The 10th Dimension – The power of 10...

...a series of articles by Dr Ed Bonner BDS MDent, Sloan Fellow
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10 things you should know about motivation

1. To inspire people to work – individually or in groups – in ways that produce the best results, you need to tap into their own personal motivational forces. Individuals working as part of a group may (and probably do) have needs that are different from the needs of the group as a whole. Find a way to balance the needs of the individual with those of the group. The art of motivating people starts with learning how to influence individuals’ behaviour. How do you find out what motivates individuals? Simple: just ask them!

2. Motivation is the will to act. To realise the full potential of employees, organisations (including dental practices) are rapidly moving away from ‘command and control’ to ‘advise and consent’ as ways of motivating others. It used to be believed that one could not motivate another, but it is possible to create a fertile working environment, which allows others to flourish and grow. Several motivational theories are based on the premise that, given the opportunity and the right stimuli, people work well and positively. The basic component of a motivational environment is co-operation, which you should give to, as well as expect from your staff.

3. Signs of high motivation is showing initiative. The ideal is that everyone should know everything that affects them directly or indirectly as soon as possible. You can never communicate too much, but take care over the content and delivery of a message so that it inspires motivation upon its reception. The ability to take initiative depends on empowerment as well as an environment that recognises contribution. The more you expect of people, the more they will give, provided you support them. A sure sign of high motivation is the one of initiative. On the other hand, high staff turnover and absenteeism are sure signs of de-motivation.

4. For most individuals, the maxim ‘I will only do as much as I have to do’, (also stated as ‘I will never do more than is absolutely necessary’) applies. Motivation is directly proportional to the answer of the question: ‘What’s in it for me (WIFI)?’ Unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise, most people will always take the path of least resistance.

5. Motivation used to be in one direction only – downwards, the superior motivating the subordinate. Today’s management is increasingly accepting of good ideas and enthusiasm from employees, as long as it suits their purpose, which should be congruent with those of the organisation. Ensure staff take both their roles and its importance.

6. You can improve communication by keeping your staff informed wherever possible – uncertainties are very de-motivating. The simplest way of obtaining this is directly to your patients. The 10th dimension is to you tell them about your practice, as you will do, your purpose is to help the public to prevent oral and dental problems and treat dental disease, then there is a wealth of opportunity via the printed and spoken media to disseminate information to existing and prospective patients that will allow us to fulfill our mission. Here’s a list of 10:

- Photographs of self or family
- Photographs of other dental staff
- Photographs of dental treatments
- Photographs of self or family
- Photographs of other dental staff
- Photographs of dental treatments

7. You should be telling your patients about current advances in dentistry: you will only do as much as you have to do, (also stated as ‘I will never do more than is absolutely necessary’) applies. Motivation is directly proportional to the answer of the question: ‘What’s in it for me (WIFI)?’ Unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise, most people will always take the path of least resistance.

8. Motivation by or through others lasts only as long as the stimulus lasts. Self-motivation, by contrast, is long-lasting. Give people the opportunity to use their initiative when possible. The ability to take initiative depends on empowerment as well as an environment that recognises contribution. The more you expect of people, the more they will give, provided you support them. A sure sign of high motivation is the one of initiative. On the other hand, high staff turnover and absenteeism are sure signs of de-motivation.

9. Staff members are paid for the work they do, but you should consider the possibility for reward for exceptional performance. These rewards can be non-financial in the form of extra recognition, certific- ables, personal and professional training, or special events; or they can be financial in the form of salary increases, bonuses or performance-related pay. Whatever the reward, they should only be given for achieving more than the basic level expected.

10. To understand and employ motivation, you need to:
   a) Analyse what it is by recognising needs and understanding behaviour
   b) Build it up by assessing your own attitude, improving communication, creating a no-blame culture at work, winning co-operation, and encouraging initiative
   c) Get the best from people by motivating individuals and groups, preventing de-motivation, enrich jobs, empower staff, and build careers
   d) Reward achievement by recognising excellence, rewarding exceptional performance, and motivating through positive change.

Keeping your patients informed
The sixth in the series of managing information articles, by Dr Ed Bonner

GDC, BDA, Academies, Societies, study groups
• Photographs of self or family
• Photographs of other dental staff
• Photographs of dental treatments
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What should you be telling existing and future patients about yourself?
• Your name and qualifications
• Education and places studied
• Experience and places worked
• The practice name, address, phone number
• Website and email
• Membership of organisations:

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