



# Hiring Highly Motivated Employees Using Employment Testing

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# Hiring Highly Motivated Employees Using Employment Testing

*Written by Michael Mercer, Ph.D.*

Employment testing scores can reveal the specific work activities that motivate a job candidate to feel highly motivated and be highly productive.

**Problem** = I found one big, widespread misconception about what motivates employees: specifically, many managers incorrectly believe most employees are motivated by amount they are paid.

But my pre-employment testing research shows “superstar” employees in each job in each company are motivated by doing specific activities. Note: I define superstar employees as those who are both

1. Highly Productive
2. Low Turnover

There are five main types of activities employees might do in their jobs.

As such, it is crucial to measure which of these activities a job applicant wants to do most, second most, and so on down to least. So, let’s look at these five possible work motivations:

- + Money Motivation
- + Helping People Motivation
- + Creativity Motivation
- + Power Motivation
- + Knowledge/Learning Motivation

*How do you increase your odds of hiring highly motivated employees?*

When I custom-tailor employment tests, I begin by having superstars in each job take tests for four work-related arenas: (A) motivations, (B) personality, (C) interpersonal skills, and (D) intelligence. As such, employment testing for motivations, my research in each company reveals scientifically benchmarked test scores of superstar employees on each of these five types of work activities.

**Example 1:** In my research in most companies, I usually find superstar *Sales Reps* score highest on two of the five work motivations:

- + Money Motivation
- + Power Motivation

That scientifically shows terrific Sales Reps usually feel highly motivated to (a) run after making sales and (b) exert power by keeping control and following-up with prospects and customers.

**Example 2:** Superstar *Customer Service Reps (CSR)* usually score highest in two motivations:

- + Helping People Motivation
- + Knowledge/Learning Motivation

Statistically, that indicates terrific CSRs feel highly motivated to do two activities: (a) help people and (b) learn or research what customers need so they can provide great service.

**Example 3:** *Design Engineers* who are highly valued by their employer usually score highest in Creativity Motivation. Why? Because terrific Design Engineers must conjure up new products and ways to engineer products. So, superstar Design Engineers desire to do highly creative work. In contrast, my research shows most other types of engineers, e.g., structural or industrial engineers, score highest on knowledge/learning motivation, because they need to do research to learn how to carry out their more normal engineering projects.

### *Widespread Misconception Among Managers*

Many managers incorrectly think good employees are most motivated by either (a) feeling achievement-oriented or (b) how much they get paid.

Misconception about superstars being *generally* achievement-oriented: No one is *generally* achievement-oriented. Instead, people want to achieve good results on SPECIFIC work tasks they feel personally enthused to do. For instance, my employment testing research typically finds good Sales Reps are

highly money motivated and power motivated. They would not feel motivated if their job focused on the other three motivations: helping people motivation or creativity motivation or knowledge motivation.

*Stunning Example of Managers Misunderstanding  
of What Motivates Good Employees*

Recently, a big residential condo association needed to decide which security company to use. Security companies often have high turnover among their employees. And some security guard companies fantasize if they pay security guards more, then they will might reduce turnover.

But, using employment testing, I did a benchmarking study of the company's superstar security guards who are both (a) highly productive and (b) low turnover.

Lo & behold, the highly productive, low turnover security guards did not score highest on money motivation. Instead, on the work motivations section of employment tests, they scored highest on helping people motivation.

That scientific finding shows the lowest turnover, most productive security guards feel very enthused and motivated to help people. Specifically, they are motivated to be a type of customer service rep for occupants of buildings in which they work.

*So, using my research, I recommended that company*

1. hire applicants who score high on helping people motivation
2. give guards many opportunities to serve to building occupants

## 5 Recommendations to Help You Hire Highly Motivated Employees

**First**, do not hallucinate nor fantasize that if you pay employees more, they will work harder or stay longer. Many wonderful employees are not money motivated.

**Second**, use pre-hire tests to scientifically benchmark and statistically predict which job applicants are most likely to become highly motivated, productive, and low turnover. Use pre-hire assessment tests to measure work-related (1) motivations, (2) interpersonal styles, (3) personality, and (4) intelligence.

**Third**, on pre-employment tests do "*Benchmarking Study*" to discover specific test scores of your best employees in each job in your company.

**Fourth**, focus on hiring applicants whose test scores are similar to your company's superstar employees' benchmark test scores, and also do well in interviews, reference checks, and other methods you use.

**Fifth**, after you hire an employee, give them the type of work activities they feel most motivated to do. That is how you use their strongest motivations to manage superstars on-the-job.

*When you do these five actions, your results should include*

- + higher productivity
- + lower turnover
- + higher profits

[Learn more about employment testing and hiring by contacting Dr. Michael Mercer.](#)

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