

Emperor International Journal of Finance and Management Research

ISSN: 2395-5929

Mayas Publication ®

www.mayas.info

Volume- X

Issue- 9

September-2024

A Study on Motivation in the Workplace to Improve the Employee Performance

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I. INTRODUCTION

Motivation results from the interaction of both conscious and unconscious factors such as the intensity of desire or need, incentive or reward value of the goal, and expectations of the individual and of his or her peers. These factors are the reasons one has for behaving a certain way. An example is a student that spends extra time studying for a test because he or she wants a better grade in the class. Internal and external factors that stimulate desire and energy in people to be continually interested and committed to a job, role or subject, or to make an effort to attain a goal.

Most employees need motivation to feel good about their jobs and perform optimally. Some employees are money motivated while others find recognition and rewards personally motivating. Motivation levels within the workplace have a direct impact on employee productivity. Workers who are motivated and excited about their jobs carry out their responsibilities to the best of their ability and production numbers increase as a result. An incentive is a motivating influence that is designed to drive behavior and motivate employees to be produce quality work. Employers use several types of incentives to increase production numbers.

Employee incentives come in a variety of forms including paid time off, bonuses, cash and travel perks. Incentives drive employee motivation because they offer workers more to strive for than a regular paycheck. Many employees need recognition from their employers to produce quality work.

Some employees are motivated through feeling a sense of accomplishment and achievement for meeting personal and professional goals. Many workers are self-disciplined and self-motivated. These individuals perform productively for the sake of the personal challenge their work provides. There are several ways employers can motivate employees and drive worker productivity. Because different factors influence workers in different ways, employers can utilize motivation strategies that encompass several techniques.

Concept of Motivation

The word motivate is frequently used in the context of management as a transitive verb: motivation is by Implication something done by one person or group to another. A further implication of this usage is that the motivated parties need to be induced to perform some action or expend a degree of effort which they would not otherwise wish to do. That this is an issue of vital importance to the prosperity of commercial organizations is emphasized by Lawler (1973): “Those individual behaviors that are crucial in determining the effectiveness of organizations are, almost without exception, voluntary motivated behaviors”.

Motivation concerns that “psychological processes that cause the arousal, direction and persistence of behavior” (Ilgen and Klein, 1988). Whilst there is general agreement in the literature about these three components of “motivation” (eg: Korman 1974, Kanfer, 1990), the nature and place of motivation in a work-related context has been the subject of a long and developing study. Theories have been propounded, tested and superseded at a pace which has left organizational practice often several steps behind the researchers. The following pages will attempt to document the main themes and the most widely recognized theories.

Employee motivation has always been a central problem for leaders and managers. Unmotivated employees are likely to spend little or no effort in their jobs, avoid the workplace as much as possible, exit the organization if given the opportunity and produce low quality work. On the other hand, employees who feel motivated to work are likely to be persistent, creative and productive, turning out high quality work that they willingly undertake.

There has been a lot of research done on motivation by many scholars, but the behavior of groups of people to try to find out why it is that every employee of a company does not perform at their best has been comparatively researched. Many things can be said to answer this question; the reality is that every employee has different ways to become motivated. Employers need to get to know their employees very well and use different tactics to motivate each of them based on their personal wants and needs.

Inspiring employee motivation requires much more than the old-fashioned carrot- and-stick approach. Today's manager needs to understand the reasons why employees work and offer the rewards they hope to receive. Motivated employees have a drive to succeed no matter what the project. Managers cannot "motivate" employees, but they can create an environment that inspires and supports strong employee motivation.

Review of Literature

There has been a lot of research done on Motivation by many scholars. The following are only a few of the research topics that have been done on Motivation: Motivation theories, Ways to encourage employee motivation, Measures of Motivation, Principles of motivation, Ways of making your firm more exciting, How to motivate your people problem, The missing link in Strategic Performance, Salary is not a motivator anymore, How to effectively reward employees, Turning Motivation Theory into Practice, Measures of Motivation, Self-Theories and Employee Motivation.

Of the many theories of work motivation, Herzberg's (1966) motivator-hygiene theory has been one of the most influential in recent decades. Basically, the theory divides motivating factors into two categories: Motivator factors, which have something to do with the work itself, and Hygiene factors, which have something to do with the surrounding context. According to Maslow, most of what we know of human motivation comes not from psychologists but from psychotherapists treating patients. He explains that these patients are a great source of error as well as of useful data, because they constitute a poor sample of the population. The motivational life of neurotic sufferers should be rejected as a paradigm for healthy motivation. Any theory of motivation must deal with the highest capacities of the healthy and strong man.

Hackman and Oldham's (1976) model of job enrichment propose that jobs can be made more motivating by increasing the following: skill variety (the number of different skills required by the job), task identity (the degree to which the job produces something meaningful), task significance (the importance of the work), autonomy (the degree to which the individual has

freedom in deciding how to perform the job), and feedback (the degree to which the individual obtains ongoing. One psychological view suggests that very high levels of intrinsic motivation are marked by such strong interest and involvement in the work, and by such a perfect match of task complexity with skill level, that people experience some kind of psychological "flow," a sense of merging with the activity they are doing (Csikszentmihalyi 1975). The major psychological view suggests that extrinsic motivation works in opposition to intrinsic motivation

Employee Motivation so Important for Performance

Managers need to find creative ways in which to consistently keep their employees motivated as much as possible. Motivation is highly important for every company due to the benefits that it's able to bring. Such benefits include:

1. Human capital Management:

A company can achieve its full potential only by making use of all the financial, physical, and human resources that it has. It is through these resources that the employees get motivated to accomplish their duties. This way, the enterprise begins to glisten as everyone is doing their best to fulfill their tasks.

2. Meet Personal Goals and Help an Employee Stay Motivated:

Motivation can facilitate a worker reaching his/her personal goals, and can facilitate the self- development of an individual. Once that worker meets some initial goals, they realize the clear link between effort and results, which will further motivate them to continue at a high level.

3. Greater Employee Satisfaction:

Worker satisfaction is important for every company, as this one factor can lead towards progress or regress. In the absence of an incentive plan, employees will not fill ready to fulfill their objectives. Thus, managers should seek to empower them through promotion opportunities, monetary and non-monetary rewards, or disincentives in case of inefficient employees.

4. Raising Employee Efficiency:

An employee's efficiency level is not strictly related to his abilities and qualifications. In order to get the very best results, an employee needs to have a perfect balance between ability and willingness. Such balance can lead to an increase of productivity, lower operational costs, and an overall improvement in efficiency, and can be achieved only through motivation.

5. A Higher Chance of Meeting the Company's Goals:

Any enterprise has its goals, which can be achieved only when the following factors are met:

- There is a proper resource management
- The work environment is a cooperative one
- All employees are directed by their objectives
- Goals can be reached if cooperation and coordination are fulfilled at once through motivation

Techniques of Employee Motivation

Job enlargement, job enrichment and job rotation are three basic approaches;

1. Job Enlargement:

Job enlargement involves expanding the job of an employee that has them doing more work of a similar nature to what they already do. This may be allowing them to complete the whole task instead of just part of it, for example, packaging the products as well as manufacturing them. This process ideally removes the boredom out of the job by eliminating the repetitiveness out of tasks and allowing them to complete the whole process, further increasing their responsibility.

2. Job Enrichment:

Job enrichment is an attempt to give workers more control over their tasks and more responsibility for design, execution, and output. The worker assumes some of the functions previously carried out by his or her immediate supervisor or by other staff.

3. Job Rotation:

Job rotation is a practice whereby each employee learns several operations in manufacturing process and rotates through each in a set period. Job rotation has important implications for firm learning. On one hand, when employees rotate, the firm receives information about the quality of various jobs - employee matches. On the other hand, without rotation, the firm receives only direct information about one match, but the information it gets about this one match is very reliable.

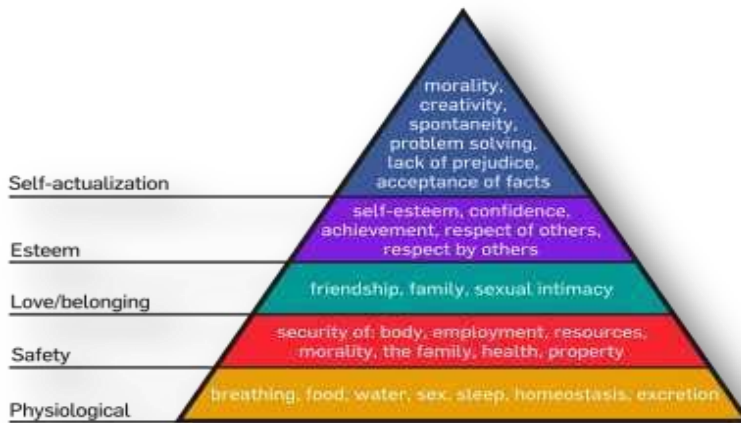
Popular Theories of Workplace Motivation

Two of the most popular models of motivation are Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's two-factor model. Both are widely accepted and most recent research builds on the ideas presented in these two models.

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS:

Abraham Maslow presented his model of motivation in 1954. The basic idea of Maslow's model was that there are five levels of needs for humans and each level needed to be fulfilled before someone could be motivated by higher level factors. Figure 1 is a graphical example of Maslow's model.

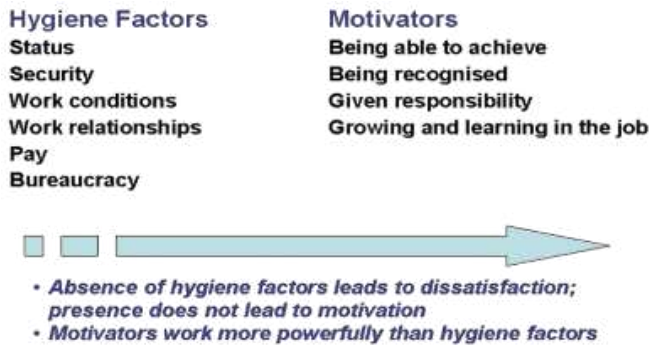
According to Maslow, you wouldn't be able to motivate someone with positive feedback (an esteem factor) if their basic physiological needs aren't met. This makes sense if you apply it to the workplace. If someone doesn't get paid enough to put food on the table for his or her family, he or she isn't going to care too much about a 'good job' sticker!



1.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Herzberg's Two-Factor Model

Herzberg came up with one of the more popular motivation theories. He felt that certain conditions, or 'hygiene factors', had to be in place for employees to be satisfied, but these did not necessarily motivate the employees.



1.2 Herzberg's Two-Factor Model

For example, if an employee is working below the minimum wage, it is not likely that he/she will be motivated until a perceived fair rate of pay is given. At the same time, if an employee is well paid, Herzberg believed that a pay rise would not have a lasting motivational effect.

Herzberg suggested that once the hygiene factors were met, employers should focus on recognizing the achievements of the employee and providing opportunities to learn and grow. So the motivation theories of Maslow and Herzberg were similar in this regard.

II.CONCLUSION

Manager's duties in today's corporate world are multi-faceted. Not only do managers need to be versed in finance, economics, and information systems; it is now essential for them to have a firm grasp on organizational behavior and psychology. They must know how their people think and what makes them do so. Making sure managers are aware of this psychology is the job of the human resource department, but all managers of the organization have a responsibility to understand it. A key aspect of organizational psychology is motivation. Managers must know why their people behave the way they do, so that these buttons can be pushed at the manager's discretion. A motivator is that which impels or compels an individual to act toward meeting a need.

Some major motivational theories will also be explored. Practical ways of applying these theories to real people will be considered.

When looked upon the first time, the link between employee motivation and performance seems to be quite obvious. That's because every time when we deem a task to be important and valuable to us, we act with a high

level of dedication and enthusiasm to its completion. However, the relationship between these two things is in fact a lot more complex. With that in mind, managers need to find creative ways in which to consistently keep their employees motivated as much as possible. Motivation is very important for every company to improve the employee performance and productivity of the organization.

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