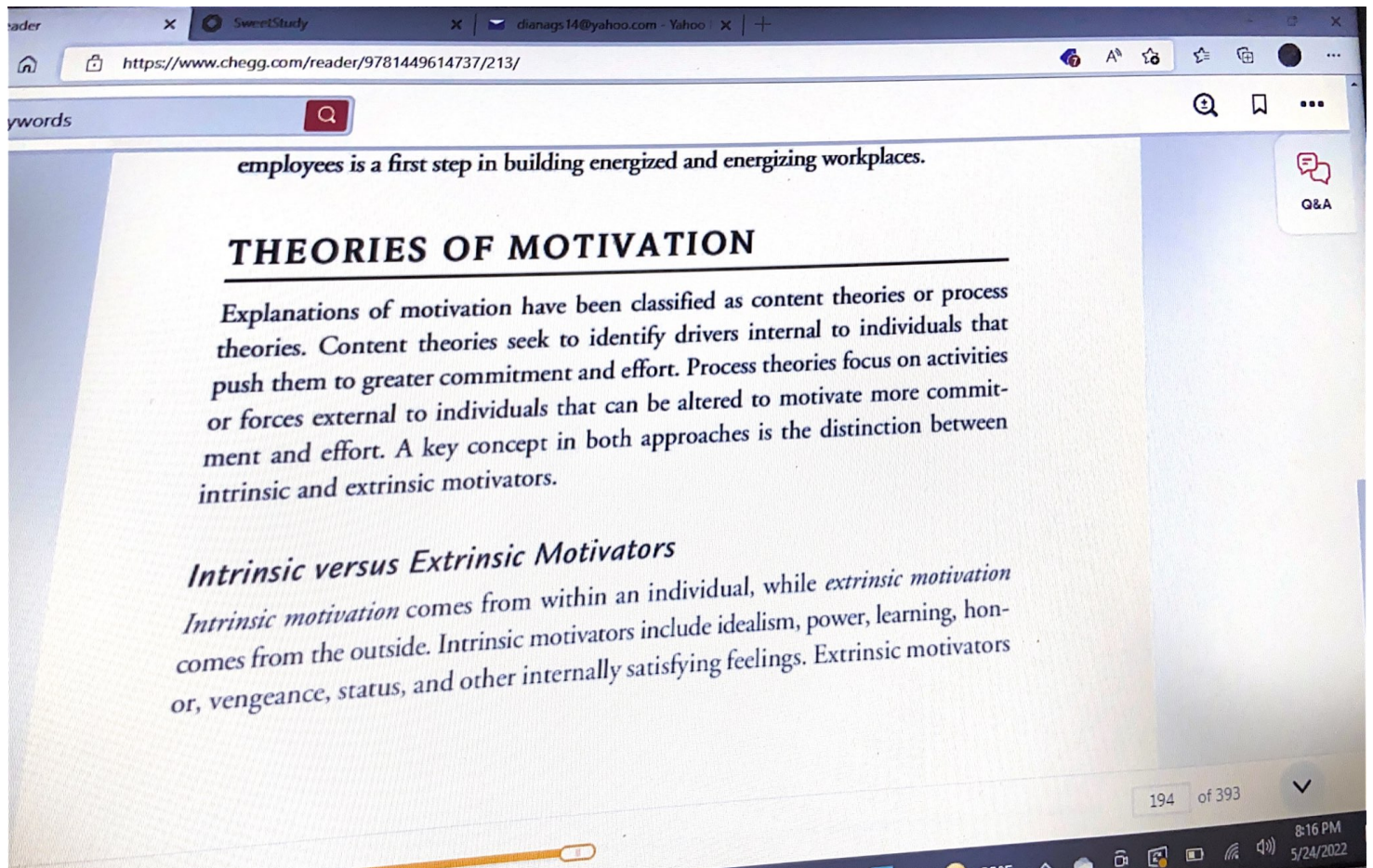


INTRODUCTION

One powerful advantage for health organization managers is that the work of their organizations is intrinsically motivating for many employees. Most intrinsically motivated employees want to improve patient and population health, increase equity in the delivery of services, and provide excellent customer service. It is an unfortunate reality that many health organizations do not use this base of intrinsic motivation to launch a cadre of incredibly energized and powerful employees. Instead, many organizations and managers de-motivate employees through rigid job design, hierarchical controls, and lack of trust. Understanding motivation of employees is a first step in building energized and energizing workplaces.

THEORIES OF MOTIVATION

Explanations of motivation have been classified as content theories or process theories. Content theories seek to identify drivers internal to individuals that push them to greater commitment and effort. Process theories focus on activities or forces external to individuals that can be altered to motivate more commitment and effort. A key concept in both approaches is the distinction between



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Intrinsic versus Extrinsic Motivators

Intrinsic motivation comes from within an individual, while *extrinsic motivation* comes from the outside. Intrinsic motivators include idealism, power, learning, honor, vengeance, status, and other internally satisfying feelings. Extrinsic motivators

include pay, benefits, accolades and recognition, or punishment. Health organization work is honorable and idealistic. It satisfies the desire of many individuals to improve the world, to make a difference in communities, and to serve others. The stories of many health leaders send this message in very powerful terms (DeBuono, Gonzalez, and Rosenbaum 2007). Management experts Pfeffer and Sutton (2007, 115) state that, "Because they are doing their jobs out of a sense of service and to make a difference, [people] often see more, not less, commitment and effort among public service employees." Health organization work is a powerful intrinsic motivator.

Extrinsic rewards, like money and recognition, are important resources of management as well, but their effectiveness can wane over time. As someone once observed, "A raise is a raise for a day, then it's part of your salary." Employees continually rewarded, for example, through pay increases and compliments may begin to feel entitled to the monetary rewards or compliments. Some evidence suggests that using extrinsic rewards may reduce initial intrinsic motivation (Gagne and Deci 2005). Decreasing or terminating their extrinsic rewards can invite retribution from employees. Extrinsic rewards can be a substitute for doing the hard work of redesigning jobs so that they are more motivating.

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Content Theories of Motivation

Content theories of motivation seek to identify universal internal drivers of human behavior. The most famous of these is *Maslow's hierarchy*, which proposes that humans are driven by five core needs, listed in order of importance from the lowest (most basic) to the highest level or type of need:

1. Physiological
2. Safety and security
3. Love and belonging
4. Self-esteem
5. Self-actualization

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Graphically, the five needs form a pyramid, with physiological needs at the base. Satisfying physiological needs (sleep, food, shelter, and immediate health) allows humans to worry about their longer-term security through establishing a family, investing in education, and having careers. At that point, needs for intimacy, connection, and friendship can be met. Next, confidence, respect, and identity become motivators, under the heading of self-esteem. Finally, at the apex of needs is self-actualization, the desire to live a life of purpose, and achieving one's full potential.

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Maslow's hierarchy is an oversimplification, because needs change over time and in different situations and interact in more complex ways than a hierarchy can convey. However, Maslow's hierarchy is an excellent starting point for thinking about the content of employee needs. Maslow's hierarchy has high face validity; people find it intuitively true. In terms of workplace applications, basic physiological and security needs are met by salary and benefits and extended by safe workplaces. Most health organizations meet those basic needs. They may also contribute to meeting needs for love and belonging, which are next on Maslow's hierarchy. Similarly, many organizations have the potential to help meet employees' self-esteem and self-actualization needs while achieving organizational goals as well.

Another strand of motivation content theory posits three key categories of needs: *existence*, *relatedness*, and *growth* (ERG) (Alderfer 1972). The three ERG categories are congruent with Maslow's five categories, but ERG theory argues that humans cycle through categories of needs, rather than proceeding in an orderly fashion up a hierarchy. Alderfer also proposed that humans' needs for growth are not satisfied by success. Rather, success merely fuels additional drive for growth. The workplace implications of ERG theory are useful. The workplace can contribute to and leverage natural drives for social relatedness and for continuous growth.

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Psychologists also point out that humans can learn or acquire needs. Internal drives are not necessarily genetic. In particular, McClelland (1962) argued that three needs are learned: needs for achievement, affiliation, and power. Because individuals differ in the strength of these three needs, it is important for managers to understand their employees in terms of these dimensions. Most managers who have worked with underperforming employees would agree that some people do not exhibit a strong need to achieve. However, if such behaviors are learned, for example, from past experience in de-motivating work environments, they can be unlearned. This suggests that managers should work to turn around low performers and attempt to motivate them before concluding they cannot be changed.

Herzberg (1968) dug even deeper into the motivation puzzle and concluded that some rewards that satisfy do not really motivate extra effort from individuals. These rewards are referred to as *hygiene factors*, because like hygiene for personal health, the factors are necessary for preventing problems but do not

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Herzberg labeled them as *satisfiers*. These motivators can be influenced by an organization and its managers, so they create a strong foundation from which organizations can design jobs that motivate. In a similar manner, employees can proactively work to create such conditions in many work settings.

The field of *job enrichment* (Hackman and Oldham 1976) derives from content theories of motivation. Most jobs can be enriched so that they come closer to meeting the human needs already expressed. Job enrichment expands the nature of tasks that an individual performs. Five characteristics of jobs are particularly amenable to enrichment:

1. Skill variety—the number of skills used in performing a task
2. Task identity—the portion of a whole task performed by an individual
3. Task significance—the importance of the work to an organization
4. Autonomy—freedom to choose how a task is performed
5. Feedback—information about the quality and outcomes of a task

Enriched jobs allow employees to maximize their skills and to experience the impact of their jobs on their organization and its clients or customers. Strategies for enriching jobs include rotating employees through different assignments, combining tasks so that employees can see processes through from start to finish



Q&A

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Process Theories of Motivation

Process theories of motivation summarize knowledge about work activities that affect motivation. There is a wealth of potential utility for managers from this body of theory and research.

Expectancy Theory

Expectancy theory is at the heart of many of the motivational processes associated with work and working environments. Employees expect that their efforts will improve the quality of their performance and output. For example, if employees stay late to complete a project, they expect the work to get finished. Second,

completed early), their improved performance will be acknowledged by the organization. Whether acknowledgement comes in a form that employees value is the third step in the expectancy theory process. If employees value the acknowledgement, then their increased efforts and higher performance have been worth the effort. The result is that employees feel motivated.

The linkages among (1) employee effort and performance, (2) performance and reward, and (3) reward and satisfaction are all intuitively recognized by most managers. However, many managers are not adept at ensuring that employees' time is well spent, that effort increases performance, and that performance is recognized. Finally, managers often do not recognize that employees differ in the degree to which they value rewards of different types. Thus, great opportunities for improvement exist in most organizations. These can be identified by addressing the three linkages in the motivation process described by expectancy theory.

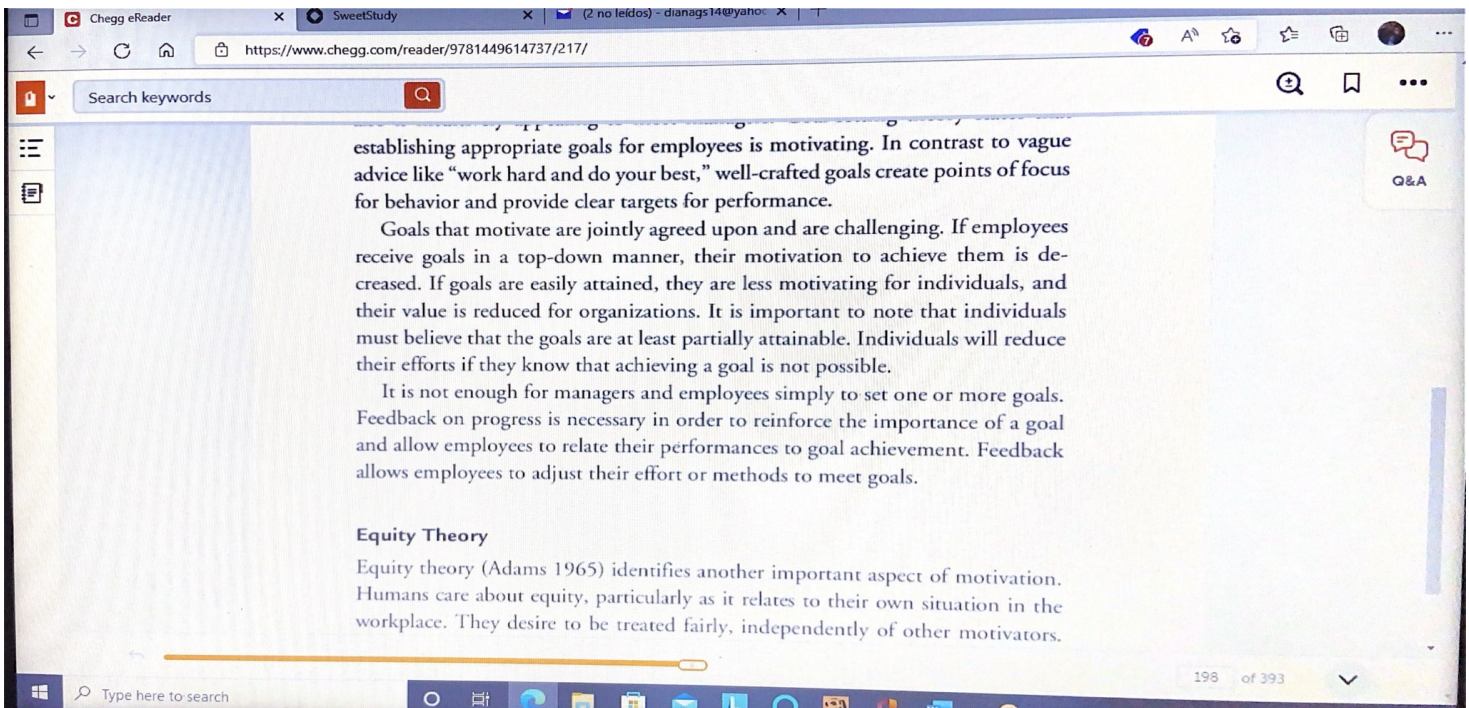
Goal-Setting Theory

Goal-setting theory (Latham and Locke 2002) is another important component in the foundations of most well-managed organizations, and goal-setting theory

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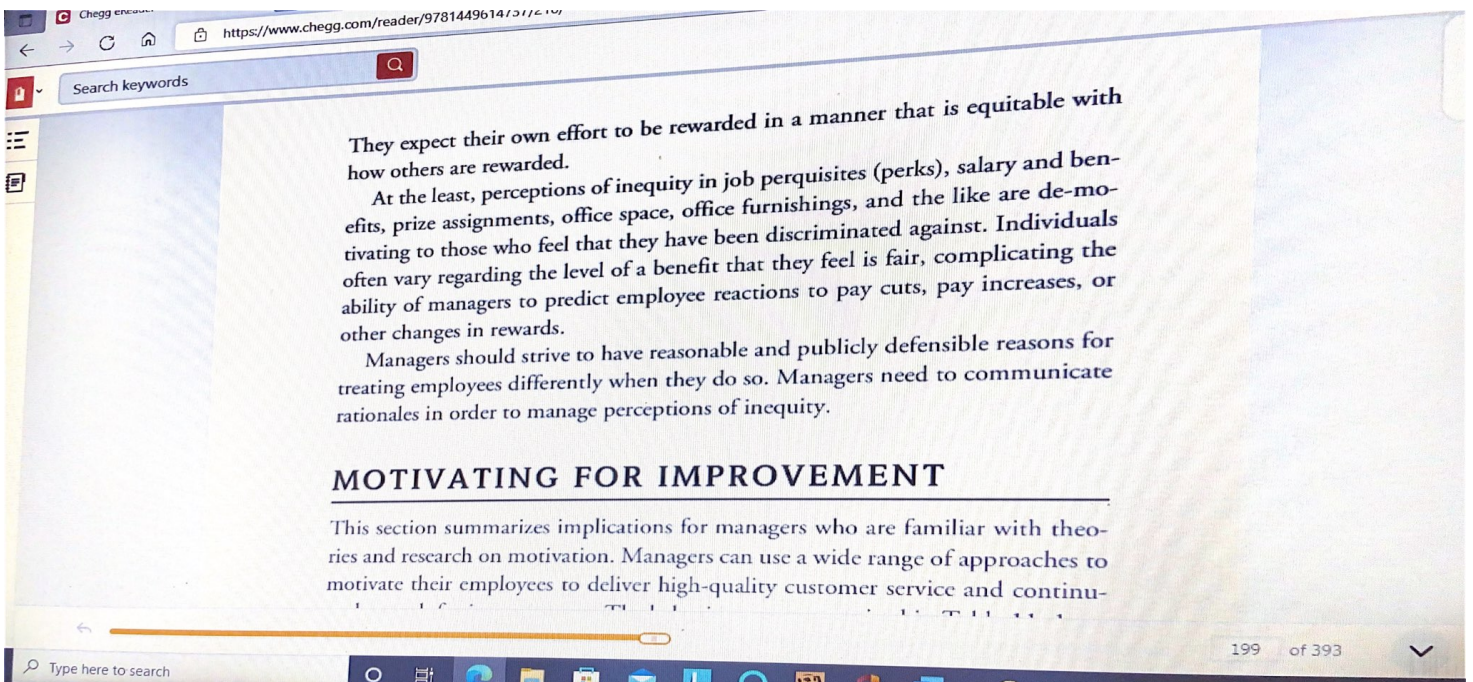
establishing appropriate goals for employees is motivating. In contrast to vague advice like "work hard and do your best," well-crafted goals create points of focus for behavior and provide clear targets for performance.

Goals that motivate are jointly agreed upon and are challenging. If employees receive goals in a top-down manner, their motivation to achieve them is decreased. If goals are easily attained, they are less motivating for individuals, and their value is reduced for organizations. It is important to note that individuals must believe that the goals are at least partially attainable. Individuals will reduce their efforts if they know that achieving a goal is not possible.

It is not enough for managers and employees simply to set one or more goals. Feedback on progress is necessary in order to reinforce the importance of a goal and allow employees to relate their performances to goal achievement. Feedback allows employees to adjust their effort or methods to meet goals.

Equity Theory

Equity theory (Adams 1965) identifies another important aspect of motivation. Humans care about equity, particularly as it relates to their own situation in the workplace. They desire to be treated fairly, independently of other motivators.



They expect their own effort to be rewarded in a manner that is equitable with how others are rewarded.

At the least, perceptions of inequity in job perquisites (perks), salary and benefits, prize assignments, office space, office furnishings, and the like are demotivating to those who feel that they have been discriminated against. Individuals often vary regarding the level of a benefit that they feel is fair, complicating the ability of managers to predict employee reactions to pay cuts, pay increases, or other changes in rewards.

Managers should strive to have reasonable and publicly defensible reasons for treating employees differently when they do so. Managers need to communicate rationales in order to manage perceptions of inequity.

MOTIVATING FOR IMPROVEMENT

This section summarizes implications for managers who are familiar with theories and research on motivation. Managers can use a wide range of approaches to motivate their employees to deliver high-quality customer service and continu-

This section summarizes implications for managers who are familiar with theories and research on motivation. Managers can use a wide range of approaches to motivate their employees to deliver high-quality customer service and continuously search for improvement. The behaviors are summarized in Table 11-1.

First, screen new hires to identify those interested in customer service and continuous improvement. Motives are difficult to change. Employment interviews should address thoughts and behaviors about standards of service and commitment to improve. The hiring process should be extensive and selective.

Second, managers should not solely rely on individuals to motivate themselves. The structure and processes of the workplace make a difference, even to the most positive and energized employees. Build work structures that recognize,

Table 11-1 Guidelines for Motivating for Improvement

1. Screen new hires for attitudes toward service and improvement.
2. Take advantage of management levers to enhance motivation—recognize, reward, and reinforce high motivation.
3. Invest in employee learning.

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reward, and reinforce high motivation. In many health organizations, this means not overpaying high-level managers relative to other employees, due to perceptions of fairness. It also involves sharing information widely so that employees can make informed contributions to improving organizational processes and the value of products and services.

Particularly important in motivating health workers are investments in learning opportunities. Support for employee learning and career development feeds employees' needs for growth, control over their own destinies, and achievement.

Fourth, managers should get to know their employees. Motivations vary among individuals. Some employees are more focused on building life security, while others are more interested in impact and purpose. Although some employees may interpret a compliment as an insult, many others feel underappreciated and savor every compliment.

Fifth, managers should be willing to take some risks. They should be proactive and creative and should experiment with different forms of motivation. Surprising people with creative forms of recognition may not always work, but



Q&A



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Sixth, look for positives. Managers are more likely to overlook accomplishments than negative behaviors. All supervisors should find ways to praise people. One consultant advises that workers need three compliments for every criticism and that employees should be thanked by managers, including the chief executive officer, when they complete tasks consistently or exceptionally (Studer 2004). Consistently reliable workers tend to get overlooked in favor of exceptional ones.

Finally, managers can remind health organization employees daily of the importance of their work to the lives of others. Post photos or letters from persons helped by the organization, or bring them in to say thank you in person. Draw on the intrinsic motivation that initially attracts many employees to health care and public health work.

CONCLUSION

Psychological theories provide a rich basis for designing and continuously revising jobs so that they are satisfying and motivating to employees. Personal needs for social connection and growth are important when designing jobs. Ensuring

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CONCLUSION

Psychological theories provide a rich basis for designing and continuously revising jobs so that they are satisfying and motivating to employees. Personal needs for social connection and growth are important when designing jobs. Ensuring that employees' efforts are recognized and rewarded in valued and equitable ways is equally important. Joint goal-setting channels motivation into focused activities that can be linked to organizational success. Challenging employees to meet continuously improving goals draws on their needs for growth and purposeful work.