

## ***117 The Big Turn-Ons***

### *Purpose/Objectives:*

Unlike communication, motivation is often difficult to teach and demonstrate in a classroom situation. This thought-provoking exercise helps managers to understand motivation by discovering factors that motivate people to high achievement and performance. Participants are first asked to talk about organizations and/or activities where people devote time and energy away from work. Then, assigned to groups, they produce ideas about what motivates people to give their time and energy to those organizations and/or activities.

When the groups reconvene for large group discussion, they are asked to discuss kinds of motivational stimuli managers can use in the job situation to produce a similar commitment. Participants can readily “buy into” the results of this exercise based on their own experience rather than simply accepting theories or someone else’s research.

**Type:** Discussion Stimulator

**Time Required:** 30 to 45 minutes

**Group Size:** 6 to 60

### **Some ways to use this Session Builder include:**

- A warm-up or introductory exercise to the topic of motivation in any first-level or middle-management program.

### *Preparation:*

- No handouts are required for this exercise.
- Provide paper and pencils for participants to use when recording their group discussions
- Have a flip chart/markers, chalkboard/chalk, or overhead projector available to use when processing the group work.
- Be sure the facilities will accommodate small group discussions occurring at the same time.

### Process:

- Begin by asking the group to think of organizations and/or activities to which people devote a lot of time and energy away from work.
- Suggest that they focus particularly on activities in which people participate as part of an organization rather than in individual sports or hobbies. Some examples are civic clubs such as Rotary and Kiwanis, church or religious groups, community groups, hospitals, volunteer fire and ambulance companies, etc. Don't bother to list these on the flip chart as the group mentions them.
- Using any convenient method, divide the group into smaller discussion groups consisting of approximately six participants each. Then read or paraphrase the following assignment:

*In your small group, record and discuss all the reasons you can think of that people would devote so much time and energy to organizations off the job.*

- Allow about 10 minutes for participants to complete this part of the exercise.
- Some typical responses are ...

*A feeling of authority or power; challenge; reasonability; a sense of being wanted or needed; recognition; or a chance to get away and/or work out frustrations.*

- Casually monitor the groups to be sure they're staying on track. If a group's list begins to get very long (roughly eight or more items) ask that group to rate the items on their list as to which is the most compelling or most universal of their reasons for off-the-job activities.

### Discussion:

- After all groups have had a chance to discuss the question, reconvene the session.
- Beginning with one of the groups, go from group to group asking each to share one item (or the most important item) from their list. Post these responses to the flip chart. As you do, restate the response as necessary to achieve clarity and conciseness. (Where a word from the Herzberg Two-Factor Theory seems to fit, use it; but be careful not to appear to be steering the group responses in any particular direction.)
- There is likely to be little discussion during this process since most groups will have similar responses. With rare exception, the resulting list will bear a marked similarity to the Herzberg "Motivators." From here, there are a number of ways to go with the discussion (see Options/Variations).

- One common technique is to use the exercise to lead into a brief lecture on the Herzberg Two-Factor Theory. You may ask participants to comment on the attitudes and dedication of those involved in such outside activities. The implication is, of course, “Wouldn’t you like to have those same attitudes and dedication on the part of the employees where you work?” Then, you can ask participants to return to their groups to discuss the question:

**How can supervisors and managers provide these same kinds of motivational stimuli in on-the-job situations?**

*Options/Variations:*

- The key variations are in what follows the exercise rather than in the exercise itself. Not only is it a good introduction to the Herzberg Two-Factor Theory, but also to the concepts of job enrichment, the role of the supervisor in creating a motivational climate, or other team building/motivation exercises.

*Notes:*

- For more information on Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory, consult any standard management textbook.

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