

performance. Even if a bonus is offered to truck drivers who complete their deliveries in half the allotted time, no additional effort will be put into improving performance if they view the target as unattainable.

The second part is the belief that improved **performance will be recognized** and rewarded. This is the “so what” issue, or the performance-reward link. The link is greater if differences in performance level are actually recognized and translate into different individual rewards. The belief that production quantity determines earnings is stronger under a piece rate system than under an hourly pay system. Failure of pay systems to motivate employee effort is most often attributable to this element in the expectancy chain.

The third aspect of expected payoff is the **value of the reward** given to the individual for improved performance. Even if a person can pick peppers, and the more peppers picked the more lira earned, effort to pick peppers will not be intense if lira are worthless to the worker. This theory has an intuitive appeal, as it basically says that people are motivated to work toward what will allow them to obtain the things they want and value.

Rewards from Work

Considering needs more generally, people work to obtain rewards, intrinsic and extrinsic. “Intrinsic rewards” are the intangible ones essentially given to one’s self. Pride of workmanship, a sense of importance, satisfaction with a job well done, feelings of belonging, identification with a larger enterprise, and dignity are examples. “Extrinsic rewards” are mostly observable and given to the recipient by others: pay, health insurance, a new pickup truck, a large office, a company hat, a television set, control over certain resources, and the right to accept or to avoid overtime hours.

To most employees in agriculture, as well as in other industries, money is a special reward, the main one for working. It has value for both what it buys and what it represents as an index of worth. Employment income is a symbol and an instrument of status in society. Other rewards are important, but if other things are equal, people tend to do what will get them more money. In the words of a seasoned mechanic, “I have been up, down, and seen a lot. Been rich and miserable, and poor and miserable. Believe me, richer is better.”

The comment below, posted on an Internet discussion group by a veteran ranch hand, reveals plenty about his motivation. What factors under management control would affect his desire to stay on the job and continue working to the best of his abilities?



I have been a herd cowboy on a 20,000 head feed yard for over five years, and have seen a lot of people come and go. In the time I have been here, there have been two experienced cowboys hired, myself and one more. All the rest have been farm boys who fantasize over being a cowboy. I have taken the time to train these pups, just to see them quit after a year or so.

Our manager does the hiring, while I do the disciplining and firing. I really don't think it is fair to the true cowboys that have to carry these farm boys that are making basically the same wages.

Maybe some day management will wake up and see that good hands are hard to find and they (the management) should pay these hands accordingly. Working in a feed yard is a far cry from a glamorous job. It is wet, muddy, and nasty. I don't think managers stop to think they are turning loose inexperienced farm boys on literally millions of dollars' worth of cattle every day. I wonder how many cattle have died because of these narrow-minded managers. The cost of two steers every month that a good hand would spot and pull would more than make up the difference. These managers are paying on the average \$1,000 a month, and they are really paying a lot more in dead cattle. The true cowboy is a dying breed, because he has to feed his family and has to take jobs in other fields.

Doesn't it make good sense to pay good wages for a good hand? I myself have been thinking very much about changing occupations because I'm tired of eating beans while the managers I have worked for eat steak and drive new Cadillacs every year. It's grunts like me and thousands of others that make these managers look good. They line their pockets with big fat bonuses while we sweat long hours with low wages, little appreciation, and bad weather. I know nobody will probably read this letter that can do anything about the situation, but it makes me feel good to get my say.

These fat cat managers will learn the hard way, when they have a wreck and a bunch of cattle will die when they have no one with experience to ride and doctor sick cattle. I'm not going to sign my name because I work for one of these narrow-minded individuals. If he ever reads this letter he would cause me much grief, as I have a wife and four children. I can't risk being without a job.

*Yours truly,
A Grunt with a Complaint*