

HOW TO FIND OUT WHAT MOTIVATES YOU AT WORK

I was recently chatting to a business associate who mentioned that his employer had bought in a notable sports person to give the employees a motivation talk. He commented that while he was fired-up after the talk, a week later he was feeling disillusioned about his job.

While I too have heard some inspiring stories from sports heroes about their achievements on the sporting field, research on employee engagement says that a company vision will mean nothing to its employees until they can see the connection between the company direction, their work and their personal goals.

Let me briefly explain this theory with a tale on engagement. My friend Martyn tells a story about his cat Poppy, learning to use a cat door. With his family looking on, Martyn said he tried every trainer technique he could draw upon, to get Poppy to make sense of the purpose of the cat flap. But he said it was the food on the other side of the door that eventually enticed Poppy to go through the flap. The cat was motivated by what was in it for her, not what was in it for her owner.

Like Poppy, we are more likely to perform at our best in a role and feel satisfied, when motivating factors that are important to us are present and we believe our work is making a contribution the organisation's direction.

The exercise below will help you to think through what engages you at work.

- STEP 1** Think about situations when you felt inspired to put in extra effort at work. Make a list of what it was that energised you (motivating factors) to make the extra contribution.
- STEP 2** Now, imagine you are at a BBQ get-together. One of the other guests asks where you work and what you do there, what you enjoy about your work and how your job helps the business succeed. Note down how you might respond to each of these questions.
- STEP 3** Compare the list of motivating factors from Step 1, with the notes about your current role from Step 2, to reflect on how satisfied you feel at work. Are any of the things that engage you to go the extra mile at work, present in your current role? If yes, what are they and why are they present? If not, why not?
- STEP 4** Use insights gained to identify ways to improve your current work situation, or you may use this awareness to explore possibilities for changing to a role where you will feel more fulfilled. ■



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Contact Carmel Kostos on:
+61 419 893 633
carmel@nexttalentdevelopment.com.au

Box 6411
St Kilda Rd Central PO
Melbourne Vic 8008 Australia
www.nexttalentdevelopment.com.au

Carmel Kostos is the author of the Career Management program, *Energize Your Work-life* and her articles on learner-centred learning have appeared in HR and Training journals in Australia and the UK. She uses her expertise in how people learn to facilitate the achievement of individual career goals and organisational development outcomes in her work as Learning Consultant and Leadership Coach with Next Talent Development. ■