



# *Enrichmentors Business Review*

**Keeping your people motivated**  
Insights while working for Hindustan Unilever,  
Johnson & Johnson and Volkswagen

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## What is in this Issue

### From The Editor's Desk

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Dear Reader,

Hope you enjoyed the last issue where I had shared with you the learnings about how to get best out of your people. One of things we talked there was keeping your people motivated in addition to developing them and providing the organizational support.

Keeping your people motivated is probably the toughest challenge any business leader faces whether it is a SME or a large corporation because it wears off very fast. Keeping your people motivated at all times requires considerable skill and practice continuously in addition to the processes and systems. Yes, it does come naturally to some but surely you also can do it if this does not come naturally to you.

My learnings about motivation in real life started under Prem Kamath in Hindustan Unilever. Prem was then the Branch Manager and I a new Area Manager in his branch. He taught us how we can motivate our sales team by taking interest in their personal development.

Next milestone in real life learnings came working under Pramod Lele in Johnson & Johnson! He demonstrated the genuine "taking care of you" attitude and one found that tremendous source of motivation. Came along Shripad during the same time as a colleague who reiterated the same attitude and that worked wonders in keeping people motivated

Somewhere in J&J learned about "finding people doing things right" and saw wonders of that when I moved to Mulund factory where the challenges was to motivate the unionized workers to improve productivity. Simple recognition system did wonders and you some time wondered at power of simplicity and genuineness!

Most recent learnings have been from Sebastian Schraeer of Volkswagen as a client. He lived the ability to think and say things in most positive way especially when the situation was not positive and keeps you working against the odds to get to your goal.

So, let me attempt to summarize these in next few pages for you to try & see their impact!

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# Keeping your people motivated

## Insights while working for Hindustan Unilever, Johnson & Johnson and Volkswagen

*This people management paper details the following aspects of getting the best out of your people.*

- *What is required to keep your people motivated?*
- *How do you use these to keep your people motivated?*
- *When do you use these tools?*
- *Where can you use these tools?*
- *How much?*

### **What is required to keep your people motivated?**

There are many factors that can be used to keep people motivated and many theories. I will only talk about the factors I have personally seen to work in my career of over 30 years. Some of them are as follows

### *Some Motivational Factors*



Don't you feel motivated when

- ✓ You get an extra pay in cash or kind for a performance delivered over the agreed plans?
- ✓ Your boss says hello to you with a smile and also says nice things about you in public for the good things you have done?
- ✓ Your boss takes personal interest in your development and provides you appropriate opportunities?
- ✓ You get adequate freedom to do your own work without being watched all the time?
- ✓ You know that each brick you are laying every day will build a monument like Tajmahal
- ✓ Your voice is being heard in the organization and acted upon appropriately

**If these motivate you, will they not motivate your people!**

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**How do you use these to keep your people motivated? When? Where? How much?**

Allow me now to share with you how I have used each of these factors in my work life so far.

*Incentives & Rewards*

Most successful use of the incentives and rewards, I found and used, was for the sales team in Johnson & Johnson



Each salesperson had a monthly, quarterly and annual target, to keep it simple, and he received an incentive every month, quarter and annually for meeting and exceeding his targets. More they exceeded higher they got and that worked like a silent supervisor allowing us change the role of their managers to coaches than supervisors.

You can also design an incentive and reward system for any function where the targets can be set quantitatively and results measured objectively. The incentive budget for the total year needs to be 20-30% of the fixed pay to be effective. It can be equally split into the monthly, quarterly and annual payouts. Each time period pay out should be based on clear criteria which you want them to focus on.

The targets need to set realistically so that 70% of the people can achieve it. The results and incentives needs to be calculated within 30 days maximum, communicated and paid out. While communicating the earnings, the missed earning opportunities should be highlighted and they coached on how they can meet those targets and earn them.

While the incentives could be individual based, rewards should be used to drive the team achievement. There could be rewards for achieving quarterly and annual team targets in the form of common gifts, a team travel to a destination of choice etc

I remember that such Annual Team Travel rewards were a great motivator and the sales team started from Goa and went to Australia over the years on achieving the annual targets

**The key in Incentive and rewards are about these being transparent, simple, reasonable and attractive! There are many pitfalls like pushing up the target to unreasonable levels in the hope of getting better results by just pushing them up. Nothing fails more miserably that such unreasonable plans.**

**As one of my bosses in J&J, John Springford, used to say, if 70% of the incentive plan is not being paid out, you either change the plan or the people!**

**How do you use these to keep your people motivated? When? Where? How much?**

Let me now share with you how can we use recognition as a motivational tool.

*Recognition*

J&J sales team recognition systems again stand out as a best practice I have seen. The



most significant element of the J&J sales team was the annual conference whose location was the recognition of the entire team having achieved the all India sales targets. I saw the wonders of this recognition in achieving goals every year and starting with the annual sales conference in Goa and going on to Australia.

Every annual conference had a awards evening for which the sales team would practically die to get a award that evening. There were awards for Best sales person of the region, Best sales person nationally, Best Area Team, Best Region etc. etc. The criteria for these awards were established right in the beginning of the year and accordingly the sales people and managers were awarded the trophies in a national gathering. This whole event was so moving that many cried every year on getting and many on not getting the awards!

Then we experimented with Recognition of the month in J&J Mulund Plant very successfully to enthuse otherwise not so motivated people in plant management. I believe this recognition also become something plant management looked forward to receiving every month.

You can also recognize people every week which I picked up from Getit Yellow pages where my wife worked and we implemented for workers in Mulund for exceptional production performance.

You can recognize people for any good work they have done any time and any way by catching people doing right things. It is as simple as noticing your assistant doing something that you did not expect and saying a few words along with a "Bourneville" in a public function. This "you deserve Bourneville " recognition was looked forward by all in one of my of latest assignment. Even the CMD seemed to vying to get a Bourneville and why not! All us need recognition continuously.

**So catch people doing right things and recognize in any away that comes to you!**

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**How do you use these to keep your people motivated? When? Where? How much?**

Let us now look at how can we use personal development as a motivational tool.

### *Personal Development*

As mentioned previously, I saw the motivating power of taking interest in the personal development of people very early in working life when I was the Area Manager in Hindustan Unilever in Chennai looking after 16 salesmen and 2 sales officers.



Guided by then Branch Manager of HUL South, Prem Kamath, I would see the motivational levels move up by simple things like discussion with the salesmen about what they wanted to become and trying to teach a couple of things that could help them while travelling with them in the markets.

You need to set up formalized HR processes that can help each of your managers take genuine interest in the development of their people. One of the processes that worked was the Career Counseling and Personal Development Planning during the Annual Performance Review in J&J. The essence of this process goes back to my early HUL learnings. It started with understanding the aspiration of the person and then advising him what could he become in the company given his current performance and potential assessment. I remember first documenting this in J&J Mulund plant with all the managers and found many of them coming and profusely thanking me for doing it. I realized later that it requires courage of conviction of your assessment to put in writing that "I also see that you can become a Business Head One day and this is what needs to be done to get you there".

The next part, naturally is to put the "things needs to done by the person and you" called Development Plans with a time line. It is very common to load the development plan items on the person himself. While that works to some extent, the real personal development plan is one which also put down in that plan what you are going to do as a mentor. This requires some real thinking and commitment on your part and that is where it becomes a motivational tool. Now your subordinate sees you taking "real" interest in his personal development. Of course, he is waiting to see if you are going to actually do it and that develops your credibility or destroys it.

Personal development of people takes time, conviction in their abilities and courage to expose yourself by giving them a chance to prove. This is not something that you can do it in a month or even a year. It takes commitment of years, quarterly reviews on the progress on the development plans, daily coaching with different people but rewards are fascinating.

**So begin today by asking your direct reports**

- ✓ **Where do you want to be in your life in next 5 years?**
- ✓ **What can I do to help you get there?**

**And just do what they want you to do to help them!**

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**How do you use these to keep your people motivated? When? Where? How much?**

How can Freedom work as a motivational tool?

*Freedom .....to manage own work.*

I asked myself when did I find myself motivated to work and when I did not! I was fortunate to work under many business leaders who provided me the freedom to manage my own work right from Arun Adhikari in HUL Chennai in early years, to Pramod Lele, Narendra Ambwani, John Springford & Barry Rhein in J&J and finally Mark Wilson in Dumex (now part of DANONE India). These were the times when I felt greatly motivated to perform vs. other times where such a freedom was missing



Providing freedom to work to each of your direct reports is a very individual thing. It requires you to assess the degree of freedom required by each one and accordingly work with him/her. You may need to only provide an annual goal and agree on key projects to one of them and leave him/her alone to manage his/her work on one side. On the other side, one of them may need to be closely monitored because s/he needs it but not because you can not work without monitoring him/her.

The question then may be asked is how do we find out about the degree of freedom each of your direct reports need and should be given?

I have not yet found a straight answer. My answer lies in beginning at some level of degree of freedom based the person and his work and then keep adjusting as you go along.

Some guideline can always be used.

- Creative workers require more degree of freedom like in advertising industry
- Repetitive work require lesser degree of freedom, but not zero.

You must have the agreement on the output expected, it quality and the time of completion. How much further you need to go into depends on the capability of the person to find the ways to achieve the output expected of the agreed quality and timing. You can only determine this by trials

But one thing is certain, if you do not provide appropriate degree of freedom in either direction, the motivation levels will suffer with the feedback of either being micromanaged or not being provided adequate support and guidance

**So the best way to provide the right degree of freedom is to**

- ✓ **Start some where based on the type of work and the person**
- ✓ **Seek feedback periodically as to what help does he needs from you**
- ✓ **Keep adjusting degree of freedom based his needs**

**And you will find the right balance in few trials for sure!**

**How do you use these to keep your people motivated? When? Where? How much?**

There is no debate on the role of Vision in motivating people, yet very few use it effectively.

*Vision.....of the future, shared.*

The issue is the way the Vision is crafted and used. For many people Vision gets confused with the Mission of the company, is drafted by one or very few key implementers and is confined to the company presentations.



For a company vision to be effective motivator, it needs to be crafted by the key implementers, set out something that these key implementers are passionate about attaining in the 3-5 years time frame and widely shared with all the company people through a variety of means. Let us look at how exactly can each of this be done.

The best way to craft the Vision of the Future of a company is to get its top management team consisting of the CMD and his direct reports together and ask each of them to visualize what would they like to hear about after 3-5 years in a news paper or TV interview about the company. The individual visualizations then needs to be synthesized into one coherent paragraph of few sentences which answers "what would you like to become by then?"

The key things is to capture the words that motivates the team and sets them to attain excellence is some area. It is only excellence, market leadership etc. that usually have the motivating capabilities to the entire company. Why would you be motivated if the Vision is about doing something mundane and obvious. Please remember that a Vision that is SMART ( Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic and Time bound) is likely to be far more motivating. Don't we have the Vision like "Putting man on the moon by end the decade of 60" successfully motivating the whole NASA in US and making it happen in spite of all odds!

I remember an interesting discussion in J&J while talking about the difference between the Mission and Vision. For the mathematically inclined people, here is the Mission and Vision defined.  $O_i$  stands for the  $i^{th}$  Objective of the company like sales, profit, market share etc.

$$\text{Mission} = \sum ( O_i, i=1, n)$$

$$\text{Vision} = \text{Max} (O_i, i=1, n)$$

Mission is about stating all that company would like to do where as Vision is one area it would aim to excel.

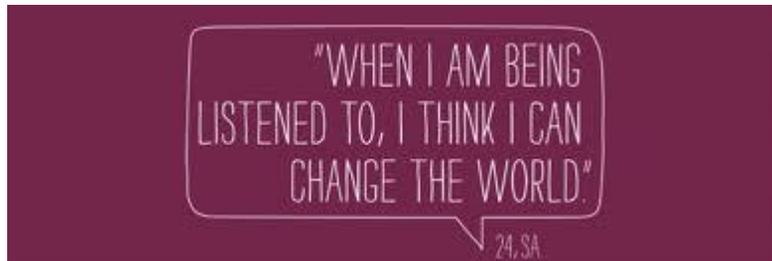
A Vision has to be shared widely to be a effective motivator to all people. It can be done through visual displays in company offices, factories, employee desks and cabins. Higher level of engagement with Vision will require Vision Challenge sessions as done in J&J.

**So check with your workers if they know the company vision and how do they feel about it. You will know if you are using the company Vision to motivate your people or can do better!**

**How do you use these to keep your people motivated? When? Where? How much?**

What has "Being listened" anything to do with motivating people?

*Being Listened.*



That is the power of being listened to!

The question now could be, so what is new about listening, I already do it.

If you really listen to you people and listen enough to motivate, try answering following questions to know how well do you do it.

- ✓ Do you listen attentively to your people and allow them to speak fully?
- ✓ Do you concentrate on what is being said?
- ✓ Do you confirm that you are concentrating while listening- e.g. using words like "yes", "Hmm" etc.
- ✓ Do you repeat what you have listened in your own words and confirm the understanding.
- ✓ Do you reelect on what you have understood and mirror his feeling and mood?

Doing well as per above check list is half the job. The next stage is to agree to do something or not do anything based on the merits of the case. Most people don't engage in this dialogue for the fear of saying no. My experience about saying a valid no is being as motivating as saying a yes. Of course it needs to be genuinely valid reason.

And from there, you need to start "Walking the talk", which essentially means implementing what you have agreed to do.

We all forget many times, that all people are intelligent enough to see the genuine talk and walk. More you can do genuine talk and walk following a genuine listening, more you will have motivated people following you, ready to jump off a cliff for you, knowing well in their hearts that you are there with them and wont let them fall.

**They say that "Trust come walking and goes back on horse back!"**

**I will say about that Motivation comes on horse back and goes on as well on horseback. So you need to keep doing all you can, every day.**

**Only good thing is that you can keep trying and people will respond every time. The challenge is to keep the motivation levels up all the time and that requires you to keep doing all of the above if not any more all the time.**

**It is one of the things you need to do daily like you eat, drink and sleep every day.**

**As mentioned earlier, to some it comes naturally but it can be learned by practicing daily. Ask yourself every day, How many people did I motivate today and find yourself on a high by motivating more people! It is viral!!**

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