

# Having Trouble Motivating Others? Try WIIFM

By Della Menechella

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Recently my fourteen-year old son Matt dressed up as Santa Claus and attended a Christmas caroling event for one of my professional organizations. Was my son excited about the idea of spending one of his evenings singing to seniors instead of being with his friends? Not really. Then how did I get Matt to agree so readily to come to the event and play Santa? It was easy; I told him that after we finish caroling we all go back to our host facility and enjoy delicious food. That was enough for Matt. He heard the word food and was ready and willing to go. I could have tried to motivate Matt by telling him what a wonderful thing he would be doing by making so many people happy. While Matt is a caring teenager, that argument would not have been enough to get him to go. However, tell a teenage boy that there will be good food where you are going and you can get him to do almost anything. I motivated my son to participate in this activity by considering his WIIFM or What's In It For Me

During my workshops, managers and leaders often complain that many of the people in their groups are 'just not motivated.' This is not a true statement. Everyone is motivated by something. The trick is to find out what motivates an individual and demonstrate how he/she will gain that outcome by doing what you suggest. Find out his/her WIIFM. It is very difficult to lead people to move forward in thought or deed unless you connect it with what is important to them. People accept new ideas or take action only when they can see how they will benefit from what you are saying. To be persuasive, you must convince them of the benefits they will gain by adopting your ideas or doing what you recommend.

One of the big mistakes people make is to think that others are motivated by the same things that motivate us. This is rarely true. If we try to persuade others by what motivates us, our words will fall on deaf ears. We must find out what is important to the individual and then we will find they are all ears. Aristotle said, "The fool tells me his reason; the wise man persuades me with my own."

We might not always agree with what is important to another person, however, there should be no judgment placed on someone's motivation. People have a right to their own opinions. We need to take the time to discover what is important to the individual and then link it to where we want that person to go. A word of caution - when you are operating at the level of motivation, you are dealing with a person's closely held values. We must be sure this is a win-win situation for everyone concerned.

So the next time you have trouble motivating people, try to see it from their point of view. How can they benefit from what you want them to do? When you use WIIFM you will find that it is very easy and even enjoyable to motivate others because you are helping them get what they want while

simultaneously accomplishing your own objectives. As for my son, he is already planning to attend this year's caroling event because he wants to partake of that wonderful food.

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