

**Pink, Daniel H. – Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us**

Canongate, 2009, [Surrounding Knowledge] Grade ★★★★★

To get the job done an employer needs to motivate his staff. According to Daniel Pink the traditional theories on how that's done are outdated and needs an upgrade. Business managers are using old tools. Pink is an accomplished business journalist who, by popularizing contemporary academic research, has turned into a best selling author of popular science books and a guru of the Internet age a la Malcolm Gladwell or Steven Levitt. The aim of *Drive* is to convince businesses to act in accordance with the new academic knowledge we have gathered on how to motivate employees – how to give them drive.

The book centers around two themes. The first is a historical exposé over the paradigms that society, academia and businesses have had with regards to theories on what drives humans to act. Named *Motivation 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0* respectively, the earliest theory focused on survival and basic needs. The industrial age instead used a theory of external rewards and punishments as the drivers of action.

To a large extent this is still where we are. The carrot and the stick prevail when schools ponder how to motivate pupils, when companies construct bonus schemes etc. The work content of today's society is however changing to more creative tasks and according to research it turns out that the motivators that did a good job with earlier rule-based routine tasks often - but not always - are down right counterproductive and negative for modern age employee motivation.

The second and lengthier theme is a description of what Motivation 3.0 is and what it means for management and organization. The focus is on people's intrinsic motivation as a driver. According to the author this new paradigm on what drives human motivation can be broken down into 3 main elements: Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose that together give people Drive. To be motivated people need to be able to have some say in what

they do, how they do it, when they do it and with whom they work. To be engaged we also want to strive for mastery in what we do. Mastery is a fleeting concept that we never really reach but by so-called deliberate practice and being allowed to experience "flow" at work a mindset to achieve mastery can foster drive. Without a purpose this mindset can however be elusive. Further, to be aligned with peoples' intrinsic motivation in our age the purpose – personal or corporate - must go beyond pure monetary measures.

This is a significant and inspiring book that I will put to practical use. The author takes on an important role to synthesize and explain academic knowledge. Also, I think in broad terms he's absolutely correct and those who take the advice to heart will have a competitive advantage. The book is legible and rather short. The later could be good or bad depending on what the reader requires.

Unfortunately at times I get a 'cut-and-paste-feeling'. A number of threads are woven together to a theory formation that in the text might be described as more coherent than it really is. It somewhat shines through that the journalist Pink is there to tell a smashingly good story rather than to be boringly comprehensive.

To a large extent the book fulfills its aim but not fully so in my opinion. The author could have shifted the weight somewhat from quaint TED-talk-psychology to practical organizational execution. As it is now *Drive* seems indecisive whether if it is a popular science best seller, a self-improvement book or a corporate management text. However, I suspect the latter type of book would hardly have sold nearly as well as *Drive* and it wouldn't have given Pink the superstar status that his three latest books have given him.

We should all take this content to heart. Those employers who can properly motivate people will surely win.

Mats Larsson, August 14, 2014