Chapter 9

Group Motivation

INTRODUCTORY EXERCISES

1. Identify three things that you feel motivate you more than any others to work together with other people. Tell a classmate about a situation in which you benefited from those three things. Be as specific as you can about how each thing affected your attitude and behavior.
2. Think of a time interval during which your level of motivation to contribute to the work of a group increased or decreased dramatically. What caused the change? When you lost motivation, who or what might have prevented you from doing so?
3. What's the most challenging goal that a group you were part of ever set for itself? Did you achieve it? List several factors that contributed to your reaching it or failing to do so.
4. Think of one of the most successful groups you've been a member of. What steps did the group take regularly, if any, to check the level of its effectiveness?

Gettin' good players is easy. Gettin' 'em to play together is the hard part.

 - Casey Stengel

Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.

 - Henry Ford

A football coach was attempting to motivate his players through a difficult season. They were discouraged. Finally the coach gathered the team together roughly and bellowed, "Did Michael Jordan ever quit?" The team yelled back, "No!" The coach then shouted, "What about the Wright brothers? Did they ever give up?" "No way!" the team yelled. "How about John Elway?" They all responded, "No!" "What about Mother Teresa?" "No! No!" they screamed. "Did Elmer Smith ever quit?" There was a long silence. Finally one player was bold enough to ask, "Gosh, Coach, who's Elmer Smith? We never heard of him." The coach snapped back, "Of course you never heard of him—he quit!"

Introduction

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In this chapter, we'll address four major questions. They are "Why do people take action at any given time, instead of remaining inert and inactive?", "Why do people choose to act in the particular ways they do?", "How can we get individuals, by themselves, to act in certain ways?", and "Once people are acting properly as individuals, how can we get them to work together for the good of a group?"

These questions are short and simple, but their answers are not. Just think of some times in your own experience when you wished you had some way to get another person, or a group you were part of, to "get off the dime" and move in a direction you felt was the right way to go! The frustration you felt has echoed through the ages; the task of motivating people has challenged human beings since at least the dawn of history. Without motivation, we flounder or stagnate.

In the pages ahead, we'll review a number of theories of motivation, ranging from complex to relatively straightforward ones, and consider factors which influence how susceptible people are to being motivated. Next, we'll list and examine two kinds of strategies: first, those which can produce motivation in people, and second, those which can lead people, once motivated, to collaborate with one another.

No matter how people act, and whether they take any action at all, the process of determining and stating whether something happened or didn't happen will always be crucial to understanding the past and preparing for the future. You can probably recall situations in your life when a person or a group seemed to be wandering about in circles, repeating statements and behaviors rather than building on them

to move forward. Perhaps it was because, even though there was action going on, no one was examining what the action was leading to. To end our chapter, therefore, we'll consider the vital role which feedback and assessment play in generating and maintaining group motivation.

9.1 Group Motivation and Collaboration

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify two fundamental questions related to group motivation and collaboration.
2. Identify factors which affect the ability to exercise persuasion and influence toward motivating collaborative behavior in groups.

Your corn is ripe today; mine will be so tomorrow. 'Tis profitable for us both, that I should labour with you today, and that you should aid me tomorrow.

 - David Hume

"Let everyone sweep in front of his own door, and the whole world will be clean."

 - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"A dark night in a city that knows how to keep its secrets, but on the 12th floor of the Acme Building, one man is still trying to find the answers to life's persistent questions: Guy Noir, Private Eye." Since 1974, Garrison KeillorKeillor, G. (2012, May 26). *Guy Noir, private eye*. Retrieved from http://prairiehome.publicradio.org/programs/2012/05/26/scripts/noir.shtml has hosted a nationally-broadcast weekly radio program called "A Prairie Home Companion." One regular feature of Keillor's show, about a bumbling detective from Minnesota, has always begun with the words we've just quoted.

The fictitious detective may not know it, but among life's persistent questions are those dealing with motivation and collaboration. As the theologian H.E. Luccock wrote, "No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it." The same goes for any other group of people: no individual can carry the whole load or produce the whole group's required outcomes.

Before we analyze motivation and collaboration in detail, let's first lay the groundwork by considering what we mean by the terms. Engleburg and WynnEngleberg, I.N., & Wynn, D. R. (2013). *Working in groups* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson. wrote that **motivation**[1] consists in giving a person "a cause, or reason, to act." **Collaboration**[2], in turn, consists in joint expenditure of energy by two or more people in pursuit of a shared goal or aim.

Two Fundamental Questions

We can see that two fundamental questions need to be confronted by anyone who hopes to motivate a group to collaborate:

1. How can we induce any single individual to act in any particular way?
2. How can we induce many individuals to act together?

Society can function only if people are motivated to collaborate in groups. Getting people to do that, however, can be extremely difficult. As Garrison Keillor would put it, it's a persistent question, and it's one which can tire people out if they persist in trying to answer it. One of Keillor's "Guy Noir" episodes illustrates this reality.

The episode describes a field trip by a middle school band class to Washington, D.C. Ostensibly, the purpose of the field trip is to have the students produce and perform music together while enjoying the experience of visiting the capital. Once the group reaches the National Mall however, its band director gives up on any attempt to herd his students from one destination to another—to collaborate. When Guy sweetly asks one of the girls in the band why she has shaved half her head and why a boy has tattoos on his ears, she calls him a freak and tells him to mind his own business. Soon the clarinet section moves off in six different directions and the percussion section disappears entirely.

In the middle of all this, the band director is wearing earplugs to avoid having to listen to his students. "Earplugs; they're a blessing," he claims, as a noisy motorcycle nearly flattens him. "I'm going to retire in two weeks to Wyoming," he continues, where "the only horns are on the cattle and the only winds are in the trees."

1. Giving a person a cause, or reason, to act.

2. Joint expenditure of energy by two or more people in pursuit of a shared goal or aim.

As far as musical performance is concerned, the band director lets his students play three-minute concerts because he can't get them to concentrate any longer than that. (The idea of making things short by eliminating repetition is, Keillor writes, revolutionary in Washington).

People in the real world generally show better manners and are able to focus more readily than the characters in this fictional account. Still, motivating real people to collaborate is no simple matter. Garrison Keillor wrote this about the actual Washington, D.C.: "It occurred to me that most of the people I saw in Washington were special needs people, and the Congress is designed for verbally aggressive listening-impaired people, and that months go by and nothing gets done, and in an election year, less than nothing, and maybe that's what the balance of powers means."

Persuasion and Influence

Hybels & WeaverHybels, S., & Weaver, R.L. (1998). *Communicating effectively* (5th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill. indicated that getting people to act in a certain way requires persuasion and influence. How and where to best direct the persuasion and influence, however, will vary with time. It may be possible to motivate people to work together at certain times on certain tasks, but not at other times on other tasks. Why? Think back to those middle school students. Many factors will vary from time to time, including these:

Individuals' and groups' level of receptiveness. Sometimes we're open to suggestions and proposals; sometimes we're not. Middle school students, for instance, might be more apt to collaborate right after a good lunch than first thing in the morning or in the late afternoon.

The surrounding circumstances. We're more likely to focus our attention if we're not distracted by external noise or other sensory inputs. Putting middle school students in the middle of a bustling urban center is not likely to help them focus on a joint task.

People's physical condition. Obviously, if a group task is physically demanding, those who possess strength or stamina will be better able to participate than those who don't. If the middle school students were hot or exhausted, they'd be less likely to cooperate in getting anything done together. The wise grandmother of one of the authors of this book always used to advise other parents, "If your kids aren't cooperating, feed them."

People's attitudes toward a particular task. Getting people to do what they already want to do is no big deal; someone has written that an easy way to be a leader is to "watch where people are headed and just get out in front of them." Middle school students might not need a lot of persuasion to eat a few boxes of pizza together out on the grass by the Washington Monument. To get them to walk quietly together

through an exhibit of Renaissance porcelain in the National Gallery of Art, on the other hand, would not be easy.

Lest we conclude that motivating people to collaborate is a hopeless enterprise, we can look around us any day and see that, although it isn't easy, it is possible. Tyler and BladerTyler, T.R., & Blader, S.L. (2000). *Cooperation in groups.* Philadelphia: Psychology Press. pointed out that intentional actions, policies, and practices can often influence people's dispositions, and through them shape cooperation. We'll consider some such actions, policies, and practices later in this chapter. Above all, we'll see that adopting a flexible attitude can help us influence people to adopt the motivation to collaborate.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Motivating people to collaborate in groups is challenging because the effectiveness of persuasion and influence depend on changeable human factors.

EXERCISES

1. If you were leading a middle-school field trip, what principles and practices would you follow to yield better results than the ones described by Garrison Keillor?
2. Think of a time when you or someone in a group with you successfully motivated the group to take action. What factors of the situation contributed favorably to the positive motivation? What factors made it difficult to motivate the group?

9.2 Role of Motivation

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Distinguish between content and process theories of motivation.
2. Identify five content theories of motivation and four process theories.
3. Identify three kinds of action which individuals or groups who are motivated may take.

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Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.

  - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

  - Helen Keller

The Latin term *sine qua non* literally means "without which, not" or "that without which, nothing." In other words, if something is a *sine qua non*, it's absolutely necessary. Emerson's comment indicates that he considered enthusiasm to be the *sine qua non* of greatness. Our position in this book is that motivation is the *sine qua non* of effective group action.

As Hoy & MiskelHoy, W.K., & Miskel, C.G. (1982). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). New York: Random House. noted, motivation comprises "complex forces that start and maintain voluntary activity directed to achieve personal goals." In short, being motivated means having energy and wanting to put it to work.

Before we examine just what motivation accomplishes within an individual or in a group setting, we should first take a look at a number of views concerning where it comes from.

Theories of Motivation

Thinkers in business, education, psychology, and many other fields have long wondered about and performed research into the causes of motivation. Their theories fall into two major categories: content theories and process theories.

Content theories[3] of motivation focus on the factors which motivate behavior by rewarding or reinforcing it. **Process theories**[4] attempt instead to determine how factors which motivate behavior interact with each other.

Content Theories of Motivation

Several content theories of motivation were developed in the middle to late years of the 20th century. Probably the most well-known today is Maslow's need hierarchy, with its five levels, which we reviewed earlier in this book.

Another content theory from this period is Clayton Alderfer's "ERG" theory. Alderfer, C.P. (1972). *Existence, relatedness, and growth: Human needs in organizational settings.* New York: Free Press. According to Alderfer, people's needs can be broken down into the categories of existence, relatedness, and growth. Like Maslow's hierarchy, Alderfer's model portrayed people's needs in a hierarchical fashion. It differed from Maslow's hierarchy, however, both in its nomenclature for the levels in the hierarchy and in its contention that development through the hierarchy takes place in a cycle between **differentiation**[5] and **integration**[6]. Differentiation is a broadening of people's awareness through new and challenging experiences, whereas integration follows as an individual brings together diverse elements of his or her personality into a new and more unified form. When you decide to join a new club or organization, for instance, you first meet many people whose habits and behaviors may be new and perhaps disorienting to you. Later, however, you become more familiar with the way things work and feel consolidated and confident in your role within that group.

A third content theory is Frederick Herzberg's **two-factor theory**[7]. Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. (1959). *The motivation to work.* New York: Wiley. Herzberg classed rewards as either "motivators" or "hygienes." He held that **motivators**[8]—including achievement, recognition, responsibility, and the opportunity to advance within a group—are factors which contribute to satisfaction, but which when absent don't cause dissatisfaction. In other words, we appreciate them but can do without them. **Hygienes**[9], on the other hand—such as money, status, and job security—don't create satisfaction when they're present, according to Herzberg, but do lead to dissatisfaction if they're absent. In a sense,

3. Theories of motivation which focus on factors which motivate behavior by rewarding or reinforcing it.

4. Theories of motivation which analyze the interaction of factors which motivate behavior.

5. Broadening of awareness through new and challenging experiences.

6. Bringing together diverse elements of one's personality into a new and more unified form.

7. Frederick Herzberg's content theory of motivation, which posits two kinds of rewards as part of motivation.

8. In Herzberg's two-factor theory, factors which contribute to satisfaction, but which when absent don't cause dissatisfaction.

9. In Herzberg's two-factor theory, factors which don't create satisfaction when they're present, but which lead to dissatisfaction if they're absent.

thus, they're what people consider to be basic minimal needs and can go only as far as preventing dissatisfaction.

Two more content theories of motivation have been identified by more contemporary authorities. Kenneth ThomasThomas, K.W. (2000). *Intrinsic motivation at work: Building energy and commitment.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler. drew a distinction between **extrinsic rewards**[10]—those which come from the external environment—and **intrinsic rewards**[11], which come from within an individual or group.

Thomas believed that intrinsic rewards are more likely to motivate people and identified four kinds of intrinsic motivators. The first is a **sense of meaningfulness**[12], which is the idea that what a person or group is doing is worthwhile. The second is a **sense of choice**[13], which is the feeling that the person or group can make decisions about how to behave. The third is a **sense of competence**[14], which is the belief that the person or group is behaving capably. The fourth motivator is a **sense of progress**[15], which is the feeling that the person or group is actually accomplishing something.

A final content theory of motivation was put forth by Steven ReissReiss, S. (2000). *Who am I? The 16 basic desires that motivate our behavior and define our personality.* New York: Tarcher/Putnam and http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/whoami.htm and developed as the outgrowth of a study involving more than 6,000 people. On the basis of statistical analysis of his results, Reiss contended that 16 basic desires motivate people's behavior: power, independence, curiosity, acceptance, order, saving, honor, idealism, social contact, family, status, vengeance, romance, eating, physical exercise, and tranquility.

10. Rewards originating in the external environment.

11. Rewards which arise from within an individual or group.

12. The idea that what a person or group is doing is worthwhile.

13. The feeling that a person or group can make decisions about how to behave.

14. The belief that a person or group is behaving capably.

15. The feeling that a person or group is accomplishing something.

Interestingly, Reiss asserted that 14 of the 16 desires are similar to those found in animals and are likely to be genetically determined. He also suggested that people's motivations differ substantially from individual to individual and group to group because each person's ranking of the 16 desires is unique.

Process Theories of Motivation

Theorists who espouse process theories of motivation are more interested in what starts, sustains, and stops behavior than they are in the things that motivate the behavior in the first place. We'll consider four kinds of process theories in this section.

Expectancy Theory

Expectancy theory[16] was originated by Victor VroomVroom, V. (1964). *Work and motivation.* New York: Wiley. and has been broadened and popularized since then by other authorities. Vroom's theory is complex, but its central idea is straightforward: People are most likely to be motivated in a certain way if they believe 1) that they will receive a reward, 2) that the reward they expect to receive is something they value highly, and 3) that they can do what it takes to achieve the reward.

Here's an example. If the members of a team of employees think they will receive praise from their boss if they produce a snappy PowerPoint presentation as part of a project they've been assigned, if they all care about receiving the boss's praise, and if they think they have the skills to create the presentation, then they're apt to work hard on the activity.

Attribution Theory

Attribution theory[17] holds that people's behavior is motivated by how they interpret the behavior of others around them. For instance, we may think that what's causing others to act as they do is a combination of internal, personal factors. On the other hand, we may think that their behavior is a product of environmental variables.

According to attribution theory, people might actually be motivated to convey more significant rewards for someone's failure than for success. Take the case of the team of employees working on the project. Let's say that their PowerPoint presentation has several errors in it. If the boss observes it and thinks, "Wow—they must've put a lot of time into this," he or she might be motivated to congratulate the team on its hard work and offer some kindly advice for improving the presentation. On the other hand, if the presentation is letter-perfect but the boss thinks, "I'll bet the department head down the hall showed them exactly how to do that," the boss may be motivated to offer only a routine acknowledgement that the assignment has been completed.

Goal Theory

Goal theory[18]Locke, E.A. (1968). Toward a theory of task motivation and incentives. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 3*, 157–189. contends that people are motivated to behave in certain ways, and to keep behaving in those ways, primarily because they intend to achieve particular goals. This sounds simple and reasonable enough, but goal theorists believe that reaching a goal actually includes seven

16. Victor Vroom's process theory of motivation, which contends that people are motivated to behave based on whether they believe a reward will ensue, whether the reward appeals to them, and whether they believe they can earn the reward.

17. A process theory of motivation holding that that people are motivated according to what they believe underlies other people's actions and attitudes.

18. A process theory of motivation comprising seven steps whereby people act to identify and pursue goals.

steps. The first five steps bring behavior about, whereas the last two maintain and regulate it.

Here's what a goal-setter has to do in these seven steps: first, survey and understand his or her environment; second, evaluate which elements of the environment are of value to him or her; third, make an emotional assessment of possible courses of action; fourth, decide what is apt to happen if he or she behaves in a particular way; fifth, decide how likely it is that the results he or she desires can actually be produced; sixth, decide exactly how to behave; and seventh, take action. The authors of this book appreciate the intellectual elegance of goal theory but wonder if they, you, or anyone any of us know has ever deliberately followed all these steps!

Behaviorism

Behaviorism[19] has probably received more attention and is better known throughout the public at large than any of the other three theories we've discussed. B.F. Skinner, Skinner, B.F. (1974). *About behaviorism*. New York: Knopf. the most prominent Western exponent of behaviorism in the last century, wrote that all human behavior is a lawful process determined and controlled in systematic and consistent ways. Furthermore, Skinner and his adherents contended that all behavior is a function of its consequences in the environment. What this means is that any action people take will depend completely on what happens afterward. If the action affects the environment in such a way that it afterward strengthens the behavior, the behavior will persist or reoccur. If what happens afterward does not strengthen the behavior, on the other hand, the behavior will eventually cease.

Unlike other theorists of motivation, behaviorists do not describe what happens inside people when they act in certain ways. They don't deny that people have feelings and thoughts, but to the degree that they deal with such phenomena at all, they consider them to be effects rather than causes of behavior.

Fruits of Motivation

We've already established that motivation is a necessary condition to the functioning of any individual or group. If we have it, we possess the capacity to take action.

19. A process theory of motivation which states that people's actions depend solely on the consequences of those actions.

So, what action might we take? Three possibilities stand out, each of them either for better or worse. First of all, we may comply with other people's wishes, rules, or expectations. We may be motivated, for instance, to obey traffic signals and "no trespassing" signs.

Second, we may produce outcomes or create resources for a group. Motivated members of a political party, for example, may prepare or distribute flyers or make phone calls supporting the party's candidates.

Third, we may decide to sacrifice some of our own comfort or security for the sake of others. The classic example of this behavior is wartime military service.

Notice that motivation, wherever it comes from, provides a capacity for action but doesn't guarantee it. In other words, it's a necessary but not a sufficient condition for getting things done. In the next section we'll take a look at ways to both produce motivation and ensure that people take action based on it.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Content theories of motivation concentrate upon rewards and reinforcing factors, whereas process theories focus on what starts, sustains, and stops behavior in response to those rewards and reinforcers.

EXERCISES

1. Frederick Herzberg wrote that people's motivation can be maintained only if they are given responsibility and an opportunity to achieve something. Do you agree? Provide an example which supports your answer.
2. Name and rank your top five desires from Steven Reiss's list of 16 desires. Share and compare your desires with a classmate. What do the results imply with respect to how you and the other person might best become motivated in a group?
3. Expectancy theory says that people will be motivated under three conditions: if they believe they will receive a reward for doing something, if they value the reward, and if they believe they can do what it takes to achieve the reward. Describe a situation in which you were motivated to do something and explain whether and how those three conditions were met.

9.3 Effective Motivation Strategies

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Acknowledge the value of trust among group members.
2. Identify four effective motivation strategies.

No matter what accomplishments you make, somebody helped you.

- Althea Gibson

In the first parts of this chapter we've discussed several theories of motivation. Some of the theories laid greatest emphasis on identifying factors that attract people to become motivated, whereas others focused on how the factors interact to produce motivation. What we haven't answered yet, however, is a very important question: "How can we get a person to acquire motivation and actually act on it?"

"Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce Mr. Gregory. Mr. Gregory will be heading up our new incentive program."

At first glance, we might think this is a very easy question to answer. After all, we see people acting in ways that other people want them to every day. What if getting a person motivated and having the person do something on the basis of that motivation is a really simple matter? What if all we need to do is follow a few steps, like these, which are based on the behaviorist concepts of B.F. Skinner that we touched on earlier?

1. Tell the person what you want him or her to do in measurable terms. Explain specifically what you have in mind.
2. Measure the person's current level of performance. Determine whether and how well the person is doing the activity in question.

3. Let the person know what kind of reward he or she will receive if he or she does what you've asked. Be sure to make clear that the reward *will* follow if the performance goal is achieved.
4. When the person does what you've asked, give the person the reward you said you would.

In the world of business, some organizations have tried to follow exactly these four behaviorist steps to motivate employees. BurkeBurke, W.W. (2011). *Organization change* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. and KelloKello, J.E. (2008). Reflections on I-O psychology and behaviorism. In N. K. Innis (ed.), *Reflections on adaptive behavior: Essays in honor of J.E.R. Staddon* (pp. 291–313). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. wrote that in the 1970s Emery Air Freight was one of the first and most publicized examples. As it turned out, Emery found that performance by its employees increased and that costs to the company declined by approximately $3 million over a three-year period.Schulz, D., & Schulz, S.E. (2002). *Psychology and work today* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

But things are more complicated than this in other places, aren't they? Emery Air Freight was in the business of processing packages, and that's a pretty cut-and-dried industrial procedure. College students and church members and people in community organizations or not-for-profit agencies are involved in broader, more complex activities than those that many air freight workers or other employees in commercial enterprises perform.

Requirements for Motivating Action

According to behaviorism, it's unnecessary to pay attention to people's **interior states**[20] in order to motivate them to do things. Emery Air Freight's approach, with its predetermined regimen of consequences for its employees' behavior, was consistent with this belief.

Most theorists today, however, believe that people need to undergo certain mental processes and reach certain mental states in order to take any particular action. Specifically, for people to be motivated to act the way someone else wants them to, they first need to possess the skills and abilities required to accomplish the action. If they have those skills and abilities, they also need to know what the other person wants them to do, how to do it, and what will happen if they do it.

In a group, having a designated leader propose that people act in a certain way can often be helpful. This will depend on the structure and mood and purpose of the group, however.

20. Thoughts, feelings, and sentiments within people. (Behaviorists hold that motivation can be explained and promoted without reference to interior states).

If you're part of a team of students that has been assigned a project, for instance, you might not decide to choose a leader. Instead, you and the other members may want to motivate each other by discussing your needs and options as equals to see what ideas and directions bubble up spontaneously.

No matter who is trying to motivate whom to act, one final consideration should be taken into account. Motivation, as we noted in chapter 4, is at least partly determined by whether people trust each other.

What if you think someone's primary reason for asking you to do something in a group is that the person hopes to gain personally from what you do? If that's the case, you're not very apt to be motivated. If the person seems to care about you genuinely, on the other hand, you're more likely to go along with his or her suggestions.

Motivation Strategies

Let's take a look at four strategies for motivating people in groups. Three of the strategies are based in longstanding organizational research, whereas one is a broader approach to motivation in general.

Based on their study of research in groups, Hoy and MiskelHoy, W.K., & Miskel, C.G. (1982). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). New York: Random House. contended that taking the following steps will lead people to be motivated:

1. Allow all members of the group to set goals together, rather than imposing goals upon them. Research indicates that people who get to participate in developing their own goals become more satisfied during the performance of their tasks than those who don't. If your student group is supposed to deliver a presentation together, you should all meet at the start of your assignment and decide what you plan to accomplish.
2. Establish goals which are specific. Broad or unclear goals are unlikely to cause people in a group to focus their attention and energy well. Instead of saying, "Let's all pitch in and give our presentation 10 days from now," it's better to decide which person will talk about which subjects in the presentation, for how many minutes, and with how many handouts or projected images.
3. Establish the highest possible goals. You've perhaps heard the adage "Shoot for the moon; even if you miss, at least you'll hit the stars." The saying isn't astronomically accurate, of course, since the stars are a lot

farther away than the moon. The principle is a good one, though, since research shows that the more difficult the goals, the more effort people will put into achieving them, as long as they accept the more difficult goals in the first place.

Hoy and Miskel contended that these three strategies tend to reinforce one another. In particular, they wrote, members of a group who are allowed to participate in setting its goals may not necessarily perform at a higher level than those who aren't, but they're likely to set higher goals for themselves than people who have goals imposed upon them. Thus, at least indirectly, the outcomes of their work may be better for the group.

In his book *Intrinsic Motivation at Work*, Kenneth Thomas wrote about a fourth strategy for motivating people: developing rewards tentatively and being prepared to change them as circumstances dictate. Personal goals and desires may shift with time, he contended, and people also sometimes have multiple and even conflicting goals. Sometimes a person who initially was enthusiastic about working on a task might say, "My get-up-and-go got up and went."

Students working on a team project, for example, may go through a cycle of changing personal goals. When they first get together, they may want more than anything else to minimize the time they spend on the project. Later, they might start to care much more about receiving a good grade—or about building relationships among themselves, or about something else entirely. To motivate them requires flexibility.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Allowing group members to set specific, challenging goals and being willing to modify those goals as circumstances change is likely to motivate them to act in a desired manner.

EXERCISES

1. Think of a group you've been a part of in which trust among its members was strong. How did you know that the trust existed? What caused it to develop? How did its presence affect the group's motivation?

2. Some people might claim that part of leadership is to set goals for a group, not to ask people to set its goals together. If you were ever in a group whose leader established its goals, how do you feel that influenced the members' attitudes and motivation?

3. In what ways do you feel a group's motivation might benefit if its members operated without a designated leader? In what ways might its motivation suffer?

9.4 Effective Collaboration Strategies

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the nature and implications of theories which assume that people collaborate for instrumental reasons.
2. Identify a theory of group collaboration that emphasizes social links among group members.
3. Identify five strategies for fostering group collaboration.

I maintain that cooperation is good, and competition is bad, that society does not flourish by the antagonism of its atoms, but by the mutual helpfulness of human beings.

 - Helen Keller

In the last section, we discussed ways to motivate individuals to act in certain ways. Now we turn to a harder question: How do we get them to work together?

A Prevalent Theory

In addition to setting goals that are specific, challenging, and jointly developed, how we try to get people to work together with others depends on our view of what makes people decide to do so. A prevalent theory, which Tom TylerTyler, T.R. (2011). *Why people cooperate: The role of social motivations.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. contends has been especially influential in the past few decades throughout American society, has been that people collaborate for **instrumental reasons**[21]. What this means is that they weigh costs and benefits and choose what they feel will be most advantageous to themselves. Their amount and quality of participation in a group then depends on "**material exchanges**[22]"—transfers of rewards back and forth between the group's members.Rusbult, C.E., & Van Lange, P.A.M. (1996). Interdependence processes. In E.T. Higgins & A.W. Kruglanski (eds.),

21. Reasons for action which rest on an analysis of costs and benefits to the individual.

22. Transfers of reward back and forth between a group's members.

Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles (pp. 564–596). New York: Guilford. If these transfers don't favor them as individuals, they will simply abandon the group.

If we operate according to this theory, there are many implications. First, we may want to spend considerable effort to decide on incentives to offer group members. Second, we may feel we need to be continually vigilant to make sure our incentives are working. Third, we may need to watch people carefully to see who is pitching in sufficiently. And fourth, we may want to create sanctions that we can impose upon people who don't comply with the group's rules and directions.

The Role of Social Links

An alternative theory, based on recent research by TylerTyler, T.R. (2006). *Why people obey the law* (2nd ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. and others, suggests that people do take their self-interest into account when they participate in groups, but that they collaborate primarily for social reasons.

According to this alternative theory, people will be best motivated to collaborate on the basis of **social links**[23]. These are defined as "long-term connections based on attitudes, emotional connections, shared identities, common values, trust in the motivation of others, & joint commitment to fairness."Tyler, T.R. (2011). *Why people cooperate: The role of social motivations.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Tyler's book *Why People Cooperate* presents the results of his studies in business, legal settings, and political organizations as evidence that people are often willing to give up the opportunity for personal gain in order to contribute to the welfare of a group as a whole. Specifically, Tyler's research with groups in more than 15 countries showed that "in none of the countries were people's behaviors consistent with a narrow self-interest model."Tyler, T.R. (2011). *Why people cooperate: The role of social motivations.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

The proponents of this theory believe that using a combination of incentives or punishments—"carrots" and "sticks"—is not always going to produce collaborative behavior in a group. It's very possible, for instance, for group members who are treated this way to do just enough to get exactly the incentives they've been promised rather than to go beyond the call of duty for the sake of the group as a whole.

23. Long-term connections based on attitudes, emotional connections, shared identities, and other human commonalities.

Tyler pointed out that soldiers can be forced into the military in times of war. Neither money nor legislation nor a military draft nor even the threat of severe legal actions such as courts-martial, however, can actually make them willing to lay down their lives. Something else has to be part of the picture.

Strategies to Promote Collaboration

Indeed, fighting successfully in a war requires total and complete collaboration on the part of soldiers. In Shakespeare's *Henry V*, prior to the Battle of Agincourt, King Henry rallies troops in the famous "St. Crispin's Day Speech." In the speech, he refers to "we few, we happy few, we band of brothers—for whoever sheds his blood with me today shall be my brother." As a result of his speech, the English soldiers fight valiantly, and ultimately they defeat the French and win the battle.

What can we learn from Shakespeare's account, as well as from the thoughts of modern theorists, to promote collaboration within a group? Here are several strategies which researchers now believe can be successful:

- Appeal to Members' Social Links

  Appeal explicitly to members' social links, including their belief in and reliance on each other, rather than only to their narrow self-interest.

  As Tyler and BladerTyler, T.R., & Blader, S.L. (2000). *Cooperation in groups*. Philadelphia: Psychology Press]. wrote, "Social motivations lead not only to compliance, but to voluntary deference to rules and to more general willing cooperation." We don't have to say that our fellow group members are brothers and sisters, even metaphorically, but we can remind them of their mutual reliance.

- Identify and Revisit Values and Goals

  Ensure that the group identifies and periodically revisits its values and goals by means of full participation of its members. Heath and SiasHeath, R.G., & Sias, P.M. (1999). Communicating spirit in a collaborative alliance. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 27*, 356–376. pointed out that leaving someone out of these processes at any time can weaken that person's social links with the group and thereby make it less likely for the person to work on behalf of its purposes later on.

- Create Relational Contracts

  Besides adopting formal written agreements, create "**relational contracts**[24]."Baker, G., Gibbons, R., & Murphy, K.J. (2002). Relational contracts and the theory of the firm. *Quarterly journal of economics (117)*, 39–84 These are informal statements which rest on mutual trust and describe the knowledge and other strengths that various group members will bring to bear in conducting the group's work. For instance, in a group planning a community bazaar, one person might

24. Informal statements of knowledge and other strengths that group members pledge to contribute to the group's work.

pledge to prepare banners because he or she possesses artistic talent. This pledge would not be part of the group's initial goal-setting process. Neither would it last beyond the completion of the bazaar. Still, it would help carry the group successfully through one of its important activities.

Because relational contracts are tied to particular situations and circumstances, they are more flexible than formal, permanent agreements. At the same time, it's important to take into account that they are also harder to enforce because of their very informality.

- Think Big and Long Term

Ask group members to think big and think long-term. BurkeBurke, W.W. (2011). *Organization change: Theory and practice* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. wrote that group members should engage in "**systemic thinking**[25]." He meant by this that they should regard their group as an enduring and organic totality, rather than simply as the sum of many individuals at a particular time.

King Henry said this when he told his soldiers of the lasting importance of their combined actions:

"This story shall the good man teach his son,

And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by

From this day to the ending of the world,

But we in it shall be remembered"

In the same spirit, Burke urged groups to build and maintain an **organizational memory**[26]—a record, preferably in hard-copy or digital form, of the history of the group. Such a record will tend to promote cohesion and identity in a group. It should also help integrate new members into the group as they join it.

Celebrate Group Accomplishements

Celebrate the group's accomplishments. People are busy, and members of groups may often feel rushed to accomplish their tasks and move on to other activities. Unless they pause from time to time and take stock of their accomplishments, therefore, they may lose focus and energy.

25. A process whereby group members "think big" and long-term by conceiving of themselves as an enduring and organic totality.

26. A mechanism, in digital or hard-copy form, for retaining information about a group's activities over extended periods.

Once a group is on the road to collaboration, its strengths can be further ensured through feedback and assessment. In the last section of this chapter, we'll consider those two final vital elements of effective motivational behavior.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Understanding the significance of social links in a group can provide the foundation for five strategies to promote collaboration.

EXERCISES

1. Think of a group of which you're a member. To what degree do you believe your fellow members are motivated to collaborate for instrumental reasons, including self-interest, and to what degree by what Tyler calls "social links"? Give examples which support your opinion.
2. When have you relinquished the opportunity to achieve personal gain in a group in order to contribute to the group as a whole? What made you do so? How did the other group members respond to your sacrifice?
3. Consider two academic groups of which you were once a part—perhaps your high school graduating class and a school club or athletic team. What efforts, if any, did each group make to maintain an organizational memory? Comparing the two groups, which one has experienced better collaboration among its members since you left it?

9.5 Feedback and Assessment

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Differentiate between feedback and assessment.
2. Identify the importance of feedback and assessment in motivating group members.
3. Identify seven characteristics of feedback and assessment which motivate group members.
4. Identify eight appropriate subjects of group feedback and assessment.

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Any old farmer in Vermont can tell you that you don't fatten your lambs by weighing them.

- Jonathan Kozol

To succeed as a team is to hold all of the members accountable for their expertise.

- Mitchell Caplan

Jonathan Kozol's point about lambs was that improving something requires that we do more than just check to see if it's getting better. As we've noted in the past several sections with respect to motivation and collaboration in groups, such positive change also requires hard work, concentration, persistence, patience, and a willingness to invest personal energy and time on behalf of goals.

Although he said that weighing lambs by itself will not fatten them, Kozol didn't say that weighing them isn't important at all. If a farmer does nothing but feed and tend animals, after all, how will the farmer know if the feeding and tending are working? And the same thing goes for group communication: if members of a group do nothing but work hard and concentrate intensively on pursuing their goals, how will they know if they're actually moving in the right direction?

Feeding and tending of animals are necessary for them to grow, just as tending a group is necessary for it to progress toward its goals. But for farmers, as well as for members of groups, so are feedback and assessment. As ThompsonThompson, L. (2008). *Organizational behavior today.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education. wrote, "It is the feedback element that is the critical ingredient in producing change in behavior." Motivation, in short, depends on both feedback and assessment.

How Feedback and Assessment Differ

Feedback[27] is a general term which simply means communicating with someone in response to a message from that person or with respect to a perception you have about him or her. In day-to-day conversations, it may be a straightforward descriptive comment about facts that happen to catch your attention, like "It looks like you just got a haircut." In a group, an example of feedback might be something like "You've completed your part of the project now."

Assessment[28], on the other hand, is one variety of feedback. It is an expression of judgment about the value, significance, or merit of a person's nature or behavior. Instead of just describing someone's haircut or indicating that the person has finished a project, an assessment might be more like "Your haircut looks great" or "It's about time you finished your part of the project."

When you transmit any message to other people, and particularly if you share an impression or perception about them, you're asking them to enter a communication transaction with you. They're going to have to focus on your message and use mental energy to decide how to respond. When, then, should you ask people to make this kind of effort by giving them feedback? What kind should you give? And how much? Answering these questions constitutes a normal part of everyday human life with people with whom we interact routinely, but it's a particularly challenging part of working in a group with people whom we may not know as well as we do our family or close friends. Offering assessment can be even more difficult, since it puts us at risk of making a mistake or upsetting other people.

One source of group motivation is a sense of movement and growth. Therefore, among the most useful tools in preparing to provide feedback and assessment are **benchmarks**[29]. These are qualitative or quantitative descriptions of a group's initial conditions to be used later for comparative purposes. For example, a newly-formed student group might make a list of how many and which books they have read by a particular author or on a particular assigned topic.

27. Communication with another person or persons in response to a message or with respect to an impression you have of the person(s).

28. A variety of feedback which expresses judgment about the value, significance, or merit of someone else's nature or behavior.

29. Qualitative or quantitative descriptions of a group's initial conditions to be used later for comparative purposes.

Effective Feedback and Assessment in a Group

Feedback and assessment should be planned and delivered carefully and intentionally. If they are to motivate people in a group, they should possess the following characteristics:

1. **Relevance.** The feedback or assessment should deal with actions the group has decided to take, values the group wants to embody, and especially goals the group has set for itself.
2. **Frequency.** People are busy and are bombarded with messages all day long, every day. In order to maintain a sense of purpose and focus with regard to their group's activities, members need to be reminded regularly of what and how they're doing.
3. **Simplicity.** The more direct and readily understandable the feedback and assessment, the better. In the 1960s, a whimsical bumper sticker said "Eschew obfuscation"—which means "avoid unclear communication." Keep things simple.
4. **Candor.** People generally appreciate honesty. In order to improve what they're doing in a group, give them forthright information about where they stand.
5. **Civility.** Too much candor can turn into rudeness. Politeness in feedback and assessment makes them easier to accept.
6. **Specificity.** Everyone in the group needs to understand the message as close to the same way as possible. Do your best, therefore, to be precise and to avoid ambiguity.
7. **Eclecticism.** Especially in large organizations such as schools and corporations, surveys and polls used as assessment tools can become tedious and burdensome. It's a good idea to invest time in developing creative new ways to monitor a group's stature and progress.

Subjects of Effective Feedback and Assessment

In order to assist and motivate group members, it's important to select the proper items to collect and express feedback and assessment about. Here are some possible topics about which feedback can be given:

1. **Group configuration/patterns.** Are the boundaries of your group clear? Have those boundaries changed, or are they the same as when the group was formed? Hartley and DawsonHartley, P., & Dawson, M. (2010). *Success in groupwork.* New York: St. Martin's Press. also suggested asking which members occupy positions of status at the center of the group and which members are on its edge.

2. **Actions taken by the group.** Does everyone agree on what the results of your group's decisions are? Have you kept track of what you've done with lists or other records?

3. **Relationship of actions to goals.** Which of your group's actions have been guided by its **a priori goals**[30], i.e., the ones it established intentionally and explicitly at the outset of its activities? What *ad hoc actions*[31], if any—that is, ones in response to specific unanticipated circumstances—have you taken since originating the group?

Other topics which your group should consider pertain to assessment, including the following:

1. **Adequacy of communication processes.** To what degree are your group's members satisfied with the quantity and nature of communication among yourselves? What communication practices do you especially appreciate, and which would you prefer to change?

2. **Adequacy of progress toward goals.** To what degree are your group's goals being met? If your group's level of progress isn't what you hoped for initially, are you nevertheless comfortable with the lesser results, perhaps because you encountered tougher-than-expected challenges along the way?

3. **Group members' individual satisfaction/mood.** Unhappy or disgruntled members don't add to the motivational spirit of a group. Try asking the simple question, "So, how are you feeling?" at the conclusion of every major group task. Probing individuals too often about how they're feeling about your group's activities can be distracting, and it can even cause doubts to expand. If you don't check often enough, however, small areas of disagreement or dissatisfaction can grow to damaging proportions. A plan for frequent, regular assessment will help group members feel supported rather than importuned by assessment of their satisfaction.

4. **The group's satisfaction with itself.** Does your group's "self-portrait" change with time? This sort of question can be posed in efficient, uncomplicated ways. In addition to asking individual members, "So, how are *you* feeling?", it's possible also to ask, "So, how do you think our group's doing?" Even fanciful questions like "What kind of animal are we?" or "What kind of plant?" can quickly help ascertain how positive your group's climate and outlook may be.

5. **External views about the group.** To remain motivated to collaborate, groups can benefit from asking for perspectives on their activities from outsiders. A fresh view will often raise thoughtful new questions for your group itself to consider.

30. Goals established intentionally and explicitly by a group when it is established.

31. Behaviors of a group which were not mandated when the group originated but which respond to specific unanticipated circumstances.

As Mitchell Caplan's quotation at the beginning of this section indicated, success in groups does depend at least in part on drawing upon the strengths of their members. Feedback and assessment make it possible to determine whether those strengths are being properly exploited and maximized for the benefit of the group.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Feedback and assessment in groups should possess definite characteristics and deal with well-thought-out subjects.

EXERCISES

1. Think of a group of which you're a part which engages in regular, frequent assessment of its activities. Who conducts the assessments? How and when are details of the assessments shared with members of the group? What, if anything, would you do to enhance the assessment process in the group?
2. Consider this feedback: "The group is doing all right, but it could improve." How would you change the message to make it more helpful in motivating members of the group? State a possible revision.
3. In some cultures, delivering direct negative feedback to others is avoided. If you worked in such a culture or with a representative of one, what measures would you take to ensure that the positive outcomes associated in mainstream American society with direct feedback and assessment could be achieved in other ways?
4. What is the most creative feedback or assessment technique you've ever seen used in a group? How effective was the technique? What might have made it even more helpful in motivating group members?

9.6 Summary

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

In this chapter we first defined motivation and collaboration. We then considered the roles that motivation play in human behavior. We identified and explained the place of strategies for bringing about motivation and collaboration. Finally, we explored the crucial role played by feedback and assessment in motivating members of a group.

CHAPTER REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Interpretive Questions

   a. What factors might cause a highly-motivated individual to lose his or her motivation abruptly?
   b. Under what circumstances might collaboration be of minor importance to members of a group?
   c. How would you rank the collaboration strategies described in section 4 of this chapter? On what basis do you feel your ranking is justified?

2. Application Questions

   a. Do motivational speakers actually cause members of their audiences to be motivated? Identify a total of at least half a dozen members of your family, friends, and peers who have heard motivational speakers and ask them how, if at all, the speakers changed their behavior or outlook.
   b. A commonly-held view of coaches in competitive sport is that they motivate athletes to achieve personal triumphs and develop productive collaboration with teammates. Investigate this issue and share your findings.
   c. Some people feel that, despite its intended purpose of increasing achievement, "high-stakes" assessment of K-12 students entails more drawbacks than advantages. Do you agree? Locate writings by three supporters and three opponents of such assessment, share the documents with classmates, and explain why you endorse or disagree with any two of them.

Additional Resources

Many organizations employ professional speakers whose chief function is to motivate groups in business, education, and other areas of society. See what you can learn by visiting and assessing the opportunities offered by the following websites associated with organizations of this sort:

- http://publicspeakers4hire.com
- http://www.speaking.com/: "Speakers' Platform"

- http://www.motivational-celebrity-speakers.com/ (sports figures and celebrities)
- http://premierespeakers.com/women_motivational_speaker (women)
- http://nsb.com/speakers (Canadian motivational speakers)

Warren Bennis and Patricia Biederman's book *Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration*, published in 1997 by Perseus Books, describes an impressive example of successful creative collaboration by a small group of employees in Lockheed Martin Corporation during World War II. Lockheed's "skunkworks"—an unstructured, independent offshoot of the parent company—encouraged collaboration among engineers and others to produce innovative new products in a very short time.

The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington strives to provide its students with a fully collaborative learning environment built around "learning communities." Visiting the college's campus or its website (http://www.evergreen.edu) will reveal some of the principles and practices underlying Evergreen's collaborative philosophy.

Many pairs of musicians have created famous and popular musical compositions. Read about these partnerships to see how well they were able to collaborate and what they felt made their collaboration successful:

- W.S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan
- Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein
- Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel
- John Lennon and Paul McCartney

Carolyn Wiley of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga published an article in the *International Journal of Manpower*, "What motivates employees according to over 40 years of motivation surveys" (1997—volume 18, issue 3), in which she claimed that employees overwhelmingly chose "good wages" as their top motivator. Although wages seem to be purely extrinsic, Wiley contended that they communicate what an organization values and that they affect employees' emotional and psychological wellbeing. Reading Wiley's article should give you a potentially new perspective on what motivates people to put forth effort in the business world.

Many theorists believe that what motivates people is culture-specific. Asians, in particular, are held to behave according to Confucian principles and collectivist motives. The chapter "The nature of achievement motivation in collectivist

societies" in *Individualism and collectivism: Theory, method, and applications* (1994; Cross-cultural research and methodology series, Vol. 18; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications) offers an explanation of this viewpoint.

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