

9 People Motivators

1. Personal gain

This is strongest of all motivators—it's the “what's in it for me” factor. Why should I? What will I get out of it? Whether consciously or subconsciously, people ask themselves this question every time they make a decision. Remember this motivator when you pose a bond issue to the community or even ask a teacher to consider serving on a committee. If you aren't able to articulate the benefits of saying yes, how will they?

2. Prestige

It's important to everyone to feel important in some way. For many people a prime motivator is feeling valued, powerful and part of something special. Little things we say and do as professionals can help meet this need for those we serve. Addressing people by name, responding to phone or e-mail messages quickly and keeping stakeholders (including staff) informed throughout a multi-step process or decision all help to address people's natural desire to feel important. Remember that children have this same need to feel special and important.

3. Pleasure

Do a gut check: What's the climate like in your school improvement team meetings? Are people having fun in the midst of the serious work of discussing the status of student achievement or would they rather be getting a root canal? People put off, ignore or avoid experiences (and other people) that are unpleasant and discount a natural need for fun. In an era where data and accountability rule, the “fun factor” in our profession has taken quite a beating; at times unfairly labeled “fluffy” and without real outcomes. The truth of the matter is that in our quest for substance, we've become...well, a little dull. Fun and productivity are not mutually exclusive and people need to feel enjoyment to stay engaged and satisfied.

4. Imitation

Not everyone wants to be out in front in a leadership role; in fact many people are motivated by leaders who they can imitate and model themselves after. According to DeBruyn and DeBruyn in their book *School Promotion, Publicity and Public Relations...Nothing But Benefits*, “managers who strive to show their employees the values of hard work, enthusiasm, curiosity, and a professional appearance tend to develop employees who try to imitate these behaviors.” Gandhi called it “being the world you want to see.” In other words, take seriously your position as a role model for your staff, students and community. Many people are looking to you to set the standard and—perhaps more importantly—are motivated by it.