

How Entrepreneurs Get Motivated

By Mike Bruner

Everyone is motivated to do something. The alarm waking you up in the morning isn't blaring at the bedside for your amusement. You've got to get up, catch your ride to work, need to exercise, and have to get going. There is a certain amount of desire for subsistence that provides a moderate level of motivation in most people to get the basics done: Go to work, call your mom on Mother's Day, and shower. But that's not the level of motivation we're seeking. We want that extra oomph of motivation that makes you care. The kind of motivation that results in an investment in your project, your coworkers, your enterprise, and your goals. The sort that results in choosing not to check your Facebook account 17 times at work. That motivation pushes you to not only want to do a good job on your presentation to impress your boss, but instead makes you feel invested in what you are doing and that it's for a worthy purpose. This internal, or intrinsic motivation is what drives many to achieve. It is important to note, however, that in addition to intrinsic motivation, the extrinsic motivation that arises from a paycheck, benefits, etc. is also a crucial piece of the puzzle, and the intrinsic without the extrinsic is not fulfilling enough for everyone.



In order to better understand what inspires employees in the workplace, three entrepreneurs share what motivates them to get in the office everyday and put in those long hours to turn their dreams into reality.

Dr. Royan Kamyar, an entrepreneur describes his motivation of working at his company, Owaves this way: "Starting this company I feel is the culmination of business school, medical school, all of my education and start-up experiences through to today. Additionally, the fact that I see my savings going out of my bank account and into my business lights a fire in me. It provides a huge sense of urgency, which I appreciated with other projects, but now it's at an entirely different level."

Frank Wang, a fellow entrepreneur at a business he started with some friends named Freshima

likewise doesn't have a difficult time getting excited about his work: "I'm very invested in the company's future and direction because I am an owner. I took an idea that I had a few years ago and helped convert it into a full-fledged company. It's fulfilling to see it come to life and take form. Most of the time it doesn't really seem like work. I feel compelled to continue to build and create every day."

Kian Salehizadeh is a co-founder of Everybody Solar, and gains his drive from serving the community: "Everybody Solar works to protect the environment and strengthen U.S. communities through solar energy projects. By providing solar power to local charities, we help them reduce electricity costs and direct their limited resources to the communities they serve. We act as an intermediary in this process, raising funds for the solar installations through donations, and coordinating the completion of the projects with local solar installers."

Personal fulfillment, changing the world and having fun all serve as reasons for these entrepreneurs to put forth their daily efforts into starting their organizations from the ground up. However, the lesson of being motivated by being invested in one's work can be applied beyond the boundaries of those founding businesses. For example, stressing the importance of ownership to your employees - whether that is from a variety of situations including a particular project you are responsible for managing, the feeling of self-worth derived from owning your career, or shares acquired through an employee stock ownership plan.

About the Author



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