

# Systemic Motivation at Work

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# **The Five Pillars of the Systemic Motivation Approach at Work**



## Pillar 1 – The Three Levels of Organization (Systemics)

Systemic motivation starts from one simple truth: **teams do not exist in a vacuum**.

They are embedded in a larger system of individuals, teams, and groups that continuously influence one another.

At the **individual level**, motivation emerges from each person's inner resources and external conditions — their role, environment, personal life, and social context. Each employee operates within defined boundaries, equipped with tools and expectations, and brings their personal story to work.

At the **team level**, motivation becomes collective. The team is the *heart of the model*: a small, autonomous group of no more than twelve people, where relationships, trust, and shared goals shape both performance and well-being. A well-functioning team self-organizes around its purpose, adapts its methods, and balances interdependence with autonomy.

Finally, at the **group level**, we consider the larger organizational unit — a department, business unit, or even the whole company, but always limited to the threshold of **Dunbar's number** (150–200 people), beyond which stable social bonds erode.

This level defines the cultural and strategic context that enables or hinders motivation.

Systemic motivation thus invites managers to navigate across these three scales, aligning individual needs, team dynamics, and organizational coherence.

## Pillar 2 – Motivational Continuity (Resonance)

Motivation cannot be managed in isolation.

It flows through a **continuum** linking individual satisfaction, team engagement, and group alignment.

The Systemic Motivation Model (4×3 Matrix) visualizes this continuity: each driver activated at one level strengthens the next. For example, **individual autonomy** enhances trust among peers, fostering **collaboration** within the team, which in turn enables **cooperation** between teams across the group.

This “motivational continuity” ensures that progress at one level translates into energy for the next. It prevents fragmentation — the classic trap where organizations boost one driver (e.g., bonuses) while neglecting others (e.g., meaning or trust).

The lesson for managers is to view motivation as a living ecosystem.

Just as in a natural system, the health of one component sustains the others.

When alignment is achieved, engagement circulates organically, transforming satisfaction into commitment and commitment into purpose.

## Pillar 3 – The Permanence of Feedback

Motivation fades without **feedback** — yet most organizations confuse its forms.

Systemic motivation distinguishes clearly between **performance feedback** and **social feedback** (or recognition).

- **Performance feedback** is factual and functional. It answers: *Are we doing the right things, the right way?* It supports learning, adjustment, and shared accountability.
- **Social feedback**, by contrast, expresses recognition. It addresses the emotional and relational dimension of belonging, respect, and value.

Confusing the two generates manipulation and frustration. A compliment meant as recognition can be perceived as performance evaluation, and vice versa.

In systemic motivation, feedback becomes a **permanent loop** — not an annual ritual. It provides rhythm to collective intelligence: measure, discuss, adjust.

This pillar connects directly to the **SMTP model** (Satisfaction, Mobilisation, Trust, Pride), which gives teams a practical barometer for tracking their motivational health.

Continuous feedback keeps energy circulating, just like oxygen in an organism — ensuring that motivation remains dynamic, adaptive, and transparent.

## Pillar 4 – Shared Responsibility

Traditional management isolates accountability: individuals are evaluated, rewarded, or blamed separately.

Systemic motivation replaces this with a **principle of shared responsibility**, rooted in team cohesion.

In this model, a team is treated as a living system — a being with its own identity and personality.

Its successes and failures belong to everyone. This collective approach reinforces mutual support, peer learning, and fairness.

Research confirms it: hybrid reward systems combining individual accountability with collective incentives outperform purely individual systems (Pearsall, Christian & Ellis, 2009).

Shared responsibility also changes the role of the manager. Instead of judging individuals, the manager becomes the *gardener* of the team's ecosystem — cultivating balance, trust, and interdependence.

Rewards and promotions are discussed openly within teams, ensuring that transitions (departures, new roles) are metabolized without harming cohesion.

The result is a culture where **confidence replaces control**, and **commitment replaces compliance**.

## Pillar 5 – Temporality

Motivation is not a constant flame; it evolves over time and through different emotional energies.

Systemic motivation distinguishes three temporal dynamics:

- **Dopamine motivation** – the excitement of novelty, challenge, and immediate reward. It energizes beginnings but fades quickly.
- **Cortisol motivation** – the pressure of urgency and constraint. Useful for short-term survival, but destructive if prolonged.
- **Serotonin motivation** – the calm satisfaction that comes from trust, belonging, and shared purpose. It builds resilience and long-term mobilization.

Healthy organizations learn to **balance** these energies. Too much dopamine leads to addiction to “hype events”; too much cortisol breeds burnout; too much serotonin may cause stagnation.

True systemic motivation relies on **temporal intelligence** — knowing when to stimulate, when to slow down, and when to consolidate.

It favors rituals and rhythms that nourish long-term engagement: retrospectives, learning loops, collective celebrations, and moments of meaning.

Motivation, then, is not a spark to ignite — it is a **pulse to sustain**.

Through the interplay of time, emotion, and collective experience, it transforms enthusiasm into enduring mobilization.

# Understanding Motivation in Context

# 1. The Evolution of Motivation Theories

## From Behaviorism to Systems Thinking

For over a century, managers and scholars have sought to understand what motivates people to work with energy and persistence. Early 20th-century management relied on **behaviorism**, which viewed people as reactive beings who respond predictably to incentives, such as rewards and punishments. Frederick Taylor's *Scientific Management* epitomized this view. Productivity was maximized by standardizing tasks, supervising tightly, and linking pay to measurable output.

This approach worked well in mechanical, repetitive jobs, but it overlooked the complexity of humans. Employees were treated like machine parts, with no recognition of their creativity, autonomy, or sense of belonging. While short-term gains were achieved, long-term costs included alienation, absenteeism, and strikes.

By the mid-20th century, the **cognitive revolution** shifted focus inward. Motivation was explained through inner processes: expectations, values, and goals. **Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964)** argued that effort depends on three perceptions:

- *Expectancy*: "If I try, I can perform."
- *Instrumentality*: "If I perform, I will be rewarded."
- *Valence*: "I value the reward."

These models helped refine management practices while maintaining a focus on the individual. They overlooked the social and organizational contexts in which motivation takes shape.

Today, most scholars agree that motivation cannot be understood in isolation from its context. As Chen and Kanfer (2006) demonstrated, motivation is a **multi-level phenomenon** that emerges from interactions among individuals, teams, organizations, and even broader social systems.

## Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory: The Hygiene–Motivation Distinction

Frederick Herzberg's work in the 1960s remains foundational. He showed that **job satisfaction and dissatisfaction come from different sources**:

- **Hygiene factors**: pay, working conditions, and company policy. Their absence causes dissatisfaction, but their presence only prevents complaints—it does not create motivation.

- **Motivators:** achievement, recognition, responsibility, and personal growth. These generate genuine satisfaction and drive.

For managers, this is a wake-up call. **A fair salary and decent equipment will not motivate by themselves**, but without them, no deeper motivational strategy can succeed. This is why systemic motivation focuses on both **foundational conditions** (satisfaction) and **higher-level drivers** (engagement).

## Self-Determination Theory: Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness

**Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (2000)** has significantly influenced the modern understanding. It identifies three basic psychological needs:

1. **Autonomy** – feeling choice and volition.
2. **Competence** – feeling effective and skilled.
3. **Relatedness** – feeling connected and valued.

When managers support these needs, employees exhibit **autonomous motivation**, as they identify with their work and engage willingly. When thwarted, employees often resort to **controlled motivation**, working only to avoid punishment or earn a reward.

European research confirms this. Van den Broeck et al. (2010), analyzing 119,000 participants across 99 studies, found that satisfaction of autonomy, competence, and relatedness predicted **engagement, job satisfaction, and commitment**, while reducing burnout and turnover.

## Why Systemic Models?

Despite valuable insights, individual-focused theories have limited use for managers in contact with production teams. Why? Because **managers cannot directly modify an employee's inner motivation**. Motivation is a **black box**: invisible, yet shaped by history, personality, and personal circumstances.

Managers *can* **influence and stimulate motivation from the outside** by shaping working conditions, team dynamics, and organizational practices. This is why systemic motivation places **social influence at the core of its strategy**. Instead of endlessly studying internal motivation mechanisms, we focus on the **observable levers that trigger mobilization**: fairness, trust, recognition, collaboration, and purpose.

## 2. Motivation vs. Mobilization

### The Black Box

Kleinginna & Kleinginna (1981) catalogued over 140 definitions of motivation. This diversity highlights the complexity and elusiveness of the concept. For managers, trying to control “motivation” directly is a dead end.

Systemic motivation solves this by distinguishing between:

- **Motivation:** the invisible, internal energy to act.
- **Mobilization:** the visible, external behaviors of effort, initiative, and persistence.

### Why the Distinction Matters

- An employee may feel motivated but still procrastinate (Steel, 2007).
- Another may not feel intrinsic pleasure, but they mobilize strongly because they identify with the company’s mission.
- For organizations, **mobilization is what counts:** it creates results.

**Case example:** In a Belgian manufacturing site (KBC Group, 2021 survey cited in *HR Square*), employees reported “feeling proud to work for the company” but also complained of outdated IT tools. Despite motivation, their productivity was blocked. Only after investing in better digital tools and delegating some decision-making to front-line teams did mobilization increase measurably.

**Lesson for managers:** Stop trying to “motivate people.” Instead, work on conditions that **allow mobilization to occur.**

### 3. The Four Essential Feelings at Work

Mobilization rests on four emotional foundations:

#### 1. Usefulness (Purpose)

- Employees must feel their work contributes meaningfully.
- Without it, even prestigious jobs feel empty.
- *Data:* A 2019 survey by the European Trade Union Institute showed that **29% of European workers doubted the usefulness of their job.**

#### 2. Equity and Fairness

- Rooted in Adams' Equity Theory (1965).
- Employees constantly compare their input-output ratios to those of their peers.
- *Data:* EY's 2023 European survey found that only **6% of employees felt free from inequity**, with pay fairness as the top grievance.

#### 3. Effectiveness

- Feeling capable of achieving results.
- Requires tools, training, and supportive structures.
- *Case:* Google's Project Aristotle confirmed that **psychological safety and clarity** are top predictors of effective teams.

#### 4. Belonging

- The experience of being accepted and valued.
- *Data:* According to Bain & Company (2022), fewer than **30% of European employees felt fully included** at work.

These four elements form a **self-reinforcing system**: fairness fosters a sense of belonging, belonging enhances usefulness, and usefulness is realized through effectiveness.

## 4. The Families of Motivational Drivers

The **Systemic Motivation Model** categorizes the various levers of motivation into **four distinct families**. Each family has similar needs and expectations, making it easier to analyze how the work environment influences people's energy, satisfaction, and commitment. These families are not isolated: they interact, overlap, and reinforce one another.

### 1. Material Drivers

This family gathers all elements linked to the **basic conditions of work**. They do not necessarily create strong motivation, but their absence can quickly generate dissatisfaction.

- **Pay and benefits:** salary, bonuses, health insurance, retirement plans, meal vouchers, mobility solutions, or any contractual advantages.
- **Equipment and tools:** having a suitable computer, a comfortable desk, modern software, and protective gear adapted to the job.
- **Work environment:** lighting, noise levels, ergonomic furniture, plants, access to coffee, air quality, or office design.

Material drivers correspond to Herzberg's *hygiene factors*. They are essential for ensuring satisfaction, but once at an acceptable level, their effect on long-term motivation remains limited.

Material Drivers → Safety / Incentives / Resources (Row 1 of the matrix)

- Material needs (salary, bonuses, insurance, tools, physical work conditions) align with the first row of the matrix: Safety–Incentives–Resources.
- These are “foundation” enablers. They do not directly spark motivation, but they remove dissatisfaction and enable people to operate effectively.
- Typical examples:
  - Safety: ergonomic workplace, job security, health insurance.
  - Incentives: pay, bonuses, fringe benefits.
  - Resources: equipment, IT tools, budget, physical environment.

### 2. Social Drivers

Humans are social beings, and the quality of interactions at work is a decisive factor in motivation. This family covers the **relational climate** of the workplace.

- **Relationships:** camaraderie, trust, and open communication with colleagues.

- **Respect:** being listened to, taken seriously, consulted in decisions, and treated with fairness.
- **Atmosphere:** humor, kindness, goodwill, and the general tone of day-to-day interactions.

Social drivers create an environment where people feel welcome and safe to express themselves. They strongly influence collective energy and reduce the risks of conflict, disengagement, or burnout.

Social Drivers → Autonomy / Collaboration / Cooperation (Row 2 of the matrix)

- Relational needs (friendship, respect, atmosphere) link to the second row: Autonomy–Collaboration–Cooperation.
- Even though autonomy appears “professional,” its social dimension is about how freedom and decision-making are respected in the group.
- Typical examples:
  - Autonomy: space to express opinions, freedom to adjust work rhythm without micromanagement.
  - Collaboration: quality of day-to-day interactions, mutual assistance, and feedback culture.
  - Cooperation: cross-team goodwill, respect for commitments, shared rituals that support team spirit.

### 3. Professional Drivers

This family concerns the **content and development of the work itself**. It includes elements that encourage growth, mastery, and recognition.

- **Autonomy:** freedom to organize one’s tasks, make decisions, and choose how to work.
- **Development:** opportunities to learn, be coached, gain expertise, or progress in one’s career.
- **Recognition:** being valued for contributions, receiving constructive feedback, and having one’s skills acknowledged.

Professional drivers directly support intrinsic forms of motivation: the joy of learning, the pride of mastery, and the satisfaction of being useful. They are key levers for managers seeking to sustain long-term employee engagement.

Professional Drivers → Competencies / Creativity / Innovation (Row 3 of the matrix)

- Professional expectations (development, recognition, mastery, support) align with the third row: Competencies–Creativity–Innovation.

- Here we are squarely in Herzberg’s “motivators”: growth, learning, challenge.
- Typical examples:
  - Competencies: training, mentoring, career paths, coaching.
  - Creativity: room for experimentation, trust to propose new ideas.
  - Innovation: participation in improvement projects, hackathons, R&D, and co-design of solutions.

#### 4. Societal Drivers

**Ultimately, this family extends beyond the individual and team, connecting work to a broader collective purpose.** It reflects the need to contribute to something meaningful.

- **Values:** alignment between personal convictions and the principles promoted by the company (justice, ecology, inclusion, transparency).
- **Membership:** the sense of being part of a team, an organization, or a professional community.
- **Contribution:** the feeling that one’s work has an impact, serves others, or adds value beyond profit.

Societal drivers provide the highest level of motivation, often described as the sense of *purpose* at work. When employees see how their daily effort connects to a bigger picture, motivation becomes both deeper and more resilient.

Societal Drivers → Trust / Purpose / Culture (Row 4 of the matrix)

- Societal commitment (values, belonging, service to others) maps to the fourth row: Trust–Purpose–Culture.
- This is the “mission” level of mobilization: employees feel part of something larger and meaningful.
- Typical examples:
  - Trust: ethical practices, transparency, fairness.
  - Purpose: alignment with personal values, feeling of usefulness, and sustainability goals.
  - Culture: inclusive practices, shared identity, and contribution to society.

Together, these four families form a **complete landscape of workplace motivation**. For managers and coaches, the challenge is not to guess what motivates each individual, but to **create the right conditions across these families**—balancing material basics, nurturing social bonds, enabling professional growth, and connecting to societal purpose.

A fifth, **Spiritual family**, is increasingly discussed in research (mindfulness, personal vocation). However, **in our model, it is considered outside the scope**. It is too intimate and individual to be standardized into systemic management practices. Managers can respect it (through tolerance, well-being policies), but it is not part of the formal framework. (You can find a detailed explanation in Appendix E.)

#### Key insight for managers:

- Material and Social = **minimum baseline** (their absence kills satisfaction).
- Professional and Societal = **true motivators** (they create engagement).

## 5. The Three Levels of Mobilization

### Understanding the Foundations of Engagement

Engagement at work is not a monolithic concept. Research in organizational psychology consistently shows that employees contribute at different **levels of mobilization**, depending on their environment, needs, and sense of purpose. The systemic motivation approach distinguishes three progressive but interdependent levels: **compliance**, **commitment**, and **mission**.

#### Compliance – *“I do what I’m asked to do”*

Compliance represents the **minimum but essential foundation** of mobilization. It ensures that people follow rules, respect deadlines, and provide reliable output.

- **What it relies on:** clarity of roles, fairness, and psychological safety.
- **Supporting studies:** Amy Edmondson (1999) demonstrated that **\*\*psychological safety\*\*** is crucial to ensure employees speak up and comply with standards without fear. Herzberg’s two-factor theory (1966) also suggests that hygiene factors, such as salary, working conditions, and security, are prerequisites—without them, dissatisfaction grows, and compliance declines.
- **Risks:** Excessive compliance (>40%) can lead to rigidity, bureaucracy, and a loss of creativity.

## Commitment – “I give more”

Commitment is the **core engine** of performance. Employees willingly go beyond their job descriptions, take initiative, and collaborate.

- **What it relies on:** recognition, autonomy, opportunities to learn and progress.
- **Supporting studies:** Deci & Ryan’s **\*\*Self-Determination Theory\*\*** (1985) highlights autonomy, competence, and relatedness as key drivers of intrinsic motivation. Hackman (2002) demonstrated that teams with the right conditions (autonomy, feedback, resources) show higher commitment and innovation.
- **Risks:** Without compliance as a foundation, commitment may scatter into chaos; without a clear mission, it may burn out over time.

## Mission – “This is who I am”

Mission is the **highest level of mobilization**, when personal values align with organizational purpose. Here, work becomes identity.

- **What it relies on:** shared purpose, societal contribution, long-term vision.
- **Supporting studies:** Viktor Frankl (1946) showed that a sense of meaning is the most powerful motivator of human endurance. Deloitte’s Global Millennial Survey (2020) also revealed that younger generations prioritize purpose and values alignment over pay when choosing employers.
- **Risks:** Overrepresentation (>20%) may cause individuals to become detached from operational reality, leading to frustration with routine tasks or resistance to change.

## Why Teams Need All Three Levels

### The Systemic Balance of Mobilization

A team cannot thrive by focusing on only one level of mobilization. Each plays a distinct and necessary role, and sustainable performance emerges only when the three are present in balance.

## Compliance: The Safety Net

- Guarantees reliability, equity, and procedural discipline.
- Without it, teams experience insecurity, inequity, and a lack of predictability.
- Ensures repetitive and regulated tasks are completed consistently.

## Commitment: The Performance Driver

- Brings energy, creativity, and continuous improvement.
- Without it, teams stagnate; work becomes mechanical and uninspiring.
- Ensures adaptation, innovation, and problem-solving in dynamic environments.

## Mission: The Cultural Glue

- Provides meaning, loyalty, and a sense of identity.
- Without it, long-term engagement erodes, turnover rises, and the team lacks a unifying vision.
- Ensures the team is resilient, able to mobilize in times of crisis, and attract new talent inspired by its cause.

## Recommended Distribution

Level	Target % in a team	Main Contribution
Compliance	30–40%	Stability, fairness, reliability
Commitment	40–50%	Energy, creativity, innovation
Mission	10–20%	Meaning, loyalty, inspiration

**Key principle:** it is not about pushing everyone to the mission, but about ensuring that each level is represented. A healthy team is like an ecosystem: compliance provides structure, commitment creates momentum, and mission offers direction.

## Practical Implications for Managers

1. **Diagnose team balance:** use barometers like SMTP (Satisfaction, Mobilisation, Trust, Pride) or workshops like *Engage Yourself* to reveal individual drivers.
2. **Redistribute effort:** if compliance dominates, add autonomy and recognition to trigger engagement; if mission is absent, work on shared purpose and culture.
3. **Acknowledge diversity:** some team members thrive as guardians of rules, others as engines of creativity, others as carriers of meaning. All are necessary.

## Conclusion

The systemic motivation model teaches that **mobilization is layered**:

- **Compliance protects,**
- **Commitment drives,**
- **Mission inspires.**

When managers and coaches nurture all three levels within a team, they create not only performance but also resilience, cohesion, and long-term loyalty.

**Manager's task:** Ensure an optimal balance between the three levels of engagement within the team, monitoring the development and fatigue of its members, and facilitating the transfer of engagement as needed.

# From the Individual to the Team

## 6. The Team as a Living Entity

Teams have emergent properties, including trust, shared identity, and collective efficacy. They are **living organisms**, not just aggregates of individuals.

### The Power of Small Teams

- A group of **5–9 members** is the sweet spot (Hackman, 2002).
- Jeff Bezos' "two-pizza rule" aligns with this.
- Small teams foster visibility, accountability, and a sense of belonging.

**Example:** A Belgian logistics company reduced warehouse teams from 14 to 8 members. Communication improved, absenteeism dropped, and throughput rose.

### Dunbar's Number

Humans can maintain stable relationships with ~150 people (Dunbar, 1992). Beyond this, motivation fades into anonymity. Large organizations must be structured as **networks of small teams**.

## 7. Focusing Motivation at the Team Level

### Why Teams Matter

Performance is rarely the sum of individuals; it is the product of **team dynamics**. Stewart (2006) found that team-level interventions outperformed individual-level ones.

### Theoretical Anchors

- **SDT(Self-Determination Theory) at the team level:** teams satisfy autonomy, competence, and relatedness.
- **Goal-setting theory:** shared team goals predict performance better than individual goals (O'Leary-Kelly et al., 1994).
- **Chen & Kanfer (2006):** ambient stimuli (team-wide influences) are often stronger than individualized incentives.

**Case:** Google's Project Aristotle proved that **psychological safety**—a team-level phenomenon—was the strongest predictor of success.

## 8. Team Traits: Size, Interdependence, Rewards

### Team Size

Team size is one of the strongest structural predictors of collaboration quality. Richard Hackman (2002) argued that the “sweet spot” for team size in collaborative work is typically between **5 and 9 members**. This range offers sufficient diversity of skills and perspectives to address complex problems, while still facilitating coordination and personal accountability.

For **highly interdependent tasks**—where every member’s input is critical at each stage—smaller teams of **3 to 5 people** are more effective. Such groups can coordinate more easily, reduce communication overhead, and foster faster decision-making.

In contrast, teams **with more than 12 members** often struggle with coordination losses, diffusion of responsibility, and subgroup dynamics. To succeed at that scale, they must rely on **strong substructures**—for example, dividing into smaller working groups or task forces while maintaining alignment through shared goals and rituals.

**Implication for managers:** Resist the temptation to “add more hands” to a struggling team. Beyond a specific size, more people often slow things down rather than speed them up. Instead, focus on clarity of roles and interdependence.

### Interdependence

The level of interdependence within a team determines how members rely on one another to complete their tasks. Research shows that **skill overlap**—having more than one team member capable of performing a given task—prevents bottlenecks and builds resilience. If a single expert holds all the knowledge for a critical function, the team becomes fragile: absence, turnover, or overload can cripple progress.

Katz and Kahn (1978) framed this as a principle of *functional redundancy*, where some shared competence across roles strengthens system stability. Modern agile practices also emphasize **T-shaped skills**: individuals develop depth in one area (their specialty) but maintain breadth across related areas, enabling them to step in when teammates need support.

**Implication for managers:** Encourage skill-sharing, cross-training, and pair work. Interdependence should not mean dependency; it should mean resilience.

### Rewards

Team performance is shaped not only by structure and skills but also by the **reward system**. Purely individual rewards often undermine teamwork by incentivizing competition and hoarding of knowledge. Conversely, strictly collective rewards can create free-rider problems, where some members benefit from the efforts of others without contributing their own.

The most effective systems are **hybrid reward structures**, blending individual accountability with collective incentives. Research by Pearsall, Christian, and Ellis (2009) shows that hybrid systems outperform both extremes. They preserve a sense of fairness (“my effort matters”) while reinforcing collective success (“our outcomes depend on each other”).

For example, companies may link a portion of bonuses to individual performance metrics while tying another portion to team results, such as quality, delivery speed, or customer satisfaction.

**Implication for managers:** Design reward systems that balance both personal accountability and team collaboration. Recognize individual contributions while making sure that collective outcomes are valued and visible.

## 9. The Organizational Context

Teams do not exist in a vacuum; they are embedded within the broader organizational ecosystem. Their success or failure is strongly influenced by the **context** in which they operate.

### Positive Context

When the organization provides **clarity, support, and alignment**, teams thrive.

- **Clear vision** ensures that teams understand the “why” behind their work. It connects daily tasks to a meaningful, larger purpose.
- **A supportive culture** fosters psychological safety, where trust, collaboration, and initiative are encouraged.
- **Aligned resources** guarantee that teams have the tools, training, and autonomy to execute their mission effectively.

Research confirms that when employees perceive organizational support and alignment, their engagement levels increase significantly, leading to improved performance and reduced turnover (Eisenberger et al., 2001).

### **Negative Context**

On the other hand, even highly skilled teams can be suffocated by a toxic environment:

- **Bureaucracy** slows decision-making and discourages initiative.
- **Silos** create duplication, waste, and prevent cross-functional learning.
- **Contradictory goals** confuse priorities and erode trust between teams and leadership.

Hackman (2002) demonstrated that team effectiveness is as much a product of the surrounding environment as it is of the team's internal processes. A poor context limits collective intelligence, while a supportive one amplifies it.

### **Implications for Large Organizations**

In large, complex structures, the challenge is to balance **alignment** with **autonomy**. Too much control kills creativity; too little alignment creates chaos.

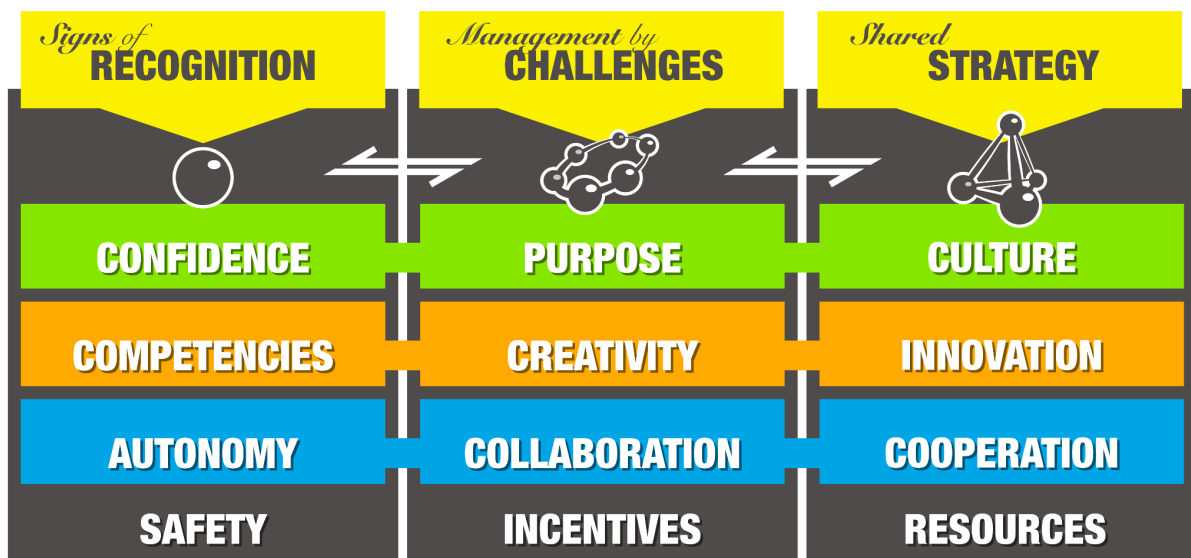
A proven approach is the **Spotify “squads and tribes” model**:

- The **company defines the “why” and the “what”**—the vision, priorities, and strategic goals.
- The **teams decide the “how”**—the methods, tools, and practices that best fit their reality.

This balance empowers small, autonomous units to innovate quickly while still serving a common organizational mission.

Ultimately, leaders should view themselves as **gardeners of context** rather than micromanagers of action: cultivating the conditions that enable teams to self-organize, grow, and flourish.

# The Systemic Motivation Model



## 10. A Hierarchical Framework for Motivation

The **Systemic Motivation Model** is the operational backbone of this certification. It integrates insights from psychology, sociology, and organizational science into a **clear 4x3 matrix**.

Why a matrix? Because motivation is not linear, nor located in one single place. It emerges at the intersection of:

- **Levels of organization:** the individual, the team, the extended group.
- **Progressive drivers:** from basic needs (safety, resources) to integrative values (trust, culture).

This structured approach allows managers to **diagnose problems** and **design interventions** with precision. Instead of blaming individuals or issuing generic “engagement programs,” the matrix identifies *where the system is failing* and *which lever is most efficient*.

## 11. Structure of the 4x3 Matrix

The model consists of **four rows** (representing drivers) **and three columns** (representing levels).

### The Columns – Levels of Organization

1. **Individual (Left column)** – drivers rooted in personal experience and recognition.
2. **Team (Middle column)** – drivers emerging from daily interactions, collaboration, and shared purpose.
3. **Extended Group (Right column)** – drivers shaped by organizational structures, leadership, and culture.

## The Rows – Progressive Drivers

1. **Row 1: The Foundation (Compliance Zone)**
  - Safety (individual), Incentives (team), Resources (organization).
2. **Row 2: Social Levers (Managerial Zone)**
  - Autonomy (individual), Collaboration (team), Cooperation (organization).
3. **Row 3: Developmental Levers (Commitment Zone)**
  - Competence (individual), Creativity (team), Innovation (organization).
4. **Row 4: Integrative Levers (Mission Zone)**
  - Confidence (individual), Purpose (team), Culture (organization).

## 12. Row 1 – The Foundation: Safety, Incentive, Resource

The **compliance zone** is non-negotiable. Without this baseline, higher-level efforts collapse.

- **Safety (Individual)**

More than physical safety, this includes *psychological safety* (Edmondson, 1999), which is the freedom to speak without fear. It also provides job security and fair treatment.
- **Incentive (Team)**

At the team level, this includes both material rewards and social incentives. Do members feel the effort is fairly recognized? Are rewards individual-only (which risks competition) or shared?
- **Resource (Extended Group)**

The organization must provide adequate tools, budgets, time, and information. A team cannot feel effective if asked to “do more with less” indefinitely. Additionally, resources must be pragmatically distributed at the organizational level, aligning with the group's strategy.

**Managerial role:** Though much of this is HR-driven, managers must be **advocates**: fighting for resources, ensuring fairness in workload and rewards, and protecting psychological safety.

## 13. Row 2 – Social Levers: Autonomy, Collaboration, Cooperation

This is the **managerial zone**, where managers have the **most influence**.

- **Autonomy (Individual)**  
Framed freedom: letting employees choose *how* to reach objectives. Autonomy is not the absence of rules, but rather the ability to make meaningful choices.
- **Collaboration (Team)**  
Teams thrive when members share knowledge and support one another. Managers foster this through rituals (stand-ups, retrospectives), role rotation, and modeling collaboration themselves.
- **Cooperation (Extended Group)**  
Beyond the team, cooperation involves smooth communication and coordination between departments. Silos are poison. Managers act as **bridges**, building networks with other leaders and ensuring clear handovers.

**Positive contagion:** improving autonomy naturally fuels collaboration, which in turn facilitates cooperation across the organization.

## 14. Row 3 – Developmental Levers: Competence, Creativity, Innovation

This is the **commitment zone**. Once the foundation and social levers are in place, employees transition from compliance to engagement.

- **Competence (Individual)**  
Growth through training, coaching, and challenging assignments. Employees are motivated when they feel themselves becoming masters.
- **Creativity (Team)**  
Teams must feel safe to brainstorm, experiment, and take risks. Managers encourage creativity by rewarding experimentation and protecting teams from bureaucratic interference.

- **Innovation (Extended Group)**

Organizations institutionalize creativity by turning ideas into implemented solutions. This requires processes for prototyping, evaluating, and scaling.

**Managerial role:** Managers act as **coaches and sponsors**—supporting daily growth while championing team ideas to leadership.

## 15. Row 4 – Integrative Levers: Confidence, Purpose, Culture

At the top sits the **mission zone**, where mobilization transforms into identity and alignment.

- **Confidence (Individual)**

Confidence is the belief that one is competent, legitimate, and recognized as such. It is not arrogance, but a secure feeling of being able to act effectively in one's role, trusted by others and by the organization. When individuals have confidence, they dare to innovate, take risks, and express ideas without fear.

- **Purpose (Team)**

Beyond corporate mission statements, teams need their own shared sense of “why.” Purpose is the collective understanding of the unique contribution the team brings to the organization. Managers reinforce purpose by connecting daily tasks to meaningful outcomes for customers, society, or the company.

- **Culture (Extended Group)**

Culture defines “how things are done here.” It embodies values, rituals, and norms that guide behavior across the organization. A strong, authentic culture makes the organizational purpose tangible and meaningful. Leadership must model it, but every employee sustains it through daily practice.

**Managerial role:** Although culture is shaped by top leadership, **every manager is a cultural carrier**. Daily actions—such as how you handle mistakes, celebrate wins, or allocate resources—either reinforce or erode the culture. By nurturing confidence at the individual level, purpose at the team level, and culture at the organizational level, managers create the highest form of mobilization: mission.

## 16. Positive Contagion Between Drivers

The matrix is **dynamic**: drivers reinforce one another both horizontally and vertically.

- **Horizontally**: Autonomy fuels collaboration, which in turn fuels cooperation.
- **Vertically**: Solid resources (Row 1) enable competence growth (Row 3). Trust (Row 4) strengthens willingness for collaboration (Row 2).

This is why systemic motivation is so powerful: **a single intervention can trigger ripple effects throughout the system, while a failure in one cell can destabilize the entire system.**

The strategy is not to allocate the entire budget to a single driver. The systemic strategy aims to enable the harmonious development of motivation across all drivers, with reasonable equivalence between each driver.

## 17. Time as an Ally in Systemic Change

Systemic motivation is a **process, not an event.**

- Early results come quickly (novelty, clarity, leadership attention).
- Deep integration takes time (changing habits, spreading contagion, embedding in structures).

Managers must strike a balance **between quick wins and patience.** Sustainable transformation is a marathon, not a sprint.

## 18. Permanent Bi-Directional Feedback

The matrix's "nervous system" is **feedback**. Without it, no adaptation is possible.

- **Functional feedback (FFR rule)** – factual, frequent, reliable.
- **Social feedback (ApProPos rule)** – appropriate, proportional, positive.

Feedback must flow not only top-down but also bottom-up and peer-to-peer. Organizations where managers act on employee feedback experience a **nearly 28%** drop in turnover (Gallup, 2021).

*More details in Chapter 22.*

## 19. Primary Drivers at Each Level

In the Systemic Motivation Model, three drivers are particularly decisive:

- **Signs of recognition** (Individual level)
- **Management by challenge** (Team level)
- **Shared strategy** (Organizational level)

These are the **primary drivers**. They act as *trust stabilizers*: when strong, they reinforce all other drivers; when weak, the system struggles to function.

### Signs of Recognition (Individual)

- Recognition = visible acknowledgement of a person's contribution (verbal, non-verbal, symbolic).
- Builds confidence and encourages autonomy and competence.
- **Gallup (2016)**: Weekly recognition makes employees 5x more engaged.
- **Implication**: Give recognition often, authentically, and in proportion to the effort.

## Management by Challenge (Team)

- Challenge = ambitious but achievable goals that energize teams.
- Without challenge, stagnation; with too much, burnout.
- **Locke & Latham (2002)**: Challenging, specific goals increase performance.
- **Implication**: Use SMART goals, provide autonomy/resources, celebrate learning.

## Shared Strategy (Organization)

- Shared strategy = vision understood, co-owned, and lived across the company.
- Aligns cooperation, resources, and purpose.
- **MIT Sloan (2017)**: only 28% of employees understand their company's strategy.
- **Implication**: Managers must translate strategy into a clear, concrete meaning for their teams.

## Conclusion of Part III

The **Systemic Motivation Model** provides managers with a **map of levers**. It turns motivation from a mysterious internal state into a **system of drivers and interactions**. With this framework, managers can:

- Diagnose motivational breakdowns precisely.
- Target interventions where they matter most.
- Understand contagion effects across the system.
- Shift responsibility from “blaming individuals” to **systemic problem-solving**.

When managers apply the matrix, they transition from being controllers of resources to **designers of ecosystems**—creating conditions where people are not only motivated but also **mobilized to excel**.

# Tools, Games, and Applications



## 20. The “Engage Yourself” Serious Game

### Purpose of the Game

“Engage Yourself” is a **serious game** designed to reveal the **individual motivational drivers** of each participant. Unlike traditional personality tests or abstract surveys, this tool uses a tangible and playful method to make motivations visible and discussable.

Its objective is simple: to help individuals understand what stimulates them at work and allow managers and teams to integrate these insights into their daily practices.

Each card has **examples** to help participants interpret what the driver means in concrete terms.

### The Game Process

#### 1. Selection of Themes

Each participant receives 12 cards and selects the **seven most essential themes** related to their current work situation.

#### 2. Ranking of Priorities

The seven selected cards are placed in order of importance, from left (less critical) to right (most important).

#### 3. Satisfaction Evaluation

Participants adjust the position of cards vertically to represent satisfaction:

- Neutral → card stays in line.
- Satisfied → card is moved upwards.
- Dissatisfied → card is moved downwards.

#### 4. Sharing and Reflection

Participants share their results with peers or the manager. The discussion explores which needs are met, which are not, and what actions could improve the situation.

#### 5. Optional Step

The facilitator may introduce theory: the link with Herzberg’s hygiene/motivation distinction or the self/team/organization orientation of drivers.

### Why It Works

- **Visual and tangible:** makes invisible drivers concrete.
- **Contextual:** Choices reflect the current job context, not an abstract personality.

- **Dialogue-based:** opens space for constructive conversations about needs.
- **Systemic:** reminds managers that drivers differ but can be mapped collectively.

## 21. The SMTP Model: Monitoring Motivation Over Time

The **SMTP model** offers managers a straightforward yet powerful way to monitor systemic motivation. It complements the 4x3 matrix by giving teams a **continuous feedback barometer** on four essential dimensions:

- **Satisfaction**
- **Mobilisation**
- **Trust**
- **Pride**

Unlike annual engagement surveys, SMTP is designed to be **regular, lightweight, and actionable**.

### 1. Satisfaction – What I Receive

**Definition:** Satisfaction is a personal evaluation of what my job, my team, and my company are **providing to me**.

- This includes material conditions (tools, pay), relational climate (respect, atmosphere), and organizational resources (policies, structures).
- It answers the question: *“Am I receiving what I need to do my work well?”*

**Evidence:**

- Herzberg (1966) demonstrated that “hygiene factors,” such as pay and working conditions, don’t motivate, but rather their absence creates dissatisfaction.

- ETUI surveys (2019) report that more than 30% of European workers feel their job conditions limit their efficiency.

## 2. Mobilisation – What I Give

**Definition:** Mobilisation is a personal evaluation of what I **want to achieve through my job, for my team, and for my company.**

- It captures my willingness to contribute effort, ideas, and energy.
- It answers: “*How much am I prepared to invest in my work and my colleagues right now?*”

### Evidence:

- Ryan & Deci (2000) distinguish controlled vs. autonomous motivation. The SMTP dimension measures the individual’s *current intention to contribute*.
- Gallup (2021) found that in Europe, only 13% of employees describe themselves as “engaged” — willing to give discretionary effort.

## 3. Trust – What I Can Share

**Definition:** Trust is the individual feeling of **capacity to share my opinion, to provide solutions, to object, and to participate openly** — at the level of my job, my team, my department, and the company.

- Without trust, employees stay silent (the “silent disengagement” syndrome).
- With trust, they become active contributors to improvement and innovation.

### Evidence:

- Edmondson (1999): teams with psychological safety (a form of trust) learn faster and make fewer critical errors.
- Google’s Project Aristotle confirmed trust/safety as the #1 predictor of team success.

## 4. Pride – What I Show

**Definition:** Pride is the personal pleasure of **sharing my activities with others inside and outside the company**. It reflects not only satisfaction with my role but also my joy in being part of *this* organization.

- Pride is expressed when employees talk positively about their work to family, friends, or on social media.
- It answers: *“Do I feel proud to be seen as part of this team and this company?”*

### Evidence:

- Aon (2022) engagement report: Pride is one of the strongest predictors of employee advocacy and long-term retention.
- Bain & Company (2022): Employees who feel proud of their company are 3.5 times more likely to recommend it as a workplace.

## 5. Practical Usage Examples of SMTP for Managers

### 1. Weekly Team Check-In (Satisfaction & Mobilisation)

- How: At the end of a weekly alignment meeting, ask two quick questions anonymously on a digital board (Mentimeter, Slido, MS Forms):
- Satisfaction: “Do you feel you have what you need this week to do your job?”
- Mobilisation: “How much energy are you willing to invest in the team’s work this week?”
- Manager’s Use: If several people score low, you may need to escalate the issue of missing tools/resources. If Mobilisation is low, explore factors such as workload, fatigue, or clarity of goals.

### 2. Monthly Trust Pulse

- How: During retrospectives, ask the team to rate: “Do you feel safe raising concerns or sharing new ideas in this team?” (scale 1–5).
- Manager’s Use: If scores drop, open a conversation: “What would help you feel safer to speak up?”. It could reveal hidden conflicts, excessive pressure, or a lack of psychological safety.

### 3. Pride Temperature at Town Halls

- How: Once per month, use a quick poll: “Would you recommend this company as a great place to work?”
- Manager’s Use: Low pride scores may indicate that the team feels disconnected from the company’s strategy or values. The manager can use

storytelling (why the project matters, impact on customers/society) to rebuild pride.

#### 4. Tracking Trends Over Time

- How: Keep a simple Excel/Notion/whiteboard chart where you log weekly Satisfaction/Motivation and monthly Trust/Pride.
- Manager's Use:
  - A drop in Satisfaction = missing resources or poor conditions.
  - A drop in Motivation = fatigue, unclear priorities, or disengagement.
  - A drop in Trust = a psychological safety issue.
  - A drop in Pride = an identity crisis with the company. Tracking makes you proactive instead of reactive.

#### 5. Linking SMTP to 1:1 Conversations

- How: In individual 1:1s, reference the SMTP scores:
- "I noticed your mobilisation has been lower these last two weeks. Do you want to share what's behind it?"
- Manager's Use: Opens up a dialogue without judgment, showing employees that feedback is noticed and acted upon.

#### 6. Action-Feedback Loop

- How: After measuring, always close the loop:
- Share the aggregated results with the team.
- Highlight one concrete improvement you will act upon.
- Manager's Use: Builds trust in the process — employees see that their feedback is not ignored but used to improve their environment.

**Key Mindset for Managers:** SMTP isn't about measuring people — it's about measuring the climate in which people work. A manager who tracks it regularly sends the message: "Your voice matters, and we're adjusting together."

## 6. Why SMTP Works

- **Balance:** It measures both *inputs received* (Satisfaction) and *energy given* (Motivation).
- **Voice:** It captures whether employees feel free to speak (Trust).
- **Identity:** It reflects the long-term emotional connection to the company (Pride).
- **Practicality:** Simple to measure, easy to discuss, actionable for managers.

## 22. Feedback as the Nervous System of Motivation

### Two Types of Feedback

#### 1. Functional Feedback (FFR rule)

- Factual, Frequent, Reliable.
- Focus on data and performance improvement.
- Example: “Your adjustment reduced downtime by 10%.”

#### 2. Social Feedback (ApProPos rule)

- Appropriate, Proportional, Positive.
- Focus on recognition and emotional support.
- Example: “The way you welcomed the new colleague really helped the team.”

### Bi-Directionality Is Essential

Feedback must not only flow downward but also **upward and sideways**. When employees feel their voice matters, **trust and confidence grow**, and managers gain more accurate information.

- *Stat:* Gallup (2021) found that companies where managers act on employee feedback experience a 28% decrease in **turnover**.

**Managerial tip:** Use team retrospectives not only to discuss processes but also to solicit upward feedback about leadership and organizational effectiveness.

## 23. D-Agnostic Tools for Managers

The **Systemic Motivation Health Scan** is a structured questionnaire based on the **4×3 Systemic Motivation Matrix**.

This questionnaire helps managers identify areas of weakness in relation to the model and prepare their upgrade strategy.

### Expanded Question Bank (1–5 scale)

#### Row 1: **Safety, Incentives, Resources**

- **Safety (Individual):** “I feel safe to express my opinions without fear of negative consequences.”
- **Resources (Team):** “Our team has the materials and tools we need to do our work properly.”
- **Incentives (Organization):** “The recognition and reward systems feel fair and motivating.”

#### Row 2: **Autonomy, Collaboration, Cooperation**

- **Autonomy (Individual):** “I have the freedom to choose how I organize and deliver my work.”
- **Collaboration (Team):** “We share responsibilities and help each other when needed.”
- **Cooperation (Organization):** “Other departments and leaders support our work constructively.”

#### Row 3: **Competence, Creativity, Innovation**

- **Competence (Individual):** “I have opportunities to grow my skills and expertise.”
- **Creativity (Team):** “We are encouraged to test new ideas without fear of failure.”
- **Innovation (Organization):** “The company actively invests in exploring new ways of working.”

#### Row 4: **Confidence, Purpose, Culture**

- **Confidence (Individual – Self-Confidence):** “I believe in my ability to perform my job well.”
- **Purpose (Team):** “Our team has a clear and meaningful reason to exist.”
- **Culture (Organization):** “The values of the company align with what matters to me.”

## Manager's Template

### Step 1 – Collect Data

Distribute the questionnaire in a team workshop or anonymously online. Encourage people to reflect on their **personal self-confidence** as well as collective dimensions.

### Step 2 – Aggregate Results

- Average scores by row and column.
- Highlight areas below 3.0 as **weak spots**.
- Pay attention to confidence: low self-confidence often signals deeper issues with feedback, recognition, or opportunities for development.

### Step 3 – Facilitate Conversation

Ask guiding questions:

- *Which situations at work boost your confidence the most?*
- *Where do you feel less confident and why?*
- *What could we do as a team to strengthen your self-belief?*
- *How does our purpose or culture influence your confidence at work?*

### Step 4 – Define Actions

For low confidence:

- Encourage skill-building (training, mentoring).
- Celebrate small wins to strengthen belief in abilities.
- Provide constructive, fact-based feedback.
- Create psychological safety: mistakes are learning opportunities.

## Scientific Validation

- **Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1977)**: Confidence in one's ability strongly predicts motivation, persistence, and performance.
- **Gallup Q12 (1998)**: Engagement rises when people know what's expected of them and believe they can deliver.
- **Herzberg (1966)**: Growth and recognition are core motivators — both directly tied to confidence.
- **Hackman (2002)**: Team effectiveness is higher when individuals feel competent and supported, which fuels confidence.

## 24. G.P.S. — Goal & Proofs of Success

The GPS tool is derived from the OKR method, which was popularised by John Doerr in his book *\*Measure What Matters\**.

The OKR method aims to set objectives for a team or department. In the case of GPS, it is the individual who is assigned a specific goal within a specified timeframe.

### The steps involved in implementing a GPS.

#### The definition workshop.

- The goal is defined by the team within the framework of its team objectives, and is validated by the individual assigned to it.
- The Proofs of Success, meanwhile, are defined by the individual assigned the task and are validated by the team.

This will therefore be a design workshop that can be carried out in two stages:

- the first stage to define the goals of each team member,
- the second stage to define the 3 or 4 Proofs of Success for each goal.

#### The review session

At the end of the period defined for each GPS (ensuring that they all have a 'synchronisable' duration), a results presentation session will allow everyone to confirm the success of their goal, or to explain any delays.

These meetings take place exclusively at team level. No one outside the team should attend, with the exception of a possible external facilitator who is neutral and free from any influence.

## 25. Integrating Tools into Daily Management

### How Managers Can Apply These Tools

- Use **Engage Yourself** to identify individual factors, preferably during individual coaching or a face-to-face interview.
- Use **SMTP** on a weekly and monthly basis to monitor team trends.
- Use the **systemic feedback rules** daily to build trust, a sense of belonging, and ensure knowledge sharing about progress made.

- Use the **Health Scan** twice a year to evaluate systemic conditions.

Together, these tools transform motivation from an abstract concern into a **practical, daily management tool**.

## Conclusion of Part IV

Tools such as **Engage Yourself, SMTP, and systemic feedback practices** give managers **concrete levers** to apply the systemic model. They enable a shift from abstract discussions (“how do I motivate my people?”) to **structured conversations about drivers, satisfaction, and mobilization**.

By combining these tools, managers become facilitators of motivation, capable of sustaining energy not through pressure or bonuses, but through **clarity, fairness, and recognition**.

# Implementation and Change Management

## 25. Time as an Ally in Systemic Change

Implementing systemic motivation is **not a quick fix**. It requires a shift in habits, culture, and organizational design. Managers must understand the **temporal dynamics**:

- **Early wins** are common: novelty, leadership attention, and clarity of roles often create a boost.
- **Deep integration** takes longer, involving changes to habits, the spread of practices across teams, and the embedding of new rituals into the organizational culture.

### Why Patience Matters

- **Behavioral inertia**: People don't change long-standing routines overnight.
- **Social contagion**: Motivation spreads through observation and imitation. Early-adopting teams influence others only gradually.
- **Structural embedding**: For change to last, it must be anchored in HR policies, performance reviews, and daily management practices.

**Managerial advice**: Celebrate quick wins, but communicate openly that the *fundamental transformation* is a long-term effort. Remind teams: *"We're not running a sprint; we're building a new way of working."*

## 26. Avoiding the Trap of Rules and KPIs

When faced with underperformance or stress, organizations often react by **adding new rules and KPIs**. This instinct feels reassuring: more control equals more safety. But in reality, it often undermines motivation.

## Goodhart's Law

*"When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure."*

When metrics dominate:

- Employees **game the system**: focusing on numbers, not purpose.
- Collaboration breaks down: individual KPIs encourage competition.
- Innovation suffers: risky experiments are avoided.
- Ethics decline: shortcuts and cheating emerge.

### Case Example:

In the UK's National Health Service, strict waiting-time targets led hospitals to prioritize "meeting the number" rather than patient well-being. Staff spent time moving patients between departments to reset the waiting clock, instead of improving care quality.

### Systemic Alternative

- Use KPIs as **dials for learning**, not **switches for punishment**.
- Focus on a **few key metrics that align with your purpose**.
- Create **psychological safety**: mistakes are data for learning, not reasons for blame.

**Managerial reflection question:** When you present metrics, do your team members view them as a *tool for progress* or as a *means of control*?

## 27. Shared Systemic Responsibility

A common trap is the **blame game**:

- Employees blame managers for bad leadership.
- Managers blame employees for a poor attitude.
- Everyone blames HR for bad policies.

The **Systemic Motivation Model** replaces blame with **shared responsibility**:

- **Individual (40%)** – responsible for self-awareness, development, and communication of needs.
- **Manager (40%)** – responsible for clarity, resources, recognition, and team climate.

- **Organization (20%)** – responsible for fair policies, strategy, and cultural alignment.

### Why This Distribution?

- Individuals are most closely aligned with their own motivation. They must articulate needs and engage in self-growth.
- Managers have the most immediate influence: they create the team environment.
- Organizations set the stage: pay structures, values, and long-term strategy.

## 28. Leadership Role: From Controller to Designer

Traditional leadership sees the manager as a **controller of resources and people**. Systemic leadership reframes the role: the manager is a **designer of motivational ecosystems**.

- Instead of “pushing” people, managers **design conditions** that allow mobilization to emerge naturally.
- Instead of controlling, they **facilitate collaboration and feedback**.
- Instead of focusing on rules, they **nurture confidence, purpose, and culture**.

**Metaphor:** You cannot force a plant to grow by pulling its leaves. You can only prepare the soil, provide consistent sunlight, and water. Growth happens by itself.

## 29. Sustaining Motivation Through Rituals

Change sticks when it becomes a ritual. Managers can anchor systemic motivation in daily or weekly practices:

- **Team retrospectives:** Discuss not just work processes but feelings of usefulness, fairness, effectiveness, and belonging.
- **Recognition rituals:** End meetings by recognizing contributions, big or small.
- **Learning routines:** Weekly “skill swaps” where colleagues teach each other.

- **Feedback loops:** Use FFR and ApProPos rules systematically.

## Conclusion of Part V

Implementing systemic motivation requires both **urgency and patience**: urgency to secure foundations and quick wins, patience to embed systemic practices over time.

Managers must resist the temptation of control through rules and instead embrace **shared responsibility**. By shifting their role from controller to **ecosystem designer**, they create environments that foster mobilization.

Sustainability comes from **rituals**: small, repeated actions that make systemic motivation a natural part of organizational life.

Part VI

# Case Studies and Evidence

## A. Why Case Studies Matter

Theory alone does not change managerial behavior. Managers in contact with production teams need **proof that the model works in authentic contexts**. Case studies offer this proof. They demonstrate how systemic motivation has been applied, the challenges faced, and the measurable results achieved.

They also help managers adapt the model to their own environment: *“If it worked in a logistics warehouse or a factory line, I can apply it in my team.”*

## B. European Case Studies

### Case 1: Volvo Cars – Ghent (Belgium)

- **Challenge:** Assembly line workers reported disengagement and high turnover, despite competitive pay.
- **Action:** Volvo introduced **self-managing teams** with autonomy to adapt workflows within quality standards. Team leaders were trained to use feedback loops and recognition rituals.
- **Result:** Defect rates fell by 15%, absenteeism decreased, and internal surveys showed higher feelings of **confidence and usefulness** (Volvo Annual Report, 2019).
- **Lesson:** Autonomy within clear frames fosters responsibility and pride in quality.

### Case 2: KBC Group – Digital Tools (Belgium)

- **Challenge:** Employees expressed motivation in principle, but complained about inefficiency due to outdated tools.
- **Action:** KBC invested in modern digital infrastructure and created **cross-functional cooperation channels**.
- **Result:** Mobilization increased significantly: employees reported fewer frustrations, and time-to-completion on routine tasks dropped by 20% (*HR Square*, 2021).
- **Lesson:** Material and resource foundations (Row 1) must be secured before higher-level drivers can function.

### Case 3: Engie – Energy Transition (France)

- **Challenge:** Employees struggled to see the usefulness of their daily work in the company’s new green strategy.

- **Action:** Management connected team projects explicitly to sustainability goals and invited employees to co-create initiatives (e.g., reducing CO<sub>2</sub> in operations).
- **Result:** Surveys showed a rise in **purpose and belonging**. Turnover in project teams fell by 12%.
- **Lesson:** Purpose becomes real only when linked to **concrete actions**, not slogans.

#### Case 4: Spotify – The Squad/Tribe Model (Sweden)

- **Challenge:** Rapid growth risked losing agility and employee motivation.
- **Action:** Spotify reorganized into **squads (small teams), tribes (collections of squads), and chapters (competency groups)**. This respected Dunbar's number by keeping teams small and autonomous.
- **Result:** The model sustained innovation speed and became a benchmark for agile organizations worldwide.
- **Lesson:** Large organizations must break down into **networks of small, autonomous teams** to preserve motivation.

## C. International Examples

#### Google – Project Aristotle (Global)

- **Finding:** Psychological safety was the #1 factor for team effectiveness.
- **Relevance:** Confirms **Row 1 – Safety** as the non-negotiable base.

#### Patagonia – Purpose-Driven Culture (USA)

- **Practice:** Aligning all activities with ecological values. Employees see their work as contributing to societal good.
- **Relevance:** Illustrates **Row 4 – Purpose & Culture** at its strongest.

#### Mayo Clinic – Team-Based Healthcare (USA)

- **Practice:** Patient care is managed by cross-functional teams, emphasizing collaboration over individual heroics.

- **Result:** Higher patient satisfaction and lower staff burnout.
- **Relevance:** Shows the power of **team-level collaboration and confidence** in complex, high-pressure environments.

## D. Evidence from Research

- **Stewart (2006)** meta-analysis: team interventions have a stronger performance impact than individual-level actions.
- **Van den Broeck et al. (2010):** satisfaction of autonomy, competence, and relatedness predicts engagement and reduces burnout across Europe.
- **Bain & Company (2022):** fewer than 30% of European employees feel fully included → urgency of addressing belonging.
- **Gallup (2021):** responding to employee feedback reduces turnover by nearly 28%.
- **EY (2023):** only 6% of employees feel free from inequity → fairness remains a major challenge.

## E. Lessons Learned Across Cases

1. **Secure the foundations first:** no higher-level mobilization without fair pay, safety, and resources.
2. **Autonomy is the strongest managerial lever:** when appropriately framed, it increases responsibility and initiative.
3. **Purpose must be concrete:** vague mission statements don't mobilize—tangible links to daily work do.
4. **Feedback loops sustain energy:** SMTP and systemic feedback rules keep motivation alive over time.
5. **Small teams are key:** 5–9 members, supported by hybrid reward systems, are the driving force behind systemic motivation.
6. **Culture is lived daily:** leaders model it, managers embody it, and teams carry it.

## F. Future Directions

The field of motivation is evolving rapidly:

- **AI and personalization:** tools can now adapt recognition and learning opportunities to individual profiles.
- **Gamification:** games like *Engage Yourself* are spreading as tools to openly discuss motivation.
- **Societal and ecological challenges:** younger generations expect organizations to align with global concerns (climate, equity). Purpose-driven culture will become a competitive necessity, not a luxury.

## Conclusion of Part VI

The evidence is clear: **systemic motivation works**. Organizations across Europe and the world have demonstrated measurable benefits: fewer accidents, lower turnover, more innovation, and higher commitment.

The key is not to search for the “magic formula of motivation,” but to **design ecosystems** where confidence, purpose, and culture flourish, where small teams thrive, and where feedback loops keep energy alive.

Systemic motivation is not only a managerial tool; it is a philosophy of leadership for the 21st century: pragmatic, human-centered, and sustainable.

# Appendices

## Appendix A – Diagnostic Tools for Managers

### 1. Systemic Motivation Health Scan

A practical questionnaire to diagnose team conditions. Rate each item from **1 (Strongly Disagree)** to **5 (Strongly Agree)**.

Row	Driver	Question
Row 1 Foundation	Safety	"I feel safe to express my opinions without fear."
	Incentive	"Our team's recognition and rewards feel fair."
	Resource	"We have the tools and information we need to do our job."
Row 2 Social Levers	Autonomy	"I can decide how to best achieve my work goals."
	Collaboration	"Team members readily help and share knowledge."
	Cooperation	"Our team collaborates smoothly with other teams."
Row 3 Developmental Levers	Competence	"I am regularly given opportunities to develop my skills."
	Creativity	"Our team is encouraged to test new ideas."
	Innovation	"Good ideas from our team are implemented by the organization."
Row 4 Mission Zone	Confidence	"I feel competent and legitimate in my role."
	Purpose	"Our team has a clear and meaningful 'why'."
	Culture	"I feel our company's culture aligns with our daily practices."

## How to Use It

- Apply in retrospectives or workshops.
- Identify the lowest average score.
- Design one targeted action in that driver.

## 2. SMTP Mini-Barometer

Quick weekly/monthly team check-in:

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Satisfaction	“Are you satisfied with your work conditions this week?”	Weekly
Mobilisation	“Do you feel motivated to give your best this week?”	Weekly
Trust	“Do you trust your manager and organization to support you?”	Monthly
Pride	“Are you proud to be part of this team/company?”	Monthly

### Exercise A1 – Health Scan in Action

Complete the Health Scan for your team (or create one).

- Which row scores lowest?
- Which systemic lever could you influence tomorrow as a manager?

## Appendix B – Glossary of Key Concepts

Concept	Definition
<b>Motivation</b>	Invisible psychological energy to act.
<b>Mobilization</b>	Observable behavior of effort, initiative, and persistence.
<b>Systemic Motivation Model</b>	4x3 matrix of drivers across individual, team, organization.
<b>Confidence</b>	Belief in one's competence and legitimacy in the role.
<b>Purpose</b>	The shared "why" that gives meaning to a team's work.
<b>Culture</b>	The lived norms, rituals, and values of an organization.
<b>Goodhart's Law</b>	"When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure."
<b>FFR Feedback</b>	Functional feedback: factual, frequent, reliable.
<b>ApProPos Feedback</b>	Social feedback: appropriate, proportional, positive.
<b>SMTP</b>	Monitoring framework: Satisfaction, Mobilisation, Trust, Pride.
<b>Engage Yourself</b>	Serious game revealing motivational drivers with 12 cards.

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## Appendix C – Further Reading and Resources

- **Deci & Ryan (2000)** – *Self-Determination Theory: Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness*.
- **Herzberg (1966)** – *Two-Factor Theory: Motivation vs. Hygiene Factors*.
- **Adams (1965)** – *Equity Theory*.
- **Edmondson (1999)** – *Psychological Safety in Teams*.
- **Graeber (2018)** – *Bullshit Jobs: The Theory*.
- **Stewart (2006)** – *Meta-analysis of team-level interventions*.
- **Van den Broeck et al. (2010)** – *SDT applied in Europe (119,000 participants)*.
- **Gallup Reports (2021–2023)** – *Global engagement & feedback data*.
- **Bain & Company (2022)** – *Inclusion and belonging at work (Europe)*.
- **EY (2023)** – *Fairness survey (Europe)*.

### Web Resources

- *MotivAtWork.com* official website – resources, articles, and certification info.
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- European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) – surveys on job satisfaction and usefulness.
  - Project Aristotle (Google) – psychological safety case study.
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## **Appendix D – Reflection Templates**

### **1. Personal Reflection – My Drivers**

- Which three drivers matter most to me right now?
- How satisfied am I with each?
- What one action could I take to improve satisfaction?

### **2. Team Reflection – Our Zone**

- Which row (Foundation, Social, Developmental, Mission) is strongest in our team?
- Which is weakest?
- What is one ritual we could start to reinforce the weakest row?

### **3. Manager Reflection – My Role**

- Do I act more as a controller or an ecosystem designer?
  - Which ritual could help me strengthen my “designer” role?
- 

### **Exercise A2 – End-of-Training Reflection**

Fill in the three reflection templates above.

Discuss in small groups:

- Where are your biggest growth opportunities as a manager?
  - Which tool (Engage Yourself, SMTP, Feedback, Health Scan) will you apply first in your team?
-

## Appendix E - Why the Spiritual Family of Motivators Is Omitted.

Several academic studies on human motivation propose a **fifth family of motivators: the spiritual dimension**. This dimension refers to the quest for meaning, transcendence, and connection to something greater than oneself. It can be expressed through religious belief, philosophical practice, or a personal sense of spiritual growth.

Although important for many individuals, the **Systemic Motivation approach** deliberately chose not to include this spiritual family as a formal category. The reasons are primarily linked to the **religious and philosophical aspects** of spirituality:

1. **A Field Beyond Managerial Responsibility**

Religion and spirituality are considered private matters belonging to individuals. They are deeply personal and often shaped by cultural, family, and societal traditions. Asking managers or organizations to influence or evaluate this dimension would go far beyond their legitimate role and could create ethical, cultural, or even legal risks.

2. **The Risk of Confusion Between Belief and Work Context**

Spiritual motivations are highly diverse and sometimes incompatible. Integrating them into a managerial framework could lead to favoritism, exclusion, or unintended conflicts. The Systemic Motivation model aims to provide **universal and neutral drivers** that can be applied in any workplace, regardless of employees' beliefs or worldviews.

3. **Purpose Is Already Addressed Within the Societal Family**

One of the central elements of the spiritual dimension—the search for **purpose**—is explicitly integrated in the **societal family of motivators**. Here, purpose is understood not as a transcendental quest, but as the sense of contributing to a collective goal, serving others, or advancing values shared within the organization and society. In this way, the model acknowledges the power of meaning at work, while keeping it rooted in the professional and social sphere.

By keeping the **spiritual family outside of the framework**, the Systemic Motivation approach maintains its **practical focus**: helping managers, HR professionals, and coaches act effectively on the motivational environment, without overstepping into areas that belong to personal life, religion, or philosophy.