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No margin, no mission? A field experiment on incentives for
public service delivery*

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Abstract

We conduct a field experiment to evaluate the effect of extrinsic rewards, both financial and non-financial, on the performance of agents recruited by a public health organization to promote HIV prevention and sell condoms. In this setting: (i) non-financial rewards are effective at improving performance; (ii) the effect of both rewards is stronger for pro-socially motivated agents; (iii) the effect of both rewards is stronger when their relative value is higher. The findings illustrate that extrinsic rewards can improve the performance of agents engaged in public service delivery, and that non-financial rewards can be effective in settings where the power of financial incentives is limited.

JEL codes: J33, O15, M52, D62

Keywords: financial incentives, non-monetary rewards, pro-social motivation, public service delivery

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No margin, no mission? A Field experiment on incentives for public service delivery

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