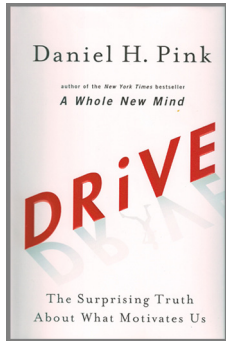


# Book Reviews for Managers

## Drive

### The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us

By Daniel H. Pink



Riverhead Books, 2009  
ISBN #978-1-59448-884-9

*“... the dueling positions of extrinsic vs. intrinsic motivators that have fueled a debate in psychology over the last eighty-plus years.”*

#### REVIEWED BY IAN COOK

In his new book Dan Pink accomplishes two outcomes really well:

1. He consolidates some major social science research around human motivation into clear, straightforward discoveries
2. He challenges the current thinking and practice in the vast majority of our organizations.

#### The Great Debate

*Am I motivated in my work primarily through what I receive from the organization and the key players around me or through the fulfillment of needs and desires that reside within me?*

These are the dueling positions of extrinsic vs. intrinsic motivators that have fueled a debate in psychology over the last eighty-plus years.

On the one hand you had B.F. Skinner who saw all behavior as a pure stimulus-response mechanism and F.W. Taylor who studied the physical micro movements of a laborer to determine the optimum way to work with minimal variation or “interference” from the worker’s mind. According to their school of thought, rewards and punishment, or what Pink calls “Motivation 2.0,” are the only way to get people to maximize their productivity. (“Motivation 1.0,” by the way, is triggered by our very basic need for food and other necessities for our survival.)

On the other side of the debate are professors Edward Deci and Richard Ryan and others, like Pink, who claim Motivation 2.0 strategies don’t work for most new jobs that are emerging today and into the future. Rewards and punishment cause

our minds to focus very narrowly on accomplishing the immediate task. But narrow focus doesn’t serve us well in the new jobs being created that require us to see patterns, work with concepts, address meaning, and come up with alternative strategies in a world of constant churn.

Furthermore, Deci and Ryan’s research confirms that, except for routine, mindless jobs, additional money will spur, at best, a brief uptick in performance. Then motivation actually starts to fall (“What have you done for me lately?”).

#### Clearing the Decks for Intrinsic Motivation

Money both is and isn’t a motivator! As Frederick Herzberg showed us decades ago, if you don’t provide (perceived) “fair” salaries and benefits your people will be demotivated. But pay them enough, plus a bit more, and they still won’t be motivated. They just will be no longer demotivated. Dan Pink calls this “taking money off the table.”

But now these adequately remunerated employees are ready for what the author calls “Motivation 3.0.” Instead of rewards and sanctions applied by bosses and companies, intrinsic (i.e. internal) motivators kick in. Pink’s research reveals three such motivators:

1. **Autonomy** – the freedom to have significant control over *how* you do your work to generate the performance results to which you agreed
2. **Mastery** – the opportunity to get continually better at something that matters to you. This is an elemental human desire

*“...the verdict of science is in... human beings, in all their infuriating and marvelous complexity, cannot be manipulated into performing better. But employees most definitely can be enrolled.”*



**Ian Cook**, trainer, consultant, keynote speaker and Principal of Fulcrum Associates Inc., helps executives and managers get more from their people and teams through modern leadership approaches. Contact Ian to discuss the ideas in this article or to find out about related training programs, facilitation and coaching services, and keynote presentations for your organization.

3. *Purpose* – having your work contribute to the well-being of people or to outcomes beyond your own self-interest

#### **Why I like this book.**

I recommend *Drive* to managers because of its clarity, its easy reading—the author writes with a journalist’s flair—and especially because of its message.

A sizeable majority of our governments, service organizations and private sector enterprises are mediocre and, in some cases, toxic places to work. *If we are to turn these into great places to work, leaders have to take a good look at their beliefs about what motivates people.* All too often, their assumptions that determine their management style are out-of-date and counter-productive for a 21st century world.

As Dan Pink presents so well, the verdict of science is in. Managers have to let go of their need to *control* the behavior of their staff. They have to realize that human beings, in all their infuriating and marvelous complexity, cannot be manipulated into performing better. But employees most definitely can be *enrolled*. You do this by providing a work experience that gives them the latitude to grow and to make a difference.

#### **What’s missing for me.**

The author covers a huge topic in his book. That said, there are three areas I would have liked him to address:

1. *How you do motivate people in jobs where any opportunity for variety and creative expression has been designed out of them?* Toll booth operators, ditch diggers and, of course, burger flippers come to mind. And then there are those jobs where a strong union will not agree to any deviation from rigid, collectively bargained job duties.

For the manager who sincerely wants to motivate his or her staff, the fixed design of jobs and work processes, as well as externally bargained work rules,

represent the “elephant in the room.” So often managers’ hands are tied, yet they are still expected to produce solid results and create a satisfied employee group.

2. *What does the science have to say about sales people?* Monetary rewards linked to sales quotas are the fuel these people run on. I know there is the personal satisfaction in closing a deal but the scoreboard of choice remains money.
3. *What role do employees themselves play in the preservation of Motivation 2.0?* I teach in my own presentations that deep within almost all of us is the desire to make a difference, to have the work we do each day matter in some way to some people. That said, ask most employees what is missing for them in their work and their gut reply will be “more money.”

Not only do the assumptions and beliefs of managers have to change. Employees must get in touch with their own need for autonomy, mastery and purpose, be aware when these elements are missing for them, and take responsibility for the level of work motivation they choose to have.

Dan Pink’s main thesis is that, despite the unassailable truths that have emerged from the field of social science and organizational behavior, when faced with the pressure to increase performance, most managers still fall back on the twin strategies of dangling more money or threatening negative consequences.

In *Drive* Dan is on a quest to raise our consciousness to this mismatch. He is a very good communicator and I believe he will transform a lot of managerial minds.

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