

Motivational strategies of microsoft



Introduction Microsoft has become one of the giants in the high tech field. Microsoft has become a household word which started in January of 1975 when Bill Gates, a sophomore at Harvard, starting writing software to enhance the use of personal computers. The company has grown from its humble beginnings to the software giant the company has now become. Microsoft uses employee empowerment, the company's ability to foster teamwork, and creative incentives and rewards to motivate the company's employees to be productive.

Employee Empowerment Microsoft is a company well known for its innovation in software and technology. However, Microsoft is also a company that has remarkable innovation in regard to employee empowerment. Microsoft realizes that without its employees they are nothing and to keep these employees within the company, thinking up new ideas and creating revenue they need to feel empowered. Not only empowered but also a sense of trust in their management. Microsoft values their employees so much that they entrust recruitment of new employees to current employees. The mantra “Spread the Love,” which speaks to employees spreading the word about Microsoft, as well as the recruiting organization giving back to our employees to enable and recognize their ambassadorship” (McLeish, J.

2008). This speaks highly of both Microsoft employees and management. This statement, made by a Microsoft executive, lets it be known that they have an abundance of confidence in their employees so much so that they look to them to recruit future employees. That is empowerment at its finest.

Letting ones employees know that they trust them to bring the best of the best to the company and shape the future of the company is a big responsibility and Microsoft does this willingly. The preceding example is only one way in which Microsoft empowers their employees. Microsoft knows that an empowered employee means an employee who is well taken care of and knows his or her value to the company. Microsoft takes this philosophy to the extreme with tremendous benefits and options for its employees. Microsoft has outstanding stock options for its employees. Nothing empowers employees more than owning part of what they are working for.

This makes employees feel like they are not just putting forth all their energy for some top executives but themselves as well because they own part of the company. This also motivates them to work harder and be loyal to the company. Microsoft allows employees to buy from 1% to 15% of the employee's after-tax salary to purchase Microsoft stock at a 10% discounted rate (Microsoft official webpage). Microsoft offers many other financial benefits to its employees however; the preceding example is the most relevant to employee empowerment. The company also offers an extensive medical package to its employees.

Microsoft offers a web page to its employees so they may see all their current and past medical information. This web page puts the employees in real control of what is going on with their healthcare and expenses. The web page also offers a link to refill prescriptions. This is an important factor in employee empowerment because it let's employees feel more secure about their and their families' healthcare, which helps to empower them at work and in their daily life.

In conjunction with this Microsoft also offers an employee 24-hour health help line and an employee assistance program, which offers counseling to its employees. Lastly, Microsoft offers excellent benefits for those employees with families or those who want to start a family. The company offers paid maternity leave, parental leave for fathers. Microsoft also offers dependent care flexible spending account, adoption assistance, childcare discounts, family care backup, and resource referral services. All these programs help employees believe that no matter the circumstance their company has a program or service to help them take care of their family and personal needs and this instills a real sense of empowerment. Not only do employees need to feel a real sense of empowerment from excellent benefit packages but also from trusting their management.

Microsoft does this by providing every opportunity to all employees. The message that Microsoft sends to its employees is that they can trust that everything will be handled is the best way that they know how. Just reading all the options and benefits that are available to employees it becomes easy for one to see that Microsoft's management cares about its employees. In a statement Microsoft states how important to them as a company that their employees are happy and well taken care of, this instills trust within the employees to know they are cared for. " Microsoft benefits are generous and personalized, to give our employees the coverage they need to keep them healthy and happy (Microsoft official webpage). " It would be hard for an employee to not trust an employer who does care so much about their happiness not just at work but also at home.

Microsoft knows that in order for employees to be successful at work they need to be more than just happy with their job, but rather with their lives and Microsoft helps their employees achieve that. Microsoft's ability to foster teamwork Not only does the motivational strategy that is used by Microsoft put an emphasis on the empowerment of it's employees, Microsoft has also found success with motivating employees by encouraging and implementing teamwork. A key ingredient to the continued success of Microsoft has been in the company's ability to foster teamwork. Microsoft's motivational strategy of fostering teamwork among its employees has produced a workplace that values the employee and recognizes the employee's competency level and reliability. As stated in an article written by Steve McConnell, " Motivating yourself and other employees is part of the Microsoft corporate culture. Microsoft doesn't have an explicit practice of asking team members to commit or " sign up" for a project, but it isn't uncommon for an employee who expresses doubt about meeting a deadline to be asked whether he or she is signed up.

Microsoft avoids the problem of phony-sounding management motivational speeches because as often as not, the question doesn't come from a manager; it comes from the person who will have to do the work if the person in question doesn't do it. (McConnell, 1996) Microsoft has strategically designed the workplace that makes every employee an important asset to the team process. Through the encouragement of teamwork Microsoft is able to influence the morale and motivational level of the employee by recognizing the skills, reliability, and level of competency each employee contributes to the team concept. Unlike other companies

that demand the presence of management with everything that goes on within the workplace, management at Microsoft recognizes the ability and competency of the employee and more often than not will allow the employee to make critical or key decisions. The recognition of the employee's ability also provides the employee with an opportunity to learn and grow, two ingredients critical for morale and employee satisfaction. Employees at Microsoft also understand that the company trusts in the ability of the employee to perform.

This trust between the company and the employee obligates the employee to perform at the highest level possible. The company of Microsoft also understands that as technology continues to advance the companies hugest asset, the employee, will help propel the company into the future to remain competitive and successful. As stated on the Microsoft home page, “ At Microsoft, we're motivated and inspired everyday by how our customers use of software to find creative solutions to business problems, develop break through ideas, and stay connected to what's important to them. We are committed long term to the mission of helping our customers realize their full potential. Just as we constantly update and improve our products, we want to continually evolve our company to be in the best position to accelerate new technologies as they emerge and to better serve our customers. (Microsoft, 2008) By allowing the team to explore new ideas and improve the components on existing products the company is able to indirectly inspire the employee through creativity and vision.

The company of Microsoft also will motivate the team member through accountability and reliability. Microsoft prides itself on the reliability of its

product and similar to the company's product dependability the company also stresses the importance of the reliability of its employee. This teamwork concept motivates the employee to contribute to the team process and suggest new ideas. Microsoft also understands that by encouraging teamwork within the workplace and among employees has a direct affect on morale and motivation as employee have a tendency to motivate one another to perform. Employees are motivated to perform understanding that in order for Microsoft to be profitable and successful every team member must put forth the maximum effort and contribute to the overall team process.

As stated in an article by Charles Duncan, " Teamwork is often overlooked but is something which must be given a high priority and to which attention must be paid. Every member must understand the importance of working together in a unified and coherent manner if the effort is to be successful. Each member of the team must be dedicated to the whole, be willing to act in an unselfish manner, and committed to the success of the project. When challenges arise, as they most certainly always do, the team must have the resources, accountability, and commitment to deal with the issues in a constructive and positive manner. This philosophy of team work is essential and will play an integral role in the success of the project.

(Duncan, 2007) Microsoft has been successful in recognizing the important role that each member plays to the team concept and shows the employee that the skills, ability, and level of performance that is brought to the workplace, on a daily basis, is critical to the efficiency and productivity of the company. Unbeknownst to the employee this concept of team benefits the

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company in several ways. Not only is the team concept cost effective for the company, Microsoft also uses this team concept as a motivational strategy to inspire and drive employees to perform at the highest level possible.

Creativity with rewards and incentives Microsoft has a large amount of benefits and rewards for employees to keep them motivated and retain the brightest of the high tech industry. “ The company has long touted its benefits package as the best in the high-tech industry, and most of the items on the long list — ranging from the 401(k) matching program to full medical coverage to free health-club membership — remain unchanged despite the latest adjustments.

” (Bishop, 2004). The type of Extrinsic Motivation used at Microsoft keeps employees motivated. The benefits are different from rewards because every employee is given the benefits just for working at Microsoft. The benefits are to attract and retain a large pool of talented workers to the high tech company. Microsoft does not use just monetary rewards as a standard reward for hard work. They expand on every opportunity to go above and beyond to keep the employees motivated.

“ Money isn’t the only way to motivate employees to work harder or smarter. Perhaps you’ve got a young parent working for you who could benefit from flexible hours or the opportunity to work from home one day a week. Maybe your salesperson has just put in a lot of long days to make a big deal happen and would prefer extra time off to a bonus. When you show you’re willing to be flexible to meet your employees’ needs you’ll likely discover your employees will reward you” (Motivate Your Employees to Help You Succeed). Microsoft uses different extrinsic rewards based on the situation. The

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different needs of an employee can be used to motivate an employee on a case by case basis.

The benefits Microsoft gives employees like flexible hours, paid healthcare, and free sodas have to be managed wisely. Microsoft has in the last few years slowed in revenue growth thus forcing Microsoft to cutback on the benefits employees receive. “ Microsoft Corp. renowned for its industry-leading employee benefits, plans to scale back in some areas as part of a broader effort to cut costs and improve its profit margin even as revenue growth slows. Don’t worry, the soft drinks in the break rooms are still free.

But the company yesterday said it will reduce the discount employees receive when they buy Microsoft stock, shrink the window in which they can take their four weeks of paid parental leave, require a co-payment when they choose brand-name prescription drugs over approved generic equivalents and trim the vacation time received by new hires” (Bishop, 2004). The motivation of the decrease in benefits could work in two ways. The positive effect would be the employees could cut cost as they can to increase operating cash flow or the employees become more productive. The negative affects can be employees leaving the company for a different job or the employees could become resentful toward the company.

Conclusion In conclusion, Microsoft has different ways to motivate employees. Microsoft uses employee empowerment, the company’s ability to foster teamwork, and creative incentives and rewards to motivate the company’s employees to be productive. With the motivation factors listed, Microsoft has become one of the top high tech companies in the world today.

“ Bringing together the right information with the right people will dramatically improve a company’s ability to develop and act on strategic business opportunities” (Gates). The right motivation given to the right people will improve a company too.

Microsoft has found the motivation to keep some of the brightest employees in the high tech field through the use of extrinsic and intrinsic motivations.

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