

Understanding My Work Motivation

A: RESPONSIBLE

In my Work Motivation Code, this is: 1st 2nd 3rd

You believe that “good people work” so you’re rarely unemployed for long. When you are, it’s difficult to focus on anything but getting back to work. Whether the pay is good or bad, whether you enjoy it or not, you will work because you feel you should. You take great pride in being self-reliant. When you enjoy your work, you make an excellent, reliable, long-term employee who employers value.

Concerns: “Responsibles” are often so busy working that they don’t take the time to figure out what they want or how to get ahead.

You may move from survival job to survival job. You take the first job offered, because you should be working, without considering if you’ll enjoy it. Then, when the job becomes unbearable, you quit and quickly take another job which you’ll hate and soon quit.

Or, you may stay in a job that’s a bad match. You get “stuck” in a job you hate, but feel you shouldn’t leave because it would be irresponsible, and then become resentful. You stay, but you may stop performing to the best of your ability or have a bad attitude. This sabotage may lead to you being let go (at least you didn’t quit), and you must find another job.

Solutions:

Use this time to figure out what you really want so you can begin and succeed in a career you’ll enjoy.

Don’t take the first job that comes along just because you want to be responsible. If you enjoy your work you’ll be a more responsible employee. Complete the WorkNet curriculum and be sure your next job is a good match for you. Remember, if you don’t start planning for a new future now, your life will look the same in 5 years.

If you need to take a survival job, make it a stepping stone on your Career Path that leads you to your career goal. Work hard in the survival job so you get an excellent reference to help you move forward.

B: TASK COMPLETION

In my Work Motivation Code, this is: 1st 2nd 3rd

You work because you get a sense of accomplishment from efficiently, successfully completing projects and tasks. You enjoy seeing the end result, feeling the satisfaction of a “job well done,” and receiving praise for what you’ve done. You make “to do” lists (on paper, or your head), and enjoy checking things off.

Concerns: “Task Completers” must be able to list what they accomplished at the end of each work day (or very regularly) or they may become frustrated or demotivated.

Some jobs take a long time to complete, or are never finished because they’re always changing. If you can’t regularly complete tasks or don’t feel a sense of accomplishment, you may find that you stop enjoying your work, are less motivated, have a hard time being on time, or begin calling in sick.

Even if others say you’re doing a great job, their praise holds little value if you can’t list your accomplishments. Some “task completers” need others to recognize their accomplishments. Others need only their own sense of accomplishment.

Solutions:

Avoid jobs that are routine, just “part of the process,” or take a long time to complete such as data entry, assembler, or counseling. These types of jobs make it difficult to feel a “sense of accomplishment.”

Choose jobs with tasks that let you see the end result.

If you’re in a job with few tasks that can be measured and completed, create benchmarks for yourself, write them down and check them off as you finish. This will keep you motivated. Your work will be even more enjoyable if it lets you focus on the tasks you enjoy.

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C: EXPERT vs. LEARNER

In my Work Motivation Code, this is: 1st 2nd 3rd

You work for 1 of 3 reasons: to demonstrate your expertise (what you're good at), to learn new skills and gain knowledge, or to start as a learner and become an expert. The key is to figure out how much time you want to spend using your expertise, and how much you want to spend learning. (A job that requires 80% expertise and 20% learning is very different from a job that requires 20% expertise and 80% learning.)

Concerns: We all have a preferred expert/learner balance, but for "Expert/Learners" the balance must be right or they become de-motivated.

A high expert with little chance to use and share your expertise may become disinterested. Or, if you're expected to learn too much instead of focusing on the knowledge and skills you're confident using, you may feel overwhelmed, defeated or incompetent. Remember, every job requires learning in the beginning. If you are a high expert give yourself at least 6 months to decide if the job is right for you.

A high learner without enough learning may become bored and uninterested, and even though you can do the job well, your performance and attitude can suffer. And, if you have a pattern of quitting after six months because you get bored, choose a job that requires more on-going learning.

A project person in a job that doesn't let you start as a learner and move to become the expert, you'll look for projects and do them instead.

Solutions:

Complete the WorkNet curriculum, especially the Expert vs. Learner portions to clarify your preferences.

Before you accept a job, determine if it matches your preferences. If you're tempted to accept a position that doesn't, talk with a mentor or the perspective employer. Maybe you can restructure the job, volunteer for extra duties, or pursuing additional education to ensure a better match. If you can't, don't take the job unless it's a required step on your Career Path.

D: SOCIAL

In my Work Motivation Code, this is: 1st 2nd 3rd

You are motivated by the social atmosphere of the job and relationships with co-workers, supervisors and customers. You feel good about your work if you feel accepted and well-liked by others. You're often more concerned with the people you work with than the tasks you do. It's important for you to be a part of a team. Working alone can be very de-motivating.

Concerns: "Socials" have to like the people they work with, or they will struggle to enjoy working and stay motivated.

You may become dissatisfied or de-motivated when you get a new co-worker or supervisor you don't like, transfer to a new department or team, or get a promotion that changes your relationship with your co-workers.

You may measure your supervisor's satisfaction with you by personal interactions, and may feel slighted by supervisors who provide little feedback or social interaction.

You may be easily distracted by others' problems or needs, and may inappropriately bring personal issues into the work place.

Solutions:

Do all you can to ensure that you'll like the people you work with. During the interview, ask questions about the co-workers and the supervisor's management style. Always meet your direct supervisor(s) and, as often as possible, your co-workers before accepting a position.

Remember that staff changes, so actively look for good qualities in new co-workers, and make friends outside your department by volunteering for various committees or special projects.

Build relationships away from work so if you lose or leave your job you don't lose all your friends and entire support system.

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E: PASSION

In my Work Motivation Code, this is: 1st 2nd 3rd

You work because it gives a sense of meaning or purpose to your life, and lets you make a positive difference. When your work aligns with your passion, you work hard, actively learn and promote the cause, regardless of pay or recognition. Passions vary from helping or teaching children, caring for the poor, improving the environment, caring for animals, or promoting a religious belief, physical health, the value of education, patriotism, etc.

Concerns: “Passions” must align their passion with the work they do, or they can become de-motivated or experience great conflict on the job.

You are motivated to do the “extra,” when your passion corresponds to the mission of the company. If it doesn’t, you may reduce the time and energy you give to your paid job, and focus on activities you’re passionate about.

If your passion doesn’t correspond to the mission of the company, you may become judgmental of the company’s goals and objectives, finding fault with their different approach or lack of interest in the things you believe in.

Solutions:

Choose work that aligns with your passions by clarifying what’s important to you, then identifying companies that can/do positively impact those issues.

During an interview, ask specific questions about their views and practices regarding your passion to see how working with them can help you fulfill your mission. Once on the job, discover how to move into positions that let you lead, or do more of the things you’re passionate about.

Pursue your passions outside of work too. This creates a balance, and means if you lose or leave the job you keep your sense of meaning and purpose.

If you choose not to (or can’t find) work in your area of passion, seek work that lets you pursue your passion as a volunteer or on the side. Make sure the job’s schedule, pay, network and reputation let you pursue your passion.

F: IDENTITY

In my Work Motivation Code, this is: 1st 2nd 3rd

You choose jobs and enjoy work that lets you feel proud of what you do, where you work, or who you work with. You choose titles you’re proud to hold, with companies you’re proud to work for. You’re motivated to work harder, expand your network, or continue your education so you can succeed in an even more respectable position or more prestigious company.

Concerns: “Identities” must do work they feel is respectable and a reflection of who they are, or they can feel ashamed.

You may identify yourself too strongly with work, rather than a balance of who you are and what you bring to the world.

You may be embarrassed to let anyone know if you’re doing work you don’t find respectable (while searching for a better job) or if you’re unemployed. This greatly reduces your network and confidence as you job search, eats away at your self-respect, and diminishes your ability to market yourself to new employers.

You may lose your sense of self-worth and self-respect if you lose a job you’re proud of, which reduces your ability to market yourself to your next employer.

Solutions:

Don’t take “just any job.” Pursue work that you feel is a good reflection of who you are, and makes you feel proud (this can vary greatly from person to person). To determine what makes a title, field or company prestigious or respectable to you, consider if you’d feel proud telling people you respect about it.

Find other ways to “identify” yourself so work doesn’t hold so much power, such as your family, social group, faith, a cause you volunteer for, etc.

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G: OUTSIDE INTERESTS

In my Work Motivation Code, this is: 1st 2nd 3rd

NOTE: If you do want to combine your outside interests and your work, read about E: Passion on the previous page.

You work to make a living so you can do other things, such as art, family, sports, studying, community service, car racing, religion/faith, music, 12-step recovery, etc. You may choose jobs that demand little physical/mental overtime but require you to use high-paid skills, show union loyalty, or take a lower wage. You don't combine your outside interests and your work because you make more money this way or because you don't want to.

Concerns: "Outside Interests" are more focused on other things in their life than on work, and when forced may choose their interests over work.

You may have difficulty choosing work, because the decision isn't based on the title or field, but on the time commitment, location, pay and how it impacts your outside interests.

When forced to choose between work and interests, you may choose your interests, making you an undependable employee. If you choose work, you may feel like you're giving-in and become resentful.

You may perform poorly, not give the extra, or even cut corners at work if you don't see and remember how your work supports your outside interests.

Solutions:

Choose work that lets you fully enjoy your outside interests. Realize that your values are more important than title/field. Investigate the job's schedule, pay and other expectations before you accept an offer. Decide with the employer how to handle factors that could impact your interests.

Remind yourself regularly how work lets you do your outside interests.

Consider creating a path to jobs that give you more time, money and energy for your interests, and consider the compromises you're willing to make along the way as you move into that job.

H: CREATE

In my Work Motivation Code, this is: 1st 2nd 3rd

You work to create and improve systems, procedures, ideas and products, or solve problems. If creative opportunities are not readily available, you may find problems to solve and discover ways to make things better, or find a position where you can do that. You may easily gravitate toward leadership so you can solve problems and be in a position to make changes.

Concerns: "Creatives" need to solve problems or create and improve, or they become frustrated, feel ineffective, and may find another position.

You want superiors to appreciate your creativity, and may be discouraged or depressed if they don't use your ideas or if they want to change them.

You may find it difficult to take orders from people who don't let creativity drive the team toward "excellence," and difficult to delegate work to people who aren't as creative or good at solving problems as you. You may also dislike working on teams if you don't respect the other members.

Your natural enthusiasm to "create" is viewed as criticism of those who designed the system or those who maintain 'what is.'

When moving into a new field, company, or entry-level position, you may be frustrated at your limited opportunity for creativity.

Solutions:

Seek positions that allow for creativity, such as team leader, the only person in the department, a consultant, a trouble-shooter, an entrepreneur, etc.

Seek employers that value your creativity, such as entrepreneurial or trend-setting companies, in the information and other changing sectors, etc.

In the interview, ask questions to learn if the position, company, and supervision style are a good match for you.

At lower levels, build a reputation as a problem-solver, and find a mentor in the company who values your ideas, can present them to the right people and can guide you through the political mine-field of being a change-agent.

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I: FINANCIAL SECURITY

In my Work Motivation Code, this is: 1st 2nd 3rds

NOTE: This is often wrongly selected when we're unemployed. If you were working, would this still be in your top three? If not, choose another.

You work for financial security. You may have depended on someone else for your financial well-being in the past and were let down (divorced, widowed, abandoned, suddenly laid-off). As a result, you have a strong desire to never be in that situation again. You want stability, are reluctant to take risks and are willing to compromise other areas for job security.

Concerns: "Financial Securities" are often less focused on the type of work they do and more on the employer who supports them. They want stable work that feels secure, with predictable income and good benefits.

You may stay in jobs that offer security, even if you don't like them. If you begin to feel trapped or resentful, your attitude and performance may decline, increasing your chance of being let go.

You may resist promotions or better job offers for fear of not being able to do the job and then being let go.

You may worry about, or experience more panic and depression than most when laid-off or terminated, or changing jobs.

Solutions:

Pursue companies that offer steady pay increases to loyal employees, and good benefits (well-established or unionized positions companies, etc.).

Consider getting a financial planner, taking a class or reading a book so you can invest your money smartly and be prepared if your income decreases.

Continue your education and find a mentor to help you advance your career in a way that feels safe, and offers greater financial stability.

Find ways to try-out a new position before accepting a permanent change, such as volunteering, filling-in during vacations, or job shadowing.

I: FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITY

In my Work Motivation Code, this is: 1st 2nd 3rds

NOTE: This too is often wrongly selected when we're unemployed. If you were working, would this still be in your top three? If not, choose another.

You work to make money and control your financial destiny, and no matter how much make you need the opportunity to make more. You like jobs where more effort means more income, such as commission sales, network marketing, entrepreneur, consultant, developer/marketer of products, jobs that receive bonuses, commissions, tips or profit sharing, and jobs with a fast track upward.

Concerns: "Financial Opportunists" need to see how their efforts and excellence directly relate to increasing their income.

You may be easily frustrated in jobs that don't quickly reward your "extra" with greater income or opportunity.

You may feel trapped in jobs that don't offer a fast track upward, and can become angry with employers for not "valuing your work." This can result in poor performance/attitude and ruin your chances for advancement, or you may job-hop, always looking for a better employer and a better opportunity.

You are likely to take financial risks in hopes of "hitting it big."

Solutions:

Pursue jobs where you control your own income and advancement through bonuses, commissions, tips, profit sharing, investment, etc., rather than those with set wages or salary, and offer promotion based on seniority.

Learn a company's promotion practices before accepting an offer. Research and ask about the career path for someone starting in this position, the type of performance that would be rewarded with bonuses, profit sharing and promotions, and if there's a cap on how much you can earn.

Consider working for yourself to ensure you have every advantage and opportunity.