

IX. Managing the 'Mission-Driven'

Many general management books include sections on human resource management, including the motivation for work. The intention is not to repeat these, but to explore the types of management style most appropriate for an animal protection society where many of the staff will be 'mission-driven' – that is highly motivated by their own altruistic and self-actualising objectives. Many serious management errors are caused by replicating management styles appropriate to vastly different organisations: such as the armed services, police, government/bureaucracies and commercial organisations, without recognising the vital need for a distinct approach in the voluntary sector. This chapter explores the difference in motivation of the 'mission-driven' and appropriate management styles.

The Bosses

Chief Executives and Managers of animal protection societies come from a variety of backgrounds including the armed services, the police, government/bureaucracies, politics, commerce and from promotion 'through the ranks' of the animal protection movement. All have experienced past successes, which have helped them to gain their current role and status. It is only natural to use past experiences to try to replicate past successes in your present job, but this is unlikely to yield the desired results without a clear understanding of the animal protection and organisational environment, including your staff and their skills, experience and – most importantly – motivations.

Some common mistakes that can be made by managers from the above backgrounds include: -

Armed services/police

Being overly directive and controlling, lacking in consultation, staff development and mentoring.

Government service/bureaucracy

Setting too formal and rigid procedures, and requiring excessive paperwork, which can stifle creativity and inspiration. In the voluntary sector, intuition and creativity are often more effective than going 'by the book'.

Politics

Concentrating overly on political lobbying and combative media, rather than commercial/consumer awareness, and on negative competitive strategies rather than collaboration with other animal protection societies.

Commercial

Concentrating on negative competitive strategies rather than collaboration, prioritising media, fundraising and supporter development above mission fulfilment (taken to the extreme this can lead to animal becoming the 'product' to be marketed). Also, can set inappropriate targets, monitoring systems and 'incentives'.

Animal protection 'ranks'

Managing in a way that prioritises own discipline e.g. a former campaigner placing most energy in the campaigns area or a former fundraiser doing the same for fundraising/media – at the expense of a balanced, pan-organisational management role. Applying perceived management models that are outdated and/or inappropriate (due to lack of in-depth understanding and broader experience).

These can all lead to de-motivation and mistrust from staff whose priority is mission fulfilment, and who feel a strong intrinsic wisdom as to how this mission could best be achieved.

There are also animal protection bosses with a religious/clerical background. Whilst these may need general management experience/training to excel, they have the innate advantage of understanding the 'mission-driven'.

The ideal animal protection boss would likely be either a 'mission-driven' animal protectionist with additional management skills and experience, or a well-rounded manager with a clear mission and intuition for animal protection work and an understanding of the animal protection environment. This would provide a clear sense of mission and purpose, together with the necessary rounded management skills.

Given the range and scope of their organisations' activities and the constantly changing environment in which they operate, a large proportion of animal protection managers need to be 'all rounders', with a clear grasp of most aspects of their organisation's activities. They very often have to tackle a range of strategic and operational issues which, in other environments, would likely be fewer in number and tackled by appropriate senior managers. However, this is not possible in an environment where mission accomplishment is the over-riding goal, but there are many views on method and competing priorities to assess.

The private sector is now rediscovering 'amateurism', autonomy of work groups and networking, government is dismantling some of the bureaucracy for which it is renowned. It is important that the voluntary sector does not adopt some of the excesses they are abandoning. They would clearly be inappropriate and lead to rigid, old-fashioned management. Management learning is cyclical, and there is no perfect state, so the search should be for the most appropriate – not the elusive.

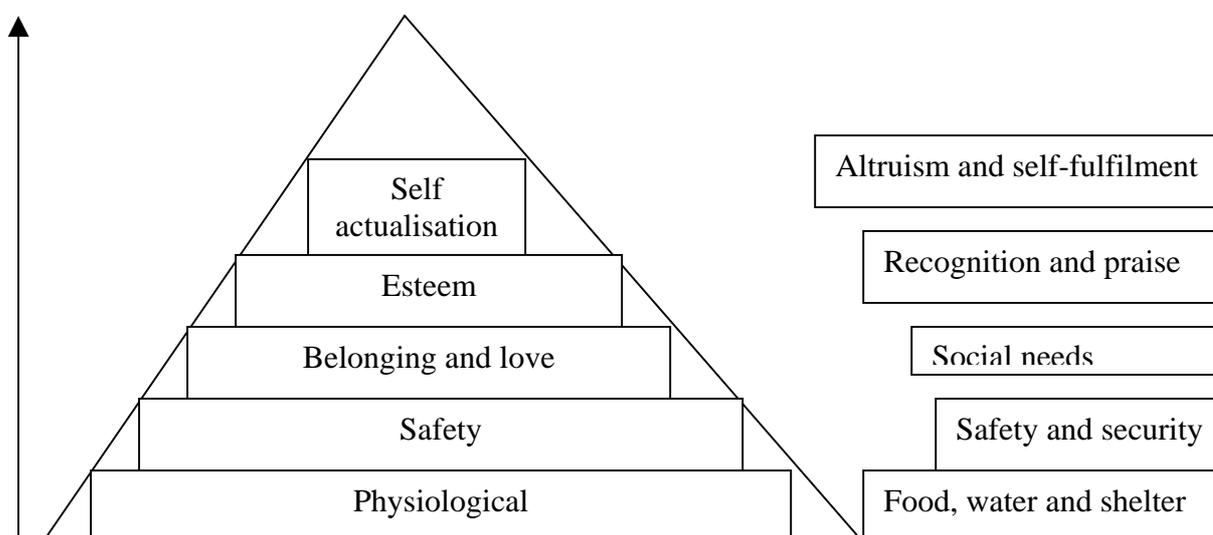
Self-security will be a hallmark of the leaders and exceptional organisations of the future. Self-security in an individual or a system brings a high ratio of coherence. Leaders or organizations with self-security can push power and authority downstream and develop centers of innovation and excellence at all levels of the organisation.

Doc Childre and Bruce Cryer, From Chaos to Coherence

Staff and Motivation

It is usual for a high proportion of animal protection staff to be 'mission driven', although there may well be some who have other motivations, especially in more technical (accounts, information technology) and junior roles.

Motivation is complex and highly individual. The motivation to work can be physical (earning money for food or shelter), psychological (seeking social satisfaction or security) or more unconscious and instinctive – which applies particularly to altruistic and self-fulfilment reasons. One of the most popular theories explaining motivation is Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs', which categorises human motivations as follows: -



The theory works on the basis that needs are only motivators when they are unsatisfied. The lower order needs (physiology and safety) are dominant until satisfied, when the higher needs come into being.

Very few animal protection workers are motivated by physiological or security needs, as wage rates are comparatively low and advantageous conditions and benefits few! However, as the movement attracts good, concerned citizens, it will also attract workers motivated by social needs (who will appreciate the company of such individuals).

The majority will be the 'mission driven', who are at the self-actualisation end of Maslow's hierarchy, and this has clear implications for management style. Furthermore, other management theorists (e.g. McGregor and Likert) consider that higher order needs are more prevalent in modern men and women. They feel that they can gain a lot of satisfaction from their jobs, providing they are given the autonomy to define their job and the way in which they tackle it. In general, the 'mission driven'

thrive under conditions where their skills, experience and views are recognised and appreciated, they are fully consulted, and given the scope to organise their work within agreed boundaries. They are also keen to improve their performance and knowledge, and respond well to coaching, mentoring, training and development.

Management is nothing more than motivating other people.
Lee Iacocca

Leadership Styles

Leadership is not magnetic personality—that can just as well be a glib tongue. It is not 'making friends and influencing people' — that is flattery. Leadership is lifting a person's vision to higher sights, the raising of a person's performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations.

Peter F. Drucker

To achieve effective management, the style of leadership will need to be suitable to each individual and their stage of development, as well as coping with the distinct needs of the 'mission-driven'. The four main leadership styles are: -

Directive

Controlling and clear about what they want team members to do. They do not appreciate arguments or suggestions from the team. This style suits new, inexperienced staff.

Coaching

More open style. Asking for suggestions and input, they still take most of the decisions and guide staff closely. This style is appropriate for a developing team.

Supportive

Encourage team to take most decisions on a day-to-day basis. They monitor closely and provide support. This style suits an improving team that still lacks confidence.

Delegating

Allow the team to take their own decisions within boundaries they have set. They have a monitoring role and make themselves available to the team as needed. This style is excellent for skilled and experienced staff.

An effective manager has to be able to move between these leadership styles in order to ensure the most appropriate and motivational is used for each member of staff and each task (e.g. a directive style may still be appropriate for an experienced and confident staff member if an entirely new task is given).

In broad terms, however, the 'lighter' management styles are more appropriate for the experienced 'mission driven'. Such staff are self-motivated and self-controlled, and

view external controls and pressures as unnecessary and counter-productive interferences that reduce their desired autonomy and decrease their motivation. If facilitated, they will voluntarily integrate their own goals into those of the organisation (usually choosing an organisation whose goals align with their own, where possible).

Another important, and increasingly acknowledged, principle of voluntary sector management is that organisation around task is often more effective than organisation around the management of resources.

'Mission Driven' Problems

Key management problems with the 'mission driven' are: -

- The tendency to take on too many projects and causes
- Starting many projects, without completion and/or necessary evaluation and reflection
- Overwork, at the expense of balance, personal life and recuperative activities
- Stress-related problems, including 'burn-out'

The tendency to take on too many problems or causes arises because the 'mission driven' staff member is constantly faced with problems of animal suffering that require resolution. Their mission compels them to accept the challenge. The desire to help is natural, but the results can be disastrous – both in terms of mission fulfilment and the impact upon the member of staff. Sometimes 'mission driven' managers themselves exacerbate this situation by imposing impossible demands upon staff.

For example, giving a practical situation: an animal shelter workers finds it difficult to turn away an animal brought in at closing time, despite existing workloads and overcrowding and the promise made to family to return on time that day for a birthday. Or the difficulty of a caseworker that has to catch a train to meet her husband on time, but knows that the next case involves an animal that will be taken to a zoo or circus if she does not deal with it urgently.

Long working hours and the crowding out of personal lives often result. Many family breakdowns occur, and the worker throws him or herself deeper into their work to forget. Some successes build the feeling of responsibility and need. Failures, where the organisation could not react, reinforce this. Leisure activities appear meaningless when compared to the never-ending battle against animal suffering.

Some animal protection staff are also forced to deal with traumatic experiences of animal suffering (including horrific maiming and slaughter) and literally 'life and death' decisions about euthanasia. This adds to the stress and trauma.

The cycle can be destructive and endless, ending in extreme stress, loss of effectiveness and 'burn-out'. Many workers find the pressure too much to bear and leave.

It is vital that managers understand the situation of their 'mission driven' staff and manage the risk of overload, stress and 'burn-out'. Supportive and constructive management can do much to relieve the load and, in particular, feelings of personal

responsibility and stress. Indeed, the negative effects of stress can be transformed into challenge if the situation is changed to give the member of staff control over their own situation within agreed boundaries. Appropriate management strategies could include the following: -

- Effective strategic and operational planning, to enable focus and prioritisation and limit areas of responsibility.
- Cultural change strategies to change working practices and attitudes.
- Clear criteria for shelter operating procedures, including euthanasia.
- Clear guidelines for the consideration of additional projects or exceptions.
- Careful recruitment procedures (such as psychometric testing), designed to ensure that staff employed in particularly traumatic or responsible roles are well suited psychologically for the task.
- Job design interventions to make the extent of job scope and systems more manageable.
- Supportive team working environment, where important issues are discussed.
- Regular staff forums and individual meetings for support.
- Stress management training and counselling, as appropriate.

It is vitally important to ensure that the 'mission driven' are placed in appropriate roles, and developed and supported in order to ensure that they can achieve their mission and consequently that of the organisation. Failure to achieve can have devastating psychological consequences, and for such staff, the trauma of sacking or redundancy cannot be underestimated.

Another important factor relating to the 'mission driven' is that they have a strong sense of ethics and justice. This means that managers need to be scrupulous about their organisation's ethical practices and just, fair and open in their treatment of staff in order to maintain their loyalty and motivation.

A good leader inspires others with confidence in him; a great leader inspires them
with confidence in themselves.

Unknown

Psychological Contract

Whilst considering the special management needs of the 'mission driven', animal protection staff with different motivations also need to be considered. Just as there are written contracts of employment with staff, there are also unwritten 'psychological contracts' (Levinson), which are a set of expectations that staff have about their jobs and the organisation. In order to ensure loyal and fulfilled staff, the organisation should ensure that each member of staff's expectations are known (and any unrealistic expectations highlighted), so the member of staff can be helped to meet these.

Motivation for work is an important aspect of the psychological contract (for example, a member of staff who works to fulfil a social need would only be content in a cooperative team environment, not in a single role working alone in an office).

There are three main categories of psychological contract: -

- Coercive (for organisations such as prisons, mental hospitals etc.)
- Calculative (for organisations exchanging pay and benefits for services e.g. commercial companies)
- Cooperative

Animal protection societies would usually operate under the cooperative psychological contract, whereby individuals identify with the goals of the organization and become creative in pursuit of these goals. In return, staff expect more voice in the selection of these goals and more autonomy in the way in which they reach them. Management cedes some day-to-day control, but retains control through the selection and development of staff, and the allocation of financial resources towards various goals. A key trait of a successful manager is self-knowledge and understanding – the ability to make a realistic assessment of his/her weaknesses, and to recruit and develop staff to complement and compensate. This is vital, because if bosses do not meet the psychological expectations of staff, they will leave the organisation. It surprises many that individuals dedicated to the cause leave an organisation with the same aims, but on analysis this is often due to management problems. It can be witnessed through the high staff turnover of some leading animal protection societies, and should be a key concern of Boards.

" If you governed your province well and treat your people kindly, you kingdom shall not lose any war. If you govern selfishly to your people, your kingdom will not only lose a war, but your people will break away from your kingdom."
Confucius, Chinese philosopher (Circa 551-479 BC)

Volunteers

This chapter applies equally to volunteer management, where the self-actualising motivation usually predominates. The Volunteer Centre's UK study (1990) on the motivation of volunteers showed the following to be present: -

- Social contact with others
- Personal development
- Skills acquisition and learning
- Challenge and achievement
- Making a contribution to society

This makes it vital to view volunteers in terms of the individual psychological contracts, rather than simply a free human resource to be utilised at will. Volunteers need to be matched to an appropriate task, included in a team or group and training/developed to optimise their performance and provided with necessary support and feedback.

Many voluntary organisations have developed volunteer strategies in recognition of this. For example, the American Red Cross published a volunteer policy back in 1988 that included the following: -

- Mission statement and principles of the organisation
- Volunteerism – philosophy and practices
- Roles and functions of volunteers

- Definition of volunteer and retention of volunteers
- Recruitment methods
- Support for volunteers
- The costs of volunteer participation
- Relevant external trends affecting volunteers
- Career development for volunteers
- Volunteer performance standards and evaluation

Praise and Recognition

All staff and volunteers seek to increase their self-esteem and feeling of self-worth. This is particularly true of the 'mission driven', who need their contribution to the organisation's mission to be recognized and validated. Animal protection society managers must prioritise the recognition and appreciation of achievement. This builds staff motivation, loyalty, and feelings of psychological success. This necessitates proper project planning and evaluation- useful disciplines in a field where the tendency is to quickly finish one task and leap directly onto the next, with no pause for reflection or evaluation to perfect future performance.

Staff appraisal is also important in this regard – both formal and informal.

'Mission driven' staff are very special people, highly evolved, altruistic and intuitive. They will always give 110%, given appropriate management. Animal protection society managers can only be effective if they provide the conditions under which these people can flourish.

All men seek one goal: success and happiness. The only way to achieve true success is to express your self completely in service to society. First, have a definite, clear, practical ideal – a goal, an objective. Second, have the necessary means to achieve your ends – wisdom, money, materials, and methods. Third, adjust your means to that end.

Aristotle, 384-322 B.C.