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# THE VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE MOTIVATIONAL MAPS MODEL

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# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## 1. What Are Motivational Maps?

- **Definition:** Motivational Maps is a self-perception tool designed to reveal an individual's key motivators at work (their "needs and wants") and how satisfied they are with those motivators.
- **Purpose:** Primarily used for coaching, team development, and increasing emotional intelligence by offering actionable insights into what truly drives behaviour and performance.

## 2. Why Motivation Matters

- **Motivation:** "The fuel that powers all our endeavours, whether they be individual, team or organisational." Understanding motivation helps understand, predict and influence behaviour. Boosting motivation and engagement helps improve performance, collaboration and retention, thereby increasing profitability, decreasing absenteeism and employee turnover

## 3. Strong Validity & Reliability

- **Face Validity:** Users consistently describe Motivational Maps as "scarily accurate," with high levels of resonance and confirmation of self-perception.
- **ISO 17065:2012 Accredited:** This certification supports that the tool is impartial, methodologically sound, and produces dependable results.
- **Grounded in Established Models:** Incorporates elements from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Edgar Schein's Career Anchors, and the Enneagram, ensuring alignment with well-known psychological frameworks.

## 4. Real-World Impact & Applications

- **Coaching & HR:** Accelerate self-awareness and self-regulation, identify beliefs, gaps in job satisfaction, and coaching needs.
- **Leadership & Management:** From recruitment to promotion, Motivational Maps support the whole employee life-cycle, including first 90-days, development reviews, and team dynamics.
- **Organisational Success:** Documented in case studies (e.g., John Lewis Partnership, United Nations, Australian Department of Social Services) that show improved engagement, satisfaction, and retention.

# INTRODUCTION

Motivational Maps is primarily a coaching tool for work, one that's proven to be very useful in the development of emotional intelligence for clients. It achieves this by providing valid and reliable insights into the motivators, and their current level of motivation, i.e. the needs and wants, of people at work, and the satisfaction levels of these their needs and wants.

Motivation is defined by James Sale, the creator of Motivational Maps, as "The fuel that powers all our endeavours, whether they be individual, team or organisational."



## Senior Practitioner of Motivational Maps, Susannah Brade-Waring, explains:

"I came across this tool 14 years ago, when I moved to Dorset and met the creator of Motivational Maps, James Sale. Very quickly, I realised this tool provided the exact insights that I'd been seeking as a director and manager, i.e.

- Are my team happy in their work?
- What drives their behaviour and their decisions?
- Can I use that information to predict how my team might react, and therefore, how I can adapt my behaviour to elicit the best results for both my team and their performance?

I recognised it would have been very useful for development reviews too, facilitating two-way discussions about their career aspirations, and which kinds of work might best suit their needs and wants. It would enable more honest conversations about how to make non-motivating tasks slightly more enjoyable, or at least worthwhile."

# FACE VALIDITY AND SELF-PERCEPTION APPROACH

Motivational Maps have a very high level of face-validity, which is why they resonated so deeply with me. In fact, feedback surveys consistently report very high levels of validity for the report. Users often describe the results as "scarily accurate" and, almost invariably, affirm that the results are accurate and confirm their own self-perception.

This is not surprising, as the Motivational Maps questionnaire is a type of Self-Perception Inventory (SPI). This is a widely used approach in psychology and organisational behaviour to understand personal preferences, perceptions, and motivations. A well-known example of another SPI is the Belbin Team Roles Inventory. These tools are designed to elicit an individual's subjective assessment of their tendencies, priorities, and reactions, which provides insights into their behavioural patterns.

One concern of Practitioners is that users might complete a Motivational Maps based upon who they think they need to be, instead of how they actually feel. Therefore, we encourage users to reflect and be curious about their Motivational Maps results, whether they're accurate, any results that have surprised them, and how their motivators might have changed over time.





In this way, the Motivational Maps elicit quality discussions with an individual about their self-perception, their needs and wants at work, how well these needs are being satisfied and what might be stopping their motivators being fully met. From here, it's very easy to discuss why the user chose this organisation, and this role, as well as their future career aspirations. Users will often self-disclose information about their personal life, to help explain what might be influencing their motivators and satisfaction levels. Therefore, Practitioners are reminded of the need to stay within their field of expertise, and signpost to expert services to support users' other needs, e.g. for mental health, and employee assistance programmes. Some Practitioners have chosen to become Mental Health First Aiders, so that we're not avoiding those crucial conversations when they arise.

For this reason, it's very important that Motivational Maps consistently produce accurate and meaningful results. There is substantial evidence to demonstrate the validity, reliability and benefits of Motivational Maps, which is particularly reassuring and empowering for coaches who prefer evidence-based models.



# VALIDITY, RELIABILITY, AND QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

**Validity** refers to how well a test measures what it is supposed to measure, e.g. a cholesterol test which actually measures cholesterol levels.

**Reliability** refers to the consistency of a measurement tool, like a set of kitchen scales that always measures the same object as the same weight.

There are several ways of measuring both validity and reliability. **Self-Perception Inventories** like Motivational Maps have been validated extensively in practice, and are used in well-known tools, such as Belbin's Team Roles. Studies and client feedback consistently indicate very high levels of accuracy, a figure supported by the strong correlation between questionnaire results and the level of perceived accuracy by users. This often includes how users describe their thoughts and feelings about the motivators; perhaps why they believe they are important, or not important, to them, and perhaps what's blocking the full satisfaction of their motivation.

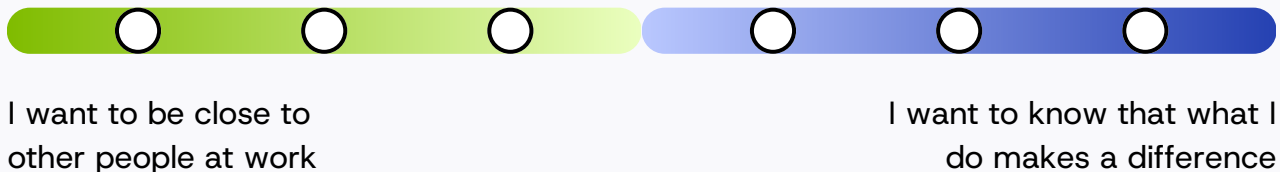
The reliability of Self-Perception Inventories stems from their ability to:

- Aggregate consistent patterns from multiple pairwise comparisons.
- Reflect nuanced personal insights while mitigating the impact of one-off biases or outlier responses.

The approach is both robust and user-friendly, balancing simplicity in execution with depth in results, which is why it's favoured by professionals across diverse domains, from coaching to team development.

To ensure the data collection is reliable, the Motivational Maps tool uses a questionnaire method called a semantic differential scale. This means users are presented with two choices, and they have to show a relative preference for one over the other, on a six-point scale. They can select a strong preference, or a balanced one. Crucially **they can't rank them equally in importance**, which deliberately creates some cognitive discomfort or 'internal opposition'.

For example, here is one question asked by the Motivational Maps tool:

A horizontal scale with six white circular markers. The first three markers are on a green-to-yellow gradient bar, and the last three are on a blue-to-purple gradient bar. Below the first marker is the text 'I want to be close to other people at work' and below the last marker is 'I want to know that what I do makes a difference'.

I want to be close to other people at work

I want to know that what I do makes a difference

This, alongside careful curation of the language used in the questionnaire, ensures users engage deeply with their motivational preferences, ultimately yielding their own clear hierarchy of motivators, with scores to indicate their relative preference on a 0 to 40-point scale per motivator. In total, users have 180 points to allocate between the 9 motivators, across 36 questions.

Questionnaires often have a left and right bias, and users can have the same bias. E.g. left is often a low score, and right a high score. Therefore, in Motivational Maps, each motivator is compared to every other motivator multiple times, with an equal balance of left and right preferences per motivator, across the 36 questions. This is part of the forced-choice or semantic differential scale used in Motivational Maps to reduce social desirability bias, and ensure that respondents' true preferences are captured as accurately as possible. This is another form of validity. Practitioners have reported trying to 'trick' the questionnaire, and find it difficult to create accurate-looking false results across the 36 questionnaires. This is even more difficult when users are asked to discuss and describe the underlying beliefs, and resulting behaviours relating to each motivator.

The ranking of the 9 motivators is Part 1 of the questionnaire.

Part 2 of the questionnaire asks users to rate their level of satisfaction, between 1 and 10, for each motivator, e.g. "I feel I make a difference".

The software behind the Motivational Maps questionnaire then applies an 8-level algorithm to calculate the user's current level of motivation. This is based upon the user's relative preference for each motivator and their perceived level of satisfaction for that motivator.

The robustness of the Motivational Maps data is recognised by accreditation to the internationally recognised ISO 17065:2012 standard, which was attained in 2015. This accreditation confirms that Motivational Maps are:

### **Accurate and Reliable:**

The accreditation assures users that the methodology behind Motivational Maps consistently produces dependable results.

### **Unbiased and Transparent:**

The certification ensures impartiality, meaning the Maps measure motivation objectively, free from conflicts of interest or external influence.





# TEST-RETEST, INTER-RATER RELIABILITY, AND REAL-WORLD OUTCOMES

As well as Test-Retest Reliability, Motivational Maps demonstrate high levels of Inter-Rater Reliability. This means, despite being a self-perception tool, Motivational Maps show consistent results across different raters and contexts. Practitioners report reliable findings in numerous conversations about the nine motivators. This reliability is currently being assessed through a Data Mining project, involving over 110,000 Motivational Maps, to explore significant correlations across a number of criteria including gender, age, role and industry.

Of course, what coaches really want is a tool that relates to real-world outcomes, including their client's beliefs, thoughts, feelings and actions as they relate to work. Motivational Maps ability to measure and report a user's motivational preferences and satisfaction levels is evidenced by its successful application in many organisational settings, of all types and sizes. This evidence has been captured in a number of case-studies, including the United Nations, the John Lewis Partnership, and the Australian Department of Social Services. Some of these case-studies are available to view on the website: [www.motivationalmaps.com](http://www.motivationalmaps.com).



The validity of Motivational Maps is reinforced by its grounding in a comprehensive range of established and well-known psychological models, including Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Edgar Schein's Career Anchors, and the Enneagram. This ensures that the nine motivators used in the model are intimately correlated with well-established psychological models.

By leveraging these evidence-based qualities, coaches, HR professionals, managers, and trainers can confidently use Motivational Maps to facilitate meaningful and impactful coaching and development sessions, ultimately driving personal and organisational growth.

# THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF MOTIVATION AND ITS SOURCES

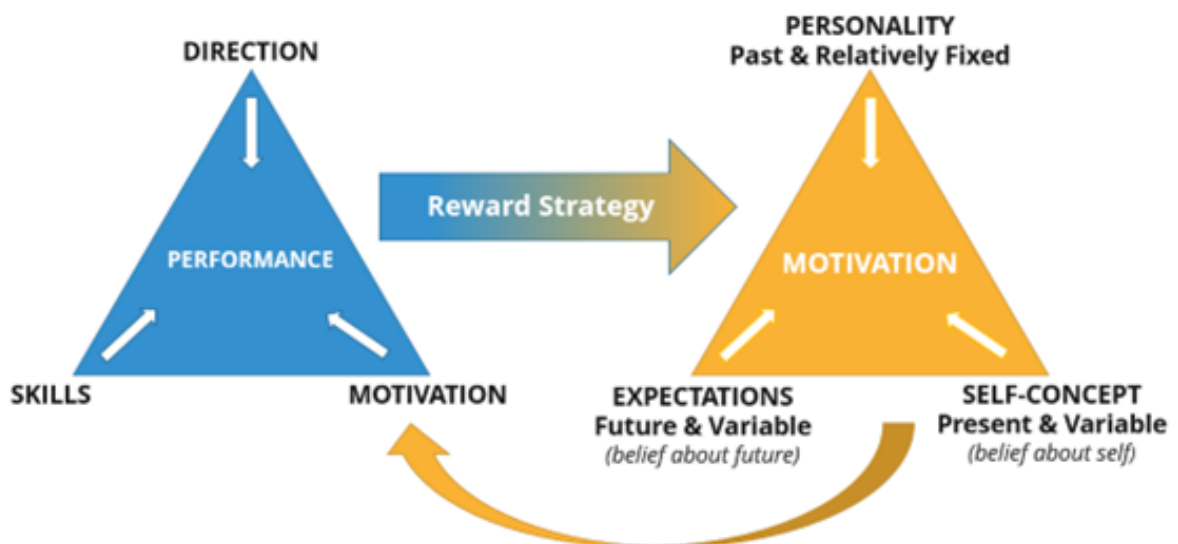


That brings us into another benefit and differentiator of Motivational Maps, in that motivation, i.e. our emotional needs and wants at work, and how satisfied they are, is dynamic. Practitioners experience of analysing Motivational Maps for the same client over a number of years, sometimes in quick succession and sometimes years apart, shows our motivation doesn't change on a daily basis, but typically when 'who' we are changes, which changes our needs and wants. That is, when we change our roles and responsibilities at work, and when our personal needs and identity changes significantly, e.g. becoming home-owners, parents, divorced, and when we're planning for our retirement.

Our motivators change when our beliefs about what is important to us at work change, and that's because the research conducted by James Sale, the creator of Motivational Maps, found three primary sources of motivation.

These are summarised, as follows:

### The Three Sources of Motivation



Therefore, Motivational Maps provide an accurate and reliable insight into both an individual's self-concept, and their beliefs about the future. Both of these are variable, and coachable. In this way, we can help clients move closer to their desired self-concept, and develop beliefs and actions to create an empowering, and indeed, motivating, future. Being linked to an individual's personality is also why Motivational Maps are so compatible with personality profiling tools.

# BENEFITS FOR COACHES, HR PROFESSIONALS, MANAGERS, AND TRAINERS INCLUDE:



## Enhanced Self-Awareness

Motivational Maps help individuals understand their key motivators, providing deep insights into what drives them most and least. This self-awareness is crucial for personal and professional growth.



## Improved Coaching Conversations

The tool provides a structured framework for coaching sessions, enabling coaches to explore clients' current states, past experiences, and future goals effectively.



## Compatibility with Other Assessments

Motivational Maps are very compatible with other assessment tools, including Insights, DISC, Team SDI and strengths. They provide another perspective to create a fuller and richer set of insights and data.



## Actionable Insights

The insights gained from Motivational Maps are practical and actionable, allowing for tailored strategies to improve job satisfaction, engagement, and performance.



## Organisational Impact

Organisations using Motivational Maps report noticeable improvements in relationships, attitudes, behaviour, performance, team dynamics, happiness, employee engagement and retention.

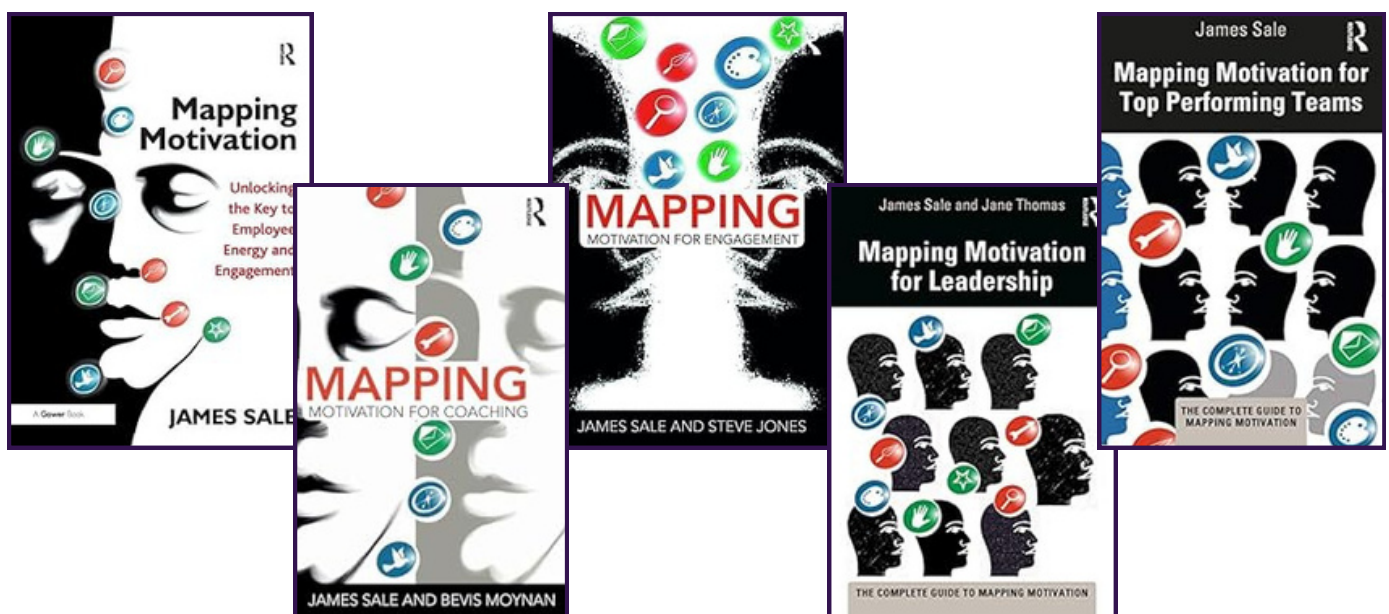


There are many applications for Motivational Maps, providing Practitioners choices and specialist areas of work. For example, Practitioners use this for the whole employee life cycle, from recruitment to promotion and retirement, as well as informing Team Selection during organisational Mergers & Acquisitions, and improving department outcomes including customer service. This makes it a valuable tool for enhancing workplace motivation, performance, productivity and profitability.

# PUBLICATIONS

James Sale has written several books about Motivational Maps, which form "The Complete Guide to Mapping Motivation" series. These were published by Routledge, part of the Taylor and Francis Group, a prominent multinational publisher specialising in academic books and journals, focused on the humanities, social sciences, education, law, and behavioural sciences.

These books provide a comprehensive overview of how motivation influences various aspects of work and personal development, offering practical tools and insights for leaders, managers, coaches, and HR professionals.



### **Mapping Motivation: Unlocking the Key to Employee Energy & Engagement**

Written by James Sale, and published in 2015.

**1.**

- Understanding motivation and its importance, measuring and defining motivation, and the role of motivation in performance and productivity
- Applications in team building, performance appraisal, leadership development, engagement, and change management

### **Mapping Motivation for Coaching**

Written by James Sale and Bevis Moynan, and published in 2018.

**2.**

- The role of motivation in coaching
- Techniques for motivating clients
- Integrating Motivational Maps into coaching practices
- Practical exercises and case studies

### **Mapping Motivation for Engagement**

Written by James Sale and Steve Jones, and published in 2018.

**3.**

- The importance of employee engagement
- Motivational factors that drive engagement
- Strategies to improve engagement in the workplace
- Practical tools and techniques for managers

### **Mapping Motivation for Leadership**

Written by James Sale and Jane Thomas, and published in 2019.

**4.**

- Leadership styles and their impact on motivation
- Motivational strategies for effective leadership
- Enhancing team performance through motivational leadership
- Case studies and practical applications

### **Mapping Motivation for Top Performing Teams**

Written by James Sale, and published in 2022.

**5.**

- Building and sustaining high-performing teams
- Motivational dynamics within teams
- Strategies for team motivation and collaboration
- Real-world examples and case studies



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