

## Adams Equity Motivation Theory; Put Workplace Psychology Into Action and Increase Motivation

By Lyndsay Swinton

John Stacey Adams' Equity Motivation Theory allows you to put workplace psychology into action and increase your own or your team's motivation. Adams' equity theory builds on [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#) and [Herzberg's Two Factor Theory](#), and was first presented in 1963.

In short, Adam's Equity Theory means that employees will become de-motivated if their perceived input is greater than the output from the company. Motivation can be expressed in many ways;

- Effort
- Loyalty
- Hard Work
- Commitment
- Skill
- Ability
- Adaptability
- Flexibility
- Tolerance
- Determination
- Enthusiasm
- Trust in manager and superiors
- Support of colleagues and peers
- Personal sacrifice, etc

Obviously you want a motivated team, so the output from the company must be in balance. Outputs are both tangible such as salary, benefits and expenses, and intangible such as

- Recognition

- Reputation
- Responsibility
- Sense of Achievement
- Praise and thanks
- Stimulus
- Sense of Advancement/Growth

If you start down the slippery slope where the employee perceives their input to exceed the company output, then de-motivation will creep in, and potentially result in increasingly disruptive behaviour.

### **Putting Adams's Equity Motivation Theory Into Practice**

As a manager, you need to keep an eye on the tangible and intangible outputs from the company. Remember, to your team, you are "the company", so it's up to you to make the effort.

Although you may have little scope to change pay policies and make substantial changes to what people earn, there is plenty you can do. Making sure you hold regular one to one meetings to discuss goals and personal development is a valuable investment in time. Set [goals](#) for your team and help them to create their own [personal development plan](#). Make sure you give feedback and [welcome feedback](#) yourself - both [positive feedback](#) and the much dreaded [negative feedback](#). Have a laugh at work by introducing [group team building activities](#). Implement a reward and recognition scheme to make sure that good performance is noticed and shared.

Adams' Equity Motivation Theory is a simple but useful tool allowing you to apply workplace psychology and increase your and your team's motivation at work.

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