

SIGMA

Leadership Series



**Great Leaders
Are Motivated
to Achieve**



GREAT LEADERS ARE MOTIVATED TO ACHIEVE

“ Excellence is a gradual result
of always trying to be better.

— Abraham Maslow

It should be no surprise that leaders with a high level of achievement and motivation are hardworking, driven, and often very successful. By setting and striving for difficult goals, these leaders not only produce high quality work, but they also set an example for their direct reports. In fact, leader motivation has been shown to relate to high levels of follower motivation. Motivated leaders are more likely to use charismatic or inspirational leadership techniques, which have been shown to relate to employee performance.

Achievement and Motivation is demonstrating the motivation to work hard, be successful, achieve difficult goals, and complete challenging tasks. This trait is seen in leaders who are willing to put time and effort into their pursuits and who seek to perform to the best of their abilities. Individuals high in this characteristic tend to set moderately difficult, achievable goals that they can accomplish with hard work and determination. Those low in this trait tend to choose goals that are either very easy or so difficult that success is unlikely.

Are You Motivated to Achieve?

In assessing your achievement and motivation, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I strive to perform to the best of my ability?
- Would I describe myself as hardworking or driven?
- Do I set high goals for myself?
- Do I prefer difficult challenges over easy or routine work?
- Am I motivated to complete my work?
- Have I considered how achieving my personal goals fits within the organization's goals?

Improve Your Achievement and Motivation

Use your motivational skills. Many leaders are skilled in motivating their employees daily, and the same skills and principles that apply to employee motivation also apply to leader motivation. If you use rewards to motivate employees, set up a reward system for your own performance. In cases where rewards are not available, consider how your personal goals align with the work you are completing. Making connections between your goals and the organization's goals can help you to see the value in completing your work effectively and to the best of your abilities.

Consider the importance of self-esteem. While motivation may seem unrelated to self-esteem, studies show that individuals with higher self-esteem are more likely to set difficult goals and to achieve these goals. A healthy level of self-esteem can help leaders to feel competent and to trust in their abilities. When your self-esteem is suffering, remember to set yourself small, achievable tasks, and celebrate your successes in these tasks. Building self-esteem takes time, but helps leaders to succeed in the long run.

Practice makes perfect. Self-motivation may be difficult to begin, but it gets easier over time. Research has shown that as individuals achieve their goals, their sense of self-efficacy and competency improves, and those with higher self-efficacy and competency have been shown to achieve more goals and feel more motivated. As you begin accomplishing tasks and experiencing success, you're more likely to achieve success and positive outcomes in the future.

Start Doing These 3 Things Now to Become More Motivated

The following steps can help you improve your achievement and motivation:

1. **Begin with the right mindset.** The way you think about your goals and tasks can position you for success. The most motivated individuals are those who reflect on their personal goals and can place their own desires and interests within the goals and objectives of the organization. Look for opportunities to achieve your goals, develop your skills, or gain new experiences while still completing your work tasks. Individuals who identify with their tasks and feel a personal connection or benefit from their work are more motivated than those completing work strictly to receive a paycheck.
2. **Set SMART goals.** When setting goals, they should always be SMART – specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-limited. Set a goal that will challenge your abilities, but not be so difficult it is impossible to accomplish. These goals can be based on your previous successes or experiences, and should build on your prior performance. Remember, the most motivating goals are those that you set yourself, so try to play an active role in deciding your goals.
3. **Monitor your progress.** As you achieve goals, reflect on your progress. This can help you develop a clear picture of your strengths and weaknesses, and can help you decide on

future goals and development opportunities. When reflecting on your progress, remember to acknowledge your successes. Sometimes, in an attempt to be efficient, individuals move immediately from one task to the next. Taking the time to recognize when you have done a good job can help improve your sense of competency and increase your motivation to reach new successes in the future.

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