

## **CREATING EXTRAORDINARY ORGANIZATIONS**

From: Don Yates of Extraordinary Organizations  
<mailto:eletter@extraordinaryorganizations.com>  
<http://www.extraordinaryorganizations.com>

**Volume 1, Letter 7**  
**October 10, 2003**

This letter is written for those pioneers who want to move beyond the ordinary to the Extraordinary in creating business organizations.

Please feel free to pass this letter on to anyone you think would like to join this journey to Extraordinary.

Sent only to recipients who have personally opted to receive it. To change your sign-up information, please follow the instructions at the end of this letter.

\* \* \*

**Special Note:** Please check out the reader survey results in the Announcements, Information, and Comments section below!

\* \* \*

**THIS ISSUE:**

### **ARE YOU MAKING MOTIVATION WORK FOR YOU? Part 1**

\* \* \*

Welcome to Letter 7 of Creating Extraordinary Organizations. In this letter and the next I want to talk about motivation, a topic closely related to Douglas McGregor's work that I discussed in the last letter. Choosing this topic also provides a chance to look at the work of another of the great contributors to the organizational field, Abraham Maslow.

I am choosing motivation for several reasons. First, you probably hear, "How do I motivate my people?" more than any other organization question. Second, most people don't seem to realize that question is not about motivating but about controlling or influencing. Third, motivation is a major factor in generating the human energy that drives an organization. And fourth, most people do not really understand the concept very well.

Motivation is an internal state. You cannot change the internal state of another person. So I answer, "How do I motivate?" with "You can't." However, most people are actually asking a Theory X question, "What carrot or stick can I use to get people to do what I want?" In fact the dictionary defines the verb motivate as "To provide with an incentive; move to action; impel." Even if they answered the real question, most Theory X managers would not succeed. Generally,

they don't understand what does motivate people so even if carrots worked they offer the wrong carrots.

According to Maslow, and other theorists, humans are wanting beings energized by trying to fill their needs, wants, and desires. Furthermore, he argues that the ones we talk about actually come from something deeper:

"If we examine carefully the average desires that we have in daily life, we find that they have at least one important characteristic, that they are usually means to an end rather than ends in themselves. We want money so that we can have an automobile. In turn we want an automobile because the neighbors have one and we do not wish to feel inferior to them, so we can retain our own self-respect and so we can be loved and respected by others. Usually when a conscious desire is analyzed we find that we can go behind it, so to speak, to other more fundamental aims of the individual. . . The particular desires that pass through our consciousness dozens of times a day are not in themselves so important as what they stand for, where they lead, what they ultimately mean upon deeper analysis.

"It is characteristic of this deeper analysis that it will always lead ultimately to certain goals or needs behind which we cannot go, that is, to certain need satisfactions that seem to be ends in themselves and seem not to need any further justification or demonstration. These needs have the particular quality in the average person of not being seen directly very often but of being more often a kind of conceptual derivation from the multiplicity of specific conscious desires. In other words, then, the study of motivation must be in part the study of the ultimate human goals or desires or needs." [P5] \*

Maslow and others have proposed various classifications of these ultimate human goals, desires, or needs. I will discuss some of these in my next letter, especially Maslow's "hierarchy of needs," with which I am sure you are familiar. In the rest of this letter I am going to lay the groundwork for discussing these classifications by looking at how motivation fits into the world of work

When someone asks or tells us to do something we ask ourselves two questions. Our answers affect our motivation, or drive, to act.

1. Can I do it?
2. What's in it for me?

Now obviously we don't state them quite that way. In fact, we usually do this unconsciously. This is unfortunate because more conscious analysis of a situation would often lead us to better decisions. Those trying to "motivate" others also seem to be unaware of these questions. If they were, they might actually have a greater chance to influence them than they do.

The first question has four sub-questions:

1. Do I know just what it is I am to do?
2. Do I know how to do it?

3. Do I have the resources — tools, time, information, etc. —to do it?
4. Will I receive feedback that will tell me if I am succeeding?

If I can't answer, "Yes" to these, I am not likely to have much interest in proceeding. Climbing Mt. Everest has never been high on my to-do list. At the same time I am assessing my capability I am also considering the other question.

As Maslow said, we are need driven. Even the greatest altruist is driven by those deeper needs. What separates the altruist from the control freak is that the altruist meets her or his own needs in ways that also help others.

To determine just what is in it for me I first ask what consequence or consequences will come from acting. Will I have some material return, some good or bad feeling, some opportunity, or some combination of outcomes? One of the strongest deterrents to change activities is the lack of known consequences. As the saying goes, the pain of uncertainty is more powerful than the certainty of pain.

If I know the consequences, I then assess what value each has for me. For instance, money has a certain value. Being fired probably has a negative value. Being praised has yet another. A consequence may have multiple values. For instance money might satisfy more than one need. The net sum of all the values of all the consequences of an act determines "what's in it for me."

My level of motivation then is a combination of the answers to these two questions. That in turn determines whether I proceed to act as well as how much effort and skill I will put into it. When thinking about motivation in the workplace, it is essential to remember that it is affected by both the perceived possibility and the perceived benefit. My next letter will look at some different ways of categorizing the myriad of needs, wants, and desires that determine the amount of benefit we perceive.

\*All quotations are taken from *Motivation and Personality, Third Edition*, Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc, 1954, 1987; Abraham H. Maslow, 1970.

This book may be purchased from Amazon using this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/pi93> [See Great TinyURL Service note below]

\* \* \*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS, INFORMATION, AND COMMENTS**

**Reader Survey** — In my last letter I asked you to help me make this E-letter more useful and interesting by filling out a short survey. I said I would report the results in this letter. Unfortunately, the huge response of two was what you might call underwhelming. I hope when you read the results you will be intrigued enough to have a go at the survey yourself.

Q1 — Do you find the length of the primary article in the letters...

About right — 2

Q2 — Do you find understanding the articles...

Easy — 1      Somewhat difficult — 1

Q3 — Do you find the ideas in the articles are ones you....

Know little about — 1      Know something about — 1

Q4 — Do you find the articles...

Interesting — 2

Q5 — Do you find the ideas in the articles...

Very useful — 2

Q6 — Do you find the ideas in the articles...

Somewhat unique — 1      Unique — 1

Q7 — Which of the following types of material would you like to see in the letter? Check as many as interest you.

Explanation or rethinking of "known" organizational concepts and ideas — 2

Presentation of new and cutting-edge organizational concepts and ideas — 2

Organizational methods, processes, and other "how to do it" topics — 2

Thinking process ideas and ways to improve the process — 2

Reviews and recommendations for books, articles, web sites, etc., related to creating

Extraordinary Organizations — 1

Cases or examples of organizations on the road to Extraordinary — 1

Answers to reader questions — 1

Q8 — Are there any particular topics or questions you would like the letter to address? If yes, what would you like to see?

No — 2

Q9 — Have you passed the letter on to anyone? If no, would you please let me know how I could improve it so you would see that as something worth doing?

Yes — 2

Q10 — Other comments or suggestions you would like to make.

None were made.

Even the limited data from these two respondents gives me some ideas about how I might improve the letter. However, more would really help. As you can see from the above, it is a very short survey that will take you less than five minutes. Your name and address are not collected by the survey, only your answers. I will report the results in the next letter. Thank you!!

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=51714267740>

**On-Line Interview** – The recording of my interview on VoiceAmerica.com on "Creating Extraordinary Organizations" is now on the EO web site at:

<http://tinyurl.com/nq9i> [See Great TinyURL Service note below]

**Great TinyURL Service** – These two links are examples of how Tinyurl.com lets you turn huge links into tiny ones. It is very easy to do and a tremendous help.

**HTML Version** — Still coming. They say Beta version next week!

**E-Letter Archive** — This link will take you to PDF versions of published e-letters:

<http://www.extraordinaryorganizations.com/Eletter/index.html>

\* \* \*

### **Until Next Time**

Motivation is one of the most important and most misunderstood concepts in creating organizations, and especially Extraordinary ones. Abraham Maslow is probably the best known person on the subject. However, next time I will also talk about what some others see as primary needs, wants, and desires that drive us.

Be Well and,  
Be Extraordinary!

Don Yates  
Extraordinary Organizations

\* \* \*

<http://www.extraordinaryorganizations.com>  
<mailto:dyates@extraordinaryorganizations.com>

170 Mapache Drive  
Portola Valley, CA 94028  
650.851.2690

**To Subscribe Free:** Just click on this link:

<mailto:creatingeo@ezmailpro.com?subject=eletterssubscribe>

You will automatically be added to the list and will receive an acknowledgement that will give you, as a thank you for subscribing, the link to the published article "Your Company Does Not Exist - Notes on the Extraordinary Organization".

**Privacy Policy:** I never rent, trade or sell my e-mail list to anyone for any reason whatsoever. You'll never get an unsolicited e-mail from a stranger as a result of joining this list.

© 2003 Don Yates, All rights reserved. You are free to use material from this Creating Extraordinary Organizations e-letter in whole or in part. I would appreciate it if you would include with it this attribution:

"By Don Yates of Extraordinary Organizations. Please visit EO's web site at <http://www.extraordinaryorganizations.com> for more information and resources for creating Extraordinary Organizations."

\* \* \*