

MOTIVATION

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A recent Gallop Poll suggests that 50% of all wage earners could accomplish 30% more, that is, produce 30% more, with little or no extra effort on their part. In 1975, the A.M.A., the American Management Association, polled 6,000 managers who were all worried about productivity, but yet, two-thirds of these, 4,000, were doing absolutely nothing about the problem.

No doubt that there are many factors contributing to the problem, for example: consumerism, social responsibility, decrease in craftsman like jobs in today's automated society, and so forth.

I suppose, leadership is also reflected in attitudes and assumptions about people, and two of these assumptions are very famous, and perhaps, a little later on I will mention these, McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y.

Whatever the cause, or causes, many executives today agree that productivity improvement has become urgent, not just desirable, and what are the solutions? I suppose there are many things we can do, for example; legislation, or the removal of people, or investing heavily in modern equipment, or improve human effort at work by insuring that employees understand what is expected of them, by removing impediments from their jobs, by showing them, and by positive consequences for their performances.

What I am suggesting, is that we can improve employee productivity and performance at work via the application of basic behavioural topics and my reference to McGregor and his Theory X and Y. Such as what! How do they influence employee performance? I think a person's performance, how he or she performs a task, and reacts to a stimuli, or an offer of a raise, depends, in part, on that person's perception, personality, and ability, and we must understand what these factors are, and how we can work with them to help improve the employee's performance.

PERCEPTION

What do you mean by perception?

How we see the world, but many things influence our seeing, for example, NEEDS. A person's needs affects his perception. Sure they do. Tell an insecure employee that you want to see him in your office later in the day, and he will probably spend the rest of the day worrying about being fired, although you wanted to discuss some small matter with him. Tell a person who has been out of work for six months that you can offer him or her a job at one-half their previous pay, and I mean in today's economy, and they might jump at it, although they turned it down three months ago. Why! Because of STRESS. Boy! If you were working under stress you sure tend to perceive things less objectively, I suppose, than others who are not. How about EDUCATION, and BACKGROUND, and VALUES? Our perceptions are influenced by all of these, for example, a policeman. We

stereotype policemen as autocratic people, black southerners as lazy, Roman Catholics as soft touches of the papacy. Managers, Oh Boy!, as part of the company who always blame the workers, and how we perceive does influence our judgement and our performance at work.

PERSONALITY

Many people believe that a person's personality is the factor that influences behaviour. In fact, too many of us. Personality is probably the first thing that comes to mind when we think of why someone behaves the way they do. We tend to categorize people, as introverted, dumb, childish, mature, or paranoid when we look at their behaviour.

What is personality?

I couldn't find in any of the text books a definition that was agreed to by more than one author, but, for our purpose, lets just say its the characteristics and distinctive traits of an individual. ABILITIES, I said, play a role in performance of, and at work, but you must add MOTIVATION. One without the other just won't do, in other words, even the most highly motivated person will not perform well, be it a football player, a company president, or a programmer, unless he or she also has the ability to do the job. The converse is also true. Everyone knows that some people are simply better at some tasks than are others. Most of us could practice for years, for example, and never play golf like Jack Nicholas, or sing like Barbra Streisand, or manage like Harold Ballard.

In other words, how well we do a job is strongly influenced by our personality and abilities, and this is generally true whether the job involves being President of I.T.&T. or running a drill press in a Ford plant, and, therefore, my first conclusion. -

MATCH THE NEEDS OF THE JOB WITH THE ABILITIES OF THE EMPLOYEE.

Carefully analyze a job's requirements, that is, for manual dexterity, accuracy, and, so forth, and then assign employees with these human traits and skills to successfully perform the job, and then motivation. Simple, but yet so complex. Motivating is your job, is management's job. It is simple because people are basically motivated or driven to behave in a way that they feel leads to rewards. So motivating someone should be easy. Just find out what he or she wants, and hold it out as a possible reward, or an incentive.

Simple, right? This is where the complexity comes in. For one thing, what one person considers as an important reward, another might consider useless, and even holding out a reward that is important to someone is certainly no guarantee that it will motivate him. The reason is that the reward itself won't motivate him, unless, he feels that effort on his part will probably lead to his obtaining that reward. People differ greatly in how they size up their chances for success on different jobs. A task that one person might feel would lead to rewards might be reviewed by another as impossible. Complex? Of course it is, but managers get things done through people.

If you can't motivate your people, you will probably not make it in management, therefore, let's accept the complexity of motivation as a fact of life, and instead let's take a closer look at what we know about motivating employees.

Most psychologists, and experts on human behaviour, agree that some sort of internal tensions are really the route of motivation, and than motivated behaviour is aimed at reducing these tensions. For example, everyone has a need to eat, but right after you finish a big meal, this need is satisfied. Then someone could not motivate you with a big steak dinner, but, if you had not eaten for a few days, that's different, an internal tension would develop. On the one hand you have a basic need to eat, but on the other, you haven't eaten for days. Just show me the steak, you say, and I will be motivated to get it. Suppose that someone throws a barrier between you and the steak dinner, you would find your path to the goal, the steak, blocked by the fence, and you would probably become frustrated. Frustrated, or not, and if you are hungry enough, you will find some ingenious way of getting around that fence, but, what we find more often in industry is that when the paths of workers are blocked they often just give up. Morale drops They sit around with their friends and gripe. In some cases, they retaliate by literally throwing a wrench into the machinery.

Human needs are the basic foundation and springboard to motivation. All motivation, ultimately, comes from a tension that results when one or more of our important needs are unsatis-

fied. A person who is hungry is motivated to find food. A person who has a compelling need to accomplish a challenging task, or tasks, like trying to conquer a mountain. Maslow and Hertzburg, shows how motivation, incentives, and frustration are related. Maslow is an industrial psychologist who made some assumptions about human needs. He says that we have five basic category needs. The first one is physiological. Physiological meaning things like food, air, liquid, and so forth, and sex. Let me not leave that one out. Followed by the safety need. You have it today you want to have it tomorrow. Down the line. A social need, or a love need, that need to belong to, just like you people in the Association. You belong to a group, you have been accepted into your Association of Land Surveyors.

The EGO need, or the STATUS need. We want to look good in the eyes of our fellow man, and in self actualization, the one at the top, where you want to be the very best that you can, and, perhaps, in today's lingual, a more suitable explanation would be to be able to do your own thing.

Maslow goes on to say that each one of these needs become active only when the next lower level need is reasonably satisfied.

How do you satisfy these needs?

I suppose, the psychological one is by giving people money, comfort, safe and healthy work environment. You give them

the security by insurance benefits, dental plan, seniorities, steady work, the love need, I suppose if we allow them to affiliate with supportive people on their jobs, and surrounding their jobs. We all have the status, if we can get them performing work relative to our organization wherein they will get recognition, perhaps, a title or two.

The last one, the self actualization, perhaps, give them challenging work, give them full responsibility for a job. No halfway measures. Herzberg then argues that we all have two different sets of needs, and he is the most recent industrial psychologist. He was recently here in Toronto. He is an excellent speaker, and really knows his stuff when it comes to motivation, but, he argues that we all have two different sets of needs. One lower level set comes from our desire to avoid pain and to satisfy our basic needs, agreeing with Maslow, food, clothing, shelter, and so forth, as well as the needs for money to pay for these things, which really is the equivalent of Maslow's physiological and safety needs.

The higher level set relates to that unique human characteristic, the ability to achieve and to experience psychological growth, for example; to achieve a difficult task; to obtain prestige; and to receive recognition the equivalent of Maslow's social ego and self actualization needs.

The way Herzberg proves his theory is by asking two very simple questions. The questions are very simple. Here is what he asked in his first experiment. By the way, these people were at the management level. The question was -

WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOUR JOB? That was question No. 1, and question No. 2 - WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL BAD ABOUT YOUR JOB? and, invariably here is what the answers were: What they don't like, he calls hygiene factors, and all those related to the environment, for example, No. 1 on the hate list was company policy and administration, then, supervision, followed by the relationship with the supervisor; the work conditions, themselves; and, down the line about fifth spot, was salary; then, the inter-relationship with working personnel; status; and security. These were things they don't like.

What did they like? Things they liked he called motivating factors, and relate to the job itself, for example: achievement; recognition; the work itself; responsibility; advancement; and growth.

I am not going to pursue management's functions of rewarding affective performance and job redesign, that is, unimportant consequences of behaviour, such as, pay, or promotion and challenging jobs. However, I would like to spend a bit of time on goal setting and how to ensure that employees do, in fact, know what is expected of them. Those of you who know anything about M.V.O. and job descriptions know that this is exactly what we should be telling them, but, do we? Then we wonder why morale is low. I think the problem of worker apathy and lack of effort are not simply a matter of individual laziness. I feel that they are often healthy reactions by normal people to an unhealthy environment created by common management policies.

Most adults are motivated to be responsible, self-reliant and independent. Their motives are acquired during childhood; from our educational system; from the family; and the communications media like radio, T.V., and books, but the typical organization confines most of its employees to roles that provide little opportunity for responsibility or self-reliance, or independence.

Too many jobs are designed in such a way that makes minimal demands on the individual's abilities, and that places the responsibility for major decisions not in his hands, but in his supervisors. We are creating a childlike role for the employee, and we frustrate his normal motivations for a more adult role. The individual to preserve his self-respect withdraws his interest from the job, treating it with indifference, or even contempt. The cost for these reactions to any organization are heavy, like minimal output, low quality, and excessive waste.

I think both labor unions and management have, and are missing the main point with regard to employee motivation. They concentrate largely on matters related to income, job security, pay, and fringe benefits. They are all necessary, but in themselves, absolutely insufficient for effective motivation. At least it is so, in my opinion. The battle for adequate income was fought and won long ago. Today the real frustration of most employees is not income, as it is of using their abilities in a meaningful way. They need a sense of pride, and accomplishment for their work. What do they find?

Work that is neither stimulating or dignified. So for a typical employee work tends to become a necessary evil rather than a source of personal satisfaction. Income, or the amount of it, takes on some of the characteristics of a penalty payment, a fine, if you wish, that is periodically levied against their employees, to compensate them, the employees, for the lack of satisfaction in their work.

The symptom of this, a smoldering resentment, and this smoldering resentment is a continual demand for income improvement. Yet both management and labour tend to be blinded to its underlying causes, but both are also under pressure, I suppose, to match income to productivity improvements. I say, you, management, are dealing only with the symptoms, not the real cause of the resentment. I suggest you revise your work flow, undertake selective programs, because not every employee wants to accept more responsibility, or is even prepared for the worry that such responsibility brings.

Nevertheless, a number far larger than more managers suspect can be successfully motivated by upgrading their responsibilities. Let me be sure we don't mistake happiness with motivation. A happy employee is not necessarily motivated to work more effectively, and the converse is also true. An employee with upgraded responsibilities takes less part in the joking and the light conversations surrounding him. He has other things on his mind.

The work environment is changing, but managerial practices are antiquated. That's how I see it. Today's employee is typically much better educated, more in demand, and, therefore, more independent than those of a generation ago, but our methods of motivation which worked then, are the pits today. Neither the threats of losing a job nor the attraction of more money are enough today to assure effective motivation. Look around you at the number of strikes that are being called, and the state of our economy, yet they are willing to go out on strike.

Motivation is not simply a matter of things that a manager does to influence his subordinates. It is much more complex than that. People are not motivated so much by what other people want them to do as by their own desire to get along as best they can in the kind of a world they think they are living in. Basically, this means that people will tend to seek whatever values they consider important to the extent that they believe it is safe and possible for them to do so.

To most employees, the manager, or the organization, it is simply a part of his or her overall environment, and not necessarily the most important part. He or she will make concessions to his manager to the extent that he thinks he must, but he will not necessarily consider it advantageous to do more, unless, and this is a big unless, it appears that doing so will lead to a lasting and significant gain. That gain is not necessarily monetary, more the role he can play.

I believe that all people are motivated, and most things that management does, do have a motivational effect. The problem is that too often people are motivated to act in the ways which are unproductive, or opposite to what we want. This is usually because they see no advantage in increasing their productivity, or because they are actually motivated to thwart the organization, if they can. They deliberately restrict their output, yes, even in the face of incentive payments. They think you regard them as a cost factor only which has to be minimized.

Perception, you see, and it takes time to change this. Patience and above all a genuine willingness to deal with employees as individuals.

May I leave you with some broad prescriptions often found to have a positive motivational effect when dealing with your employees.

- Define their objectives clearly.
- Let them know what they have to do.
- Provide a system of rewards.
- If you are going to make changes, introduce these changes gradually.
- Give out assignments that require a little bit of stretch.
- Give your employees some discretion over details of the job.
- Let them participate in some of your decisions.
- Listen to your employees before making significant decisions, particularly those that affect the workers.

Even if their suggestions are not accepted, the fact of their having been consulted makes management's decisions more understandable to the employees, and, therefore, less likely to be misinterpreted.

You all know the story of Lordstown and Ford. Why did this happen? Because the people were not informed in advance, and my real prescription is, please, regardless of what path you choose, utilize modern principles and techniques, rather than relying on traditional combinations of rewards and threats.

Once you have them motivated in your morale at the level you wish, keep it in high gear. How? Be available to your employees. You know, what's a minor point to you can be a very important point to your employee or subordinate. Don't always be on the run, or between phone calls, and we say yes, I'll give you a minute.

These meetings you hold, plan the agenda for your meetings, in advance, with lots of notice.

- Don't surprise people an hour before you want to call a meeting.
- Don't belittle employees, certainly in front of others, at least.
- If we must reprimand, use the time that is most productive to you. You should not reprimand people at 5:00 o'clock in the evening, or Friday at 4:00 o'clock.
- Don't play favorites with your workers. That's a cardinal rule.
- Be sensitive to little things. How many birthdays to you remember? How many anniversaries do you remember?

- How often do you give praise? Certainly give praise when it is appropriate.
- Listen to the views and ideas of your workers. They just might be better than your own.

DELEGATION

Delegate to your subordinates. Keep educating your staff. Send them to programmes - self development courses. Don't be an old poker face all the time. Laugh a little bit. Be people oriented.

How do you conduct your performance reviews? Periodically? Do you let them know where they stand? Finally, don't resist change, stay loose, be flexible.