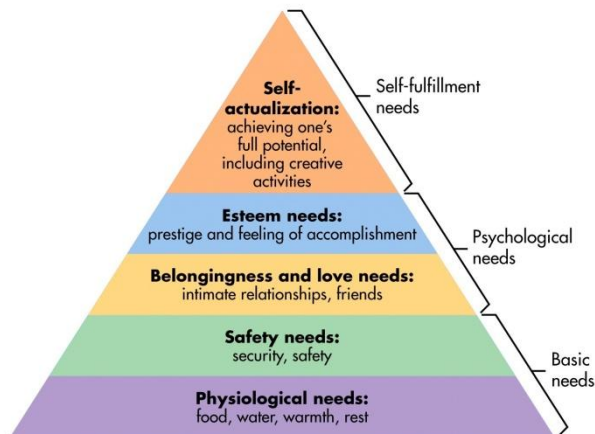


Motivation.....and Game of Thrones

Motivation: (defn.) A reason or reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way.

There are a number of theories which seek to explain what motivates people, what makes them desire a particular outcome or take a certain action.



In the 1940's Maslow proposed a hierarchy of needs, based on the view that our basic needs need to be met first and then we become motivated by our psychological needs and finally our need for self actualization.

Business leaders are usually most concerned with the top part of Maslow's pyramid - in most of our organisations basic needs are already met (at least most of the time) or are accepted as a "given" that needs to be addressed in any event.

The more complex higher level needs are harder to perceive and understand than the more basic ones and because of this many people struggle to work with them. Managers don't have the luxury of simply ignoring them, they have to have some guide to how high level motivations work so they can understand and manage their own motivations and also motivate others.

One model which addresses the different sorts of higher level needs was developed by David McClelland in the 1960's, it describes motivation as being a response to one (or a mixture) of 3 fundamental "needs".

the need for achievement

- People who are 'achievement motivated' seek achievement, attainment of realistic but challenging goals, and advancement in the job. There is a strong need for feedback as to achievement and progress, and a need for a sense of accomplishment.

the need for authority and power

- People who are 'authority motivated'. This driver produces a need to be influential, effective and to make an impact. There is a strong need to lead and for their ideas to prevail. There is also motivation and need towards increasing personal status and prestige.

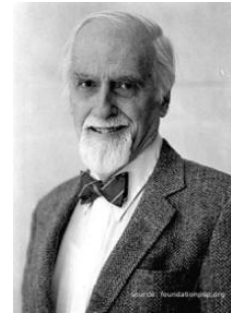
the need for affiliation

- People who are 'affiliation motivated', have a need for friendly relationships and are motivated towards interaction with other people. The affiliation driver produces motivation and the need to be liked and held in popular regard. These people are team players.



McClelland was of the view that being driven mostly by the Achievement need was best for a business leader as it in turn led most directly to people being motivated to meet targets and goals.

I think most people would now say that this view was over simplistic, or perhaps the product of a simpler world of “Management by Objectives” where business was seen as a fairly straightforward (if sometimes difficult) undertaking which could be described and controlled in terms of KPIs and financial metrics.



In my view business these days is complex and interconnected, success is hard to define simply using individual KPIs and it is seldom that one person achieving their particular goals is all that is needed to achieve success overall. In such a world I doubt that Achievement motivation (or in fact any one of them alone) can be seen as being “best” for a business leader.

But in giving that personal view, and in the interests of transparency, I suppose I should make it clear that I don’t have a particularly strong Achievement need, I am more motivated by a need for Authority and Power. So on a personal level Achievement motivation just doesn’t make as much sense to me as some others. I hope that I have this personal prejudice under control, but maybe not!

So rather than try to decide which motivations are “best” perhaps we should just agree that all motivations have their place and that being able to recognise and understand them (in yourself and others) would be an advantage for anyone who wants to be a self aware and insightful leader.

A good question to start with then might be “what do they look like in action”.

As a fun example why don’t we examine a few people that most of us are familiar with – some of the key characters from the Game of Thrones.

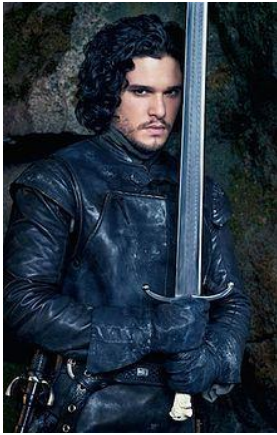
Achievement?



Cersei Lannister is clearly the baddest woman in Westeros and would seem to fit the Achievement need profile pretty well. She is certainly driven to achieve the challenging goal of ruling ALL OF THE WORLD. She also demonstrates a strong need for Authority and Power but seemingly not much for Affiliation.

A similar case can be made for **Arya Stark**, in her case being driven to achieve the death of all the people on her infamous list.





Affiliation?

On the other hand *Jon Snow* would seem to have strong need for affiliation - shown by his desire to be accepted and loved by all (and hasn't that caused some trouble).

His cousin (though they don't know it yet) *Daenerys Targaryen* also seems strongly motivated by affiliation – all that time spent freeing slaves and wanting to be loved for it!



Authority and Power?



And the powers behind the thrones – the ones who seek to wield power and influence? How about *Varys* or *Tyrion Lannister*

Both seem prepared to take a back seat, but they are hardly without power and have strong views about what the future of Westeros should look like (and are prepared to act to achieve that)



So you may agree with my views on these characters or not. As examples I hope they demonstrate that most of us have a mixture of types of motivations, but generally one of them will be the principal one, and that all of them can lead us in “good” or “bad” directions.

Effective business leaders are those who understand and can manage their own motivations and who are also capable of understanding and managing the different motivations of those around them.

So, as a start, what do you think might be your strongest motivation?

Best Wishes

David Gunzburg

Director DGHR Services

