

Maslow's hierarchy of needs essay

[Business](#), [Management](#)



The mention of Maslow's hierarchy of needs brings Abraham Maslow into mind. He is credited for the proposal for this human motivational theory that describes the stages of their growth. By definition, it is a concept in psychology that was proposed by Abraham Maslow in his paper entitled 'A Theory of Human Motivation' in *Psychological Review* back in the early 1940s. He later extended the idea so that the interpretations of human distinctive and inherent inquisitiveness would be included (DuBrin, 2009). It is from that background that this paper will endeavor at elucidating and giving further details on the history of the theory and the needs as Maslow described them. In addition, the paper will be expounding on the theory's reputation to executives in today's workplace and how they can be used to maintain a competitive edge.

The theory traces its history to 1943 when a humanist psychologist introduced the concept of a hierarchy of needs in his paper as revealed exceedingly. That was attributed to the fact that human actions were stirred and inspired in order to accomplish certain needs in life. The hierarchy according to Maslow recommended that people are encouraged to realize basic needs first before moving on to the other more advanced needs upwards. To illustrate this, he used a pyramid to do so with the lowest level of the pyramid being the most basic human needs with the top of the pyramid being the most multifarious needs (Aswathappa, 2005). There are various needs as described by Maslow in the theory and he held that they played a major role in motivating people's behaviors. For instance, physiological needs which are the physical needs for the survival of an individual. Without attaining them, a person cannot function and will lead to

total failure. That explains why they are considered to be of great importance implying that they ought to be met first (DuBrin, 2009). They physiological needs include air, water, food, and shelter. The safety needs are the additional needs as suggested by Maslow and they include but not limited to personal security, financial security, health and well-being, as well as safety against accidents or illness. Similarly, social needs are additional needs that were elaborated by Maslow in his works.

The theory is important for managers in today's workplace. This can be attributed to various reasons. For instance, the hierarchy indicates all the human needs from the most basic ones to the less basic. It is important for managers to understand such needs for they will be vital as they decide on how they ought to motivate their employees. By ensuring that they attain their prime needs, they will have happier workforce who will be performing at their highest capabilities (DuBrin, 2009). In addition, the theory elucidates the different levels and their importance on individual psychological and physical needs, and as a result, managers are in a better position of understanding their employee motivation. Equivalently, the hierarchy enables the managers to know what motivates specific people at the workplace since others may be motivated by money while other by friends and at the same time, others are motivated to work just for prestige (Rakowski, 2008).

Coupled with the above elucidations, the theory can be used to sustain a competitive edge in various ways. For instance, employees will tend to be more competitive as long as they are assured that their basic needs will be meet as portrayed by the pyramid. Once they are attained, the subsequent

need will be used to motivate employees to be competitive because that it will be the only way that they can reach the level (Aswathappa, 2005). Apart from that, the theory can maintain a competitive edge of their workforce through ensuring that they have access to the next step in the pyramid. By so doing, the employees will remain competitive with an aim of achieving and accessing the next step. Worth noting is the fact that they will be doing so without being forced but rather, from their own will to move to the next level in the pyramid. As a result, a competitive edge will have been maintained and encouraged by the managers (DuBrin, 2009).

There are various illustrations of how managers can apply the theory in order to manage successfully bearing in mind that their main responsibilities is getting things done through their workforce. An employee who is concerned that he/she may lose a job (has no job security) will be less concerned on the friendship and respect that his/her jobs position gives (Aswathappa, 2005). That is bearing in mind that the job security that brings about stability in one's work life is low in the Maslow hierarchy of needs that the friendship and respect that is higher in the pyramid denoted by self-esteem.

In closing, it can be deduced from the above discussions that motivation is the psychological process that gives behavior purpose and direction. As a result, Maslow considered that in the process of designing a motivational theory while writing his paper entitled A theory of Human Motivation (Schermerhorn, 2010). As a result, it has taken a central role for the managers of various companies for they apply them in ensuring that their workforce remains competitive.

Reference

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