

# Motivational Management

**Inspiring Your People for Maximum Performance**

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# Introduction

Managers have a tough job. By definition, they must accomplish their goals and do their work *through the work of others*. The old saying that “If you want something done right, do it yourself” has a ring of truth to it, because it is usually harder to get employees to do a challenging job well than to do it yourself. Yet managers must let go of their own urge to just step in and make things right, and they must instead nurture the necessary competencies and commitment in their employees.

Achieving difficult goals through the work of others is of course an age-old challenge. Whoever built the pyramids must have wrestled with it. But in some ways, the challenge is a new one for us today. As we’ll explore in Chapter 1, managers now face challenges that need a lot more effort, creative problem-solving, and willingness to change than did the previous generation of managers. As I visit workplaces and speak to audiences of managers and executives, I hear a common set of frustrations and desires having to do with the need to achieve tough and variable goals in a tough and variable world. To be better and quicker and smarter as an organization requires us to be better and quicker and smarter as *individuals*. That means everyone, not just the managers. How do we achieve that goal?

Some of the traditional answers still apply. Managers need to have appropriate strategies to implement. They need to be sincere and dedicated. But many of the other answers are changing because the results we need are changing.

We are not building old-fashioned pyramids. We cannot define work as the repetitive cutting and carrying of blocks of stone for decades at a time.

Our pyramids have to be finished this quarter and every block of stone needs to be made out of new composite materials and then custom-fitted by teams of employees who, incidentally, have never done this job before and who don't have enough tools or time to implement the blueprint the manager is looking at. Now what? Well, we could tell the employees to work faster. And if that doesn't do the trick, we could threaten to fire the slowest. Wait a second, that sounds a bit too negative. Let's organize them into teams, then add a prize for the fastest team. Will that work? Will we have the best new pyramid in the shortest length of time for the least cost? The answer is still likely to be no.

The kind of solutions I just described to the pyramid-building puzzle are examples of applying what I call level-one management to a level-two problem. Level-one management uses traditional top-down, command-and-control methods to structure and routinize and direct the work. It's great in a stable, relatively predictable environment.

A level-two strategic environment is harder to predict and faster changing. It requires a creative, entrepreneurial (opportunity-making) approach on the part of the organization, which of course means that managers need different sorts of qualities from their employees. But we can't simply begin importing superhumans from another planet; we still have the same sorts of people in our workforce. In many cases, we need to generate new and different types of performance from the exact same individuals. How do we get level-two performances out of our employees instead of level-one performances? *Something* has to change.

And the something that has to change is *us*, the managers. We

need a new approach, a new set of tools and techniques. And we are working on this challenge. Many new approaches are developed and tried every year. Most organizations are in transition right now, with a mix of management methods and strategic approaches, some of which are clearly operating at level two. To be an effective manager today means helping with this transition. Ideally, it means leading the way by developing and adopting new management approaches that naturally generate the kinds of performances needed for strategic success. This book is intended to aid any manager who is eager to take up this challenge.

I named my most recent book *Making Horses Drink* after the old saying that you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink. There are also some—perhaps many—things you cannot simply tell employees to do or make your organization do just by commanding them to happen. As we move toward level-two management, we bump into more and more of these things that require special inspiration, that don't just happen because somebody wrote a memo ordering them to be done.

Traditional command-and-control management will not generate the kinds of performances we most need from our employees today, as we will see in Chapters 1 and 2. We need employees who are self-motivated and eager to take initiative to address our challenging performance requirements. We need a turned-on, fast-learning workforce. We need our organization to be thirsty for change, willing to try harder, and eager to succeed. My goal as an author, consultant, and trainer is to help managers achieve exceptional performance in this new, challenging level-two environment. In this book, I'll share many of the tools and techniques that my firm uses to help managers achieve this important and difficult requirement.