



**Dear Friends and Clients,**

One of the lessons of the Web is that thousands of people are willing to work long hours on a big project although the only compensation is enjoyment of the task. For example, Wikipedia, the free on-line encyclopedia created in 2001, now boasts more than 3 million articles contributed by volunteers scattered around the globe.

According to social media guru **Randy Rieland**, “Wikipedia has succeeded where traditional encyclopedias have failed because people enjoy watching the collaborative process. And those who know something about a subject like to weigh in and participate. Wikipedia has its share of problems, but it is still the most popular reference source on the Web and much of that has to do with its currency, fluidity, liveliness and collaboration.”

The Web has brought numerous examples of cooperative activity. Rieland points to social games, like Mafia Wars and Farmville, that are less about who wins and more about playing with others. Another big trend, he says, is that “smart companies like Coke and Pringles are using social media, like Facebook and YouTube, to allow fans to create content -- including videos and photos -- that celebrates the brand and has fun with it. And people do it for free because they like being part of the experience. Some of the most popular content on the Web has been created by users largely for the fun of it.”

Why do people work so hard on web-based projects, even though they may drag their feet at feet at the office? In his book, “**Drive**,” bestselling author **Daniel H. Pink** explores what motivates us to take up a project, even when there is no external reward like money. And that is what I’ll discuss in this issue.

Warm wishes, Bev

## **Encourage High Performance By Fostering True Motivation**

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According to Daniel H. Pink, Wikipedia has been extraordinarily successful because “it represents the most powerful new business model of the twenty-first century: open source.” In explaining the strength of open source projects, Pink cites research showing that contributors are motivated by the enjoyment they feel when they master a challenge in a creative way.

There is a role in the workplace for bonuses and other “carrot and stick” motivators, particularly for routine tasks. In his intriguing book “Drive”, Pink writes that “Rewards, by their very nature, narrow our focus...They help us stare ahead and race faster.”

But, Pink says, “For more right-brain undertakings – those that demand flexible problem-solving, inventiveness or conceptual understanding – contingent rewards can be dangerous.”

In other words, if a task is tedious the promise of a bonus upon completion may keep us hustling. But research suggests that an external “carrot” might actually chill our interest in a creative challenge, like participating in an open source project. What is more likely to get our juices flowing is the fun of working with others to create something new.

Pink describes decades of research, including in the field of “positive psychology,” that helps explain why intrinsic motivation is a key to stimulating high performance. Scholars have demonstrated that our activities are shaped by three powerful drives, he says. Human beings want to be:

- **Autonomous.** We are more likely to enjoy our work if we can do it in our own way and according to our own schedule. And we are more likely to perform well if we can choose our own team.
- **Competent.** We like to do things well. We are more likely to be creative if we find a project to be satisfying and challenging. And if we can find a profession where we want to improve at even the most mundane tasks – where we are willing to work toward mastery -- we are likely to be happy.
- **Connected.** We want to be part of something bigger than ourselves. Pink says, “Autonomous people working toward mastery perform at very high levels. But those who do so in the service of some greater objective achieve even more.” The “purpose motive” is a powerful source of energy.

But if you are trying to encourage a team to work smarter, don't think that the latest carrot-and-stick research suggests that you can abandon positive feedback. Praise can fan the fire of intrinsic motivation. You can motivate your colleagues by expressing sincere appreciation for the work they have just completed. And be honest and specific with your comments. Pink says that

feedback that focuses on specifics (like “great use of color”) can be highly effective in motivating performance.

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