



The A-B-C's of Motivation

I'm beginning to hear it all the time. "Gee, Jerry, how do you motivate people to help make a Chapter Run? We can't get anybody do volunteer to do anything."

Let me share a technique or strategy that works for me. First, I have found that you can't typically make someone motivated. Rather, they have to light a fire from within themselves. As a leader or coach, you can make lighting that fire easier by following what I call the A-B-C's of Motivation.

The "A" stands for "Awareness". Too often I hear leaders complaining that they have to do all the work, when they haven't asked for help. And I don't mean standing up at the Chapter meeting and saying, "Who wants to mail out the newsletter?", or "Who wants to be our Rider Education person?" In my experience, such announcements and/or pleas are far less successful than approaching an individual and saying you'd working on a project, and you thought they could be a big help with it. When you ask for help, I have almost always found it better to ask Bob or Bill or Joan or Jill, than a big broadcast. Asking privately, personally gives you a chance to answer questions about it, and why you specifically wanted their help. Make your request personal, and, in my experience, you'll be more successful.

The "B" stands for "Benefits". What do I get for my help? Why would I want to do this? Not from a point of desperation: "Oh, Bob, we really need a newsletter editor, and I just don't know what we'll do with out one!" Instead, share why it might be fun. "Being Newsletter Editor puts you in touch with all the members. You'll be able to put your own personal touch in our communications, and you might be the key reason someone joins or re-news their membership in our Chapter!"

"C", in this case, stands for "Connections". When you're asking for help, or selling someone on the concept of a project, make sure you tell them that you'll get them help if they need it. The help is one of the critical aspects: you're not throwing them to the wolves, but walking beside them in the endeavor. I've seen folks take on all kinds of projects for the chance to get to know others in the Chapter better, especially if they confident they'll get the help they'll need.

Let me give you a real-world scenario where the A-B-C Motivation principle works. Let's say you want to get a new Chapter going somewhere. With the dozen or so folks who showed up for the ride and free hot-dogs you organized, you take the time to explain how you'd like to welcome them to the Gold Wing Touring Association. You walk through the benefits, the fun others have, and you have some personal success stories of your own. While you're serving up the hot dogs, you get a sense of the folks who are there, and their interest level. You quickly figure out that some of them are just there for the free hot dogs, but that a few of the others really like to ride, and might enjoy sharing the road with friends.

If you tried to say, "OK, who wants to be Chapter Director? It's the toughest job in the organization. You'll work like a dog, get no respect, and probably be burned out in six months," I doubt you'll get any takers.

Can I suggest another idea? Touch base with some of those who look like they'd like to participate, and say, "I know you probably don't want to be Chapter Director, but would you help someone else if they signed up?" Chances are much greater they'll say, "Sure." Find the next interested party and say, "I know you don't want to be Chapter Director, but you seem to really enjoy riding. If I find someone else to be Chapter Director, would you consider being the Ride Coordinator? You get to plan the rides when and where you want to go." Chances are they'll say, "Great." Take the same approach for some of the other various jobs. Then, when you reach the person your prior scouting looked like the most likely CD prospect, tell them, "Suzie will be Newsletter Editor, Bob will be Ride Coordinator, Bill and Sally will be the Assistant Chapter Directors. Wouldn't you like to work with a crew like that? They'll do those jobs, if you'll think about being CD. And, remember, I'll help you, too."

An over-simplification? Perhaps. But this same approach will work when you're trying to create a slate of officers for an existing chapter, too.

Awareness, Benefits, and Connections each go a long way to helping to light someone's internal fire of motivation. I hope you consider this approach on your way to Destination Friendship.

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