

ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN ACTION

EXTRINSIC REWARDS SPARK INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

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When confronted with the myth that extrinsic rewards crowd out intrinsic motivation, reference academic research, motivational theory, and empirical evidence to set the record straight.

► Combined Theories of Human Motivation

General Interest Theory

Extrinsic Rewards

Offered for doing, completing, or meeting a goal



Self-Determination Theory

Increase

Autonomy:

The feeling of choice in one's work.

Competence:

The experience of mastery and effectiveness in work



General Interest Theory

Resulting In:

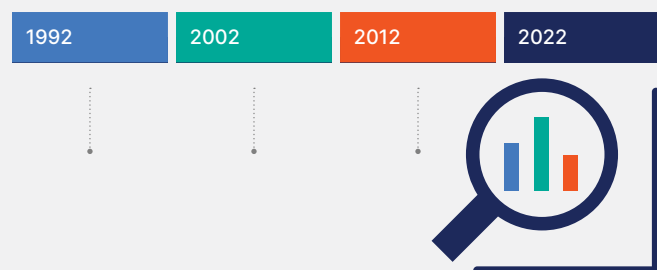
Higher task interest and performance



Extrinsic rewards offered for doing, completing, or meeting a performance criterion often increase people's perceived freedom and autonomy. Reward contingencies that enhance perceived competence or self-efficacy increase interest in and performance of an activity.

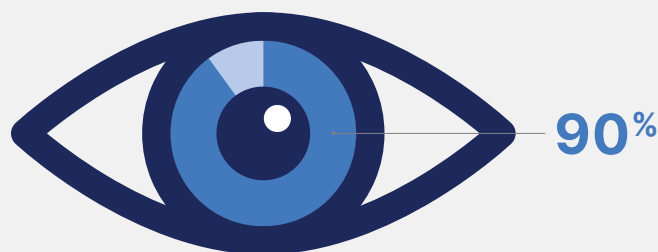
► 40 Years of Research

Every major academic review of rewards research in the past 30 years confirms that extrinsic rewards combine with intrinsic motivation to increase performance.



► Real-Life Observation

About 90% of US firms offer tangible cash and/or non-cash extrinsic rewards. It is safe to assume that they do so for a reason.



People respond to incentives from the day they start talking. Designing incentives is difficult and tricky though. First discover what motivates people by experimenting and observing; then design the incentive.

Select References

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