

Real leaders value intrinsic motivation over loyalty

Dr Charles du Toit



Think about it. In the past leaders prided themselves in the loyalty of their staff, emphasising the transactional nature of the relationship. They offered benefits, competitive pay, stylish uniforms, a pleasant work environment, and even a gold watch upon retirement. In return, loyal team members would go above and beyond to meet their leader's needs, exhibiting dedication and consistency in performance. They walked the extra mile!

This arrangement may have seemed ideal however, in this volatile era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, merely relying on loyalty is no longer sufficient. We need more from employees to ensure the success of our Organisation.

To fully leverage the opportunities presented by intelligent technologies and global access, organisations require employees motivated beyond mere loyalty.

Characteristics such as resilience, innovative, passion, collaboration, and creativity are key.

In this modern dynamic landscape, we argue that we need employees who are not just loyal but are *Intrinsically motivated!*

What is intrinsic motivation?

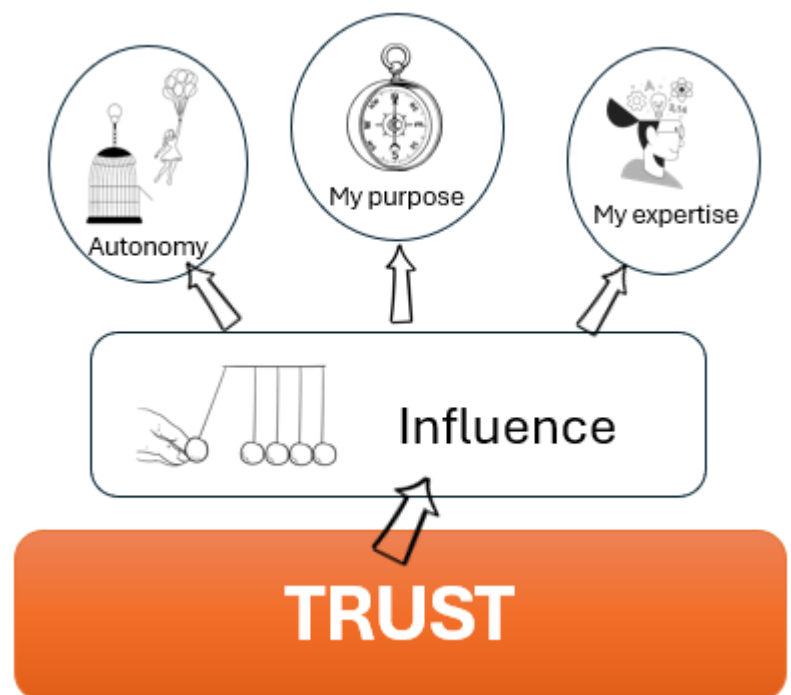
Intrinsic motivation is defined as the inherent satisfaction derived from an activity rather than external rewards.

Susan Fowler, in her exciting book “Why Motivating People Doesn’t Work... And What Does”, argues that “true motivation is intrinsic”, a fire fuelled by the deep-seated human need for *Autonomy*, *Purpose*, and *Growth*. She explains that: “This isn’t just feel-good fluff; it’s backed by science and a deep understanding of what makes human beings tick.”

Employees driven by intrinsic motivation exhibit a different level of commitment; they do not rely on external incentives but are fuelled by their own desire to excel.

So, how can leaders foster intrinsic motivation among their employees?

- **Through careful selection:** Look for applicants who display a sense of responsibility and internal locus of control.
- **By offering autonomy:** Provide employees with choices and decision-making opportunities.
- **By connecting with purpose:** Help employees understand the purpose of their work and how it contributes to the organisation's goals.
- **By recognising and enhancing competence:** Support employees in developing and showcasing their skills.
- **By building trust:** Establishing a trusting relationship with employees is essential.



This all starts with trust!

How do leaders build trust?

We believe the first step is connection. Leadership, like all relationships, depends on connection and how you experience me during these connections will determine to what degree you trust or distrust me.



Studies show that employees are more likely to trust a leader when they believe the leader is:

- **Competent**, able to do their job.
- **Invested** in the employee's well-being and
- **Consistent** in their values and the way in which they treat all members of their team.

In our leadership journey trust is tested, often on a daily basis, we call these "Leadership Moments", and trust levels increase or decrease depending on certain outcomes:

- How the leader connects, on a daily basis with the employee
- How the leader responds to and handles key leadership moments as they arise

By building trust and demonstrating competence, leaders gain influence over their team members. With this influence, they can create conditions that foster intrinsic motivation, leading to a more engaged and productive workforce. The illustration provides a visual representation of this process.

When team members are intrinsically motivated, the leader opens up a whole new world of possibilities.



DR CHARLES **DU TOIT** & ASSOCIATES

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