Understanding Motivational Needs

*A session from
the Rx CD System*

Rx

Understanding Motivational Needs:

The ability to understand the needs and desires of employees enough that this knowledge may be used to motivate them to succeed; the ability to encourage a self-starting, active pursuit of goals and objectives.

Why is this skill important?

A good score in this area is indicative of someone who understands that everyone is unique, and therefore motivated by different things. A person who Understands Motivational Needs values individual desires and takes the time to get to know other people's specific motivators. In contrast, a person with a poor score in this capacity will tend to discount the importance an individual's desires and needs play with regard to managing or motivating that person.

As you work with employees or project team members, you will find that they face difficult decisions and problematic issues as often as you do. You will need not to solve the problems for these people, but encourage them to decide for themselves how to resolve them.

A key part of encouraging people to develop their own solutions is understanding what motivates them to act in the first place. What are the person's values? What does the person consider important? What kind of reward does the person expect or require? What kind of penalties are effective?

There are many different assessments that can give you insight into people's motivations. One such assessment is the PIAV which refers to six common values or attitudes:

- Theoretical—This individual uses cognitive ability to discover, understand, and systematize the truth. He may be well motivated by working on projects that require him to be a problem-solver.
- Utilitarian—This individual makes investments for greater returns in time and resources. She may be best motivated by cold, hard cash.
- Aesthetic—This individual enjoys and experiences beauty all around him and allows it to mold him. He may be motivated by creative jobs or rewards such as a redecorated office space.
- Social—This individual invests her time and resources in helping others achieve their potential. She is motivated best by helping other people and the potential satisfaction of their success.
- Individualistic—This individual seeks to achieve the highest position and wield the greatest power. He will be easily motivated by the prospect of rapid promotion.

- Traditional—This individual seems to pursue and understand the highest meaning of life. She will be most supportive of projects that are consistent with their belief system.

Learning what motivates other people, through methods such as this one, will help you interact productively and empathetically with your employees and team members.

What are skills associated with Understanding Motivational Needs?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Understanding Motivational Needs:

- Believes that every person is unique and that every person has a special value in the workplace.
- Takes time to learn individual motivators for employees and team members.
- Understands that individual desires and needs play a strong role in managing or motivating that person.
- Helps employees or team members define their own priorities and rewards system.
- Never underestimates the power of positive feedback and public recognition of a job well done.

How do you develop your own skills in Understanding Motivational Needs?

- Be an observer—observe how managers, peers, and employees react to events.
- Be direct—ask people what motivates them!
- Give others what they want—recognition. Most people will work harder for emotional benefits and recognition than they will for money.
- Make people feel important.
- Offer positive feedback.
- Do simple favors for other people.
- Remember people's names and facts about them.
- Set an example for courageous and risk-taking behaviors.
- Encourage others to take initiative. Reward them for making independent decisions.
- Give appropriate guidance to each person—coach her according to level of experience and knowledge.
- Don't make other people's decisions for them. Lend your expertise if necessary or if you are asked to, but always stop short of making decisions for someone else.
- Be empathetic—think about what other people may want or need, and try to understand why.
- See how you can encourage people to succeed by using your knowledge of what motivates them. Incorporate their desires as rewards for success.

- Make time for informal discussions with your employees or team members—
  you will learn more about them in this type of conversation.
- Take advantage of standardized tests that will give you insight into your employees
  or team members. With their permission, share and review the results carefully to
  see what you can learn about one another.
- Help employees develop their own reward system for good performance, and let
  them measure their own performance.
- Ask employees and team members to help define their professional goals,
  and incorporate their ideas into their work plans. Let them perceive how they are
  adding value to a larger organizational plan.
- If someone reliable is uncharacteristically underperforming, try to figure out why.
  See if you can initiate positive change and improve the person's motivation based on
  what you know of their individual needs and wishes.

Understanding Motivational Needs Activities

Activity 1: Unique Attributes

Think about a project team you are currently involved with. List each team member's
name and establish what that person brings to the group, thinking about how their
skills contribute to the tasks they have been assigned and/or accepted. Include your-
self in the list.

Name	Skills/Expertise	Assigned Tasks

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When you have completed the tables above, reflect on how each team member's particular expertise contributes to the success of the group as a whole. Make a conscious effort to support each person's decisions and assist them with your areas of expertise when appropriate.

Activity 2: Standardized Testing

Find out if your company uses a standard employment test or a personality inventory test of any kind. If so, and the rules allow it, review your employees' results—see what you can learn about them to help motivate them.

If your company doesn't use a standard test, investigate the various options on the market today. See if you can implement such a test—a personality inventory—using it to better understand yourself and your employees.

Activity 3: Employee/Team Goals

Make a point of interacting with each of your employees or team members with the goal of understanding what their primary goals are and how you can help them achieve their goals while meeting organizational priorities. Fill in the table on the next page as you have a chance to discuss their goals with them.

Employee/Team Member	Primary Goals	How You Can Help
	1. 2. 3.	

Once you understand what each person's goals are, discuss with them what you can do to help them within the framework of your organization's mission and goals.

Activity 4: Everyday Efforts

Begin to practice doing the following things every day. You may want to print out this list to remind yourself of what to do.

- Remember and use people's names.
- Pay attention to personal details that people share. Remember to ask about them later.
- Do simple favors for people.
- Don't make other people's decisions for them.
- Reward someone for good performance every day, whether it's a verbal compliment for a job well done or a financial reward for a major accomplishment.
- Make time for informal interactions with other people, especially your employees or team members.
- Keep your knowledge of what motivates people at the forefront of your mind—see if you can use this knowledge to help them achieve and to feel more satisfied at work.