

Herzberg two factor theory

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Maslow's need theory has practical limitations in translating needs into something operational, since the criteria for satisfying social needs differ from individual to individual. Frederick Herzberg developed a two-factor theory to provide some direction for managers in resolving motivational problems. He derived to this conclusion by a survey he ran back in 1959, in which he asked engineers to describe events that led to such feelings of satisfaction about their work and events that led to dissatisfaction.

In this theory, Herzberg distinguished between two different types of factors, those who can give an individual the feeling of satisfaction which he called motivating factors and those that can give him the feeling of dissatisfaction which he called hygiene factors. Hygiene factors include " technical supervision, interpersonal relationship with peers, salary, working conditions, status, company policy, job security and interpersonal relations with superiors". All of these factors are job contextual and also include maintenance factors.

These are considered extrinsic, as they are out of the limit of work and employees. Hygiene factors are satisfiers to the extent that they produce dissatisfaction if absent, but once satisfied the effect soon disappear - satisfaction is temporary. However, they are not motivators for better performance. Motivating factors relate to job content and are concerned with increased satisfaction and the desire to work harder. This factors provides satisfaction and motivates towards more effort and better performance, their absence does not produce dissatisfaction.

Some of the motivating factors are " advancement, the work itself, recognition, and the possibility of growth". Herzberg's theory can be applied to better understand the problem of high staff turnover. In this scenario, hygiene factors are salary (dissatisfaction on salary), security (safety risk), work condition (outdoor job), supervision (lack of support from management), personal life (own attitude - introverts) and relationship with peers (influence by bad attitude colleagues).

Motivators are personal growth and recognition (demoted staff) and responsibility (autocratic leadership). Hence, Herzberg's theory can be applied by management of the organisation to better motivate their staff. Various job enrichment techniques can be implemented, for example removal of controls, increase in accountability, participation in decision making, introduction of new tasks and the granting of additional authority. Management can focus on motivation through rewards that linked to performance and equitable.