

## Rewarding Changed Behaviours

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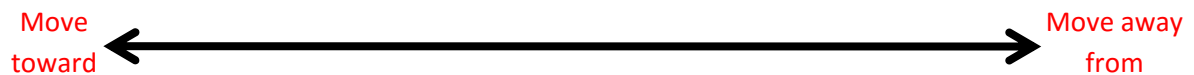
Research shows that 50% of people 'move towards' and 50% of people 'move away' when considering their motivational strategy. The glass is half full, or the glass is half empty. The carrot or the stick. People do not consistently apply their chosen motivational strategy, but they do have a preference.

Just for clarity, let's have a look at some paired examples of equivalent outcomes:

- move toward understanding - move away from confusion
- move towards safety - move away from harm
- move towards success - move away from failure



The application of their motivational strategy is also on a continuum:



People who 'move towards' are more likely to positively respond to rewards. A 'move toward' person will be motivated by a carrot i.e. a reward and will be looking for goal achieving roles. They will predominantly move towards what they like. To sustain behaviours for a 'move toward' person you emphasize the benefits, and reward them when they achieve the desired changed behaviour.

People who 'move away' generally work to reduce or avoid what they don't like and are best motivated by their fears. They are motivated by a penalty. As odd as it might sound to 'move toward' people, threatening losses works well with these people and emphasizing what needs to be avoided will sustain their new behaviours. People who 'move away' avoid perceived pain, focusing on the things they don't want, working to reduce risks and minimize the negatives. If you try to lock-in and sustain behaviours with a carrot they simply won't care (or in extreme cases, they will be offended because they think that you are trying to bribe them). Think of all those people you ask "Have you had a good day?" "Not bad...." they say.

So, as long as you remember that rewards don't work for everyone, here are a few recommendations:

- Create new paths or habits through a system of rewards. When you feel good once, it's easier to feel good the next time. Think of rewards as fuel to keep you on a new path.
- When we celebrate behavioural change with rewards, we're recognizing achievement, motivating our teams to continue, and building self-esteem. Building self-esteem is key to maintaining change as it gives people the courage to keep moving forward and to keep trying.
- Reward the positives and remember to correct the slip-ups.

- When rewarding someone, get to know what they value. People are motivated by different things - money, praise, recognition, authority, friendship, inclusion. Rewards need to have value to the recipient to be effective.
- Celebrate small and large accomplishments proportionately.
- Let other people know about the team successes.
- Don't over-reward. Over-rewarding, like over-praising, can be detrimental. If someone raves about a mediocre accomplishment, you feel patronized and manipulated. Make the reward match the effort or output.
- Celebrate with others, especially a mentor.
- Celebrate the positive hidden within certain negatives. Congratulate the risk that was taken rather than the outcome not achieved.
- Create a written and signed performance agreement in which the behaviour changes and rewards are outlined.
- Re-evaluate the goals and rewards regularly. If they don't work, change them.
- Reduce rewards as the new behaviour becomes a habit, while keeping a few maintenance rewards in line.

### **References:**

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