# MECHANISMS FOR MOTIVATING COMPANY EMPLOYEES IN THE PROCESS OF GLOBAL STRATEGIC CHANGE

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**Abstract.** *This article examines the mechanisms of motivating company employees under conditions of global strategic change. The study proceeds from the assumption that strategic transformation cannot be reduced to structural reforms, new technologies or revised business models alone. Its success is determined by the willingness of employees to accept uncertainty, update competencies, coordinate their efforts and identify personal meaning in change. On this basis, the paper systematizes classical motivation theories and integrates them with contemporary trends in digitalization, hybrid work, reskilling, cultural diversity and strategic volatility.*

**Keywords:** *employee motivation; strategic change; engagement; adaptation; reskilling; organizational development; leadership; reward systems.*

## Introduction

Global strategic change has become a normal condition of corporate development rather than an exceptional episode. Companies are compelled to revise their strategies because of digital transformation, geopolitical uncertainty, supply-chain restructuring, ecological requirements, new forms of competition and shifting consumer preferences. In such circumstances, management often concentrates on organizational design, investment priorities and market positioning. Yet the human dimension remains decisive. A company may formulate an excellent strategy, but it cannot implement that strategy unless employees are willing to learn, cooperate and perform under new expectations. Therefore, the question of motivation becomes central in the governance of strategic change.

The academic literature provides several complementary approaches for explaining why people support or resist change. Lewin’s conception of social change emphasizes that transformation requires the destabilization of existing routines, the movement toward a new pattern and the institutionalization of the new equilibrium (Lewin, 1947). Kotter later showed that change initiatives fail not only because of technical mistakes but also because employees are not mobilized around urgency, vision and short-term wins (Kotter, 1995). In this sense, strategic change is not merely an economic process; it is also a social and psychological process in which motivation, trust and perceived fairness shape implementation outcomes.

### 1. Core motivation mechanisms in periods of strategic transformation

The first major group of mechanisms is material and performance-linked incentives. In periods of transformation, employees often assume additional workloads: mastering new software, adapting to revised standards, participating in cross-functional projects and meeting transitional performance indicators. If organizations demand more but do not differentiate rewards, employees interpret change as unilateral pressure. For this reason, variable bonuses tied to learning outcomes, project completion, innovation proposals or successful adaptation can serve as a signal that the company recognizes extra effort. However, material rewards should be transparent, time-bounded and strategically meaningful. When bonus systems become arbitrary or overly complex, they undermine trust instead of strengthening motivation.

The fourth group includes developmental mechanisms. Under global strategic change, motivation and learning are inseparable. An employee is less likely to support transformation if it threatens to make their skills obsolete. By contrast, willingness rises when the company offers training pathways, micro-credentials, coaching, cross-functional mobility and career opportunities linked to the new strategy. Developmental incentives are especially powerful because they connect short-term adaptation with long-term professional value. They tell employees that change is not only a risk but also an investment in their future employability. This strengthens both commitment and perceived organizational justice.

The fifth group is associated with fairness, wellbeing and psychological safety. Change processes often produce fatigue, role ambiguity and emotional pressure. If employees are constantly asked to adapt without rest, support or realistic workloads, even sophisticated reward systems will fail. Managers should therefore protect basic conditions: predictable performance criteria, non-humiliating feedback, balanced workload allocation, reasonable transition timelines and access to psychological support where needed. In multicultural and geographically dispersed companies, fairness also requires sensitivity to local labor norms and cultural expectations. A mechanism that motivates one group may demotivate another if it is perceived as culturally tone-deaf or socially exclusionary.

**Table 1. Integrated mechanisms of employee motivation during strategic change**

| Mechanism | Strategic purpose | Typical tools | Expected effect |
|---|---|---|---|
| Material incentives | Compensate extra adaptation effort and link results to strategic priorities | Change bonuses, innovation awards, milestone payments | Higher performance focus and visible reward fairness |
| Recognition mechanisms | Preserve status and reinforce contribution | Public praise, internal awards, expert roles, mentoring status | Higher commitment and reduced symbolic loss |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Participatory mechanisms | Increase ownership of change | Idea sessions, pilot teams, dialogue meetings, surveys | Lower resistance and better implementation quality |
| Developmental incentives | Connect change with career value | Training, coaching, certification, mobility pathways | Reskilling, employability and strategic adaptability |
| Wellbeing and fairness tools | Protect energy and trust during uncertainty | Transparent KPIs, workload balancing, support services | Lower fatigue and higher psychological safety |

**2. Adaptive motivational architecture for global change**

On the basis of these considerations, an adaptive motivational architecture for global strategic change can be proposed. Its first stage is diagnostic assessment. Before launching incentives, the company should identify which employee groups are most affected by change, what skills gaps exist, what anxieties dominate and which informal leaders influence attitudes. The second stage is segmentation. Frontline workers, technical specialists, project managers and senior experts often respond to different motivational triggers; therefore, one universal package rarely works. The third stage is communication and meaning construction. Management must connect strategic goals with understandable narratives about professional growth, market resilience and organizational purpose. The fourth stage is targeted implementation. Here the company combines financial rewards, recognition, learning opportunities and participatory tools according to group-specific needs. The fifth stage is feedback and recalibration. Motivation is dynamic, so incentive systems must be revised as the change process evolves.

An additional issue concerns measurement. During transformation, many companies measure only financial or operational indicators, such as cost savings, system deployment or project deadlines. These are important, but they do not fully reveal motivational reality. A more balanced system should include indicators of training completion, participation rates, engagement trends, internal mobility, retention of key specialists, suggestion quality and manager feedback quality. Such indicators help management detect whether apparent compliance hides silent disengagement. In other words, motivational governance should be evidence-based.

**Table 2. Proposed stages of motivational governance in transformation processes**

| Stage | Main task | Managerial instruments |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Diagnosis | Identify risks, skills gaps and attitude clusters | Pulse surveys, interviews, change-readiness mapping |
| 2. Segmentation | Differentiate motivational needs across groups | Role-based incentives, manager mapping, tailored packages |
| 3. Communication | Explain the meaning and direction of change | Town halls, team briefings, Q&A channels, scenario narratives |
| 4. Targeted implementation | Apply integrated incentive architecture | Bonuses, recognition, training, participation, coaching |
| 5. Feedback and correction | Measure effects and adjust mechanisms | Retention data, engagement trends, milestone reviews |

**3. Risks, limitations and governance implications**

At the same time, there are several risks. First, organizations may overuse extrinsic rewards and weaken intrinsic commitment. Second, poorly designed metrics can encourage superficial compliance instead of real learning. Third, symbolic recognition becomes empty if it is not accompanied by fair pay and managerial consistency. Fourth, strategic change may generate motivation gaps between core and peripheral employees, especially in multinational structures where headquarters and local branches experience transformation unevenly. These risks confirm that motivation is not a technical add-on; it is a governance problem requiring institutional coherence.

At the same time, the use of digital systems creates governance obligations. When companies intensify data-driven people management, employees may become suspicious if they do not know how behavioural data, survey responses or productivity indicators are interpreted. Therefore, digital motivation systems should be governed by transparency, proportionality and ethical safeguards. Employees need clear information about the purpose of surveys, the logic of incentive criteria and the channels available for contesting unfair evaluations. Personalized motivation is effective only when people perceive that differentiation is based on legitimate role-specific needs rather than hidden favoritism. Consequently, digital motivation architecture should combine analytics with explanation, confidentiality with dialogue, and efficiency with respect for human dignity.

**Conclusion:** The study shows that employee motivation in the context of global strategic change should be designed as a coordinated system rather than a fragmented set of rewards. The most effective organizations are those that combine financial incentives with symbolic recognition, meaningful communication, participation, learning opportunities and conditions of fairness. Such a model transforms strategic change from a managerial demand into a shared organizational project. Accordingly, the quality of motivational design may be treated as one of the main indicators of whether transformation will remain formal or become sustainable in practice.

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