

FACTORS WHICH CAN ENHANCE OR WEAKEN LEVELS OF MOTIVATION OF EMPLOYEES IN AN ORGANISATION

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Abstract

This present paper attempts to discuss the various factors which either enhance or weaken levels of motivation among employees in an organisation. It reveals that each employee has a different set of factors that motivates him; her to do his/her best work. Owners of business and other employers need to understand what the motivations of workers are in order to effectively manage and grow a business that has the full support of its employees. Money is often the first factor to come to mind, but successful entrepreneurs will see that as just one part of a larger picture of incentives that drives employees to excel at their jobs. Motivating is critical in an organisation in that it is next to directing / leading. Managers can motivate their subordinates while guiding them. Motivating means encouraging people to take more initiative and interest in the work assigned. It is an art of getting things done willingly from others. Motivation avoids clashes and non-cooperation and brings harmony, unity and co-operative outlook among employees. Managers have to work as motivators of their subordinates.

Key terms

Factors, enhance, weaken, motivation, management, effective.

Introduction

The key to effective management is the ability to get results from other people, through other people and in conjunction with other people(Lai,2011). If the underlying psychology is wrong, the most carefully constructed system and techniques will fail.

An efficient supervisor may not necessarily be an effective supervisor if his or her relationship with the staff is poor. But if relationships are good and the staff is motivated, some administrative or environmental flaws will readily be over looked.

What is motivation?

Motivation is concerned with the cause of behavior; why people act, speak or think in a particular way. Supervisors need to know how to motivate. They need to get results through people or get the best out of people. This is most likely to be achieved if the supervisor helps the staff experience job satisfaction. This is known as intrinsic motivation which is too often based on fear (Halonen, 1995). Results will then be the best that the employee can produce and be more likely to be in line with the overall goals and ethos of the organisation.

According to Stipek (1996), early approaches to the study of motivation were rooted in the literature on extrinsic reinforcement. Within this literature, all behavior, including achievement, was believed to be governed by reinforcement contingencies. Proponents of this approach included B. F. Skinner (Lai, 2011), who identified different types of reinforcers. Positive reinforcers, or rewards, are consequences that increase the probability of a given behavior they were made contingent on, whereas negative reinforcers are consequences that increase the probability of a given behavior by removing or reducing some negative external stimulus. Punishment on the other hand, refers to unpleasant consequences that decrease the probability of a given behavior. As Broussard and Garrison (2004) notes, this approach is limited to the extent that rewards and punishments are not equally effective for all employees and desired behaviours (such as productive work) are difficult to reinforce. Moreover, the benefits of extrinsic rewards tend to decay over time (Stipek, 1996). As Stipek (1996) explains, the limitations of extrinsic reinforcement led to the development of new approaches to motivate people, including cognitive behavior modification (CBM).

Principles of motivation

Principles of motivation are the rules that all motivated and happy people abide by in this struggle of life. Martinez (2006) provides four major principles of motivation as discussed below.

Participation

The staff should be involved in decision-making and in matters which affect them directly. The more the staff becomes involved, the more they will have a sense of ownership in decisions and

be prompted to help in achieving the objectives. Involving the staff in decision-making does not alter the fact that the supervisor remains accountable for taking the final decisions and for their results.

Communication

If the staff is informed about the objectives and the results achieved, they are inclined to cooperate more and feel that they are part (members) of the staff (group). The opposite is also true: if staff does not know what they are supposed to be achieving, they will show little interest and have little motivation. Staff should not only be informed about results, but also about changes and progress.

Recognition

If staff members receive the necessary recognition for work done, they will be inclined to work harder. Recognition should be given to the staff member as a person and not just as a human resource.

Delegated authority

The supervisor should be prepared to delegate authority to capable people. In this way, a person's post is enhanced, and this serves as a means of personnel development. Delegated authority also means that more people will be allowed to make decisions themselves in connection with their work, within set guidelines.

Motivating staff

The principles of motivation outlined above indicate that there are a variety of factors which influence an individual's level of motivation at work. The supervisor therefore should not only have some knowledge of the staff but should bear in mind all the different factors which can enhance or weaken motivation. These factors can be divided into four groups: the personal needs of all human beings, factors inherent in the work situation, management methods and the social system as reflected in the community (Bandura, 1982).

Personal needs

The needs of every person should be taken into account, such as the need for recognition, the need to achieve, the need to be a valued person in the community, the need for self-respect and for friendship. If a worker occupies a temporary post, there is a need for work security. Merit awards and promotion can give the necessary recognition of employees' achievements. Non-recognition of achievements has a demotivating effect on employees and can lead to high staff turnover. A sense of responsibility should be cultivated as well as pride in the quality of work done.

Work situation

Factors related to the work itself may also affect levels of motivation; for instance, the nature and type of work, the opportunities for group identity, the chances of promotion, the work environment, the opportunities and challenges of the work that is, the opportunities for creativity and renewal. Monotony and routine can be demotivating. Routine work leads to frustration and boredom and to a lack of motivation. One solution can be to rotate some routine activities so that boring chores do not always have to be done by the same person.

Management factors

The quality of management affects behaviour, attitudes and effort. Positive interpersonal relationships are regarded as strengthening motivation. In this respect, communication is of great importance. Workers like to know and should know what is expected of them and how their tasks form part of a total plan. This should be coupled with competent and just leadership which sets out acceptable tasks together with clear guidelines.

The supervisor is responsible for planning, guiding and leading the school. Tasks are delegated to employees, and if a participatory management style is used, with workers' efforts valued, motivation to work hard is likely to be strong.

Community factors

If the community's values (whether religious, moral, economic, cultural, political or social) differ from those of the worker, these community factors will have a demotivating effect on the employee. The personal lives of employees such as their relationships with their families will also influence their behaviour. The supervisor has little control over such motivating factors, but he or she has to deal with the situation should it have a negative effect on an employee's work. Therefore, it would seem that to motivate staff effectively, a supervisor should have knowledge of their personal needs, their work circumstances, the requirements of the community, and have an effective management style.

Motivation and the supervisor

We should remember to use the 'motivators', that is, people's need for achievement, recognition, responsibility, job interest, personal growth and advancement potential. We tend to underestimate the needs of other people in these areas. Involving others in decisions which affect them is one way of meeting all or most of these needs. Supervisors should avoid window dressing. The relative intensity of psychological needs will vary greatly from person to person and from time to time. There are people whose motivation is not work related. If an employee's spouse loses his or her job, security needs may well be the most important. If there is a marriage break-up, both security and social needs may surface, though these may be followed later by a need to find renewed interest and achievement in the job. These are predictable and often

recognizable behavioural phenomena. However, when symptoms and causes are less obvious, the risk is that we misjudge the needs of colleagues or friends. Some of us have a tendency to assume that the needs of others are the same as our own; others tend to assume the opposite (Bailin, Coombs and Daniels, 1999). We should try to suit our management behaviour to both the personalities and the needs of the situation. Our automatic behavioural reaction may not be the right one. Think about the alternatives. Despite every effort there will remain individuals who have no wish to be 'motivated' and who view with suspicion any attempt to increase their responsibilities, job interest or involvement. Such attitudes may typically be found in workers who are frustrated. However, the danger is always that we give up too easily. The right approach may prompt a surprisingly warm response (Halonen, 1995).

Above all, it is necessary for a supervisor to establish by means of honest self-evaluation what the true nature is of his or her attitude towards staff. It is important that this introspection is honest and open, because experience has shown that it will determine the way in which supervisors treat their staff. It is indubitably true that the way in which the supervisors treat their staff will, to a great extent, be determined by their outlook on life, their attitudes to motivation as the basis of human behaviour, and the judgement they make of people's behaviour in a specific working situation.

Summary

As the recognized leader of the organisation's community, the supervisor has the responsibility for helping staff members get satisfaction from their job and move towards the fulfilment of their needs and objectives. It is through improving levels of motivation that these needs and objectives can be met. Motivation involves a constellation of closely related beliefs, perceptions, values, interests, and actions.

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