Early theories of motivation: maslow

" If you want people to do a good job, give them a good job to do."

Introduction

Employee resourcing ensures that the organisation obtains and retains the people it needs and employs them efficiently (Armstrong, 2006). Employees stay with organisations because effective HR practices provide a supportive work environment, thus, it is imperative that organisations develop effective policies that enable them to recruit, select, and retain competent employees (Mullen, 1997). One of the key questions in all organisations is how to get employees to perform well. Most writers have established that the basic foundation for retaining high performing employees is to have them motivated (Steer et al., 2004). This is because a motivated employee is likely to perform better. Robbins (1993, p. 32) defines motivation as the " willingness to exert high levels of effort toward organisational goals, conditioned by the effort's ability to satisfy some individual need."

Many writers on performance argued that employee motivation is widely believed to be a key factor for performance of individuals and organisations and is also a significant predictor of intention to quit the workplace (Steer et al., 2004, Tzeng, 2002). Based on this, one of Frederick Herzberg's famous quotes is: " If you want people to do a good job, give them a good job to do." This paper discusses this statement.

Early Theories of Motivation: Maslow and Herzberg

One important motivational theory is Maslow's Theory, which claims that human needs are ordered in a hierarchy: physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs (Maslow, 1954). Lower order need must be at least partially satisfied before

a higher order need is pursued. The only motivating need is an unfulfilled need. At the lower end, the company can use extrinsic motivation, as evidenced by their great reward power. With extrinsic motivation, it means that workers are motivated by tangible rewards such as high pay.

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory is often is referred to as the two-factor theory because of the dual nature of its approach to identifying the sources of job satisfaction, and eventually job motivation (Miner, 2007). Herzberg's research produced a list of factors that contribute to satisfaction at work, which he called motivation factors, and another separate list of factors that contribute to dissatisfaction, which he called hygiene factors. In this theory, Herzberg et al. (1959) suggested that certain intrinsic factors motivate behaviour, such as achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth, while extrinsic factors de-motivate workers and this means that the things that cause satisfaction are not the same things that cause dissatisfaction, such as company policies, salary, relations with co-worker, and supervisory styles. For example, the terms of assessment and promotion, the perceived fairness of the decision making process is crucial for commitment and therefore managers should clearly communicate clearly how decisions are made and why some people and not others did get promotions (Herzberg, 1987). Herzberg's extrinsic (hygiene) factors are similar to Maslow's physiological and safety needs and include factors such as supervision, working conditions, and salary. On the other hand, Herzberg's intrinsic factors are similar to Maslow's higher order needs and include factors such as recognition, achievement, and the work itself.

Overall, Herzberg argued that there are a set of features that should be built into jobs to make them satisfying and motivating. This is because that eliminating the causes of dissatisfaction (hygiene factors, which are not intrinsic to the content of the work itself) would not lead to job satisfaction, it would just eliminate job *dis* satisfaction (Herzberg, 1987). Workers can only be satisfied and motivated if motivation factors are used. Thus, based on this he argues that staff motivation can be increased by introducing basic changes in the nature of an employee's job. This ' job enrichment' can be achieved by redesigning jobs to allow for increased challenge and responsibility, opportunities for advancement, and personal growth, and recognition.

It is important to note that Herzberg et al. (1959) argue that if the basic factors are missing (hygiene factors), such as appropriate levels of financial compensation, workers will be dissatisfied irrespective of whether other factors are present. For this reason, some people have put emphasis on financial incentives. Hicks and Adams (2003) argue that one way to motivate staff within an organisation is through the use of incentives. Incentives, they argue are a means to favour certain behaviours in order to reach defined objectives and are important because they can influence key determinants of performance and can encourage people to stay on a job. Whilst this argument may be true, incentives are in various forms and different people prefer different forms of incentives. Therefore, though an organisation may offer good incentive schemes such as payment of tuition fees for external courses, those staff who are no longer interested in further education may not find these as good incentives and may not be motivated to work.

Newer Theories of Motivation: High Performance Work Systems

In more recent times, researchers have put all these ideas about making work more motivating together and theorised what a ' high performance work system' would look like. It is argued that high performance work systems would involve

…recruitment practices which aim to attract and select highly committed and flexible people, internal labour markets which reward commitment and training with promotion and job security, and methods of direct communication and team-working (Wood and de Menezes, 1998, p. 488).

Pfeffer (1998) identifies seven practices of successful organisations. The first is employment security, which he argues is essential to underpin the other high-commitment HR practices, primarily because it seems unrealistic to ask employees to offer their commitment and hard work without some expectation of security on their part. The second practice is selective recruitment, which is seen as a valuable way of realising ' human capital advantage' by hiring exceptional individuals and " capturing a stock of exceptional human talent" (Boxall, 1996, p. 66-7) as a source of competitive advantage. Third, after recruiting outstanding talent, employers need to ensure that these people remain at the forefront of their field and so extensive training, learning, and development are necessary. Marchington and Wilkinson (2005) note that this is one of the most widely quoted and important elements of high commitment HRM.

The fourth practice is team working, which has become more ubiquitous for a variety of reasons and it is now identified by most employers as a essential

building block in their organisation. Fifth, Pfeffer (1998) identifies high compensation contingent on organisational performance as an important element. This means that employers need to provide employees with (1) above average compensation and (2) performance-related reward, which both indicate to employees that they deserve to be rewarded for superior contributions.

The sixth practice is the reduction of status differentials, such as shared canteens, which signals to all workers that they are valuable assets who deserve to be treated in a similarly to more senior staff. Finally, Pfeffer (1998) states that high-commitment HRM includes information sharing and employee involvement. This is because open communication about financial performance, strategy, and operational measures conveys the message that employees are trusted. Also, for team-working to be successful and employees are to be encouraged to offer ideas, it is essential that they have information upon which to base their suggestions and know something about the financial context in which their ideas are to be reviewed.

Overall, it can be argued that this theory of high-performance work systems incorporates both motivating and de-motivating factors and provides managers with a template as to how to deal with this together. While it does not specifically talk about how the job itself is to be designed, it does seem that workers in such a system would be given increased challenge and responsibility, opportunities for advancement, and personal growth, and recognition, all things that Herzberg argued are needed to motivate workers and make them perform at a high level.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to Herzberg, those factors that lead to job satisfaction are separate and apart from those that lead to job dissatisfaction. Thus if the firm tries to tackle factors that create job dissatisfaction, such as salary, they can bring about peace but will not necessarily motivate workers (Robbins, 1993). This means that ' if you want people to do a good job, give them a good job to do," rather than simply trying to deal with de-motivating factors. Overall, this means that the organisation as to do more to motivate workers than just compensation, good working conditions, and similar factors. Instead, jobs have to be enriched so that workers have opportunities for achievement and recognition, stimulation, responsibility, and advancement (Herzberg, 1987).

However, while the idea that people with ' good jobs' would perform better is intuitively appealing, actual research support for some aspects of the theory is patchy. Furthermore, it may also be culturally specific. Hofstede (1980) points out that culture influences factors that motivate and demotivate behaviour. He reports that individualistic, productivity-oriented cultures (such as the United States) focus on socio-technical systems and new methods to improve the quality of working life. Outside the United States, Hines (1973) reported that supervision and interpersonal relationships in New Zealand seem to contribute significantly to satisfaction and not only to reducing dissatisfaction, failing to replicate findings in the United States. In general, the universality of Herzberg's two-factor theory cannot be presumed. Each culture has some factors that act as motivators and others that act as hygiene factors. These factors and their relative importance

appear particular to each culture. Managers should be aware of that, and should not suppose that their experience is transmissible.

In summary, it is clear that motivation theories in use today are Western in their origin and many have been developed in the United States or at least influenced by American theoretical work. However, concepts such as achievement and esteem may have different meanings in other societies. The American individualistic culture has led researchers to put emphasis on rational and individual thought as the primary basis of human behaviour (Boyacigiller and Adler, 1991). The theories consequently do not give universal explanations of motivation; rather, they reflect the value system of Americans (Hofstede, 1980).

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