Context Matters

Low Cost, High Stakes

Motivational Strategies for Hiring and Onboarding

www.amrop.com

Introduction
Low cost, high stakes
Motivational strategies for hiring and onboarding

The war for leadership talent, combined with pressure on executive compensation packages, is a challenging mix for hiring organizations. Meanwhile, cases of reckless risk-taking driven by dysfunctional motivation have badly damaged the reputation of many top managers and with them, the organizations with whose leadership they were entrusted. This kind of risk-taking is considered by many to be a root cause of the economic crisis – one that has led to a re-thinking of senior executive compensation.

What if the cloud had a silver lining? Could we see these phenomena as an opportunity to unleash the potential of non-financial motivation? To ensure that the right leaders join an organization, for the right reasons? In dialogues with a high potential, what non-financial parameters could actually *raise* the chances of a successful and sustainable hire? What motivational principles should we take into account during the critical transition of a senior candidate into a new and demanding role?

From founding father Maslow to later pioneers, Deci and Ryan, motivation has been intensively studied and debated. In this article, we take a journey into some cornerstone research to build a motivational platform. We reveal six keys to intrinsic motivation, and five levers for recruitment and onboarding.

Contents

Amrop

Executive Summary

A journey into motivation research is a pathway into increasingly subtle – and tested – territory. At times puzzling, intriguing or downright confusing, years of questioning reveal 11 keys to motivational drivers in the recruitment and onboarding setting. An overview:

1 **Promote autonomy:** create an environment that promotes the new hire's personal autonomy. Avoiding over-control could paradoxically help individuals on a learning curve to incline more towards *adaptive* rather than *reckless*, risk-taking

2 **Keep it individual:** tailor the motivational environment to personal needs, rather than assuming that 'what worked last time, will work this time'

3 **Create strategic space:** in strategy discussions, make room for the new executive to explore alternative – even unconventional - scenarios

4 **Use imagination:** internal coaches can use personalized, imaginative exercises to accompany the new executive's journey into new ways of thinking

5 **Exercise tolerance:** failure tolerance is linked to learning and innovation. Create a safe space for experimentation through, for example, piloting new ideas

6 **Give fresh hope:** coaches and mentors should convince the new executive that 'it's never too late to change' – even at an advanced stage in an established career

7 **Performance Management:** fairness and trust are critical to motivation. And senior hires are all too aware of their vulnerability as a new entrant. We provide indicators to help hiring organizations convince him or her of the likelihood of fair treatment

8 **Feedback** ascending rank and the pressures of integration make feedback more critical than ever. We raise questions to help you ascertain how receptive your candidate is to feedback, and find answers to reassure him or her of the ways in which feedback is delivered in your organization

9 **Organizational Strategy:** vision, CSR and organizational reputation are important motivational factors. What should your organization take into account to convince a new executive of your credibility at hiring stage - and deliver once he or she is on board?

10 **Passing it On:** the ability of the new executive to effectively motivate *other talent* must be assessed upfront to ascertain the likelihood of his or her successful integration.

11 **Sovereign or Servant?** exploring the paradox of *Sovereign and Servant Leadership* gives clues regarding whose interests the new leader is most deeply motivated to serve. His or her answers will help determine whether s/he can work in harmony with the best interests of the organization, without falling into narcissism - or self-sacrifice.

Low cost, high stakes
Motivational strategies for hiring and onboarding

An established but struggling telecoms player is under pressure. The position of Global Vice President of Marketing must be filled in weeks. Two final candidates have been shortlisted. Yet the financial compensation package – already a stretch for the organization - is uncompetitive.

Negotiations with the candidates have reached a critical stage. Despite a salary proposal that is somewhat lower than a competitor's offer, the first candidate, John Molina, is still in the game. He is keenly attentive to the culture and style of the company's top management. John is particularly focusing upon the Board's receptiveness to some potentially disruptive strategies that he has in mind. These, he believes, will be pivotal to the company's sustainability.

Now the recruiting team must concretely demonstrate to John that the hiring organization's Board is indeed open to positive confrontation. Having a significant impact upon strategic direction might be a sufficient motivation for John to subordinate any interest in higher remuneration.

The second candidate, Tasneem Ahmed, has a formidable reputation in the telecoms sector. However, she is currently making an important investment in her personal life – she is building a large sea-front property for her family. A comparatively low salary will retard her plans. Even if she accepts an otherwise-tempting package, she could rapidly become dissatisfied and, if a better-paid opportunity arises, defect.

Through incisive questioning, the recruiting team ascertain that a raise in salary is an unavoidable motivation factor for Julia. Her expectations may well be unmanageable. In this case, her failure to accept will at least be predictable. John, on the other hand, is another matter.

Building a Motivational Platform –
The Research Context

In dialogues with a high potential, what non-financial parameters could actually *raise* the chances of a successful and sustainable hire? What motivational principles should we take into account during the critical transition of a senior candidate into a new and demanding role? We begin our investigation with a journey into the research.

Let's start by asking: 'what is motivation?' Interestingly, no universally-accepted, single definition exists. Yet clues can be found in the word itself. According to work psychologist John Arnold: "To use a mechanical analogy, the motive force starts an engine and keeps it going. In legal terms, a motive is a person's reason for doing something. Clearly, then, motivation concerns the factors that push or pull us in certain ways." Motivation has three components: 'direction', 'effort' and 'persistence'. It requires a 'goal.' Harvard Professor Teresa M. Amabile says: "Expertise and creative thinking skills provide natural resources. Motivation determines what a person will actually do."

As early as the 1940's, theorists were suggesting that financial factors might only be part of the motivation story. Our journey begins by re-visiting some of the most prominent concepts and finding out why and how subsequent researchers slowly began to unravel them. We will quickly enter newer and more fertile territory – and unearth eleven keys to non-financial motivation in recruitment and onboarding.

American psychologist Abraham Maslow is widely considered to be the father of motivation theory. His five-level 'Hierarchy of Needs' was first published in 1943. "A musician must make music," he said, "an artist must paint, a poet must write, to be ultimately happy." Whilst parts of the theory are easily translatable into business, ('esteem' is often translated into 'recognition' for example), later researchers found that Maslow's needs do not group together as predicted. Maslow himself admitted that they may emerge in a different order, be present to varying degrees or absent altogether. In 1972, psychologist Clayton P. Alderfer compacted Maslow's five constructs into three – 'existence' (physiological and safety) 'relatedness' (belongingness, the esteem of others) and 'growth' (self-esteem, self-actualization). A powerful theoretical movement had begun.

In 1960 Douglas McGregor published his best-seller 'The Human Side of Enterprise,' introducing' Theory X' and 'Theory Y' – beliefs that different managers hold about people. 'Theory X' subscribers tend to believe that people have an inherently irrational and lazy nature requiring a 'carrot and stick' approach. 'Theory Y' supporters believe in people's inherent morality and responsibility – they will naturally strive for the good of the organization. Like the Hierarchy of Needs, McGregor's original theory has never been scientifically tested and there have even been moves to strike both McGregor and Maslow from business textbooks. Despite this, their work is still widely available – and quoted.

Building Blocks
Usually visualized as a pyramid by Maslow's observers (rather than by Maslow himself), Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is worth reiterating. At the base are fundamental or *physiological* needs, followed by *safety*, then *belongingness* and next, *esteem* (from others). At the summit we find *self-actualization*.

Amrop

Enter the industrial psychologist. Frederick Herzberg introduced his famous 'dual-factor theory' in 1966. He proposes two separate groups of factors contributing to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

- **Group one**: *motivators*: responsibility, advancement and recognition
- **Group two**: *hygiene factors*: working environment, management, salary and corporate governance policy

If people's expectations of *hygiene* factors are not met, demotivation results. Yet, even if people are happy with their working environment, their salary and corporate governance policy, such hygiene factors have a limited effect if *motivators* such as responsibility, advancement and recognition are not taken into account.

Levels, categories and groups – surely the motivational story is more subtle? People are integrated beings – individuals whose different needs overlap and evolve over time and who interact constantly with others. Later research takes account of this. In 1988, Management Professor Edgar Schein added the 'Social theory' to McGregor's notion of 'Theory X and Theory Y' – proposing the human quest for *social relationships*. These relationships - the expectations of people around us - influence us more than financial incentives, he argues.

> "To be self-determined is to endorse one's actions at the highest level of reflection. When self-determined, people experience a sense of freedom to do what is interesting, personally important, and vitalizing."

Intrinsic Motivation – Fertile Ground

Yet it is another, complementary theory that takes our journey into even richer territory. 'Self-Determination Theory' (SDT) was conceived by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan in the 1980's. It concerns our natural tendencies to behave in effective and healthy ways. "To be self-determined is to endorse one's actions at the highest level of reflection," its authors state. "When self-determined, people experience a sense of freedom to do what is interesting, personally important, and vitalizing."

Sir James Dyson, the British inventor, industrial designer and founder of his eponymous company, is just one example of the way in which self-determination can build great businesses. He recently told *wired.com*: "We try to make the corporation like the garage…our engineers and scientists actually go and build their own prototypes and test the rigs themselves. And the reason we do that— and I don't force people to do that, by the way, they want to do it—is that when you're building the prototype, you start to really understand how it's made and what it might do and where its weaknesses might be. If you merely hand a drawing to somebody and say, "Would you make this, please?" and in two weeks he comes back with it and you hand it to someone else who does the test, you're not experiencing it. You're not understanding it. You're not feeling it. Our engineers and scientists love doing that."

Experience. Understanding. Feeling. Love, even? Such is the territory of SDT. Vitally, the theory distinguishes between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation. *Intrinsic* motivation occurs when people, like Dyson's engineers and scientists, engage in an activity out of genuine interest – when they are truly 'self-determined'. It is associated with deep learning, improved performance and well-being. Writing in the Harvard Business Review ('How to Kill Creativity") Teresa M. Amabile explains: "Intrinsic motivation…comes from inside the individual. It's a

person's abiding interest in certain activities or deep love of particular challenges." Intrinsically motivated people engage for the challenge and enjoyment, she claims.

Organizations seeking competitive advantage through innovation can also find some important clues in intrinsic motivation. Amabile again: "There is so much evidence in favor of intrinsic motivation that we have articulated what we call the Intrinsic Motivation Principle of Creativity." Yet, intrinsic motivation is dependent on the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs described by SDT (and reminiscent of Alderfer) – *autonomy*, *competence* and *relatedness*.

Steve Wozniak is a famous example of an intrinsically motivated individual – one whose functionality his cohort Steve Jobs well understood: 'Jobs knew how to appeal to Wozniak,' writes Walter Isaacson in his 2011 biography of Jobs. 'He didn't argue that they were sure to make money, but instead that they would have a fun adventure. "Even if we lose our money, we'll have a company"…This was enticing to Wozniak, even more than any prospect of getting rich. He recalled, "I was excited to think about us like that. To be two best friends starting a company. Wow. I knew right then that I'd do it. How could I not?"'
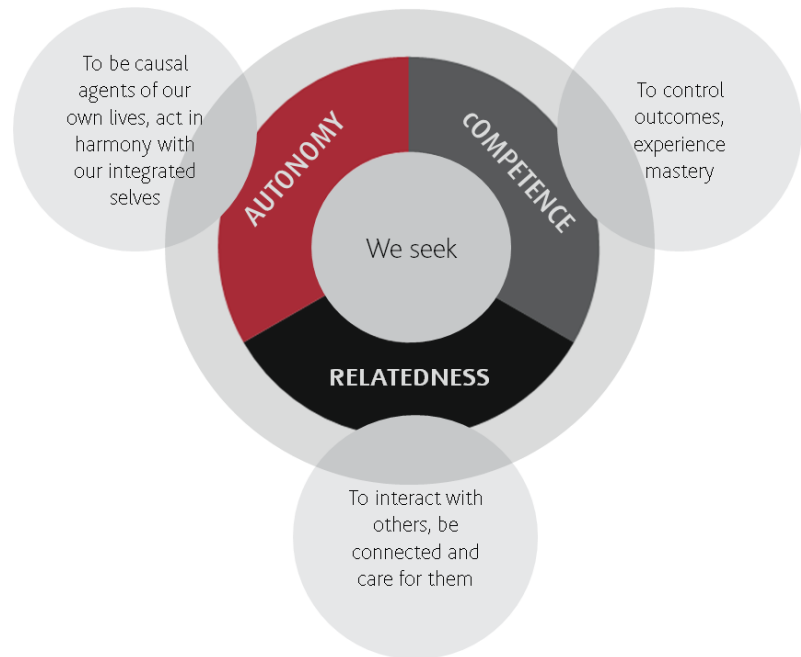
Early beginnings

There is something irrepressibly childlike in this statement - also suggested by filmmaker Danny Boyle, Artistic Director for the widely-acclaimed 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony, 'Isles of Wonder'. Jonathan Freedman, writing for the Guardian, observed: "Perhaps it's his youthful manner, the way Boyle seems to fizz with energy when he speaks, dressing like a thirtysomething – and sufficiently trim to get away with it – but the word that comes to mind when meeting him is one rarely applied to a man in middle age…Danny Boyle is an idealist." He adds "We're not used to idealism and unbridled optimism in those who are not young, so where does Boyle's come from? "I've been very lucky," he says, explaining that he does a job he loves, with tremendous freedom – thanks to a finance deal under which he makes films costing less than $20m in return for near-total artistic control…"

Thinking of childhood – could early life indeed give us some keys to motivation in leaders? Recently-concluded research suspected so. It followed the paths of individuals from childhood through adulthood in order to better understand the motivational roots of leadership (Gottfried et al, 2011). It indeed found a link between academic intrinsic motivation in childhood and adolescence, and the motivation to lead in adulthood.

Yet, if intrinsic motivation is *internally* driven, is it possible or even right to stimulate it via *external* reward systems? Lepper & Henderlong (2000) ploughed through 25 years of research in the educational context. They found that intrinsic motivation can indeed be stimulated with extrinsic incentives. However, some conditions need to be in place for these to help, rather than harm. Simply put, extrinsic rewards must be:

- Non-dependent on engagement in, or completion of, a task
- Unexpected
- Intangible (e.g. diffuse, implicit, social or verbal)
- Able to provide clear evidence of competence or ability.

The researchers propose several supporting strategies, some of which we raise here. Firstly, treating people as *'origins'* of their behavior (rather than pawns) raises achievement and encourages more *adaptive* risk-taking (relevant, following an economic crisis associated with *inadaptive* risk-taking). Secondly, it is important to note that *different* people tend to perceive an environment in *different* ways. Vital, too, is the treatment of *mistakes* as a necessary part of learning. The use of *individualized fantasy* is also encouraged in the learning process. Finally, individuals should also be helped to understand that intelligence (also emotional intelligence) is a *changeable*, rather than a fixed measure, as neuroscientists now agree.

I just got in, hear me out

Back to business and further making the case for intrinsic motivation, drivers for 'job excitement' - a key engagement factor - were explored in a Kenexa Research Institute survey (2008). The top ten drivers were grouped into three themes: *current work*, *future* and *work group/organization*. Of these, the top three concerned current work and intrinsic reward – (also at senior management level). First, 'liking the work itself', second, a 'feeling of personal accomplishment' and third, 'making good use of skills and abilities.'

Especially in onboarding, cultivating personal accomplishment, skills and abilities are vital. The 'way things are done around here' can and should be constructively challenged by the fresh observations and proposals of a senior newcomer, as yet unburdened by the organization's relationships, habits and practices. As such, his or her entourage has a golden opportunity to benefit from:

- Personal experience (e.g. "Faced with similar succession issues, I adopted the following approach…")
- Objective questioning (e.g. "I would like to understand why we are taking this particular approach?")
- Lateral comparison (e.g. "In my former company, the CEO found the following solution…")
- Alternative scenarios (e.g. "Given my observations and experience, I propose…")

Yet it is crucial that to keep an open mind to the input of the new executive, resisting natural defense mechanisms and the urge to self-justify. His or her motivation could be at stake.

Down to Business

6 Keys to Intrinsic Motivation

The research strongly suggests not only that people can be highly receptive to non-financial motivators, but that such forms of motivation, if stimulated in the right way, are more vitalizing, sustainable, and - quite simply - joyful. How can we use these findings to create the conditions to hire and secure a new leader? What elements could nurture and sustain the motivation of a demanding candidate?

The Lepper & Henderlong study of 25 years of research into intrinsic motivation in an educational environment gives ideas for some over-arching guidelines. As a hiring organization, we strongly propose that you do all you can to inspire the candidate's confidence that these points are high on your organization's agenda – and to deliver upon the promise once he or she is on board.

1 **Promote autonomy.** Resist, as far as is practical, the urge for non-essential early-stage control mechanisms. Innovation is vital for competitive edge and the new executive will be under the spotlight for generating solutions. Work in the knowledge that the new hire, if over-control is avoided, may be more inclined towards *adaptive* rather than *reckless*, risk-taking.

2 **Keep it individual.** Stay alert to the new executive's specific perceptions of his or her new environment, rather than assuming that 'what worked last time, will work this time.'

3 **Create strategic space.** In strategy discussions create space to explore alternative scenarios – even if at first glance some may seem lateral to the established super-highway.

4 **Use imagination.** Internal coaches or mentors are vital for onboarding. They can draw on personalized, imaginative exercises to accompany the new executive's journey into new ways of thinking.

5 **Exercise tolerance.** Failure tolerance is not only vital for intrinsically motivated learning, it is also a key for innovation. Allow space for experimentation through, for example, piloting, especially at this crucial stage.

6 **Give fresh hope.** When coaching and mentoring are practiced to optimize integration and performance, it helps if the coachee is convinced that evolution in his or her Emotional Intelligence really is possible – even at this stage in an established career.

5 Further Levers for Recruitment and Onboarding

Further research reveals five more motivational areas for the recruitment and onboarding context.

Performance Management Practices – Greener Grass?

Exploring the neglected role of intrinsic rewards and citing previous studies, Tymon et al (2010) raise the importance of fairness and trust in performance management. This is expressed as goal setting, standards, performance evaluation and feedback. If these measures are incorrectly applied, the results can be highly problematic, they argue.

Regarding fairness and trust, senior players in particular are increasingly vulnerable, as Booz & Company's 12th annual CEO Succession Study reveals. In 2011, 14.2 percent of CEOs at the world's largest companies were replaced. Whilst it is in line with the historical seven-year average, this figure it is nonetheless higher than the 11.6 percent rate of crisis year 2010. As the global business climate recovers, employers may feel more inclined to take the risk of exchanging the 'devil they know' for the 'devil they don't' – and senior executives know this only too well.

The Washington Post recently reported on the findings of a study by Professor Peter Cappelli of the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. Examining the data of a 'prominent executive-search firm' Cappelli found that 55 percent of chief executives and 65 percent of executive vice presidents responded positively to overtures from executive search companies. He attributes this to a number of factors, including executives' uncertainty regarding their future with their employer in the face of the fast-changing global economy.

7

Performance Management

....

Key question

If a newly created position, what will be the criteria for performance management, particularly with relation to goalsetting and performance evaluation?
If a replacement, under what circumstances did the departure happen? To what extent was this openly publicised - in what terms? What arguments can reassure the candidate regarding this new environment and encourage a career progression that is not only rich in challenges and growth, but in personal health?

As such, the promise of a fair and trustworthy approach to the management of the new executive's performance may be a very tempting proposition.

Amrop

8

Feedback

....

Key questions

To what extent do you observe that the candidate *proactively* seeks feedback during the recruitment process?
What is his or her reaction to feedback or observations? How able is s/he to balance self-reflection and self-absorption?
Once on board, what support can s/he expect from senior mentors in feedback-seeking and giving?
To what extent is a constructive feedback culture installed in your organization?
What are the attitudes of key stakeholders to early failures or mistakes? And of the organizational culture?

Feedback – Rising Importance

Researchers have consistently pinpointed feedback as a motivational factor. Its relevance *rises* with seniority and the stakes associated with the actions of a senior executive. Deci, (Self-Determination Theory), found that positive feedback increases intrinsic motivation. Even more, we add, if it comes from a respected source, is unexpected, sincere and timely. A simple "congratulations!" can transform and yet it is an often neglected act. Here, we recall the 25 year study in the educational environment: positive feedback should be non-dependent upon task engagement or completion, and should be unexpected and intangible (e.g. diffuse, implicit, social or verbal). It should also provide distinct evidence of ability.

Of course, feedback is not just about flowers. Steven Segal referred in 2007 to an observation made by Sherman & Freas in 'The Wild West of Executive Coaching: "It is remarkable how many smart, highly motivated, and apparently responsible people rarely pause to contemplate their own behavior. Often more inclined to move on than to reflect deeply, executives may reach the top ranks without addressing their limitations."

How much stronger could this inclination be in the high-pressure cauldron of a new environment? Here, the imperative to swiftly add value, combined with unfamiliarity with multiple new variables, can create an inflammatory mix, leading to a silent accumulation of errors.

Unhelpfully, some research (Vallerand & Reid, 1984) has suggested that, whilst positive feedback can *enhance* intrinsic motivation, negative feedback can *diminish* it by undermining people's need for 'competence'. So the way in which feedback is given – particularly at a sensitive stage of integration - is crucial. The recipient should clearly feel the positive intention behind the feedback, and – within reason - a tolerance of failure at this early stage (within reason). It is equally important to disassociate the feedback from the individual - saying: 'yes to the person, no to the behavior/the event/the decision.'

Given the need for *autonomy*, the level of seniority and delicate circumstances at play, an environment helping new leaders to evaluate *themselves* could be appropriate. As discussed by Eugene McKenna (2006) – individuals can be helped to do this by rating their performance relative to other aspects of their *own* performance, rather than through comparison to *others*.

This is a difficult voyage, for which an expert coach or mentor is a priceless guide.

Amrop

Organizational Strategy – When Words Are Not Enough

Research has clearly demonstrated the motivational power of an organization's Corporate Social Responsibility. Researchers Tymon et al (2010) emphasize that a good, socially responsible reputation increases employee morale, commitment and loyalty and pride in the organization. In turn, this pride contributes to intrinsic rewards.

Obvious? A gap often yawns between aspiration and reality. In 2009, human capital consultancy Krauthammer, the University of Amsterdam and the Erasmus University of Rotterdam researched employee perceptions of four CSR dimensions– 'planet' 'profit' and 'people' (external and internal). 50% had a managerial function. Only half thought their organization behaved in an 'exemplary' or even 'operational' way. The remainder rated practice as 'penalizing' or even 'disqualifying'. These findings echoed the 2008 Kenexa Research Institute employee engagement survey. Only around 55% were satisfied with their organization's 'green' efforts' (e.g. recycling, energy conservation and vendor selection).

On the note of *general* organizational reputation, a further study by Krauthammer and a team from seven universities produced similar findings. Only around half of employees surveyed (88% with a managerial function) believed that the conditions for 'organizational prestige' were met by their organizations. Given these dismal figures, we can imagine that statements surrounding CSR and organizational reputation may meet with cynicism from seasoned professionals. So senior hires will have a keen eye on vision, mission and strategic goals. And this, from the first approach.

'Culture eats strategy for lunch,' Dick Clark, ex-CEO of Merck, famously said. Organizational culture specialist Dan Denison explained: "A lot of companies are trying…they put up a series of values – sacred values, good things, such as communication, respect, integrity and excellence, but it's important to remember that these four values are actually *Enron's* values. So it's not just about having the values on the wall, in the annual report, carved in stone in corporate HQ. It's about walking the talk, living the values and about what really happens on the ground."

Once the new executive is on board, a close relationship between the new hire and organizational architects is therefore called for - at the highest level. To work, the relationship demands robust, diplomatic and lucid dialogue. Such dialogues are cost-free. Yet they can be difficult – especially at early stages of candidate integration when trust is still being formed.

9

Organizational Strategy
....
Key Questions
To what extent are the *vision, mission and strategic goals* of your organization clearly defined and distinctive?
To what extent are they credible and anchored in daily practice? What evidence can you provide the candidate of constructive dialogue at top management level?
How healthy are factors related to *CSR and organizational reputation*? What measures are in place to reinforce and communicate strengths and remedy areas of underperformance?
To what extent is the CSR 'pitch' to the candidate credible, authentic and well-articulated? What aspects of CSR are of greatest personal importance to the candidate? Returning to the notion of personal vitality, to what extent is the 'people' dimension of CSR – external as well as internal, prioritized within your organization?

Amrop

Passing It On – Motivating Others

We have explored some motivational drivers of a new senior recruit. These can apply during the recruitment process, and must be strongly sustained during onboarding. And yet it is just as important to ensure that the new leader is able and willing to apply the same motivational rules to his or her *entourage* – from day one. No leader can solve business problems or manage change in splendid isolation; his or her role is also to facilitate their solution by others. As such, s/he must ensure that the new colleagues s/he involves not only possess the right competencies and availability, but that they are sufficiently and incisively *motivated*.

Through objective information-sharing, the new leader must therefore ensure that the key motivational elements of 'direction, effort, persistence and goal' are identified and installed and that people's intrinsic motivation is nourished. Yet motivational levers are as numerous as team members – each individual is driven by different means. For an incoming leader, unfamiliar with roles, personalities and team dynamics, the challenge can be a tough one.

Furthermore, motivational leadership is not necessarily an innate competence and the stakes are high. A new leader may have limited insight into the principles of motivating others, may be unaware of the importance of doing so, or, more likely, may simply neglect to apply the knowledge in the turbulence of his or her own fast-evolving processes.

This can be problematic. When a competent and valued team member loses motivational drive, he or she may spread dissent, quietly stagnate or emotionally resign (with predictable effects on productivity). Or at worst, defect to a competitor. Thus, the most-employable or dynamic team members may be lost. It is a daunting price to pay. Not only has a new and high-profile hire proved unsustainable, the negative effects have spread to other talent in the organization.

10

Motivating Others

....

Key Question

What structural support will be available to help the new executive not only to select the best people to fulfil the early-stage demands of his or her mission but to understand what truly motivates them?
To what extent does the candidate spontaneously demonstrate his or her *appreciation* of the importance of motivating others?
What *knowledge* does the candidate display regarding this? With what examples and results?

Sovereign or Servant? The Ultimate Checkpoint

Ronald Meijers, Talent and Diversity Partner at Deloitte in the Netherlands, has developed a set of leadership paradoxes with Ron Meyer, Professor of Corporate Strategy at TiasNimbas Business School and co-author of the widely-used business textbook 'Strategy Synthesis'.

Leadership tensions, they argue, are situations in which leaders need to do contradictory things at the same time. When seen and treated as paradoxes, these can be combined in innovative ways that enable the leader to get the best of both worlds – a synthesis of two poles. One paradox highly relevant for candidate motivation is that of 'self-actualization or service.' This can be expressed as follows:

Sovereign style: If *self-actualization* is the act of fulfilling one's own potential, leaders need to develop themselves and realize their dreams. Therefore, they must serve their own interests by engaging in those actions that will help them be who they want to be. A *sovereign* leadership style emphasizes the importance of self-actualization by focusing on self-interest first. According to this, people will be motivated by striving to fulfill the leader's dream – 'do what I want.'. Such leaders have a 'core quality' of pride and charisma. The intended impact of the sovereign leadership style is that people should follow the leader's dream, on the basis of the underlying conviction that what's best for the leader, is best for all. With the guiding principle or motto 'follow me!' a preferred tool of such leaders is that of compelling presentations. Yet a clear pitfall of such a style, if pushed to the extreme, could be *narcissism*.

Servant style: *Service* is the act, on the other hand, of doing what is needed for the good of others. Just as all humans, leaders want to contribute by serving a greater cause. Therefore they must focus on the organizational interests by mobilizing all stakeholders to strive towards a greater purpose. A *servant* leadership style emphasizes the importance of service, by focusing on the good of the organization. According to this, people will be motivated by serving a common cause for the good of the collective. Such leaders have a 'core quality' of humility and determination. The intended impact of the servant leadership style is that people should follow a common vision in the spirit of following a common vision – 'do as I do' on the basis of the underlying conviction that what's best for all, is also best for the leader. With the guiding principle or motto 'I am behind you!' a preferred tool of such leaders is that of intensive dialogue. Yet a clear pitfall of such a style, if pushed to the extreme, could be self-sacrifice.

Between self-actualization and service, determining the motivational tendency of a senior candidate can help structure an appropriate response and check the fit with the culture of the hiring organization – and the personalities and behavioral style of its top management team.

11

Sovereign or Servant?

....

Key questions
From self-actualization to service, what is the day-to-day style of your leadership culture?
Whose interests does the candidate - a potential member of a leadership team - seem most motivated to serve? What examples can he or she give?

Amrop

Conclusion

In the war for talent, motivation strategies can be low cost, yet the stakes are high. Identifying and encouraging the motivation of senior executives – beyond financial compensation packages – demands serious reflection, presentation, and delivery in practice.

Every individual has an innately unique personality and managing such diverse capital means that there is no 'one size fits all' solution for individual motivation. Furthermore, whilst simple measures of management and reward theory are, in themselves, insufficient, later research offers fascinating insights, often backed by empirical evidence, giving us win-win strategies to attract and retain Leaders For What's Next.

....

Milena Pervanje
Director, Amrop Adria, Slovenia
Milena.pervanje@amrop.si

Steffi Gande
Global Content and Communications Manager, Amrop
Steffi.gande@amrop.com

....

Sources:

Alderfer, C.P (1972) *Existence, Relatedness and Growth: Human Needs in Organizational Settings:* New York: Free Press

Amabile, Teresa M. How to kill creativity, *Harvard Business Review* (October 1998)

Arnold, J. (2005) *Work Psychology, Understanding Human Behaviour in the Workplace 4ᵉ Edition:* FT/Prentice Hall, an imprint of Pearson Education

Berger, Shoshana, (2012), 'How James Dyson Makes the Ordinary Extraordinary' *Wired.com* (November, 2012)

Booz & Company, (2012) *12th Annual CEO Succession Study*

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985) *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior.* New York: Plenum.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000) 'The "What" and "Why" of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior,' *Psychological Inquiry, 11,* 227-268.

Gottfried, A.E, Gottfried, A.W, Reichard, R.J, Geurin, D.W, Oliver, P.H, Riggio, R.E (2011) 'Motivational Roots of Leadership: A Longitudinal Study from Childhood Through Adulthood,' *The Leadership Quarterly*, 22, 510-519

Halzack, S. 'More than half of top execs willing to jump ship for a new job,' *Washington Post,* 3/9, 2013

Herzberg, F. (1966) *Work and the Nature of Man.* Cleveland: OH: World Publishing (2009)

Isaacson, Walter, *Steve Jobs.* Simon & Schuster (2011)

Krauthammer, Amsterdam University, Free University of Amsterdam, Brunel University, Coventry University, the Open University, the University of Warwick, the University of Zürich (2007), *Organisational Trustworthiness 2007*

Krauthammer, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, (2009) *Corporate Societal Responsibility 2009*

Kusarkar, R.A, Croiset, G. Ten Gate, OTJ, (2011) 'Twelve Tips to Stimulate Intrinsic Motivation in Students Through Autonomy-Supportive Classroom Teaching Derived From Self-Determination Theory,'*Medical Teacher* 33, 978-982

Meyer, R. & Meyers. R, 'Sovereign or Servant? Cross-Fertilizing 20 Approaches to Develop a Robust Leadership Style (2008)

Lepper, R, Henderlong, J. (2000) 'Turning "Play" into "Work" and "Work" into "Play": 25 Years of Research on Intrinsic Versus Extrinsic Motivation,' *Academic Press, 2000,* 257-307

Maslow , A.H (1943) 'A Theory of Motivation': *Psychological Review,* vol 50, 370-96

McGregor, D. (1960) *The Human Side of Enterprise*: New York: McGraw Hill

Schein, E.H. (1988) *Organizational Psychology, 3ᵉ Edition.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall

Tymon, W.G, Stumpf, S.A, Doh, J.P, (2010) *Journal of World Business 45,* 109-121

Kenexa Research Institute (2008) *'Engaging the Employee'*

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000) Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist,* 55, 68-78.

Segal, S. (2007) 'The Importance of Awareness in Management and Coaching' Macquarie Graduate School of Management

Sonnentag, Sabine (2002) *Psychological Management of Individual Performance,* Wiley

About Amrop
With 85 offices in 56 countries, Amrop provides services in Executive Search, Leadership Assessment and Board Consulting. It is the largest partnership of its kind.

Amrop's Context Driven approach to executive search helps our clients find Leaders For What's Next - top talent, adept at working across borders in markets around the world.

www.amrop.com