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in·cen·tive  (ĩn-sĕn tĭv)

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n.

Something, such as the fear of punishment or the expectation of reward, that induces action or motivates effort.

adj.

Serving to induce or motivate: *an incentive bonus for high productivity.*

[Middle English, from Late Latin *incentĭvum*, from neuter of *incentĭvus*, inciting, from Latin, setting the tune, from *incentus*, past participle of *incinere*, to sound : *in-*, intensive pref.; see [IN-](#)² + *canere*, to sing; see **kan-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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