

Motivation and control: the police supervisor's dilemma essay

[Business](#)



Motivation and Control: The Police Supervisor's Dilemma¹. A very delicate relationship exists between the need for administrative control and maintenance of police workers, and the worker's need for motivation and self-esteem as applies to their jobs. A number of theoretical models have been developed over the span of several decades to attempt to establish a harmonious balance between the needs of the administration and the personal, individual needs of rank-and-file officers. The search for balance between these two needs includes the use of motivating principles such as employee evaluation and subsequent promotion or lack thereof, as well as demonstrating motivational achievement from the "top" down by use of managerial example. Other strategies include: achievement-power theory, equity theory, which holds that workers are motivated by their perceptions of "fairness" in the workplace, "expectancy theory" which holds that workers believe that "if a certain amount of effort is put forth, a calculated outcome will result," and "need theory" which holds that "Managerial behavior[. . .] requires attention to the various levels or stages of development of workers and how to motivate them to meet higher-needs as they travel up the need hierarchy,"; each of these models represents one of many theories of employee motivation and managerial strategies, all of which may be combined, along with other theories, to create an integrated model for motivation. The key factor which runs through most, if not all of the theoretical models is the idea that "In seeking a sense of congruence between the employee and the organization, management has the responsibility of providing mechanisms that enable employees to be highly motivated," (Wadsworth/Thompson). 2. Captain Frebe's strategy for

creating more accountability for his officers is rooted in the “ Theory X” paradigm which views management and employee relationships as essentially confrontational and which accepts underlying principles of human behavior which are negative. For example, Theory X holds that individuals are “ lazy, lack ambition, are predominantly self-centered, are resistant to change, and on the whole are not too bright,” (Wadsworth/Thompson).

This style of managerial strategy has been widely discredited by subsequent theories, such as “ Theory Y” and “ Theory Z.” In order for Captain Frebe to motivate officers without alienating them, he must realize that employees — in fact — require that their needs also be met in attempts to create a more productive working environment. By drawing from some of the theoretical models of human behavior outside of “ Theory X” Captain Frebe would gain insight into the humanity of his workers and in doing so, come to understand that integrated models of motivation strategy are far more effective than simple models based on punishment and managerial oversight. An integrated approach to management, such as that espoused in “ Theory Y” contends that “ there is a definite relationship between job satisfaction among employees and management style.

This management approach has been supported by many in the police field, such as Roberg (1979), who argue that Theory Y is more conducive than Theory X in helping police deal with the demands of competing groups in today’s society. Furthermore, they argue that a system of supportive management is the most effective because it provides a satisfying work environment for the individual officer,” (Wadsworth/Thompson). 3. Is it true

that you really cannot motivate persons in organizations? If this statement is true, then is there any role for administrators and managers in the motivation of their employees? Are there unique concerns that face police supervisors that make motivation of employees difficult? If so, what are they, and how would you address them? Motivating people in organizations is not only possible, it is mandatory for those who are in management positions.

The entire productivity of a given organization rests on its ability to motivate and continue to motivate the rank-and-file workers who make production or execution of services possible. Because employee motivation is such an integral part of all organizational dynamics, many models of behavioral and motivational theory have been forwarded to help managerial staffs understand the underlying matters of human psychology and emotional response which characterize work-relationships and specifically management-worker relationships. While it is not possible to espouse a single strategic model by which all, managerial-worker conflict regarding motivation will be "fixed," an integrated model of worker motivation can be reached by managerial staffs who appraise the current theoretical models of motivation and choose those elements which may prove helpful to their specific needs. The unique concerns which face police supervisors are those which relate to ideas of personal autonomy (which are necessary for police work) and the seeming contradictory organizational hierarchy which accompanies law enforcement programs. The strategies of integrated motivation should prove highly effective at meeting the changing conditions faced by police supervisors in the area of worker motivation.