
BOOK REVIEW

"Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us" by Daniel H. Pink

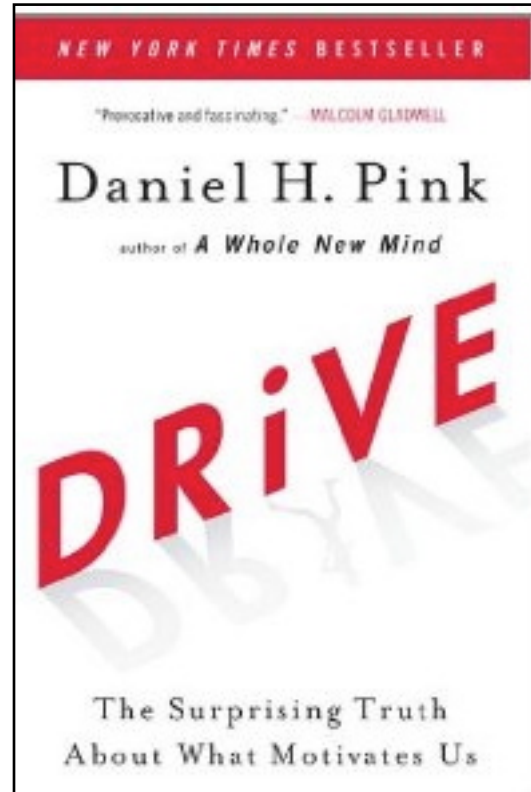
Published 2011

ISBN 13: 978-1594484803

ISBN 10: 1594484805

(Paperback for around US\$9.78 on www.amazon.com for a new copy; from US\$6.99 for a used copy; Kindle for \$8.04)

**Reviewed by Darryl Cross,
Leadership & Careers Coach
& psychologist**
www.DrDarryl.com



If you are a business owner, have you ever stopped to wonder what could be the one thing that could motivate your employees even more? Is it cash bonuses to top performers or is it a promise of a corner office to the most outstanding employee? If that's what you do, then you are just like many other businessmen who are always looking for ways in which they can inspire their employees to work even harder. Many entrepreneurs tend to think that the key to motivating and encouraging their employees

lies with giving tangible rewards, and in many cases, this doesn't always work too well. Well, if you have operated under this perception, there is something that you ought to know and you can find it in the book '*Drive - The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*'. This is an expertly-written book by Daniel H. Pink, a business writer who is always on a mission to give businessmen and profit-oriented organisations some insight on what to do to achieve greatness.

In this book, Pink argues convincingly that companies that offer tangible or extrinsic rewards to their workers as a means of motivation have it all wrong. He refers to a body of behavioral science research that advocates instead that optimal performance is more likely to be realised when employees find intrinsic meaning in what they do. He further points to various studies that can give you an idea of how incentives can, in fact, be counterproductive. He directs the readers to a particular experiment that was done in the 1960s by a psychologist, Sam Clucksberg at Princeton University. He gave out a test to a number of participants, whereby each one of them was given a candle, a matchbox and a box. They were then asked to light the candles and fix them to a wall using the boxes as platforms. Some participants were offered cash as an incentive to complete the task faster, and others were not offered any incentive. Guess what! Those participants that were offered incentives took longer to finish the task. Sam Clucksberg interpreted that focusing on the reward actually obstructed the volunteer's concentration on completing the task at hand.

In a more recent study that was done by researchers at Harvard Business School, a panel of artists and curators were asked to rate pieces of artwork for technical skill and creativity. The panel was not informed whether the works were commissioned or not. Surprisingly, the panel ranked the pieces that were commissioned lower in creativity than those that were not commissioned. Even though these studies somehow suggest that incentives tend to hamper performance, Pink admits that not all situations are same. It is, therefore, important for each organization to identify the things that can help workers find their intrinsic value to their work.

The author however, outlines three fundamental elements of intrinsic motivation which are: -

- **Autonomy:** - This is the ability to select what and how chores are completed.
- **Mastery:** - This is the process of becoming proficient at a specific activity.
- **Purpose:** - This is the desire to make a positive impact that will improve the world.

Drive – The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us also points out the type of businesses that promote the above values. An example of such businesses is Google as it gives its engineers the chance to choose what they would want to work on for about 20% of their time. This policy has facilitated the rise of popular products such as Google News among others. The author also gives the Montessori schools as an example citing how these schools allow kids to follow their natural instincts in self-directed activities. The author also suggests that one should design his or her own workout program instead of following someone else's. One can achieve best results if he or she gets to feel motivated to do something that he or she is passionate for, rather than feel like he/she is being forced to achieve those results.

This is an interesting read that will bring great insights to the way you relate to your employees. It is therefore an excellent resource if you have been looking for ways in which you can motivate your employees to become more productive.

(Dr Darryl is a clinical and organizational psychologist as well as a credentialed executive and personal coach. He is also an author, international speaker and university lecturer. Dr Darryl assists people to find their strengths and reach their goals. Further information on Dr Darryl can be accessed from www.DrDarryl.com.)