

Reinforcement strategies used to motivate employees

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HERE YOUR HERE HERE HERE Reinforcement Strategies Used to Motivate Employees There are a wide variety of reinforcement strategies that are used in contemporary business as a means to motivate employees. Abraham Maslow, a 20th Century psychologist with a well-respected theory of motivation, developed his Hierarchy of Needs that describes the basic human motivations required for a person to achieve the pinnacle of their success and self-awareness. One of these elements on his hierarchical pyramid of motivation is a sense of belonging, involving the need to be affiliated and respected by others (Morris & Maisto, 144). In the business environment, managers can use a transformational leadership style that deals with inspiration and being able to bring out the best qualities in people through behavior modeling and encouraging shared goals (Bass & Steidlmeier, 188). Engaging in behavior modeling is a method of learning through social learning theory, in which a person realizes that behavior changes are positive when an action is consistently rewarded. If managers continue to behave in a moral and upright manner and employees witness the manager being rewarded for these positive behaviors, it is likely they too will adopt these behaviors and become more productive and motivated to achieve performance goals.

Positive reinforcement also includes operant conditioning, another method of punishment versus reward, in which an employee experiences positive consequences in the face of a desired behavior occurring (Kadden, 3; Toor & Ofori, 535). It is a learning through consequences model where management continues to offer some sort of reward when a desired action occurs, thus creating an operant conditioning response where the same behaviors

become part of the employee norm of behavior.

Negative reinforcement also occurs when an undesired stimulus is removed from an environment. For example, an employee might cease a behavior that is undesired as a means of escaping long and dragged out meetings to discuss problems with a job role. The change in behavior, in this case, occurs only to avoid having to attend these meetings, however the end result is higher motivation and productivity. This can be used to improve an employee's commitment to achieving a desired goal laid out by management.

Each of the reinforcers have their own strengths and weaknesses. Positive reinforcement is usually more productive as it gives employees a genuine reward or worthwhile stimulus when a desired act is performed. They come to respect their manager especially when they model the same behaviors they demand in the employee population. The weakness of positive reinforcement is that it requires managers to devote time and labor to model these behaviors or to develop an appropriate rewards system.

Negative reinforcement has advantages also, as it can change the environment where the employee works and limit the volume of labor required, such as in the previous meeting example. Removing negative stimulus from an environment can have long-lasting impact on budgets or the method by which a job role is performed. Its weakness is that it oftentimes takes longer to change a behavior through the process and might lead to psychological behaviors where a person is not necessarily motivated to achieve, only to ensure they do not have to endure ongoing punishment-based scenarios. Achievement through avoidance is not always significant or

beneficial in the long-term.

Bibliography

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