

How To Motivate Your Team; Put Frederick Herzberg Theory Into Practice

By Lyndsay Swinton

Using [Frederick Herzberg](#) theory is a simple, structured way to motivate your team and increase job satisfaction. By considering Herzberg's two factor theory, you can work out what dis-satisfies your team, what motivates them and most importantly, what you can do to increase job satisfaction.

Herzberg, an American behavioural scientist, observed that people could get very dissatisfied about with problems about; salary, job security, supervisor behaviour and company policy. However, if these issues were resolved, it did not guarantee job satisfaction. Herzberg identified job satisfaction was a result of different factors such as achievement, recognition and growth.

Herzberg called the dis-satisfiers "hygiene factors" because they helped prevent dissatisfaction, but in themselves would never provide real satisfaction. Perhaps you have a good salary, in a secure job in a company you like, but there's something missing. You're not dis-satisfied with your work, but you're not satisfied either. The key to job satisfaction is having one or more of the "motivator factors" present.

To put Frederick Herzberg theory into practice, consider these two questions;

- 1) "Which of these cause me irritation or frustration is I don't have them?"
- 2) "Which of these when I do have them, make me feel fulfilled and involved in my work?"

Critics consider Herzberg's two factor theory to be simplistic - what motivates me may be a dissatisfier for someone else. For example, increased responsibility for one person may be a motivator as they can grow and develop in their role, allowing them to further their career. But to another person, increased responsibility can be a dissatisfier, particularly if pay does not reflect the new role or if they are over-stretched already.

To make use of this criticism, you need to consider your team as a collection of individuals, not as a homogeneous group with one set of wants and needs. Take each individual and ask the same two questions, and by the time you've worked through your team, you will have a clear idea what you need to do to increase job satisfaction.

Some factors may be within your control, some may not. For example, it may not be possible to influence company holiday policy, but you could decide within the team how holidays are allocated. Work with what you can change and highlight those you can't to your manager or through the company's employee feedback mechanisms.

Unlike some staff motivation theories, Frederick Herzberg theory is easy to remember, easy to explain and easy to use. By considering Herzberg's two factor theory, you can work out what dis-satisfies your team, what motivates them and most importantly, what you can do to increase job satisfaction.

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