

Motivational Fitness

A Practical Guide to Career Motivation and Workplace Transformation



Motivational Fitness

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What is Motivational Fitness?

Introduction

Most service businesses accept lagging engagement and steady turnover as a normal consequence of growth. However, they often overlook how motivation ultimately dictates productivity, loyalty, and innovation. When employees disconnect from their future, the company stalls.

Motivational fitness changes that equation. Like physical exercise builds strength, motivational fitness strengthens the drive that keeps people focused, resilient, and aligned with business goals. At its centre is the Ideal Vision of Yourself (IVY), a question every team member must answer: *Who am I becoming, and how does this align with the company I'm in?*

When personal IVYs mesh with corporate objectives, career growth fuels revenue growth. Individuals own their ambition, leaders guide rather than push, and teams move faster through market shifts. Organizations that practise motivational fitness foster continuous learning, transparent communication, and a culture where every employee sees a clear path forward. For over 20 years, this has been proven to increase quality, loyalty, productivity, growth, and profitability.

This book delivers a concise framework that works at both the individual and company levels. You will learn a three-step method to define an IVY, link daily actions with strategic goals, and maintain long-term momentum. The content stays brief and practical because busy owners and time-pressed managers do not have time for academic theory.

The book is divided into two parts.

Motivational Fitness for Individuals equips workers - front-line workers, managers, and founders - to define and chart personal progress.

Motivational Fitness for Organizations shows leaders how to weave these principles into hiring, planning, and daily operations so motivation becomes part of the system, not just an afterthought.

Motivation drives performance. Build it deliberately, and you and your business gain a competitive edge that lasts.



Motivational Fitness for individuals

Motivational Fitness for individuals

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1. Motivational fitness

Everyone has a vision of who they want to become. This vision drives ambition, career progression, and leadership potential. Motivational fitness is about defining that future vision of yourself and creating a strategic plan to achieve it. Whether you want to upgrade your skills, become service manager, or aim to become CEO, your vision will provide a framework for continuous growth and career success.

We call this vision your Ideal Vision of Yourself – or IVY for short. IVY is the driving force behind motivation and motivational fitness, shaping how you set goals, tackle challenges, and take meaningful action in your career. It aligns your career path with what truly motivates you.

Motivational fitness is built on having a strong IVY. If you think of IVY as a muscle, then strengthening it makes you more resilient, adaptable, and driven – making you motivationally fit to achieve your highest career potential.

To have a clear understanding of who you want to become, you may create what is called an “IVY statement”.

An IVY statement consists of three parts:

- 1 The first part defines who you envision yourself becoming. It often starts with the words, “I want to become...”.
- 2 The second part defines how you plan to get there. You may complete the phrase, “By working on my abilities in...”.
- 3 The third part defines why you want to become this future person. This part may start with, “So that I may benefit from...”.

Let's look at an IVY statement example:

1 - *"I want to become an effective leader in the field services industry."*

2 - *"By working on my decision-making skills and being more understanding of the needs of my teammates."*

3 - *"So that I may create a supportive network in my personal and my work life."*

You may create your IVY statement on paper, or you may want to use the free [ChatGPT app](#). This AI-powered virtual assistant will guide you through drafting your first IVY statement in just a few minutes.

Defining all three parts of your IVY statement helps to prevent the following issues.



1 - Knowing who you want to become in your life and career, and how you will get there, but without understanding your core reasons why this is important to you - and not only to others - can result in short-lived change.

2 - Having goals to achieve and knowing your reasons why you want to achieve them will move you forward; however, without the overarching direction provided by knowing who you are trying to become, you may achieve some degree of success in your career, however, you may experience little satisfaction.

3 - Knowing who you want to become and understanding the core reasons why will generate desire; however, if you do not have a plan, your progression forward is more likely to stall.

IVY may be applied to individuals as well as it may be applied to organizations, using the same three steps. In the first half of this book we focus on IVY as it relates to individuals and their careers. In the second half, we focus on applying IVY in an organization.

Observe: Do people in your life - your coworkers, your friends, and your family members - have a vision for their future? If you had to guess, what might be their IVY statements?

Action: Draft your first IVY statement. Try to complete the three parts. You don't need to show it to anyone. Do it for only yourself.

2. Not a goal

IVY is not a one-time achievement or a final destination – it is a framework for continuous career and personal growth. Our environment is never static. Job responsibilities evolve, industries shift, and therefore we must adapt. IVY represents an ongoing process of improvement, where we are constantly refining our vision, surpassing previous accomplishments, and pushing the boundaries of what we are capable of.

Rather than viewing IVY as a fixed goal with an endpoint, think of it as a strategic mindset that fuels long-term development. Simon Sinek’s concept of infinite vs finite game applies well here. “Finite players play to beat the people around them. Infinite players play to be better than themselves.” The infinite game encourages us to embrace new challenges, build new skills, and stay ahead of industry changes. This approach fosters resilience, adaptability, and a commitment to lifelong learning; qualities that define high-performing individuals and companies.

By understanding IVY’s dynamic nature, we can cultivate a mindset of continuous progress, where we are empowered to innovate, improve, and align our personal aspirations with career success. This ensures we remain motivated, and future-ready.

Observe: What happens to people after they achieve the goal they set out to accomplish?

Action: Adapt your draft IVY statement to be a journey you can always work toward. Avoid finite goals. Example: I want to continually improve my customer service skills.

3. Is for you

Prioritizing your own growth and well-being isn't selfish – it's essential for long-term success. The third part of an IVY statement, which focuses on personal benefit, is sometimes misunderstood as self-serving. However, just as strong leaders must develop themselves before effectively leading others, we must invest in our own motivation, skills, and well-being to make meaningful contributions to those around us.

IVY recognizes that self-improvement fuels broader success. When we are engaged, motivated, and continuously developing, we bring more energy, innovation, and resilience to our work. This mindset is what drives entrepreneurship, leadership excellence, and high-performing teams.

While an overly self-centered approach can create conflict, IVY is about strategic self-investment that ultimately benefits everyone. Teams thrive when employees and leaders take ownership of their career growth while also fostering collaboration and empathy. We create a sustainable balance – ensuring that both personal development and collective success move forward together.

Observe: If given permission to talk freely, in a safe space, will people you know talk about a future vision of themselves? If yes, how does this change their mood? If no, what do you feel is holding them back?

Action: Give yourself permission to wish for whatever IVY you want. Write it down. Do not hold back.

4. Not about values

In any group of people, success is driven by alignment, not necessarily by shared personal values. Being part of a team does not require everyone to think the same way or hold identical beliefs. While shared values can make collaboration smoother, they are not a prerequisite for working effectively toward a common goal. Any group of people can be aligned in their objectives even if they differ in opinions, work styles, political or personal perspectives.

When IVYs align, individuals are more likely to respect differences and focus on collective progress. This alignment fosters collaboration, allowing diverse teams to work effectively, even in environments where personal values may vary. Leaders who prioritize IVY alignment create workplaces where employees are motivated by shared aspirations rather than constrained by ideological uniformity.

Observe: Have you ever been in a highly motivated team? Did the members get hung up on religious, political, or cultural differences?

Action: Ask your coworkers what their values are. What might be the values of your company? Now, ask them where they are trying to get to as people.

5. Is flexible

Adaptability is key to long-term success, and the same principle applies to IVY. As individuals grow, gain experience, and navigate career changes, their IVY will naturally evolve. An IVY statement is not a rigid commitment - it's a dynamic tool that adjusts as personal and career priorities shift.

Successful individuals regularly reassess their direction. Just as businesses refine strategies in response to market changes, individuals should refine their IVY statements to reflect new goals, insights, and opportunities. It's normal to update your IVY statement multiple times over weeks, months, or years as circumstances change. The important thing is maintaining clarity on where you're headed and staying aligned with what motivates you.

If your current IVY statement starts feeling restrictive or out of sync with your reality, don't hesitate to revise it. You are in control of your own motivation, and adjusting your IVY is a sign of growth, not failure. Your IVY should always be current, intentional, relevant, and aligned with your evolving career.

Observe: Of the people you know who are motivated, are they always on the same path, or do they change their journey from time to time?

Action: Draft your IVY statement knowing you are free to change it at any time, thereby freeing you to imagine any future you desire.

6. To be shared

Success is rarely achieved in isolation. IVY fosters a mindset of openly sharing career aspirations and aligning with the goals of those around us. When individuals communicate their IVY, they create opportunities for collaboration, mentorship, and strategic support – key drivers of career and business growth.

Sharing your IVY within a team or organization allows colleagues, leaders, and partners to understand your direction and provide meaningful opportunities that align with your goals. Likewise, engaging with the IVY of others strengthens teamwork, fosters trust, and encourages people to actively contribute to each other's success.

People cannot help you, when they don't know what you need. But when they do know what you need, it may be a surprise to see how many will come to your aid.

Observe: What happens when you tell people what your IVY is?

Action: When someone asks you "What do you do?", instead of answering with a static 'I am a ____ at XYZ Ltd', answer with what you are working toward – your IVY statement.

7. Without judgement

Growth looks different for everyone. IVY statements are not meant to be judged or compared – they are personal road maps that evolve over time. Some may be highly refined, while others are just beginning to take shape. What matters is the intent behind them, not how polished they appear.

Everyone, from entry-level employees, to business owners, has an IVY that reflects their aspirations and growth trajectory. No path is inherently better or more valid than another. When we respect and support individual IVY statements we create an environment where everyone feels empowered to explore their potential without fear of criticism.

Prioritizing intent over perfection strengthens trust, inclusivity, and long-term motivation in personal and professional lives.

Observe: When you ask people who they are trying to become, notice how they respond and how this affects you – even if they have no answer.

Action: When asking people about their IVY, allow for those awkward moments of silence. That is when they are reflecting upon what might be a life-changing response. Just listen patiently, through the silence.

8. Puts you in control

In today's workplace, top performers don't wait for motivation to come from external sources - they take ownership of their career growth. IVY empowers individuals to drive their own success, rather than relying on others to provide external motivation. When individuals actively shape their career paths, they become more engaged, resilient, and adaptable to change, irrespective of what that path is.

With IVY, you are in control of your own progress. Instead of outsourcing your motivation to others, and passively following predefined career trajectories, you can take the lead in decision-making, skill development, and your workplace contributions. This perspective alone provides a significant motivational boost.

This shift toward personal accountability creates stronger workers and high-performing teams. This is a win-win scenario: You see your work as an investment in yourself, while the business gains a motivated workforce that thrives on purpose, growth, and innovation. With IVY, individuals and organizations unlock a future where self-driven success leads to collective achievement.

Observe: What happens when you encounter daily challenges and then think of your IVY, the IVY of the other people, and the IVY of your organization? How does this change your perspective?

Action: Tell your manager, your partner, your coworkers, what you are trying to become, and what you need to grow - your IVY. Does this give you a feeling of control that you previously did not have? How do they respond?

9. Money is a tool

In individual career development, money is not the ultimate goal - it is a tool that enables progress. While financial incentives alone rarely drive deep motivation, they are essential for sustaining career growth, funding new opportunities, and maintaining long-term career stability.

Think of money as a resource, much like technology or having quality tools. It is difficult to succeed without these resources but not the defining factor of success. Viewing money as a means rather than an end helps you strike a balance between financial stability and strategic ambition.

By understanding money's role in supporting your IVY journey, you can approach financial decisions with a pragmatic mindset. Whether it's investing in skill development, or navigating career transitions, financial resources should be leveraged effectively to maximize long-term success. While money doesn't define your IVY, it plays a key role in enabling you to reach your full potential.

Observe: Imagine you could have the worst job imaginable for double your current pay. Now imagine you could have the best job imaginable for a little less than your current pay. Which would you take?

Action: In the second part of your IVY statement - the plan - write down the financial requirements for each action. Does this present a challenge for you?

10. Movement matters

In IVY, your journey within an organization matters more than any single static position. Career growth is about continuous learning, evolving skills, and seizing opportunities. If an organization no longer supports your growth, transitioning isn't failure - it's a milestone, like a graduation.

IVY defines career success by progress, not tenure. As employees evolve, so do their ambitions and contributions. Knowing when to move on benefits both the individual and the organization, keeping employees engaged and companies dynamic. Staying stagnant leads to disengagement, lower productivity, and missed innovation. It creates a lose-lose scenario.

By embracing career transitions, employees find better-aligned challenges, and organizations gain fresh talent and perspectives. In IVY, progress and fulfilment take priority, fostering a shared commitment to long-term success.

Observe: Pay attention to people who are learning new skills, and progressing in their career development versus those who have been doing the same thing over and over for many years. How motivated are they?

Action: Imagine your business card displayed you desired future position. "Future Service Manager" "Future CEO", instead of your current job. How would that change how people interact with you? Make up your own future career business card to show movement instead of position.

11. Intrinsic motivation in the context of IVY

Intrinsic motivation – the drive to act based on internal rewards rather than external incentives – is a well established concept in psychology. While financial compensation and external recognition can play a role in workplace motivation, lasting engagement and fulfilment come from within. IVY nurtures intrinsic motivation by helping individuals define a compelling vision of themselves and aligning their work with personal aspirations.

For example, an engineer who sees their IVY as becoming a leader in sustainable design is likely to remain intrinsically motivated even when facing project setbacks. Their drive comes from the personal satisfaction of contributing to environmental sustainability rather than from performance reviews or bonuses.

Studies consistently show that intrinsic motivation leads to higher levels of innovation, job satisfaction, and long-term career commitment. When employees are motivated primarily by their IVY, they take initiative, seek learning opportunities, and remain productive without requiring constant monitoring and external validation.

Observe: Are you intrinsically or extrinsically motivated? Which of those motivations is reflected in your IVY statement?

Action: Ensure your IVY statement is intrinsically motivated, yet aligned with the people you want in your life and your career.



Motivational Fitness for organizations

Motivational Fitness for organizations

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1. Motivational fitness in organizations

The collective IVYs of the people within an organization exerts a profound influence on the organization. Imagine a sports team where each player has a different strategy - a different objective. How likely is it that this team will win at the game? Or worse, imagine a sports team where half the players wish they were playing for the other side. The motivational alignment of the players is critical. And you cannot have motivational alignment unless each player knows what motivates them, individually.

These are the basic steps toward motivational alignment:

1. Understand IVY
2. Team members define their IVY statements
3. Define stakeholders' IVY statements, as best as possible
4. Define organization IVY statement
5. Work toward aligning the motivations of all stakeholders

If the IVY of an organization will help support our own IVY journey, then you will join in and help move it along. Win-win. If not, then maybe that company is a poor fit for both of you. Lose-lose.

Observe: Does your company have the equivalent of an IVY statement? What is it? What should it be?

Action: Following the 1, 2 , 3 steps, create an IVY statement for the organization you are in. Does this align with yours? Complete the 5 steps above.

2. The reason organizations exist

We have stated that IVY has a profound influence on organizations however we believe it runs deeper than this. We believe the core purpose of an organization is to advance its stakeholders along their IVY journeys - owners, employees, investors, customers, and suppliers alike. While profitability is a tool that sustains operations, it is not the ultimate goal. Profit becomes a means to a greater end - empowering stakeholders toward their desired future selves.

Non-profits embody this principle, prioritizing impact over profit, which demonstrates how IVY can supersede financial motives to serve a greater purpose. Understanding this is key to team building, and to create an alignment of purpose throughout the entire organization. In our experience, this perspective dramatically reduces misunderstandings by providing a universal common focus: The organization is there to help everyone get to where they want to go. Financing the venture is critical, and this often includes a monetary return for the investors, because they also have their own IVY journeys, and these journeys also require funding.

This IVY perspective creates more of an “all of us” perspective instead of an “us and them” perspective. It makes hiring easier, and it makes helping someone move on easier. It boosts productivity and quality, with very little cost and effort.

Observe: Think of the fastest growing companies you know of. They may be profitable; however, is it profit that motivates their team?

Action: Write down an imagined IVY statement for each of your company stakeholders. This may provide a understanding of your company's purpose. Is there IVY alignment?

3. IVY career opportunities

IVY opportunities are moments within an organization where individuals can engage in tasks or projects that facilitate their personal and career growth, advancing them along their IVY journeys. These opportunities are most effectively maximized within a distributed decision-making environment, although this isn't a universal rule. Certain organizations, like the military, may switch between distributed and hierarchical modes based on the specific situation. Each mode can offer IVY opportunities to those who are ready to seize them.

Focusing on IVY opportunities within an organization increases opportunities for innovation and resilience. As motivated individuals embrace opportunities, they experience personal and career development, catalyzing progress within the entire organization. Word spreads that this organization is a great place to work, lightening the load on human resources.

Observe: What are the IVY opportunities in your company?

Action: Write down ideas for creating new or improved IVY opportunities within your company.

4. Growth beats compensation

In modern organizations, motivation has shifted beyond financial compensation to prioritize personal and career growth. Employees seek self-improvement, skill development, and a sense of purpose, driving engagement and commitment to the organization's mission.

While growth is a key motivator, fair compensation remains essential. Feeling underpaid compared to peers can lead to dissatisfaction and disengagement.

To retain talent, organizations must balance development opportunities with competitive pay. However by fostering a culture of growth and psychological safety so team members can openly discuss their IVY journeys, they create a motivated, productive workforce, ensuring long-term success.

Observe: Think of people who switched jobs to simply get a pay increase. Are they happy? Now Think of people who found IVY alignment in their existing company or a new company. Are they happy?

Action: Write down what your company can do to help you move along your IVY journey.

5. Quality is emergent

Quality naturally arises from motivational alignment rather than being imposed through enforcement. While procedures and policies can support quality, their effectiveness largely relies on the intrinsic motivation of the staff. Enforcing strict rules without fostering self-motivation is akin to attempting to push a string – it proves to be ineffective and unproductive.

When individuals are aligned and deeply committed to their personal and career growth, they naturally take pride in their work and strive for excellence. They are driven to deliver high-quality outcomes and go beyond the expected because it directly relates to their own objectives. When employees lack a genuine drive to excel, compliance with procedures might occur, but genuine dedication to producing exceptional results is unlikely.

To cultivate a culture of exceptional quality, organizations must prioritize motivation and motivational alignment.

Observe: Have you ever seen company policies and procedures increase quality in a demotivated team? What effect did you observe?

Action: Give (or ask for) responsibility, accountability, autonomy, information, tools, and resources, and see what changes in the quality of work.

6. Loyalty is a result of the work environment

Loyalty cannot be demanded or purchased from team members; instead, it emerges naturally as a positive side-effect of facilitating their IVY journeys. Genuine loyalty is earned by management through providing ample opportunities for personal and career growth.

When individuals within a team are empowered to progress along their IVY journeys, they experience a sense of purpose and fulfilment. This environment of growth and advancement fosters a deep sense of appreciation and loyalty towards the organization and its leadership.

Rather than attempting to enforce loyalty (how is this even possible?), management can inspire it by actively supporting the development of their team members. By creating an atmosphere that values personal growth, loyalty becomes an authentic and organic outcome.

Observe: What types of people stick around in a typical company? Which of these types stay even when things get tough? Which are happy to work after hours, without being asked?

Action: Stop feeding and playing with your pet, and leave your front door open. Joking. Please don't do that. However, I assume you get the point...

7. Knowledge scarcity vs abundance

The abundance and easy access to education and knowledge (YouTube, podcasts, online education, websites, digital books, etc) have significantly altered the optimal organizational structure in today's society.

In the past, when knowledge was scarce and hierarchical, command-and-control organizational structures relied on the few educated individuals who possessed this precious knowledge. While these setups optimized profits in the past, they often offered limited chances for personal and career growth, hindering progress along one's IVY journey.

With the advent of mass education and access to digital knowledge, most anyone can become an expert in their field. As a result, distributed decision-making structures have gained favour because they provide real opportunities for personal and career growth. The new generation is not lazy and distracted, they simply don't fit into a business model designed for people in the 1600s.

Observe: Think of successful business leaders who hire people who are more knowledgeable than themselves. How is their business structured?

Action: Write down what might attract people who are more knowledgeable compared to the current team in your company.

8. Information symmetry wins

Information symmetry, where all levels within an organization have equal access to information, plays a pivotal role in supporting motivational fitness. This concept ensures that front-line workers, middle managers, and higher levels of management have the same level of access to decision-making information.

On the contrary, information asymmetry, where front-line workers have limited access to information compared to higher levels of management, hampers their ability to advance themselves. Unequal access to information restricts the ability of front-line workers to make informed decisions and take proactive steps for the company, and towards their own career growth.

By promoting information symmetry, organizations create a culture of transparency and inclusivity, empowering all employees to actively contribute to the organization's success and their individual growth. Access to information enables individuals at all levels to see the big picture, to make suggestions for improvement, and to confidently pursue their IVY journeys within this context, fostering a motivated, productive workforce.

Observe: How do you feel when someone withholds information from you that could make your life easier?

Action: Write down what information access might make your job or your team's job easier?

9. Creating resilience

By enhancing individual motivation, IVY builds resilience to challenges and change on a personal level. Recognizing that an organization is essentially a sum of its individual members, it becomes evident that the collective resilience of these individuals directly impacts the organization as a whole. When the IVY of the organization is under threat, this threatens the aligned IVY of the individuals within it, and they will rise to address the challenge, and adapt to change.

IVY alignment becomes the cornerstone of organizational resilience.

Observe: What happens when a sports team doesn't feel like it has any chance of winning, and the play doesn't go as expected? What if they are confident they will win?

Action: Define an IVY statement for your company that aligns with all stakeholders, to help create resilience when faced with bumps along the way.

10. Skill diversity

Skill diversity opens up numerous IVY opportunities, while skill specialization tends to limit opportunities. This observation aligns with the well established principles from lean manufacturing practices.

When there is a range of diverse skill sets within a team or organization, individuals can collaborate, adapt, and contribute in various ways. This flexibility creates a fertile ground for generating new ideas, fostering innovation, and addressing challenges more effectively. In contrast, excessive skill specialization can lead to silos, where each individual becomes narrowly focused on their specific tasks, hindering the flow of information, and inhibiting creativity and growth.

Drawing from lean manufacturing concepts, which emphasizes process ownership and continuous improvement, encouraging skill diversity enhances the organization's adaptability and resilience in a rapidly changing environment. By embracing this principle, businesses can unlock a wealth of IVY opportunities, promoting individual growth and collective success.

Observe: How excited are you to do the same task over and over, all day long?

Action: Write down what an ideal mix of daily work tasks would like for you.

11. Over-measurement is a symptom of IVY issues

An excess of measurement often indicates an unhealthy IVY environment. While measurement can serve as a valuable tool, its effectiveness relies on thoughtful design, enabling individuals to gauge their progress on their IVY journey. However, connecting measurement to punishment or rewards seldom yields the anticipated outcomes in terms of behaviour.

It's important to recognize that an organization cannot simply measure its way out of a motivational slump. Genuine motivation springs from a conducive IVY environment, where individuals feel empowered, supported, and engaged. When measurements become a source of pressure or fear, they often stifle creativity and hinder overall performance.

To cultivate a thriving IVY environment, it's essential to strike a balance with measurements, using them to provide insights rather than instilling fear, internal competition, or force compliance. By focusing on nurturing a positive IVY culture, organizations can reduce the dependency on costly over-measurement.

Observe: When has measurement helped motivate you? When has it helped demotivate you? Why?

Action: Write down what measurements might help you move along your IVY journey.

12. Manage IVY, not people

In an optimized setup, management works alongside the team, rather than the team working solely for management. Ideally, the relationship between management and the team is one of peers, as this increases the chance of creating IVY opportunities and deep, resilient connections between teammates.

By embracing a peer-to-peer dynamic, management acknowledges the expertise and contributions of the team members. This approach empowers individuals to take ownership of their work, creating a sense of shared responsibility and mutual respect. It also paves the way for open communication, allowing ideas and feedback to flow freely, ultimately leading to better decision-making and problem-solving.

When management focuses on motivational fitness by supporting the creation and regular revisiting of IVY statements, everyone's strengths are utilized to the fullest, promoting a positive, supportive, and productive environment.

Observe: How many times have you been in a meeting where management proposes something they are excited about, and everyone smiles, but then rolls their eyes as they leave the meeting?

Action: Write down a company initiative. Think of it in the context of the IVY of all the stakeholders involved, especially those expected to execute the plan. Now, rework the initiative in the context of the stakeholders' IVYs.

13. Hourly vs Salary

Hourly work arrangements can be counterproductive when striving to create a positive IVY environment. Salaried compensation is often better suited for fostering an IVY-rich workplace.

Hourly work emphasizes time spent on tasks, potentially leading to a focus on total hour targets rather than on quality, collaboration, and long-term growth. It often creates competition between team members. This can hinder the development of a motivated, quality culture.

Salaried compensation, on the other hand, encourages a results-driven mindset and allows individuals the flexibility to manage their time effectively. With less emphasis on tracking hours, employees can focus on achieving meaningful outcomes, collaborating, and supporting customers to the fullest.

By shifting towards salaried compensation, organizations signal their commitment to valuing the quality of work and the individual's contribution to the overall success of the team and company. In turn, this enhances motivation, job satisfaction, and a sense of purpose, leading to a more positive and productive environment.

Observe: Think of a time when you came up with an idea that would save you or your coworkers a lot of time. Now imagine you are paid by the hour.

Action: Even if you are paid hourly, focus on your IVY journey as a win-win scenario for you and your company.

14. Working smarter - redefined

IVY helps create a culture of working smarter, while command-and-control structures promote a culture of working harder.

In an IVY environment, the focus lies in finding efficient and effective ways to achieve goals and solve problems. This approach encourages creativity, collaboration, continuous improvement, and personal growth, leading to increased productivity and innovation.

Conversely, command-and-control structures tend to emphasize rigid hierarchies and strict adherence to directives. This can lead to a culture where employees are driven to work harder to meet set targets or follow orders without much room for autonomy or individual initiative. A “just-follow-orders” culture set in. Innovation and growth stall.

By adopting an IVY mindset, organizations empower their teams to think critically, seek better solutions, and make informed decisions. This not only leads to improved outcomes but also cultivates a positive work environment where employees feel valued and motivated to contribute their best efforts, since this helps contribute to their own career growth.

Observe: What happens if you or your team consistently process more work orders than usual?

Action: In the thought exercise above, thinking about people progressing along their IVY journeys, what should happen?

15. Small tasks, low IVY opportunities

Avoid the misconception that small and easy tasks will inherently motivate people to perform them, or will reduce resistance toward executing these simple tasks. In reality, such tasks may not offer significant IVY opportunities for career growth, thus resulting in low motivation. True motivational fitness involves challenging oneself to grow, as it is through overcoming challenges that growth is realized.

Rather than assuming that simple tasks will be motivating, consider the importance of offering opportunities that stretch individuals' capabilities. When people are presented with challenges that push their boundaries, the sense of accomplishment they experience becomes a catalyst for personal development and enhanced motivation. Small tasks always need to be done. Providing a balance is the key.

By prioritizing tasks that encourage growth and learning, organizations can create an environment that inspires their team members to excel. It is the pursuit of meaningful challenges and the subsequent sense of achievement that fuels lasting motivation, loyalty, and productivity.

Observe: What would motivate you more, many small tasks or a small number of big projects?

Action: View your IVY as a big project. Now put all the small tasks in that context. Does that change your perspective?

16. IVY Flow

An organization thrives on the flow of IVY - encouraging individuals to grow and move on when they've reached their full potential. This cycle of progress keeps the organization dynamic and forward-moving. It changes the commonly held belief that keeping employees as long as possible is a good thing. With the IVY perspective, helping people move on is sometimes the best approach.

Hiring should focus on those eager to learn, not just masters of their craft. As employees develop and outgrow their roles, they make way for new talent, ensuring continuous evolution. Framing this as a shared journey- introducing new hires as learners and rallying support - builds a culture of collaboration and growth.

If development stalls and everyone becomes too comfortable, motivation wanes, leading to stagnation. Profit alone isn't enough to drive engagement. To sustain a thriving, innovative environment, organizations must allow new talent to refresh and energize the team.

Observe: Think of a company as a pipe that feeds a turbine. Now think of what happens to the turbine if the exit of the pipe is blocked. In the context of IVY flow, is letting experienced people go (exit the pipe) a bad thing? Why or why not?

Action: How can your company create IVY flow? Write down your ideas.

17. Operate your way

IVY does not advocate for a rigid, one-size-fits-all operating system for businesses. Instead, it recognizes that various operating systems can complement IVY principles. What IVY does offer is a unique perspective on the purpose of an organization without specifically dictating how it should be managed. We call this the "IVY Lens".

By using the IVY Lens as a guiding philosophy, businesses can explore and create tailored operating strategies to suit different industries, markets, and niches. This approach represents a fresh way of perceiving and approaching challenges.

The IVY Lens encourages organizations to experiment with novel solutions that align with the IVY of the stakeholders. As a result, businesses can adapt, evolve, and thrive in a rapidly changing landscape.

IVY lets companies optimize their unique strengths, and positions them for sustainable success. It's not about adhering to a fixed blueprint, but rather, it's about adopting a fresh perspective that encourages ongoing exploration and improvement.

Observe: Think of the IVY statements of various successful companies that compete in the same field. Think of the IVY statements of people who do the same type of work. How similar or how different are they?

Action: Craft an IVY statement for your company that reflects its unique market position. Focus on what makes your company different.

