

Victor Vroom: Expectancy Theory of Motivation

[Expectancy Theory of Motivation \(managementstudyguide.com\)](http://managementstudyguide.com)

The expectancy theory was proposed by **Victor Vroom** of Yale School of Management in 1964. Vroom stresses and focuses on outcomes, and not on needs unlike Maslow and Herzberg. The theory states that the intensity of a tendency to perform in a particular manner is dependent on the intensity of an expectation that the performance will be followed by a definite outcome and on the appeal of the outcome to the individual.

The **Expectancy theory** states that employee's motivation is an outcome of how much an individual wants a reward (**Valence**), the assessment that the likelihood that the effort will lead to expected performance (**Expectancy**) and the belief that the performance will lead to reward (**Instrumentality**).

In short, **Valence** is the significance associated by an individual about the expected outcome. It is an expected and not the actual satisfaction that an employee expects to receive after achieving the goals.

Expectancy is the faith that better efforts will result in better performance. Expectancy is influenced by factors such as possession of appropriate skills for performing the job, availability of right resources, availability of crucial information and getting the required support for completing the job.

Instrumentality is the faith that if you perform well, then a valid outcome will be there. Instrumentality is affected by factors such as believe in the people who decide who receives what outcome, the simplicity of the process deciding who gets what outcome, and clarity of relationship between performance and outcomes. Thus, the expectancy theory concentrates on the following three relationships:

Vroom was of view that employees consciously decide whether to perform or not at the job. This decision solely depended on the employee's motivation level which in turn depends on three factors of **expectancy, valence and instrumentality**.

Advantages of the Expectancy Theory

- It is based on self-interest individual who want to achieve maximum satisfaction and who wants to minimize dissatisfaction.
- This theory stresses upon the expectations and perception; what is real and actual is immaterial.
- It emphasizes on rewards or pay-offs.
- It focuses on psychological extravagance where final objective of individual is to attain maximum pleasure and least pain.

Limitations of the Expectancy Theory

- The expectancy theory seems to be idealistic because quite a few individuals perceive high degree correlation between performance and rewards.
- The application of this theory is limited as reward is not directly correlated with performance in many organizations. It is related to other parameters also such as position, effort, responsibility, education, etc.

Implications of the Expectancy Theory

The managers can correlate the preferred outcomes to the aimed performance levels.

The managers must ensure that the employees can achieve the aimed performance levels.

The deserving employees must be rewarded for their exceptional performance.

The reward system must be fair and just in an organization.

Organizations must design interesting, dynamic and challenging jobs.

The employee's motivation level should be continually assessed through various techniques such as questionnaire, personal interviews, etc.

McClelland's Human Motivation Theory

Discovering What Drives Members of Your Team

[McClelland's Human Motivation Theory - From MindTools.com](#)

One of your team members recently created a report that was so thorough and well-written that the board of directors asked you to make sure that she was praised for her efforts.

So, at your monthly staff meeting, you stood up in front of the group, and congratulated her on her achievement, and for the good impression she made for the team. However, instead of smiling and appreciating the attention, she looked embarrassed. She lowered her head, and as soon as she could, she left and went to her office.

What did you do wrong?

Managing a group of people with different personalities is never easy. But if you're managing or leading a team, it's essential to know what motivates your people, how they respond to feedback and praise, and what tasks fit them well. David McClelland's Human Motivation Theory gives you a way of identifying people's motivating drivers. This can then help you to give praise and feedback effectively, assign them suitable tasks, and keep them motivated.

Using McClelland's theory in the example above would have helped you structure your feedback for the person. You would have known that your team member's main motivational driver is affiliation, which means that she never wants to stand out in a crowd. So, your feedback would have been far more effective, and appreciated, if you had praised her in private.

In this article, we'll explore McClelland's Human Motivation Theory, and look at how you can use it to manage and lead your team more effectively.

Understanding McClelland's Theory

In the early 1940s, **Abraham Maslow** created his theory of needs. This identified the basic needs that human beings have, in order of their importance: physiological needs, safety needs, and the needs for belonging, self-esteem and "self-actualization".

Later, **David McClelland** built on this work in his 1961 book, "The Achieving Society." He identified **three motivators** that he believed we all have: a need for achievement, a need for affiliation, and a need for power. People will have different characteristics depending on their dominant motivator.

According to McClelland, these motivators are learned (which is why this theory is sometimes called the Learned Needs Theory).

McClelland says that, regardless of our gender, culture, or age, we all have three motivating drivers, and one of these will be our dominant motivating driver. This dominant motivator is largely dependent on our culture and life experiences.

These characteristics are as follows:

| Dominant motivator | Characteristics of this person |
|--------------------|---|
| Achievement | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has a strong need to set and accomplish challenging goals.• Takes calculated risks to accomplish their goals.• Likes to receive regular feedback on their progress and achievements.• Often likes to work alone. |
| Affiliation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wants to belong to the group.• Wants to be liked, and will often go along with whatever the rest of the group wants to do.• Favors collaboration over competition.• Doesn't like high risk or uncertainty. |

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|-------|--|
| Power | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants to control and influence others. • Likes to win arguments. • Enjoys competition and winning. • Enjoys status and recognition. |
|-------|--|

Using the Theory

McClelland's theory can help you to identify the dominant motivators of people on your team. You can then use this information to influence how you set goals and provide feedback, and how you motivate and reward team members.

You can also use these motivators to craft, or design, the job around your team members, ensuring a better fit.

Let's look at the steps for using McClelland's theory:

Step 1: Identify Drivers

Examine your team to determine which of the three motivators is dominant for each person. You can probably identify drivers based on personality and past actions.

For instance, perhaps one of your team members always takes charge of the group when you assign a project. He speaks up in meetings to persuade people, and he delegates responsibilities to others to meet the goals of the group. He likes to be in control of the final deliverables. This team member is likely primarily driven by the power.

You might have another team member who never speaks during meetings. She always agrees with the group, works hard to manage conflict when it occurs, and visibly becomes uncomfortable when you talk about doing high-risk, high-reward projects. This person is likely to have a strong need for affiliation.

Step 2: Structure Your Approach

Based on the driving motivators of your workers, structure your leadership style and project assignments around each individual team member. This will help ensure that they all stay engaged, motivated, and happy with the work they're doing.

Examples of Using the Theory

Let's take a closer look at how to manage team members who are driven by each of McClelland's three motivators:

Achievement

People motivated by achievement need challenging, but not impossible, projects. They thrive on overcoming difficult problems or situations, so make sure you keep them engaged this way. People motivated by achievement work very effectively either alone or with other high achievers.

When providing feedback, give achievers a fair and balanced appraisal. They want to know what they're doing right – and wrong – so that they can improve.

Affiliation

People motivated by affiliation work best in a group environment, so try to integrate them with a team (versus working alone) whenever possible. They also don't like uncertainty and risk. Therefore, when assigning projects or tasks, save the risky ones for other people.

When providing feedback to these people, be personal. It's still important to give balanced feedback, but if you start your appraisal by emphasizing their good working relationship and your trust in them, they'll likely be more open to what you say. Remember that these people often don't want to stand out, so it might be best to praise them in private rather than in front of others.

Power

Those with a high need for power work best when they're in charge. Because they enjoy competition, they do well with goal-oriented projects or tasks. They may also be very effective in negotiations or in situations in which another party must be convinced of an idea or goal.

When providing feedback, be direct with these team members. And keep them motivated by helping them further their career goals .