THE
MANAGEMENT MODELS
POCKETBOOK

By Dr Mike Clayton

Drawings by Phil Hailstone

"Invaluable both as a foundation to the subject for new managers and as a quick refresher for more seasoned managers and leaders."
Cryss Mennaceur, Head of Organisational Development, London Borough of Sutton

"If I wanted to know about the essence of leadership or motivational theory, or even just how to communicate more effectively, this is the book I would turn to."
Adam Wynard, Ministry of Justice, Justice Academy

"With so many daily challenges faced by managers, this book is a great way to refresh and enthuse yourself with some great management model thinking – a pocket-sized gem for managers."
Perry Timms, Head of Organisational Development, Big Lottery Fund

CONTENTS

4 EXPECTANCY THEORY

QUICK SUMMARY
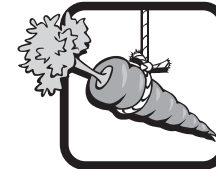
Victor Vroom described his Expectancy Theory of motivation in terms of a mathematical equation – a choice he later regretted. It is much easier to understand as a story.

I want my car washed and, luckily, I have four children. I ask my older son if he will do it, but he says, *'No. Whenever I wash your car, you always criticise and say it's not clean enough'*. Vroom called the link between the effort we put in and the performance we believe we can achieve, **Expectancy**.

So I ask my older daughter. She knows that she can clean my car well, so I promise a small gift. But she says *'no'* too. *'Whenever you promise me a gift, you always forget.'* Vroom called the link between performance and anticipated outcome, **Instrumentality**.

45
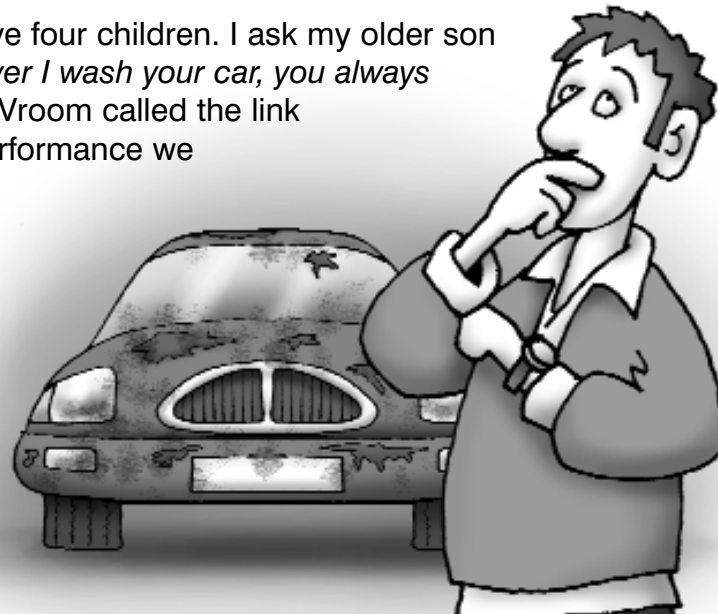
4 EXPECTANCY THEORY

QUICK SUMMARY

I next ask my younger son to clean the car. He knows he always does a good job and I have never let him down with a present. But he declines, saying, *'There is nothing I want at the moment; I'd rather go and play with my friends'*. Vroom called the value we associate with a reward, the **Valence**.

My younger daughter has no such concerns. She knows she can do a great job, trusts I'll honour my promise, and also wants a new DVD. For her, the desire to achieve the reward, and the confidence that she can earn it, make the effort worthwhile.

EXPECTANCY THEORY

QUICK SUMMARY

Performance   **Outcome**

Effort   **Reward**

Expectancy   *Instrumentality*   *Valence*
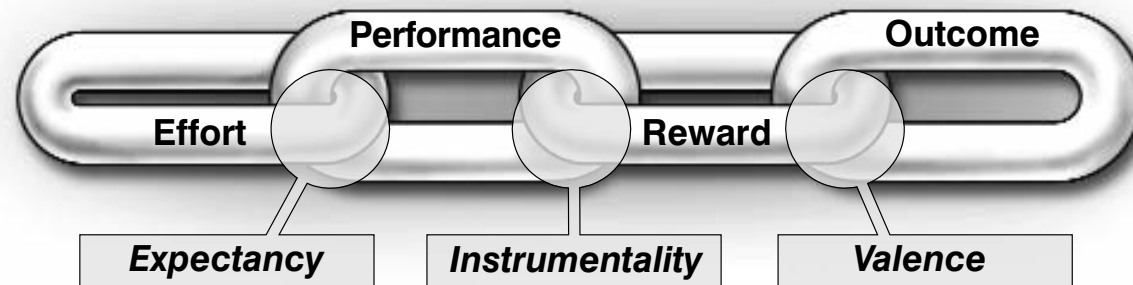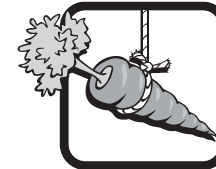
Expectancy theory is like the links of a chain. The strength of the link between the effort you put in and the results you get is called *expectancy*. The link between your performance and the reward you are promised is called *instrumentality*. The strength of the link between the promised reward and the value to you of the outcome you associate with it is called *valence*.

47

4 **EXPECTANCY THEORY**

EXPECTANCY: EFFORT & RESULTS

If I ask you to do something, and you put in the effort, how confident are you that you will get the results I expect? Your answer to this is what Vroom termed *expectancy*. Expectancy is therefore a subjective measure – it is not a reflection of your actual capability, but of your beliefs about your ability to get the result I want. The more you believe something can be done, the more you are likely to want to do it. Expectancy can range from:

|		
Zero – *'I believe it is impossible'*	**to**	**One** – *'I am sure I can do it'*

In the next section on Motivational Needs, you will see how McClelland found that certain people will be demotivated by a task that is too easy; people with a high *'need for achievement'* are most motivated when the expectancy is about half.

Here are some things you can do to increase expectancy at work:
● Provide appropriate support, encouragement and ongoing review
● Give a thorough briefing with context, key steps and advice
● Ensure access to the right resources, equipment and materials

48

4 **EXPECTANCY THEORY**

INSTRUMENTALITY: PERFORMANCE & REWARD
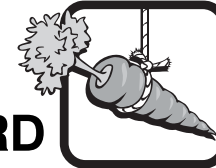
Instrumentality is a subjective judgement by the person you want to motivate. It measures the extent to which they believe that, if they deliver the results you require, you will deliver the reward you promised. Clearly, nobody will work for a promised reward if they doubt it will materialise. Yet many organisations – and managers too – will happily break a promise in the belief that people will forget and be fooled next time.
Instrumentality can range from:

| **Zero –** *'I don't believe you'* | **to** | **One –** *'I am sure you'll deliver it'* |

The reward can be one provided by the organisation: a promotion, a commendation, a bonus, or even a pat on the back. These are *extrinsic* rewards; beyond our direct control. We can equally be motivated by an *intrinsic* reward; something we ourselves want, like the fulfilment of a personal need or desire.

To boost instrumentality at work:
●   Make your promises plausible
●   Create a track record of keeping your promises
●   Distance yourself from others who break their promises

'Fool me once, shame on you.
Fool me twice, shame on me.'
           Anon

49

4 **EXPECTANCY THEORY**

VALENCE: REWARD & PERSONAL OUTCOME

Valence is where this model links directly to other models of motivation that talk about *what* motivates us. It measures the value we attach to the reward we are promised and how that reward links to outcomes or goals in our lives. The greater the attraction of the reward, the higher its valence, which can range from:

Minus one – *'I really don't want it'* **to**

Zero – *'I don't care about it'* **to**

Plus one – *'I really do want it'.*

We are not only motivated by the value we attach to the reward. Some work is intrinsically motivating – just achieving the results is reward enough. As an example, few get rich writing a book, yet many take on the challenge and feel a huge sense of achievement that justifies the effort. So valence can also link to an intrinsic reward.

To boost valence at work:
- Find out what your colleagues want, enjoy, and value in life
- Understand how other models, which describe what motivates us, apply
- Provide work that is intrinsically motivating – provides its own rewards

50

VROOM'S EXPECTANCY THEORY EQUATION

Vroom originally articulated his model as a mathematical equation. He later felt that this introduced a bogus sense that the model could be tested empirically. What the equation does, however, is show how the three terms interact.

$$\text{Motivation} = \text{Expectancy} \times \text{Instrumentality} \times \text{Valence}$$

The multiplication means that if any single component is very small, then your motivation to act will be low. To be highly motivated, each term must be near to one. And because valence can be negative – the outcome is an unwanted one – so can motivation. In this case, you would be motivated to avoid the action concerned.

There may be multiple outcomes from an action. So Vroom suggested we would have to add up the individual motivations to get the total motivation.

$$\text{Total motivation} = \text{Motivation 1} + \text{Motivation 2} + \text{Motivation 3} +$$

51

4 EXPECTANCY THEORY

VARIATIONS ON A THEME

LINKS TO OTHER MODELS

Expectancy theory is central to ideas of motivation in the workplace. Just as Vroom developed his thinking from earlier models, others have sought to complement or improve on his simple model. Two strands are worth unpicking.

- **Needs Theories: Maslow, Hertzberg, Alderfer, McClelland and others**. There are many models of what motivates us or, in Vroom's terms, what has a high valence. These motivators are our needs, wants, desires – even lusts! We look at McClelland's model in detail in the next section

- **Adams' Equity Theory**. Stacy Adams argued that we are motivated by a need for fairness, and will work hard to reduce inequity. Often we view the valence of a reward not simply in its own terms, but against our perception of how others around us are rewarded for a similar effort

Equity

Outcome · Effort · Reward · Performance

52
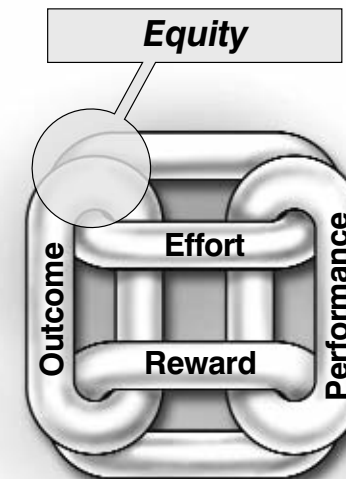
4 EXPECTANCY THEORY

HOW GOOD IS EXPECTANCY THEORY?

Vroom did not set out to create a complete model of motivation. If he were to start again, he says, he would pay more attention to what causes us to start or stop our behaviour. Other criticisms are more substantial.

The model assumes behaviour is rational and calculating: it rarely is. We often make decisions based on simple, almost reflexive, behaviours, called heuristics. If you are trying to gauge my motivation, you must gauge *my* perceptions of expectancy and instrumentality, rather than yours, even if you have better knowledge. This introduces bias and prejudice.

Expectancy Theory ignores wholly the nature of the work. This surely influences our motivation – we don't like all work equally. Finally, this model assumes that explicit rewards are valued. There is evidence that explicit rewards actually diminish our implicit sense of satisfaction in a job well done, by making the reward our objective, rather than the result. Think of the pleasure of reading a novel for itself versus reading a set text for an exam. Having said all of this, Expectancy Theory makes sense. Understanding it can prevent you from sabotaging motivation.

(53)

About the Author

Dr Mike Clayton

Mike is a freelance speaker, advisor and trainer. He has worked with a wide range of organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors, helping managers to improve their leadership and management skills. He specialises in leading and managing in times of change, where he can apply his experience of and passion for project and change management.

He has found models a useful way of collating and explaining his experiences, across 20 years of consulting, training and coaching. He has been a Senior Manager at Deloitte and is a Director of Kent Trainers.

Contact

You can contact Mike at:
The Old Chapel House, 20A Pound Hill, Alresford, Hampshire, SO24 9BW.
Tel: 01962 736019 E-mail: mike@thoughtscape.net