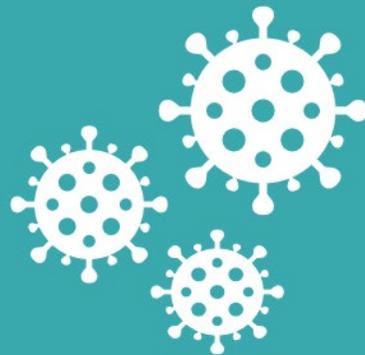


Motivation During a Global Pandemic

Busting the myths and taking action



Contents

The world of work is changing. Now is the time to change it for the better.....	3
The Workplace Reimagined	4
What is Motivation?.....	5
How important is motivation?.....	5
Dispelling the myths around motivation	7
Myth #1: Motivation is intangible and immeasurable.....	7
Myth #2: Engagement strategies already address motivation.....	8
Myth #3: To improve performance, you need to focus mainly on skill/behaviour development.....	8
Myth #4: Psychometric personality questionnaires tell you everything you need to know about what motivates someone.....	9
Myth #5: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs explains what drives people.....	9
Myth #6: Most people know what motivates them. Just ask them.....	10
Myth #7: Companies already meet people’s motivators through the rewards they offer.....	10
Myth #8: Improving the employee experience of work will deliver the results that businesses seek	11
Practical actions to increase motivation	12
4 Actions to Reinforce ‘The What’.....	13
4 Actions to Augment ‘The How’.....	14
4 Actions to Strengthen ‘The Why Bother’	15
Over to You.....	16

The world of work is changing. Now is the time to change it for the better.

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed how we work and the value we place on the work itself. It has accelerated practices and approaches which ordinarily would have taken years to evolve.

Practices such as remote working have become common place and are set to continue. The ability for organisations to reinvent themselves or re-engineer how they deliver their products and services within a matter of weeks has set the bar high for what is possible. Leadership is under pressure in ways previously unseen; simultaneously we see calls for strong leadership (decisiveness, bravery and boldness) AND compassionate and connected leadership (focusing on well-being, kindness and collaboration).

When we step back, we remember that the pandemic sits in a landscape of economic uncertainty, political divisiveness, digital acceleration and climate change.

The challenge for businesses, indeed for society, is huge.

84%

of organisations are exploring different working models in light of the Covid-19 pandemic

(Source: Aon, Pulse Survey, August 2020)

36%

of employees are fatigued by recent change

(Source: Top 5 Priorities for HR Leaders in 2021, Gartner, 2020)

The Workplace Reimagined

The response to the Covid crisis for many has been to ‘dig deep’ and ‘push through’ but we know this is not sustainable. We are seeing an increasing focus on well-being, mental health and resilience in the workplace, yet we also see demands being placed on people like never before. Higher performance and productivity, increased levels of creativity and innovation, and greater collaboration are all being asked for.

To meet these challenges, people are starting to reimagine the workplace. Managers are seeking new ways to reshape and reengage their teams. Individuals are inquisitive about how they can get what they want and need from work – and life.

We believe harnessing motivation is key to transforming our experience of work.

When people understand and take responsibility for what drives them, they can find ways to have their motivators met on a consistent basis. And when they do this, they have the energy to wholly commit at work, expressing themselves fully, doing what they love and contributing more to the work that they do.

Only by understanding motivation can people ensure that they get more energy from work than they expend doing it. Only then can their efforts be sustainable and the human experience of work be improved.

And when this energy is focused on behaviours and outcomes, we start to see results in the form of performance, productivity and profitability. We see it change the human experience of work.

The Covid pandemic has shown us just what is possible when humans respond to a rallying cry. It has unleashed previously untapped potential in the form of creativity, innovation, pragmatism, teamwork, resilience and compassion. Imagine if we harness those qualities but without the fatigue, the burnout and the stress. What would then be possible? How much better would that be for the people we employ?

Motivation is the key to unlock that potential.

But there are lots of myths around motivation – some of which stop people from pursuing activities in this area.

In this article, we dispel these myths. We also provide some practical suggestions for how you can create motivation by bolstering and aligning the way you address each component of the Performance Triangle – the What, the How and the Why Bother.

But first we need to remind ourselves what motivation is.

22%

of employees will work from home all the time post-pandemic (up from 9% pre-pandemic)

(Source: CIPD, July 2020)

79%

say that fostering a sense of belonging in the workforce will be important to organisational success in the coming 18 months

(Source: Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends Survey, 2020)

What is Motivation?

Motivation is our reason for acting or behaving in a particular way. It is why we do what we do.

Motivation explains our behaviour. It explains why we get the results that we do. And yet motivation itself is invisible because it is a feeling - an energy.

How important is motivation?

Think of a time when you have had low motivation, what does that feel like? Time seems to drag, tasks and interactions are effortful and, when a problem comes up, we see it as a blocker. How productive are you when you feel like this? How resilient? How does work feel?

Just thinking about low motivation is likely to have impacted how you feel right now!

Now, think about a time when you are highly motivated at work. How does that feel? Time skips past - you are in a place of flow bringing your full self to work, solving problems, overcoming difficulties and interacting with others with a 'can do' attitude. At this time, how productive are you? How much are you enjoying the human experience of work? What does work mean for you when you are experiencing high levels of motivation? Its way beyond the transaction of time for money, right?

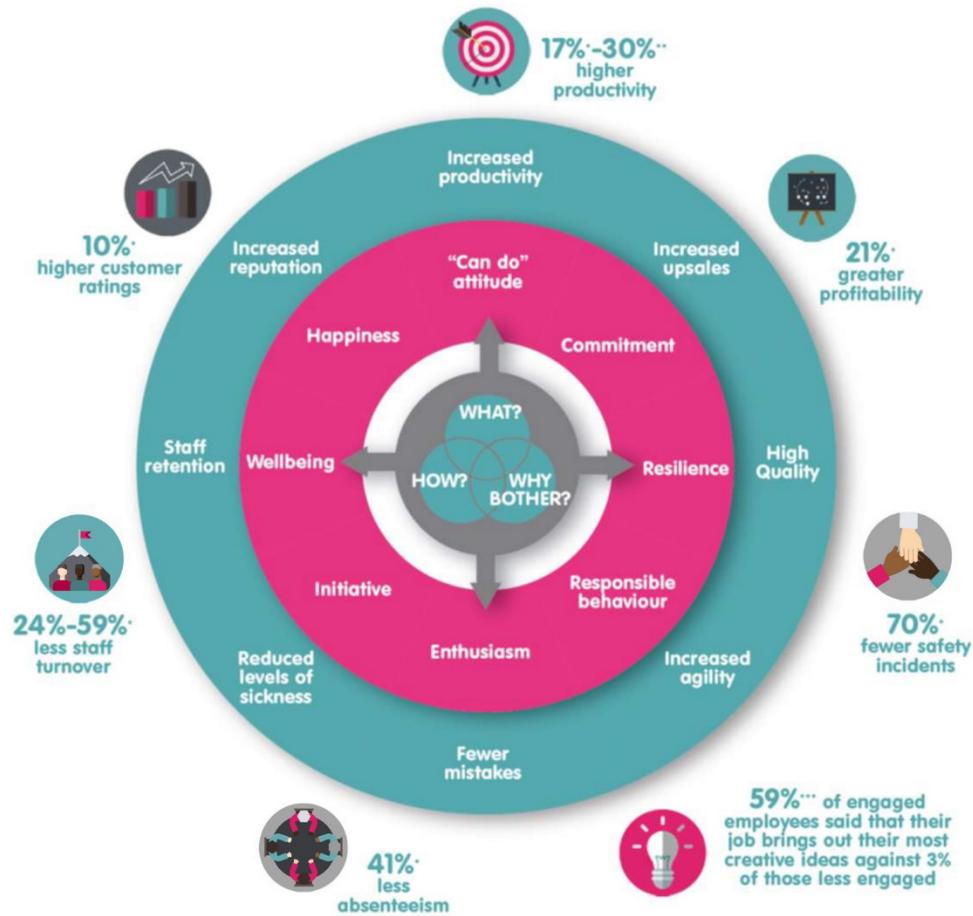
Now think of how this applies to the people in your organisation.

Yes, harnessing motivation increases productivity and performance, but its real power lays in transforming how we show up at work and what work means for us.

Motivation, when combined with skills and behaviours, can be directed to delivering outcomes, results and impact that constitute success. Done properly, and these outcomes are sustainable as individuals will gain motivation as a result of their efforts, and not simply expend effort.

“Because when people love what they do, they do it so much better”

And when motivation is harnessed its good for people and business as this graphic shows:



Source:
*2016 Gallup Worldwide Survey
**Storyforge.co/data
***engageforsuccess.org

And yet, there are numerous myths around concerning motivation and how best to achieve this.

Let's now take each in turn and see how it stands up to scrutiny.

Dispelling the myths around motivation

Ask most people and they will say motivation is vital in delivering performance. Yet, for years, motivation has either been left to happenstance (a person is seen either to be motivated or they're not at any given time); or, been wrapped up in employee engagement strategies.

We believe that improving the human experience of work will make an even bigger impact on societal wide issues such as public health, economic prosperity and climate change by unleashing greater creativity, discretionary energy and collaboration.

The Covid crisis, coupled with existing challenges such as the advance of AI, the changing generational demographic of the workforce and globalisation all call for new ways of working.

We believe that harnessing motivation is an imperative for those working within the HR, OD and talent space. Motivation is poorly served in most people strategies.

Efforts to improve levels of performance and productivity have been heavily skewed towards the SKILL rather than the WILL side of the equation. The skills which have been under the microscope the most are so-called 'soft' skills, or behaviours. When it comes to motivation, the most often referred to model is Maslow – a model which only really looks at meeting the 'needs' of an individual and not their 'wants'. Some argue that we don't need a tool to identify what motivates someone because people know what motivates them. Our experience shows different. Furthermore, it is often argued that we can learn a lot about what people are seeking from work by looking at what rewards are provided. Again, the data shows different. And some would say that the current work being done on improving the employee experience of work is enough and already addresses motivation. Again, we see it differently.

Let's address these myths in turn as we look at them during these disruptive times.

Myth #1: Motivation is intangible and immeasurable.

What motivates someone, changes at different ages and stages of life. What motivated someone pre-pandemic is possibly quite different to what motivates them mid-pandemic and beyond. We need a way and a tool to identify what motivates someone at a specific moment in time. Far from not being possible to measure motivation, Motivational Maps® enable you to measure the order and intensity of nine Motivators – and the extent to which each motivator is being met.

Maps are very different to other tools. They enable you to monitor trends over time, put in place specific actions to address shortfalls, and then assess the effectiveness of these.

These are rapidly shifting times and we need to learn how effective our talent strategies are at building motivation across our workforce, within teams and for individuals.

Rather than leaving motivation to happenstance, you can support your employees to find ways which optimise their motivation throughout their lives, understand what causes it to dip and what action to take to build a more fulfilled work environment.

Myth #2: Engagement strategies already address motivation.

There are plenty of studies which show the link between shifts in engagement levels and the corresponding shifts in productivity, profitability, staff retention, stress levels, absenteeism and customer experience. But most of the work on engagement has been top-down – and the dial hasn't moved much in twenty years. Adopting this approach in isolation, misses the amplification of results achievable when a bottom-up, motivation-led strategy is also incorporated. Furthermore, a purely top-down approach reinforces the view that employees need to align with what organisations state as success, rather than co-creating with employees what is possible.

By focusing on motivation, you can put back in the hands of individuals the strategies which are more targeted, and which are bottom-up.

When individuals and teams know what motivates them and are able to put in place actions for these motivations to be met on a more consistent basis, not only do levels of motivation increase, and the human experience of work improve, but its impact can be felt in the results seen at all levels of an organisation. It means that motivation data and interventions for meeting them can inform people strategies across the employment life cycle.

We believe that when people-led motivation strategies meet top-down engagement strategies real change occurs. At a time of uncertainty and of renewed focus on employee engagement and wellbeing, we know that motivation will augment your talent strategy.

Myth #3: To improve performance, you need to mainly focus on skill/behaviour development.

Most development programmes allude to motivation but mainly focus on developing skills and behaviours. Plus, with new skills and behaviours needed for the future, it is important to upskill and reskill. And yet, such a focus misses the core of development; the 'why bother'.

With Motivational Maps, and our CREATE Motivation model, individuals understand why they will benefit from the development programme; it increases learner engagement and follow through. Applying the lens of motivation also helps individuals understand why they don't perform at the desired levels and explains what derails success.

Myth #4: Psychometric personality questionnaires tell you everything you need to know about what motivates someone.

There is a clear distinction between motivation and behaviour and yet these two aspects of performance are often conflated.

To have self-awareness, it is not enough to look only at our personality, our preferred ways of working and traits (which we see so beautifully explored in psychometric profiling tools such as Insights Discovery® and Myers Briggs®). We also need to look through the lens of motivation. In this way, people identify why they do what they do – what the motive is behind their behaviour. This ultimately leads to a deeper level of understanding of self and others and this then complements any previous investment made in psychometrics.

Our 15+ years of experience of working with both Insights Discovery and Motivational Maps has confirmed to us that whilst there might be some correlation between personality traits and motivation, assumptions around this are unhelpful.

It is in separating these two aspects of self that we start to see a more granular picture of a person. After all, not all those who lead with a particular personality trait are driven by the same motivators. Likewise, not all those who share the same motivators, also share the same personality traits. By understanding both aspects, we can start to truly understand ourselves and each other. By understanding both we understand the behaviour, what it is driven by and what it is directed towards.

Myth #5: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs explains what drives people.

Ask a room full of people on a training course about motivation and the most often cited model is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Most people remember parts of this model, but they aren't clear how it relates to their work. The reason?

In normal times in the developed world we are lucky enough to have most of our needs met through work. Where we are left wanting is in, well, our wanting.

We need ways to turn our attention beyond our needs to address and meet these wants.

When we do, it feeds our soul, contributes to the human experience of work, and enables us to contribute fully from a place of flow. Individuals must understand what they want from work – and how best to achieve that.

Myth #6: Most people know what motivates them. Just ask them.

Our experience has shown that 70% of people don't know what motivates them. Part of this lack of awareness comes from the lack of a common language by which to refer to motivation. Motivational Maps® provides a common language of nine motivators. Maps also shows that when people complete Maps, they are 95% accurate.

Another reason we find why people don't know what motivates them is because people often carry round an old script in their heads about what used to drive them – and yet we know that throughout our life this changes. Circumstances, lack of being asked and / or cultural norms stop people from updating this aspect of self-awareness. At the current time, when we are still coming to terms with the changes enforced on our working and family lives, what drives us will most likely have changed.

Motivational Maps provides an up to date picture of what drives someone. This supports a growing awareness of self and a launchpad for taking action to increase opportunities for greater flow and work engagement. Over time, subsequent profiles can show patterns and trends – helpful for the individual but also the team manager and, at an organisational level to inform aspects of your people strategy.

Myth #7: Companies already meet people's motivators through the rewards they offer.

A [2019 Deloitte report](#) found that only 11% of respondents believed their reward strategy was highly aligned to their organisational goals. With the general pattern being for organisations seeking to provide ways other than pay to reward their people, it is perhaps alarming to then note that the greatest barrier organisations perceived to be to changing their company's rewards strategy was not understanding what's most important to employees (23%). The second greatest barrier was lack of funding at 22%.

Motivational Maps can be used as part of the holistic rewards strategy which moves the focus away from pay and benefits and a top down approach to a tailored, informed approach which can be responsive to people's wants and needs. It can be used to move away from an old-fashioned obsession with compensating people for service and effort, towards a reframing of rewards as a way to provide the environment and strategies for people to thrive. Furthermore, the language of Motivational Maps enable companies to help explain what rewards are being provided and why, and how these meet the needs and wants of the people in the business.

Myth #8: Improving the employee experience of work will deliver the results that businesses seek

MIT research shows that companies with a top-quartile employee experience achieve twice the innovation, double the customer satisfaction, and 25 per cent higher profits than organisations with a bottom-quartile employee experience.

It is clear employee experience matters.

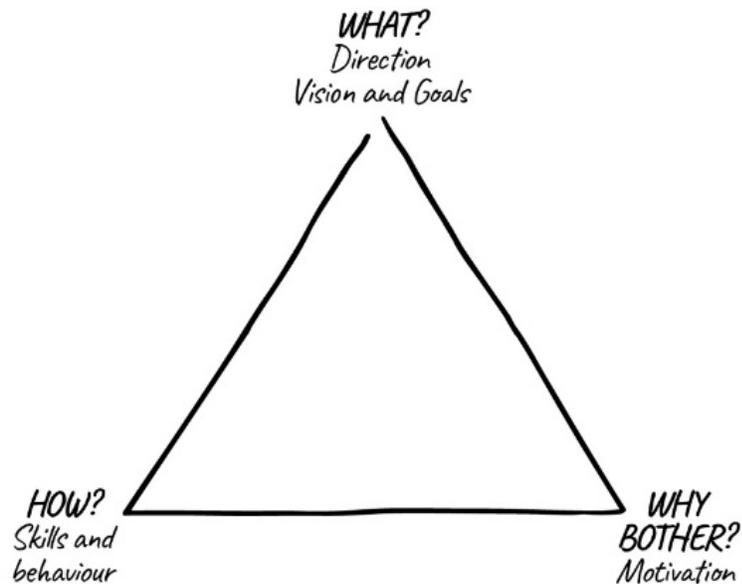
But with employee experience still mainly focusing on perks, event, rewards and work/life balance the focus remains on the work itself and not on the human experience – that which extends beyond work processes to the meaning of work itself.

Across the thousands of Maps now completed, one of the nine Motivators, Searcher (the desire to make a difference) is the top motivator.

There is a compelling case for companies as they reimagine work, to put purpose side by side (or ahead of) profit, as people will be more motivated, more committed, and more human.

With the myths busted, let's now focus on practical ideas for increasing motivation.

Practical actions to increase motivation using each area of the Performance Triangle



Our CREATE Motivation model has performance as its heart. We call it the Performance Triangle.

The Performance Triangle asks questions around three key components of performance, namely:

- **'What?'** This is about **setting direction**; knowing what good looks like in terms of impact, results and outcomes. It gets translated through an organisation in its strategy, the business plan, objectives, job roles and more.
- **'How?'** This is about **the skills and behaviours that exist in an organisation**; the ones which are nurtured and sought after, the ones which set you apart from your competition.
- **'Why Bother?'** This is about **motivation**; the reason why people want to work in this organisation; the reason why people want to perform at their best and go the extra mile.

We know that when people align their 'What, How and Why Bother?' with that of their teams and organisation (and the communities they serve), performance is optimised; people are able to give of their best and the human experience of work is transformed.

Set out below are practical ways to create motivation that can be incorporated in your people strategies.

4 Actions to Reinforce 'The What'

What outcomes, impact and results are you seeking?

1 Co-create.

Share the purpose/vision/direction but co-create the plan through open discussions and genuine exploration of the possibilities. This is about aligning top-down and bottom-up thinking. And it creates motivation because both parties are aligned.

2 Be clear and explicit.

Use measurement where you can. Take time to explore beyond the vague headlines to fully explore what 'good' looks like. To use an analogy, the What? is about direction-setting. It is not enough to say to someone you'll meet them in London. A post-code and house number are also needed. Clarity enables trust and confidence, and this builds motivation.

3 Take it step by step.

Break big deliverables into milestones so you can both check in along the way.

This is even more crucial now as the future seems more intangible and uncertain. Most teams now are looking at what good looks like in the next 3, 6 and 9 months within a context of the future strategy. When people see progress, they are motivated to keep going.

4 Know your starting point.

Be clear about how things are now; the Current Reality. What outcomes, impact and results are you already getting? Not only might this tell you what you need to start/stop/continue but the gap between the Current Reality and the Envisioned Future creates motivation. Our brains are wired to seek solutions.

4 Actions to Augment 'The How'

How will you get there? Which skills and behaviours are needed along the way?

1 Co-create (again!).

Work together to identify which skills and behaviours will contribute most powerfully to the outcomes. Which ones need a light shone on them? When people can use their own experience to inform ways of working, and can see the merit of working in this way, they are motivated to act.

2 Be clear and explicit (again!).

When exploring behaviours, it is easy (I could even say lazy!) to couch language in vague terms such as 'be more collaborative', 'plan more', or 'use your initiative'. These terms mean different things to different people.

Spend time together exploring what 'good' looks like for key behaviours.

Share examples of what people would be saying and doing. Be specific.

When people can imagine themselves behaving in that way, as if they are already there, their self-confidence increases (self-confidence is a component of motivation).

3 Catch people doing things right.

As people use the agreed behaviours and skills, catch them doing it right by giving meaningful feedback. And encourage feedback upwards, sideways, all-ways.

This is incredibly motivational and spurs people on to keep going.

4 Use Emotional Intelligence.

It is not enough to know our preferred ways of working. We also need to know when to use our strengths and when to adapt to our less preferred styles because that is what is needed. This develops agility. It develops our Emotional Intelligence. It keeps us growing.

4 Actions to Strengthen ‘The Why Bother’

Why do you/the team WANT to go in this direction? Why do you/the team WANT to use and develop these skills and behaviours? What’s the motivation?

1 Check-in to make sure the basic needs are met.

Only when our basic needs are being met can we truly step into our motivators – our drivers. At a time of crisis where everything feels like it has been thrown up into the air, many people have not paid attention to their basic needs. This is contributing to a growing issue around mental health and resilience.

Make time to check-in with the team to make sure they are aware of and are meeting their needs. These will include food and water, but also exercise, movement, light, connection. When we don’t have our basic needs met, we start forming bad habits because we are in a place of lack.

2 Unearth the higher order needs of each person.

Sitting above our basic needs are our higher order needs. These are not ordinarily factors that drive us but their absence is problematic. Most often our higher order needs are taken care of at work. They partly explain why we chose to work for the company we did. But changes in management, organisational structures, let alone changes in work practices caused by the pandemic, mean higher order needs may go unmet. Because we aren’t used to having to pay attention to these, they may be in our blind spot; we know something is wrong but can’t quite put our finger on it. Or, we know what is wrong, but we aren’t used to asking for help to have these needs met.

Work with teams to help them audit these needs and find solutions together which address them.

3 Review the strengths of each person and how these align with their motivations.

The Strengths movement has been adept in showing how much more successful organisations who follow this approach are than those businesses who don’t. Traditionally this has focused on the skills and behaviours associated with those Strengths. By focusing on the motive behind the behaviour it is possible to ramp up effectiveness in this area by ensuring people not only do those tasks which they are good at but also make sure they only do the ones which they love. When people love what they do, they do it so much better.

Review the strengths in your team and check in to see how these align with their motivations.

4 Purpose.

Over the last 15+ years of working with Motivational Maps, Searcher (making a difference) has been consistently in the Top 3 Motivators for all the teams we have worked with. Recent studies on the human experience for work confirm this drive for greater meaning in work.

Harness this motivation not only by demonstrating goals and targets are purpose-led, but also by regularly reviewing how the work of each team member is contributing to this. This is both in terms of results achieved outside the organisation, and on the impact felt within the organisation (impact on culture, human experience, engagement and more).

Over to You

Much has been written in this article about Motivational Maps and the role they can play in shifting the paradigm around motivation in the workplace. If you would like to experience a Motivational Map for yourself and discuss the opportunities for using Maps in your business, [contact us](mailto:info@motivationalleadership.co.uk) to arrange a call by emailing: info@motivationalleadership.co.uk

create motivation inspire connect adapt partner lead
deliver transform **pass it on**

T: 0845 123 3959

E: info@motivationalleadership.co.uk

W: www.mappingmotivation.com

Motivational Leadership Ltd

35 Chequers Court

Brown Street

Salisbury SP1 2AS