

Timely Tips

from Thinking Well Consulting

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This week: The Three Primary Drivers

Dear Reader,

What Drives You As A Manager?

Which of these three motivators or needs in the workplace resonates with you most?

The Need For Achievement

Do you have the drive to excel, to achieve in relation to a set of standards, to strive to succeed?

There is a distinction to be made about the need for achievement. In this context, it's about the desire to do things better. It's a personal achievement rather than seeking the rewards of success. High achievers prefer working at challenging tasks and accept personal responsibility, no matter the outcome. They like to set realistic but difficult goals that requires some stretching.

The Need to Affiliate With Others

Do you have the desire for friendly and close interpersonal relationships?

According to research in this area, individuals with a high need to affiliate strive for friendships involving a high degree of mutual understanding. They prefer cooperative situations rather than competitive ones.

The Need For Power

Do you need to direct and influence others?

The need for power is about a desire to be influential but also to control others. These individuals enjoy being in charge. They prefer competitive and status-oriented situations. Individuals high in this need are more concerned about gaining prestige and influence over others. This can also be a need for institutional power. This individual likes to organize the efforts of others to achieve the goals of the organization.

Additional research in the Theory of Needs has shown that affiliation and power tend to be closely related to managerial success. The best managers are high in the need for power and low in their need for affiliation and not so much in the need for achievement (since high achievers prefer job situations with personal responsibility, feedback and a moderate amount of risk). If the job calls for high achievers, candidates who are not high in this need can be successfully trained to be high achievers.

Adults are assumed to have all three motivations in varying degrees and yet one will be more of a driving force. Managers need to identify what motivates others and to create appropriately motivating conditions for them. People with *achievement* motives are motivated by standards of excellence, delineated roles and responsibilities and concrete, timely feedback. Those with *affiliation* motives are motivated when they can accomplish things with people they know and



trust. And the *power* motive is activated when people are allowed to have an impact, impress those in power, or beat competitors.

Depending on the workplace situation, the right driver will drive success. So, it's important to know what drives you and what situation is right for you.

*The above concept is a contemporary theory of motivation, also known as McClelland's Theory of Needs.
For more info on motivation concepts, refer to:
Essentials of Organizational Behavior by Stephen P. Robbins*

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