1. Introduction

Motivation is a personal matter for each individual. The level of an individual’s motivation will be influenced by a wide range of factors inside and outside of work. However there are a number of ways you can help motivate the people you manage and supervise. There are also a number of ways that poor management behaviour and actions can significantly de-motivate people.

Some of the Leadership and Management behaviours listed in the Leadership and Management Framework are a good starting point when trying to motivate people.

- **Provide Strong Leadership**
  Strong leadership is about being enthusiastic about the work you and your team does, about describing clearly what you expect of people and what you want to achieve.

- **Communicate and consult regularly with staff**
  Do you talk to your team frequently about work and progress? Would your team say you consult with them regularly on important matters.

- **Allow colleagues to learn from mistakes without blame**
  Do you have a team culture where mistakes are used to improve performance next time and where people feel safe to talk to their manager about a mistake they have made?

- **Empower staff through delegation and trust**
  Are there areas of your work that could be performed by others in your team? Are people given sufficient opportunities to demonstrate the skills they have?

- **Treat colleagues with respect, dignity and courtesy at all times**
  Do you and the rest of the team treat each other with respect, dignity and courtesy – even when under pressure, deadlines or when things go wrong?

2. What Motivates You?

A starting point for thinking about how to motivate your team is to write a list of what motivates you and to think about when you were most motivated yourself.

Many managers will say the things that motivate them the most are:

- Receiving positive, constructive feedback from their manager on their achievements.
- Being given interesting new challenges
- Feeling pride and internal job satisfaction for doing something well
- Seeing their team perform well
- Money

Money is often mentioned last when managers are asked to list what motivates them.

Generally the things that motivate you and other managers will also motivate everyone else in your team. So think about the things that motivate you and try to provide them to your team.

3. Money as a Motivator

Generally, the less someone is paid, the more important money is as a motivator for them. For some of the lowest paid people within the University, money may be the main motivator for them.

However, money is not a long-term motivator. If someone is given a pay-rise the positive motivation impact may only last 6 months. After this initial period people are already thinking about their next pay award. Non-financial ways of motivating people generally have a much longer term positive impact on their motivation.
4. Removing Causes of Dissatisfaction

People’s motivation is also clearly affected by things that they are unhappy with about work. If you do things to try to motivate people this will only have a limited effect if there are other factors causing dissatisfaction eg poor working conditions, lack of communications within the team, etc.

Try to reduce factors causing dissatisfaction where this is possible and where these factors are under your control or influence. If these factors are not under your control can you influence them through other people?

You may not know what team members are unhappy about so you might want to consider asking them. Try using a “Stop, Start, Continue” approach.

Ask team members to consider how you can further support and help them. Ask them to list anything that will make their job easier in terms of things you should:

- stop doing (or do less of)
- start doing (or do more of)
- continue doing.

Constructive replies could give you some good ideas about how to motivate people or remove demotivating factors.

5. Communications

The Communication Guide for managers talks about how to communicate with people at an organisational level. The way you communicate with people on an interpersonal level can also have a big impact on their level of motivation.

Research by Albert Mehrabian an American Academic showed that when people communicate their feelings and attitudes in face to face conversations communication takes place in three ways shown in the diagram below.

Body Language is particularly important for communicating feelings and attitude. However if what you say in words and what you say by your body language disagree, then people tend to believe the body language.

Relative Importance of communication methods.

In practice this means that when you talk to individuals and your team as a whole, try not to let your body language ‘give away’ any true feelings you might have eg frustration with team progress, tiredness, your own low levels of motivation, personal dislike of anyone etc.

Try to motivate people by being an active listener, ie acknowledging what people are saying as they talk, making appropriate eye contact and not gazing away etc.

The importance of tone can be shown as follows: Try saying “well done you’ve done a good job there” when you are smiling and then repeat the phrase but this don’t smile. You may hear a difference, one sounds more encouraging than the other. Words of course important too and the Performance Management Guide gives advice on what words to use when giving people feedback.