



# Work Motivation: History, Theory, Research, and Practice

By Gary P. Latham

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This book provides a unique behavioral science framework for motivating employees in organizational settings. Drawing upon his experiences as a staff psychologist and consultant, Gary Latham writes in a "mentor voice" that is highly personal and rich in examples. The book includes anecdotes about the major thought leaders in the field of motivation, together with behind-the-scenes accounts of research and the researchers. It offers a chronological review of the field, and a taxonomy for the study and practice of motivation. Controversies of theoretical and practical significance such as the importance of money, the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance, and the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are discussed.

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## **Editorial Review**

Review

Gary,

Forgive the length of this e-mail, but I have been reading your new book on my job trip and I wanted to send you some thoughts. First, thanks for reminding me why I entered this profession. The last few years have been frustrating for me, mainly because I have been torn between the science and the practice of business. While my experiences at Wichita State and here at Chico have been valuable, I have not done a very good job of integrating the two. Your book is reminding me why good social science really adds value to the practice of business, entrepreneurship included.

Second, your anecdotes are fabulous. They are reminding me that the real payoff of our profession is the ability to exchange ideas with other smart people. I have to say that one thing I have done well over the past few years is to learn from people who know more than I do.

You, Ed, Maureen Ambrose, and Joe Rosse are just some examples. I think the best example you gave of the never-ending process of learning was your encounter with Chris Argyris. I about split my sides on reading that one.

Third, and this is what qualifies my reading of the book as a "critical incident," it primed me for my interview at Illinois State. Though I knew before I went that I wanted a position that afforded me more time and resources for research, I was able to see the big picture much more clearly. My research presentation was the best I have ever made. I felt like I knew my stuff and that while I have been less focused the past few years than I would like, I had actually done a pretty good job of preparing for my next career phase. Your book was the final trigger I needed.

So, all of this figures in some "resolutions" on my part. Number one, scholarship is now my professional priority. When I do practice it will be with an eye toward furthering our knowledge of entrepreneurship.

Number two, you have taught me the value of fast turnaround time. I have resolved that when I am working with others, they will get manuscripts and correspondence back as fast as you get them back to me.

(I do realize how challenging that goal is, by the way.)

This Monday morning finds me optimistic. I believe I have a very good chance of landing that job and there is every indication that it is exactly where I need to be to accomplish my professional and personal goals. Thanks once again for your willingness to be a mentor. One day, I hope to do the same for others.

Best,

Terry W. Noel

Associate Professor of Management and Quantitative Methods Illinois State University

(Terry W. Noel 2007-04-01)

*"Dr. Latham's book is very detailed about under whom and where the major writers on work motivation studied. This makes for interesting asides. His footnotes are both informative and eyebrow raising. His personal journey through all this is insightful, charming, and a great contribution to understanding the lineage of psychologists. I plan on loaning to other nonpsychologists as well as assigning it to my students."*

?CANADIAN PSYCHOLOGY (Adam S. Radomsky, Ph. D. 2008-03-27)

#### About the Author

**Gary Latham** is the Secretary of State Professor of Organizational Effectiveness in the Rotman School School of Management at the University of Toronto. He is a Past President of the Canadian Psychological Association, a Fellow of the Academy of Management, the American Psychological Association, American Psychological Society, Canadian Psychological Association, and the Royal Society of Canada. He is the only person to receive both the awards for Distinguished Contribution to Psychology as a Profession and as a Science from the Society for Industrial/Organizational Psychology. He is also the recipient of the Scholarly Practitioner and the Heneman Career Achievement Award from the Academy of Management Human Resource Division. He is the co-author of *A Theory of Goal Setting and Task Performance* with Edwin A. Locke; and *Increasing Productivity through Performance Appraisal*, and *Developing and Training Human Resources*, both with K. N. Wexley.

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