

Free research paper on leading and managing people

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Question 1

A good leader must be able to meet the needs of their subordinates in order to ensure that they are motivated to perform well in their jobs, which can lead to an increased productivity or bottom line for the company. This would be in conformance to the many theories of motivation, such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y, Alderfer's ERG Theory, and Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory (Koontz and Wehrich 2006). More specifically, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory indicates that people's needs are classified into lower-order and higher-order needs. The lower-order needs include the basic physiological needs and the need for security while their higher order needs would include the need to belong, the need for esteem, and the need for self-actualization. While the lower order needs provide employees with extrinsic motivation, it is the fulfillment of their higher order needs that makes them intrinsically motivated and empowered. With employees who are highly motivated, the leader should have no difficulty in getting them to work towards the achievement of the organization's strategic goals.

Similarly, a good leader is one who can effectively instigate the necessary change to pave the way towards the achievement of the organization's goals. In this regard, charismatic and transformational leaders would be most effective. An example of a charismatic leader is Mahatma Gandhi who successfully led the Indian people through a peaceful revolution. On the other hand, an example of transformational leadership is the leadership of Novo Nordisk, which not only leads initiatives that lead to developments and advancements in the field of pharmaceuticals, but which operations promote

sustainability, in turn enabling the company to become socially responsible. In this manner, not only is Nova Nordisk a highly innovative company, but they also accord great importance to conducting a morally and ethically sound business, which further contributes to their success.

As well, a good leader must not shy away from conflicts as these can be positive if managed well. For example, a conflict among employees about how to accomplish a certain project can lead to brainstorming, which can result in new and more effective ideas. In contrast to this would be groupthink, which essentially enables the avoidance of conflict, but which limits the ideas that are put to the table. In turn, these types of mindsets can curtail innovativeness and creativity.

Two well-known business leaders are Sergey Brin and Larry Page, the founders of Google, and Bill Gates of Microsoft. While both company leaders do fulfill their employees' needs in the forms of competitive compensation packages and career advancement opportunities and while they both encourage innovative ideas, I would prefer to work for Google. The leaders of Google have truly cultivated an innovative culture that enables employees to feel empowered. For example, any Google employee can directly approach the company CEO and the employees are also allowed to work on projects of their own interest. This makes the employees feel free to explore their creativity. In addition, Google ensures that their employees have a work-life balance. As well, there is no doubt that Google has been transformational in the sense that everybody now uses Google for their information needs. Google has indeed transformed the World Wide Web. In contrast, there have been complaints about how there isn't much career advancement in

Microsoft and how employees tend to work on the same projects all the time. It cannot be denied, though, that Microsoft has also been transformational in the field of technology, especially with the important role it played in the PC revolution.

Question 2

- The HR practices that would help create and sustain a happy workforce would include providing the employees with a comprehensive compensation and benefits package, a secure work environment, fair company policies, fair and flexible working conditions, and opportunities for career development and career advancement in the forms of formal performance appraisals, trainings, and guidelines for promotions.

These practices would address the needs of the employees as indicated in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. In this theory, incentives such as the salaries and the benefits, as well as the flexible working conditions, would provide for the employees' basic physiological needs. Similarly, providing the employees with a safe work environment and a sense of job security will enable the company to fulfill the employees' security needs. On the other hand, providing employees with trainings and career advancement opportunities enable the employees' higher order needs to be met, which include their needs for a sense of belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization.

Another motivational theory that can be cited is Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory (Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory n. d.). According to this theory, hygiene factors are the factors that deal with the job context and

can cause job dissatisfaction while the motivation factors are those that deal with job content and can lead to job satisfaction.

In particular, examples of hygiene factors include the salary, working conditions, status, interpersonal relations, supervision, and company policies and administration. Since these factors can cause job dissatisfaction, HR should ensure that these factors are addressed properly in order to not cause job dissatisfaction. For example, it should be ensured that salaries are at least reasonable, if not competitive, that the workplace is secure, that the working conditions are flexible or that the employees are at least given considerations when necessary. This would also include the implementation of fair company policies and having managers who are objective and fair in their treatment of their employees, especially when there are conflicts.

On the other hand, examples of motivation factors include recognition, advancement, achievement, responsibility, the nature of the job, and growth. Since these factors lead to job satisfaction, HR should ensure that the employees are provided with more of these. More specifically, HR should ensure that employees are provided with career advancement opportunities in the forms of trainings, performance appraisals, job promotions, or recognition awards.

- The happiness of the workforce is crucial to HR's and management's functions in that happiness or satisfaction about one's job can lead the employees to become more motivated to do well in their jobs. This can also lead them to become more involved in their job (Saravanan, Udhayasankar and Balashakthivel n. d.) in that it can make the employees more eager to contribute to the achievement of the company's goals. As well, happy

employees tend to be more committed to the organization that they work for. For example, employees tend to be emotionally attached to their employers if they are being treated right (i. e. affective commitment). In the same manner, if they are being compensated properly then they will perceive an economic value to staying in the company (i. e. continuance commitment). As well, if they are happy with their jobs and their employer then they are bound to feel obliged to stay with the organization for ethical or moral reasons (i. e. normative commitment). All of these can lead to improved job performance, which can lead to an increased bottom line. In addition, they can lead to a reduced turnover rate, which can mean cost savings for the company as well as ensured continuity of the business operations.

References

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory. [online] Available at: < <http://www.sacbusiness.org/marketing/john%20materials/Bus%20120/herzberg.pdf> > [Accessed 9 May 2013].

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