

FBBM | motive

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Introduction

The power of motives

What we strive for and how we evaluate the result of our actions depends on our inner rationales and goals, i.e. our motives. Even if we seldom become aware of our motives, they are always there and significantly guide our actions.

On the basis of psychological research, one can distinguish three basic motives:

- the need to belong to a community and human interaction
- the desire to achieve and accomplish something
- the joy of being able to make the decisions and find a following

These basic motives can be further subdivided and more specifically defined. For life at work, the FBBM | motive differentiates between 14 different motives.

Knowing about your own motives leads to more clarity:

- When deciding on a career path that corresponds to one's own goals, inner motives and personal values.
- For consciously designing work tasks according to your own motives, so that more satisfaction and thus success are created.
- Recognizing how the importance of motives changes over time. Some personal goals take a back seat, others become more important. This realization should be taken into account when making career decisions.

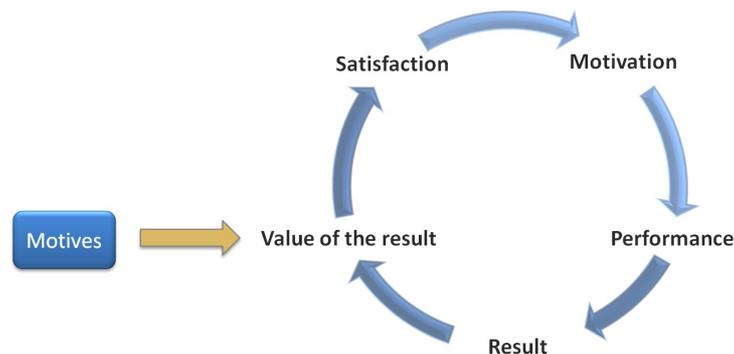
Your personal motive structure differs from that of other people*. The different characteristics of their motives make everyone unique.

The FBBM | motive supports you in planning your career development by helping you to make conscious decisions.

**) For the sake of simplicity of language and better readability, when mentioning "people" or "groups of people". we refer to individuals of either gender.*

How motives turn into motivation

Personal motives that are initially more general in nature turn into a concrete motivation to do something specific when the person can assume that his/her own action will lead to a positive result in the near or mid-term. A result is positive for someone when it corresponds to his/her motives. The motivating result can take the form of inner satisfaction, social recognition or material reward.



So if a person's manager wants to motivate the employee to take a particular course of action, s/he needs to be sure that the kind and result of the work corresponds at least partly to the employee's individual motives. If the employees realise that they can achieve valuable goals and results through certain activities, they will perform the activity concerned on their own initiative even without specific inducement from their manager.

Each person has an individual motive structure

Each person working in a profession is influenced especially strongly by some of the 14 motives, and less strongly by others. For some people it is very important to be able to work independently and creatively, while others are especially motivated by personal recognition and the chance to do something useful for a customer. By the same token, the motives that hold no particular appeal for one individual, or that s/he even rejects, can vary considerably. Some people are deterred by the idea of having to sell something, while others may not find it particularly exciting to be in demand as an expert in their field- or not any more. Because the individual motive structure varies so widely and has such great influence, it makes sense to take a close look at it for each individual. The FBBM questionnaire brings out the structure of a person's motives clearly by highlighting the four strongest and four weakest motives.

A person's motive structure alters over the years

Some people may have motives that guide their actions throughout their lives. But for most people, their motives change in different life phases. Thus a young person may seek challenge, whereas in the family phase job security and money tend to be more important. Later on a person may find it particularly exciting to take on responsibility at work and exert influence. And towards the end of his/her career, that person might want to do something new again and bring his/her experience into play in the shape of creative ideas. It is not unusual for motives to lose importance once they have been lived out sufficiently. Since a person's motive structure can change, it is worth reviewing it again from time to time.

For different positions, particular motive structures will be especially favourable

According to our studies particular motive structures are encountered with great frequency in certain functions. Thus the motives power, income and status are found especially frequently in senior management, while for key performers with high qualifications it is important to have scope to develop their creative ideas. Many executives, on the other hand, are strongly motivated towards leading their employees and convincing people/selling to them.

For every function in a company, we can describe which motives are particularly useful for the work concerned, or which should not be entirely absent. By comparing an applicant's or employee's individual motive structure with the target profile, it is possible to arrive at much sounder selection and career decisions.

Summary of all 14 motives

You will find below a summary of all 14 motives.

Specialist expertise - The motive to be good in a specialist field.

Responsibility - The motive to be personally responsible for a particular area and to have that responsibility.

Independence - The need to work according to one's own rules.

Identification with the company - The need to also be able to identify fully with one's company.

Service-orientation - Pleasure in finding out what other people require and then supporting them.

Personnel management - The need to instruct and lead others through direct personal contact.

Special challenge - The wish to prove oneself in the face of special challenges enjoyment in dealing with particular difficult tasks and solving apparently insoluble problems

Creativity - Pleasure in evolving and pushing through one's own ideas.

Status and recognition - The need to climb up the career ladder and to enjoy recognition from successful people.

Power and influence - The wish to have influence and be able to take the decisions.

Security - The need for job security.

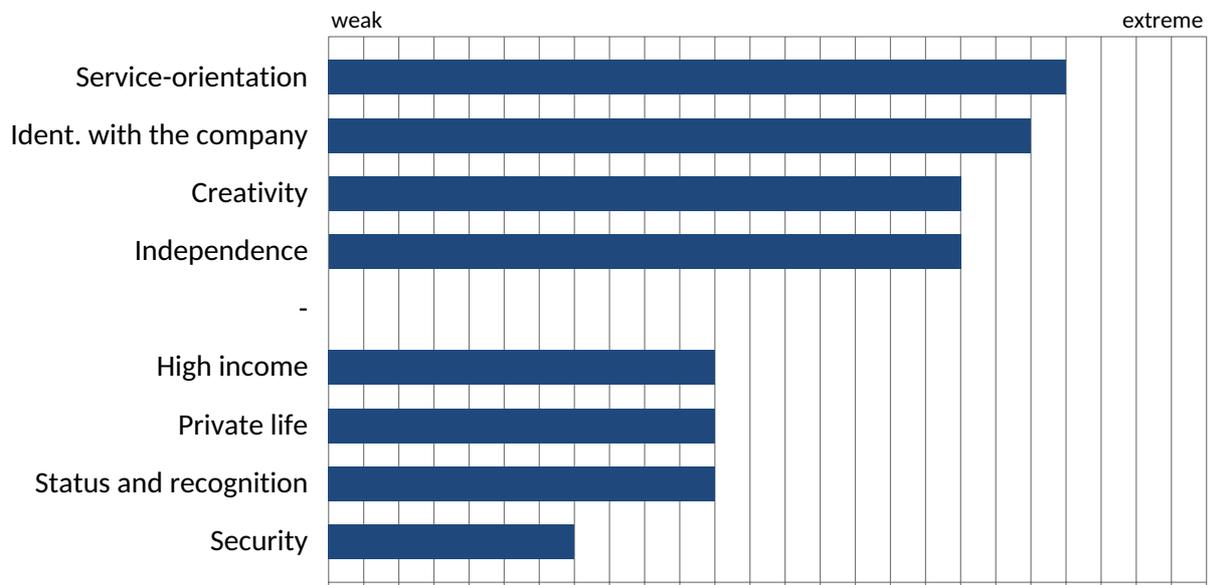
Private life - The wish to have enough time for private interests and commitments in addition to one's work.

Selling - Enjoyment derived from approaching others, convincing them and winning them over.

High income - The need to earn a lot of money and be able to afford a high standard of living.

Results

Overview of the four strongest and the four weakest motives



Please note that it is not the absolute strength or weakness of the motives that is decisive, but the strength of one motive in relation to the others.

The following motives are very pronounced:

Independence

The person needs the freedom to set his/her own pace and particularly to decide him-/herself when s/he does things and how. The opportunity to develop freely inspires him/her.

People like this can be motivated by assigning them tasks with a large scope for their own planning and decision-making. Narrow restrictions and frequent instructions tend to demotivate them.

Possible supporting questions to help understand the motive better:

What types of freedom are important to you? Do you have the freedom you would like to have? How do you respond when too many restrictions are imposed on you?

Explanation of the motive

Some people need a lot of freedom. They don't want to be regulated and ordered about, but rather to decide for themselves what to do, when and how to do it. That doesn't mean they don't seek advice. But they want to decide for themselves whether they do things and how to use the advice. People who are strongly motivated by independence would like to avoid having to comply with regulations and restrictions as much as possible. They most appreciate being able to act freely and independently. They don't want to be closely led, but need a manager who gives them their liberty. If there are target agreements, these should allow them the freedom to determine the ways and working methods themselves. For them, professional success always means being able to act independently and without being forced. They would not accept a promotion that would restrict their personal freedom of action.

The motive of independence is part of a general achievement motive: to be successful, to achieve something and to want to set things in motion.

Work requirements increasingly demand colleagues who are willing to work independently.

People with a strong motivation for independence are characterized by the fact that they take the initiative more than others, set goals and directions themselves and require little encouragement or support even in difficult situations. They dare to make independent decisions and take matters into their own hands, even without backing or safeguards.

For quite a few people with a strong motive for freedom and self-reliance, the question of self-employment arises. Some actually go ahead with this wish. For others, that is not absolutely necessary if, as employees, they also have the unrestricted opportunity to implement their ideas and proceed in their own individual way. They will always want to exploit every freedom available to them. Marks of recognition that they can take with them when they change jobs, such as diplomas and testimonials, are particularly attractive to these individuals.

Identification with the company

The person sets great store by being able to identify fully with the company. He/She wants to feel comfortable in his/her environment and wants to have a sense of belonging. In that case, he/she shows commitment and dedication.

Possible supporting questions to help understand the motive better:

What do you need to be able to identify with your company? How does your identification with your company express itself? In what kind of company or corporate culture would you not feel at home?

Explanation of the motive

For many people, identification with the company is a motive that is a powerful driving force. One aspect in this is belonging to a community. They don't want to be left on their own, but to a certain extent wish to experience security and recognition in a group. The company they work for can also partially meet this need. A second aspect is identification with the subject matter. People usually think of a company that is value-oriented, practices humanity and fairness and has a good reputation. High-quality products and good services can also strengthen identification with a company. Very value-oriented and quality-conscious people may have a particular tendency to identify with their company. Most people today have a strong desire to work in a company that they can fully identify with and in which they feel "at home".

The motive of identification with the company is part of the basic need of belonging to a community and human interaction.

If a company corresponds to the individual perceptions of people with a strong identification motive, they are also very willing to do things for the company, such as foregoing a salary increase in an emergency. Conversely, they would not be satisfied in the long run if they were not internally in agreement with the company and its products and services. That's why they wouldn't even take a job there. When the company changes for the worse, e.g., through a new owner, they tend to leave the company. Then they would no longer feel "at home" there.

Service-orientation

The person likes doing things for others. Tasks that include assisting costumers (internal or external) are satisfying for that person. S/he wants to be useful to others and to see them happy.

People like this need regular, direct contact in order to recognise the needs of others and to get feedback. They are happy to perform tasks that involve looking after others.

Possible supporting questions to help understand the motive better:

How would you like to give support to others? When you do things for others, how would you like it to benefit them? How could you be even more helpful?

Explanation of the motive

Quite a few people feel particularly comfortable in a service role. They are especially satisfied when they can do something for others. They like helping and supporting others. The value of what they do is measured by how useful and helpful their service is for others. Their motto might be: "The customer is king."

For the motive of service-orientation, the need to belong to a community and to be close to people plays an important role. This often arises in conjunction with the motives of personnel management or selling.

People with the predominant motivation of service-orientation can be found in many parts of the service sector as well as in sales, also with a preference for social and caring professions. However, not everyone in a caring or service profession has a high service orientation. For example, many specialist physicians feel motivated above all by technical challenges. On the other hand, service-motivated people can also be found in technical and administrative occupations.

For people with a strong service orientation, it is usually not so important to earn a lot of money or to be at the top of the hierarchy. Rather, they feel successful when others are satisfied. They always see themselves as service-providers, even if they also like to occupy a leadership role or work in sales.

Creativity

The person is motivated by the opportunity to develop and promote unusual ideas. S/he enjoys introducing own concepts and putting them into practice. The opportunity for creative self-fulfillment is a central motivator for that person.

People like this need to be given scope to change the established order, to evolve new ideas or to just try out something new. They shouldn't be expected to deal solely with routine and familiar tasks.

Possible supporting questions to help understand the motive better:

Do you feel that you can introduce your own ideas well? And if not, what stops you doing so? Were you able to introduce ideas of your own in the past? What ideas were they? Were they then put into practice? Do you have any ideas at present about how to move your work and the company forward?

Explanation of the motive

Some people particularly enjoy developing and implementing their own ideas. They like to be creative and look for opportunities to advance their area of responsibility through their own ideas. Often, they are the ones who bring about innovations in a company. Again and again, they question the status quo. People with a primary motive of creativity would be dissatisfied if they could not follow this tendency. Even a leadership position in upper management would not offer sufficient compensation. They are only attracted to management responsibility if they can express their creativity with their co-workers. Their motto could be: "There is nothing that can't be improved."

People with a high creativity motive are also looking for a challenge and want to develop new solutions independently and responsibly on the basis of a high professional qualification. They are likely to get bored with administrative and routine tasks.

People with a high creativity motivation need their own creative leeway, the freedom to take unfamiliar paths and the permission to make the occasional mistake. They shouldn't be expected to be efficient as a priority. Instead, however, they can develop a new quality of solution. They will be well employed wherever there is a need for innovation.

The following motives are not particularly pronounced:

Status and recognition

Status and recognition are comparatively unimportant as driving forces. The person's actions are not primarily motivated by a need to belong to the ranks of successful and important people.

Probably people like this cannot really be motivated by status symbols.

Security

The prospect of a secure professional future holds comparatively little interest for this person. A secure position is not as important to him/her as e. g. the opportunity for professional fulfilment.

The prospect of a secure job coupled with firm and binding commitments probably will not help motivate people like this. Other strategies are more likely to be successful, e.g. supporting the person in his/her professional development.

Private life

The person is relatively willing to place private life last. Leisure interests and family commitments are not so important for him/her that they would stop him/her dealing with work issues.

People like this can presumably not be motivated very much by offering them flexible working times and holiday arrangements.

High income

Material incentives are not (or no longer) a significant motivator for the person, once a certain level is reached.

S/he will probably not be particularly motivated by special bonuses or profit-sharing schemes.

The following motives are not very pronounced in this person's case. But they do supply additional indications of the motive structure that supplement the above-mentioned motives.

Specialist expertise

The person attaches importance to being good in his/her field, but s/he does not need to have expert status. Assignments calling for specialized expertise can motivate him/her in some cases.

Responsibility

The person would like to assume responsibility. However, this is not a primary driver of his/her actions. S/he does not necessarily have to be officially allocated the responsibility.

Personnel management

The person finds it interesting to guide others through personal contact. But it is not demotivating for him/her if s/he does not have any assignments that involve supporting staff.

Special challenge

The person likes to set him-/herself challenges. But s/he is not necessarily actively looking for assignments that no-one else has been able to deal with.

Power and influence

The person likes to exert influence. But it does not demotivate him/her when s/he sometimes cannot take the decisions.

Selling

The person enjoys selling. But s/he is not demotivated if his/her work is not in this field.

Questions for the practical evaluation of one's own motives

In order to go deeper into the analysis of the structure of your motives, it can be helpful to consider the following questions. Why not write down your thoughts on these issues?

Which of your current tasks do you enjoy most? Which of your motives are particularly relevant? And through what specific behaviour can you recognize this?

What aspects of your present work are not so easy for you, or you do not enjoy doing so much? Which of your tasks do not fit in well with your motives?

Which of your career motives do you find difficult to realise today? What would a task/challenge look like, in which you could realise such motive(s) much more effectively? Where could you find such a task/challenge?
