

A WEEK IN *Learning*

LEADING WITH INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

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It is hard to believe that, almost a month ago, many of our leaders came together for the first ever GCNA Leadership Conference. The feelings of excitement and anticipation for the conference were real, and while no one knew quite what to expect, everyone hoped for the best. With the conference now behind us, it warms the heart to read some of your feedback. Here is what some of our leaders said at the Conference:

"...very motivational and encouraging."

"...will definitely help me to be a better leader."

"...made me more motivated than ever to get my team 100% on board to getting things done."

While these comments represent a small sampling of the feedback, they also represent a real and recurring theme that we kept hearing: *people felt motivated!* They felt motivated to **be** more and to **do** more for themselves and for the people they lead. What an awesome outcome! But, what is motivation and how does it work? This week's article looks at, and examines, the concept of motivation. More specifically, understanding the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation as a way to better motivate the people we lead. Why, you ask? As leaders, it is critical that we understand what drives our team members. When we don't understand what drives or motivates people, it can lead to declines in performance and engagement.

So, let's begin with some definitions. **Extrinsic motivation** is the type of motivation that comes from the outside. Someone who is extrinsically motivated is driven to do something in order to earn a reward or avoid a punishment. In this situation, you perform an activity not for pleasure or satisfaction, but in order to get something out of it or to avoid a consequence.

Conversely, **intrinsic motivation** is the type of motivation that comes from the inside. Someone who is intrinsically motivated is driven to do something for the sake of doing it and for the personal satisfaction that comes with it. In this situation, you perform an activity because you want to, not because you have a desire for some form of reward or recognition. In other words, performing the activity is its own reward.

Admittedly, these definitions are pretty straightforward, and they line up with what we intuitively understand about what drives human behavior. The challenge we have as leaders is that too often we focus on motivating people through external (extrinsic) forces, such as rewards or punishments. The opportunity we have as leaders



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is to create an environment that fosters internal (intrinsic) motivation.

So, how do you do this? Let's examine five things you can do to help promote intrinsic motivation in your team members.

1. **Create the conditions for success.** When your team members feel they have the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform their jobs well, it makes a difference in how they show up. They feel more competent, confident, and successful. These feelings lead to an internal (intrinsic) sense of satisfaction.
2. **Provide regular feedback.** Team Members who receive regular performance feedback feel they have more control over their work, and the quality of their work. Providing team members regular feedback and constructive criticism creates an environment where team members feel empowered. They are empowered to receive feedback, process how they feel about the feedback, and ultimately decide what they will do with it. The ability to make choices and decisions about how they show up, and perform, leads to a motivating sense of accomplishment.
3. **Create challenging opportunities.** Provide opportunities for team members to take on challenging stretch assignments. Challenging your team members, in a positive way, can cause them to push themselves to higher levels of performance—perhaps higher than they thought possible.
4. **Lead career conversations.** Make opportunities for advancement *known*. Talk to your team members and help them understand the many opportunities they have at GCNA. Team members who feel they have a clear path to advancement ahead of them will feel more internally (intrinsically) motivated than those who feel they are stuck in a dead-end job.
5. **Invest in growth and development.** Team members who are provided opportunities to expand their knowledge through Enrichment activities (such as mentoring, job shadowing, and training) feel an increased sense of worth. This internal (intrinsic) motivator makes employees feel like they are valued by the company, which makes them value the quality of their work.

The things we just outlined fueled much of what led up to these feelings of motivation at the Leadership Conference:

- ✓ We created an environment where people could be successful
- ✓ We provided training opportunities to help leaders grow
- ✓ We created challenging (and fun) team experiences that pushed and stretched them
- ✓ We talked about Enrichment and the future of our Organization

Some, or all, of these things may have tapped into your own intrinsic motivation, which is great. Although, I hope you walkaway recognizing something just as important - that these are things you can be doing, right now, to motivate your team members. You all can, and should, be working to create an environment that fosters intrinsic motivation in your own teams. I challenge each of you to pick one area of focus and see what kind of good stuff happens. Good luck!