

Low employee motivation: causes and effects



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Discuss the causes and effects of low employee motivation & Consider solutions to this problem.**1. Introduction**

With financial crisis sweeping across the world, many companies have recognized that low employee motivation has become a crucial issue all over the world. This essay will discuss through its causes, effects and solutions in order to analyse low employee motivation. Argyle (1972, p. 84) indicates that there are several reasons why motivation can be excavated from the intrinsic side, for instance the employees maybe enjoying in the job itself, they are probably obtaining the opportunities to make self achievement and recognition, they might be simply working for self-image, or they could feel that the job they are doing is “worthwhile” dedicating or loyalty issue. These theories are discovered by managers and social scientists during the recent years. In fact, the employees’ motivation has always been fluctuating, but the overall trend is that according to the experiences, people are able to utilize several appropriate approaches to maintain it into a positive and high level, because all of these factors, no matter intrinsic motivation or extrinsic motivation, have direct relationships with human nature. This is why many companies are implementing the so called “People Oriented” operational strategy. The problem of low employee motivation is a vital issue for a company, although the company itself might be largely blamed for the causes of low employee motivation, but its consequences can affect both the company as a whole and its individual employees. If the problems cannot be solved, the organization will be tracked into a tragic cycle, and moreover it could be destroyed. In fact, all these negative effects can be solved in many

ways. This essay will discuss in depth about what the causes and effects of low employee motivation are and how they could be solved.

2. Causes

2.1 Company Causes

Firstly, different employees who work in different workplace have a variety of reasons for low employee motivation. Because of the close relationship with its employees' career progress, the company's wrong strategies could become the main reasons for its low employee motivation, for example, the company cannot give its staffs achievement feeling, cannot provide its employees enough recognition opportunities of promotion, no work peer group or any facilities around. Nelson (1999 p. 31) states that almost every employee wants to be appreciated, because they give high value of the managers' recognition. However, not many managers can realize this important point. Similarly according to Pepitone (1998, p. 10), the right solutions and techniques are used by manager who can revive strength of mind which can lead to employees' own motivation towards working. Thus, under the correct supervision and direction of the company and the managers, low employee motivation can hardly be formed. That is to say, in a wrongly directed organization, most low employee motivation can be seen as the result of the company rather than the employees.

2.2 Individual Causes

Secondly, not only can the issue of low employees' motivation be due to the company but could it also come from the staffs themselves. Dell (1993 p. 11) states that all the workers themselves want to feel satisfaction from their work. This satisfactory feeling is so called "employee satisfaction".

Employee satisfaction is composed by five aspects: surviving, security, adscription, prestige and self-fulfilment. Employee satisfaction is the main driver of employee motivation. But sometimes people feel the basic necessary things are not always enough and people cannot feel achievement, or sometimes they cannot get recognition from their manager, further more they may not able to make good relationships with other workmates. Witzel (2004 pp. 92-93) suggests that basic necessary things, like food, water, shelter and so on were the main causes of the low employee motivation at the old time. But nowadays there is huge change of the motivation causes. Therefore low employee motivation has many causes. Generally we can separate these causes into two groups, one is intrinsic motivation and the other one is extrinsic motivation. It is hard to say which one of these two aspects is more important, they are equally vital.

3. Effects

The effects of low employee motivation are very multiplex, not only because of the employees themselves but may also due to other extrinsic aspects. Low employee motivation could lead to many negative effects of companies, which can be separated into two parts: the extrinsic effects and the intrinsic effects.

3.1 Extrinsic Effects

Firstly, the extrinsic effects may be presented in the way that if the gap between managers and employees become significant, then the motivation of employees will decrease rapidly resulting in causing work inefficiency and it is hard to reawaken. Nelson (1999, p. 27) states that sometimes employees are easy to lose their motivation because their managers often

focus on some urgent businesses and ignore to motivate and recognize the staffs. However, if motivation has been lost it is difficult to revive.

Secondly, the relationship among workmates can cause the change of employee motivation. According to Argyle (1972, p. 101), the relationship among workmates could be the most important reason of job satisfaction. He has also found several surveys suggesting that the workplace is inefficient in “cohesive groups and among popular individuals”.

Thirdly, the social environment of the office deteriorates can cause the motivation of employees decline then work effective decreases as well.

Witzel (2004, p. 91) stated that giving opportunities to employees to choose their own work place such as remote working or work at home, it is possibly good for work. However, Witzel (2004, p. 91) also argues that this method is not useful for everybody.

Employee has many opportunities to participate the decision of management could be increase employees’ motivation to rise up the work efficiency.

Pepitone (1998, p. 62) states that it is important to encourage employees to think like a entrepreneurial, and let them feel this is their own job or own business, therefore responsibilities and authorities should be shared between employees and managers. This is a good way to motivate employees’ motivation and then increase the work efficiency. It is thought that increase the employees’ self-responsibility in work can cause the motivation of employee decrease. The employee has opportunities to participate in decision; it can also lead to increased work effective.

3. 2 Intrinsic Effects

The intrinsic effects of low employee motivation come from the idea that most people think money is the most important reason to affect employee motivation. Nevertheless, in fact money is not always the most important issue, but one's popularity in his group could be more important. Argyle (1972, p. 101) states that in manual works, the desire that workers want to be accepted by the other partners is stronger than to earn money, this is why some workers make a lot of efforts to be popular than a leader.

If the employees cannot receive the recognition from their managers, their motivation will be low and this will lead to the low work efficiency. Nelson (1999, p. 31) states that almost every employee wants to be appreciated. It is thought that recognition could be of the top motivating methods for improving employee performance. However, not many managers can recognize enough.

Self-esteem and self-fulfilment are other important effects of low motivation. Mostly, if the employees cannot feel these two points, they will be working at low efficiency. For example, Cameron (2002, p. 38) argues that sometimes employees do the job just for self-esteem and self-fulfilment such as in feudal times, crafts-persons conducted their job simply because they enjoy it, any other things were not important. But with the rise of capitalism, their self-esteem and self-fulfilment were displaced by " pay-for-service economy"

4. Solutions

4. 1 Social solutions

Some generally solutions focus on the negative or positive of relationship between manager and employees or work peer team could be useful to solve

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low employee motivation. Firstly, supporting a satisfactory Job Status could increase the motivation result in solving the issue of low employee motivation. Argyle (1972, p. 102) claims that status have a crucial relationship with job and it is necessary for job satisfaction.

Secondly, building a synergy system and combining different skills are well way to solve low employee motivation. Witzel (2004, p. 90) states that synergies and a variety of different skills and viewpoints of bearing on an issue are created by team. So team is seen as important.

Finally, encourage employee to participate in decision to share their ideas with managers or other staffs are good solution to work out the problem of low employee motivation. Witzel (2004, p. 94) suggests that managers should actively listen to employees' opinions and give some feedback of employees' opinions; employees could have some valuable ideas, because they are the closest group with production.

Sometimes managers should share their responsibility and authority with employees, in the exchange, motivation of employees could be increase. Pepitone (1998, p. 62) claims that encouraging employees thinking like entrepreneurial is very importance. Some powers should be shared with employees by managers is named Empowerment, cause employees plough into job like entrepreneurs, like they are the owners of business. Thus, employees' motivation could be increased by managers' generosity.

4. 2 Economic solutions

Bonus is a very useful solution to solve the problem of low employee motivation.

“ Monthly productivity bonus” can increase the employees’ motivation.

Argyle (1972, p. 99) indicates that in adding together to a definite weekly wage, a monthly bonus is paid, it depend on the production or wage of the whole company or particular department. Possibly it is come true and match with a goal number. So many workers’ participation is put in management, and the department work efficiency will become better than the whole company as well. Labour turnover has been discovered to reduce, and cooperation rise in the place where productivity bonus is used.

Improve the ways of Pay such as paying high wage for the higher level skill and choosing the method of equal pay to increase the motivation of employee. Argyle (1972, p. 90) states that the better employees and managers who in important positions in the decision-making status should receive more salaries.

Managers provide more promotion opportunities can increase the motivation of employee. Nelson (1999, p. 30) analyzes an example, at Disney managers should be placed in a traditional culture of Disney. The culture of Disney is as long as their employee who work hard enough and pay their best attitudes on work, who can receive more opportunities to promote. Thus, all of this discussed above are appropriate approaches to low employees’ motivation.

5. Conclusion

Although low employee motivation is a complex problem and it has always been changing, people have clearly recognised its essence and have taken appropriate approaches to maintain it to be positive. This essay has considered the problems which lead to low employee motivation and some

effects and solutions. The common reasons employees obtain low motivation are related to work environment and work feeling, which means low employee motivation can be caused by both extrinsic and intrinsic aspects. Moreover, low employee motivation is also significant reasons to affect some other relevant aspects. Therefore managers should try their best to resolve the problem of low employee motivation. As mentioned above, people have created many useful solutions such as building a good relationship, encouraging participate in decision, sharing power with employees, bonus, more promotion opportunities. But with the society and science technique is developing maybe some other aspects will be created to affect employees' motivation, so human should find an advanced appropriate solutions to solve it. This will not be easy but it is possible to improve humans' work efficiency significantly.

6. References

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