

NANO TOOLS FOR LEADERS®

MOTIVATOR IN CHIEF: GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR TEAM

Nano Tools for Leaders® are fast, effective leadership tools that you can learn and start using in less than 15 minutes—with the potential to significantly impact your success as a leader and the engagement and productivity of the people you lead.

THE GOAL

Increase motivation by incentivizing, developing, and structuring work better for those you manage.

NANO TOOL

One of managers' primary responsibilities is motivating their teams to do their best work—and feel a sense of fulfillment in the process. A motivated team is a highly engaged one; its members are better at handling uncertainty, solving problems, and applying high levels of creativity and innovation to their work. They're also much more likely to stick around.

Motivation can be driven by intrinsic reasons (e.g., a desire to learn or be challenged) or by extrinsic ones (e.g., a desire to gain status or earn a financial bonus). Not every team member is going to be motivated in the same way, and the role of a manager is to discover team members' motivation preferences and then meet those preferences.

That role becomes significantly less complicated by using psychologist David McClelland's Human Motivation Theory, which identifies three needs (achievement, power, and affiliation) that correlate with how an individual is motivated, particularly at work. While everyone is driven by a combination of these needs, most of us have a dominant motivator. Determining the dominant one for each team member and structuring work, providing praise, and rewarding performance based on it is the key to motivating them.

ACTION STEPS

Managing for motivation requires understanding the three needs, identifying the primary need of each team member, and then managing them to best meet that need.

1. Achievement: If this is a team member's primary need, they will be motivated by goal setting and accomplishing goals. They like to see progress and like to receive regular feedback along the way. They are drawn to work where success is clearly accomplished through effort and merit. The best ways to manage these team members are:

- Because promotions matter a lot to this type, make sure they understand how and when a promotion can happen.
- Give them projects where outcomes can be attributable to their efforts. They like projects that are challenging but not so challenging that luck has to play a large part in the project's success.
- Provide clear goals for the quarter or year. Work with them to set those goals and celebrate them when achieved.
- Praise their completion of tasks and recognize their specific contribution to accomplishing the task.



2. Power: Team members with this primary need will be motivated by competition and the ability to influence others. They like to have the ability to exert control over situations and are driven by the desire to have responsibility and sway. The best ways to manage these team members are:

- Reward work well done, and increase responsibility and ownership over projects. Giving management responsibilities over an individual or a team would be a strong motivator.
- Praise them when they come up with the right approach or are correct about a decision. Validate the impact their ideas and work have on a decision or project outcome. Send an email to a senior team member (cc'ing or bcc'ing them) praising the team member.
- Give them projects that have a competitive tilt (such as a sales goal).

3. Affiliation: Those with this primary need are motivated by belonging to a group and feeling a strong sense of community in their workplace. They love collaborating with others and cultivating a sense of attachment to those around them. They will stick with an organization because of loyalty to the team. The best ways to manage these team members are:

- Make sure they feel part of the team at all times and that they are accepted by the group. Spend time building a personal relationship with them and creating space for mentorship. Keep your eyes open for situations where they could feel socially excluded.
- Praise them by sharing how they have impacted the team and the organizational culture.
- Encourage them to take on roles and projects that involve building relationships with different members of the organization.

CONTRIBUTOR TO THIS NANO TOOL

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KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION: RELATED EXECUTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

[*Becoming a Leader of Leaders: Pathways to Success*](#); [*High-Potential Leaders: Accelerating Your Impact*](#)

ABOUT NANO TOOLS

Nano Tools for Leaders® was conceived and developed by Deb Giffen, MCC, director of Custom Programs at Wharton Executive Education. *Nano Tools for Leaders®* is a collaboration between joint sponsors Wharton Executive Education and Wharton's Center for Leadership and Change Management. This collaboration is led by Professors Michael Useem and John Paul MacDuffie.