.

Diffuse groups

Perhaps the hardest large groups to motivate are diffuse groups, where the individuals involved may not even realise that they are members of a group. Consider all the potential customers for your products and services. Not the customers you've already got, but the ones you might have in the future (though of course your existing customers are a group too). They are never going to be together in the same location. Many of the traditional motivating techniques are simply irrelevant. At this level, motivation becomes more aligned with marketing than conventional interpersonal skills. Yet all the lessons from the different types of grouping described above are still likely to be valuable.

Getting the bandwagon rolling

An unfairly large part of the motivational opportunity with a large group rests in the first few minutes of its existence. Luckily, through the flow of a day there are usually several 'first few minutes' - after the group has been broken up and reformed, after breaks and meals. Setting the right tone in those first few minutes can make a lot of difference to motivation. One contributory factor has already been mentioned - getting started promptly. It is also very valuable to get started with a bang. Resist the temptation to drone through a summary of the day, and safety regulations and how to find the toilets. Getting the group into a positive frame of mind, perhaps using one of the exercises described in *Instant Teamwork* (see chapter 6) is a much better starting point. Similarly a very short multimedia presentation can help introduce a positive, anticipatory state. Be intensely aware of the opportunities those first few minutes present.

Avoiding farce

When you are dealing with large groups, you are working at a particularly emotional level. Like any serious drama, you have to tread carefully to avoid flipping into farce. This is a particular danger if those attempting to put across the motivational message are more serious about it than those receiving the message. Grand spectacular can have superb results, but misjudged messages can have the opposite effect.

A wonderful case study is provided by the major relaunch international airline British Airways undertook in the 1980s. With the memory of being a nationalised company still around, BA took a bold step in transforming the company, highlighted by a striking new livery. This was launched in a stunning show. The whole audience was on a mobile platform which first raised to an upper level for a speech by the senior executives then returned to the lower level for a light show that ended with the audience's platform moving towards the screens. As they did, the screens fell away and there, spotlighted through the smoke, was a model plane in the new livery, revolving on a turntable. It took a few seconds to realise the scale of the event - this wasn't a model, it was an actual 737 jet. This event took the breath away and was genuinely motivational. (This shouldn't be confused with the livery change BA undertook in the 1990s which received much flak from the press and public, and was spectacularly demotivational.)

This event worked because of the sheer scale and drama, and because the message fitted. However, dressing up an unconvincing message with excessive razzamatazz can have the reverse effect to that intended. Those attending can go away thinking 'what a waste of money - so what?' This can be the case where an expensive presentation is used to launch a cost-cutting exercise, but more typically it happens when there is no belief among the group that those putting across the message really mean it, or that they can deliver on the promise. This response is often seen in political events. Large scale glitz works superbly when it is supporting a strong message - as smoke and mirrors to conceal an absence of message it is an effective (and expensive) demotivator.

5 - The exercises

5.1 *It's catching*

Preparation – none.

Running time – ten minutes.

Resources – notepad.

Frequency – once.

The whole aim of this book is to help you to motivate other people. One of the best tips on motivation is noticing that it is infectious. If you are genuinely motivated in what you are doing, if it gives you real satisfaction and you are totally committed to it, it will rub off on those around you.

This isn't the place to discuss self-motivation and assertiveness in any detail. However, spending a few minutes looking at your own motivation will generate significant benefits. Try out the *Portfolio matching* (5.26) exercise on yourself. Note down how motivated you are in the areas where you are trying to motivate others. Make sure you have that essential buy-in and enthusiasm. With it, you will succeed in motivating others.

Feedback – The question arises, what happens if you aren't motivated yourself? Apart from looking at the possibilities of self-motivation, you have a number of options. Discuss it with those who have the opportunity to motivate you. Look at why you aren't motivated and see if you can remove the obstacles. If all else fails, find a way of doing something else. You can only keep up a facade of motivation for so long, and demotivation is even more infectious than motivation. You owe it to yourself to be doing something that excites you.

Outcome – This is one of the most powerful techniques available in motivation. We aren't all capable of generating charisma, but everyone can provide enthusiasm and interest. This will communicate itself.

Variations – This technique works across the whole spectrum of audiences from individuals to huge groups. It is not an option.

Individual ★★★★★

Team ★★★★★

Group ★★★★★

Fun ★★★★★