

Extrinsic motivation is when our driving force and motive is to achieve a goal or some type of reward coming from outside of ourselves. For example, a sales person striving to achieve an award, a bonus or paid cruise vacation would be considered extrinsically motivated in that situation.

Balancing Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

Articles and posts online can give the impression that we are either intrinsically motivated to do something or extrinsically motivated – one extreme or the other.

The reality is that many of us have times when we are intrinsically motivated and others when we are motivated extrinsically. It's always just a matter of scale.

Extrinsic motivation is critical to building your business. If you were not extrinsically motivated, your business, life and relationships would have little meaning.

There wouldn't be any products or services offered to others, customers wouldn't have a problem solved, no contribution to our local communities or national economy would take place and we wouldn't achieve success.

In business we are both intrinsically motivated (working for personal satisfaction) and extrinsically motivated (to achieve some of the things outlined above).

It's just a matter of balance.

This balance of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation can also be helpful in terms of goals that we set for ourselves, largely because our moods can change. One day we may set a goal for ourselves when we feel particularly intrinsically motivated but a few days later we don't feel so motivated anymore. In cases like these it is good for us to have some kind of extrinsic motivation as well.

We could set up some kind of reward system for ourselves and/or our employees. This must be balanced with a culture that supports both goal achievement and individual personal satisfaction. This can help everyone stay on track and working to achieve strategic objectives.

For others, having a coach, accountability partner, friend, family member, or networking group with similar interests and goals can help us to stay on track.

Each of these options will give us encouragement to continue pursuing our goals even on days when we don't particularly feel like it. Some may even help us work through obstacles and setbacks.

Why Is Motivation So Important?

In 2008 academic and author Malcolm Gladwell popularized the 10,000 hours rule. He stated that it takes 10,000 hours of practice to master a skill. The concept began running into flack in 2013 when writer David Epstein wrote that genes play a more significant role than practice.

This has led many to abandon the 10,000 hours rule, which is unfortunate. Gladwell responded in an article in **The New Yorker** magazine that the 10,000 hours rule is meant to apply to cognitive skills rather than strictly athletic skills.

Whether you agree with Gladwell or Epstein, few would disagree that it takes time and effort to develop a new skill. Perhaps fewer would disagree that putting in that time can be hard.

Knowing how to keep our eye on the ball when we lose our sense of motivation can be very important to achieving a goal. Things like losing weight and building muscle, learning a new language, or learning an instrument take time and it is best if we do them every day.

Try to keep track for a week of what motivates you throughout a work or weekend day. You will most likely find that there are times when you are intrinsically motivated and others when your motivation is extrinsic.

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