

Behavior modification and needs

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



In many companies, managers struggle to improve or motivate employee actions or behaviors to get desired results. Many managers turn to organizational behavior modification. Behavior modification is used in organizations to shape individual behavior through the use of positive and negative consequences. Organizational behavior modification relies on several factors including, the law of effect, alternative consequences, schedules of reinforcement, and understanding human needs, to successfully operate.

The law of effect states that a person tends to repeat behavior that is accompanied by a favorable consequence. For example, if an employee is recognized and encouraged for going above and beyond for a customer, the employee is more likely to repeat this action. For the law of effect to remain effective, a manager needs to recognize what the employee sees as major consequences, and must be able to respond in a way that the employee will see the connection between their actions and the consequence.

An employee doesn't always have to learn from personal experience. The theory of social learning suggests that employees are likely to learn by observing the actions of others and understanding the consequences that others are experiencing. Through the law of effect, the employee is able to connect the relation of; good actions equal good consequences, therefore motivating the employee to act in a positive way. Once a manager has identified the employee's behavior, the manager needs to decide on the alternative consequences he/she wants to apply.

Alternative consequences include: positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, punishment, and extinction. The key to alternative

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consequences is to make the consequence contingent on the employee's correct behavior. Through the use of these consequences, employees and managers will be able to accurately assess the result or planned result of an action. Once a manager monitors an employee's behavior and learns how often or how well the employee is performing, the manager can determine the type of consequence to be applied.

Once a frequency has been established the manager can create a standard, or a baseline, against which employee improvements can be made. A manager will then decide if continuous reinforcement or partial reinforcement is called for. Continuous reinforcement is when reinforcement accompanies each correct behavior by an employee. Partial reinforcement occurs when only some of the correct behaviors are reinforced. Scheduling reinforcement allows a manager to stay consistent in expectations and consequences.

Though the behavior modification model is popular amongst organizations, many have criticized its functionality from a human needs perspective. Human needs are a driving force in individual decision making. The behavior modification model focuses on the nature of the items that may motivate a person. However, a manager cannot observe or monitor a person's needs. Because of this, it is important that a manager understand employee needs when using the behavior modification approach