

# Motivating the unmotivated

By Francie Dalton



**I**F YOU'RE frustrated in your efforts to elicit the best from each of your subordinates, chances are it's not that they can't be motivated, but that the wrong methods are being used to motivate them.

The secret is to package what you want from each individual in a way that makes them want to deliver for you. There are seven classic work styles, each of which is motivated differently: Commanders, who need control; Drifters, who need flexibility; Attackers, who need respect; Pleasers, who need to be liked; Performers, who need recognition; Avoiders, who need security, and Analyticals, who need certainty.

Here's how to use this knowledge to better motivate your staff.

**Commanders:** Results oriented, aloof, bossy and not terribly tactful, Commanders need to be in a position to take initiative. Delegate substantive assignments to them, and employ a hands-off management style.

Articulate the desired result, and then stand aside and let them figure out the "how to's." To motivate the Commander, link what you want them to do to how doing so will improve order, control, or results. Most importantly, understand that the Commander wants to be valued and validated for his ability to overcome obstacles, to implement, and to achieve results.

**Drifters:** Free spirited and easy going, disorganized and impulsive, Drifters are virtually antithetical to Commanders. They have difficulty with structure of any kind, whether it relates to rules, work hours, details or deadlines.

To motivate the Drifter, delegate only short assignments and ensure assignments have lots of variety. Provide as much flexibility as possible, including what they work on, where they work, with whom they work, and the work schedule itself. Drifters want to be valued and validated for their innovation and creativity, their ability to improvise on a moment's notice, and their out-of-the-box thinking.

**Attackers:** Angry and hostile, cynical and grouchy, Attackers are often the most demoralizing influence

in the workplace. They can be critical of others in public and often communicate using demeaning, condescending tones, or biting sarcasm. Attackers view themselves as superior to others, conveying contempt and disgust for others.

Granted, these folks aren't exactly the most lovable of employees, but you do need to be able to motivate them effectively. Start by identifying what they're really good at, and then put them in positions of using or imparting that knowledge in ways that don't require much actual interaction with others. Value and validate the Attacker for his ability to take on the ugly, unpopular assignments no one else wants to touch, and for their ability to work for long periods of time in isolation.

**Pleasers:** Thoughtful, pleasant and helpful, Pleasers are easy to get along with. They view their work associates as extended family members and have a high need for socialization at work. Unable to handle conflict, Pleasers can't say "no" to the requests of others, developing instant migraines or stomach problems to escape having to deal with negativity.

Motivating Pleasers is pretty simple and direct—just let them know how doing whatever you ask will make you happy. The more difficult thing is to manage their tendency to subordinate what's best for the company to the maintenance of relationships. To manage this, you'll need to continually stress the concept of the

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“greater good.” Value and validate Pleasers for the way they humanize the workplace, and for their helpful, collaborative work style.

**Performers:** Witty and charming, jovial and entertaining, Performers are often the favorite personality in the workplace. They’re the first to volunteer in public venues, and the last to deliver on their promises. Performers can also be self-promoting hustlers who use others as stepping stones on their path to stardom. They’ll also avoid accountability for any negative outcomes by distorting the truth and blaming others.

Motivating the Performer requires that you link recognition and other incentives, such as high-profile assignments, to improved teammanship. Value and validate your Performer for his ability to establish new relationships, and for their persuasive and public speaking skills.

**Avoiders:** Quiet and reserved, Avoiders are the wallflowers of the world. They create warm, cozy nest-

like environments and prefer to work alone. They fear taking initiative, and shun increased responsibility because of the attendant visibility and accountability. They’ll do precisely what they’re told—no more, it’s true, but no less either. Avoiders will sacrifice money, position, growth and new opportunities for the safety of status quo.

Motivating the Avoider requires that you always provide detailed instructions, in which the Avoider will find safety. Don’t expect to be successful in pushing this fear-based individual toward increased responsibility. Value and validate your Avoider for his reliability, meticulous attention to your instructions, and for getting the job done right the first time, every time.

**Analyticals:** Cautious, precise and diligent, Analyticals are the personification of procrastination. This sometimes incapacitates them in times of urgency. Their ability to multi-task mentally results in poor eye contact and flat intonation. They scrutinize the ideas of others and anticipate all that could go wrong, which creates an inaccurate impression that they’re

negative. They’re ill at ease socially and prefer that all communications be written or electronic—not in person.

Motivating the Analytical requires that you give him time to complete each task before assigning another, and that you demonstrate and articulate respect for data and for the analytical function. Value and validate your Analytical for his commitment to accuracy and ability to anticipate and evaluate risk far enough in advance to allow risks to be reduced.

The “one-size-fits-all” cookie cutter approach to motivating others doesn’t work. Instead, you must customize your methods to each individual you manage. Doing so allows you to access your staff’s discretionary energy—that which they aren’t required to exert, but may want to for those who employ these tips.

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