

Organizational behavior and job satisfaction

[Business](#), [Human Resources](#)



Synopsis

George is planning on resigning from his job only three months after beginning, he has been unhappy working there for a long time and has put minimal effort into his work after the first month when his ideas and report were criticized.

Critical Analysis

Primacy Effect in Interview: There seems to be many different factors contributing to George's dislike of his new job. Beginning with the misalignment between expectations and opinions of Janet and of George. It is common for employees to use shortcuts in judging people during interviews, the primacy effect (meaning we tend to form too much of an opinion from a first impression) has been shown to play a large role in the selection process. This indicates it was possible that Janet formed an incorrect or misinformed opinion of George during his interview and, therefore, he is not as well suited to the job as Janet expected. This idea is supported when Janet says: " I guess we thought you were a little more extroverted" during the first group project meeting. This means that she may have been harsher on him or expected more from him than she should have.

Fundamental Attribution Error: Another error in perceiving others that may have contributed to George's aversion to the work place is perhaps him experiencing fundamental attribution error. Fundamental Attribution Error is when we attribute other peoples actions more to internal factors than external factors, so we think their decisions are a reflection of them as a

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person and their values rather than perhaps the circumstances they are in. When Janet did not like George's report and sent back feedback, he took this very personally and assumed Janet did not value any of his opinions, however, her feedback could have been caused by a number of different reasons; George could have not presented his ideas in a coherent, organized way, or Janet could have also been under a lot of pressure from the CEO and she was very stressed. George did not consider any external factors when reviewing the feedback given to him.

Self-fulfilling Prophecy: Self-fulfilling prophecy is also a factor at play here, this is when a supervisor or senior person's opinion of an employee changes the way they act towards them, and then due to this this, that employee acts as the supervisor expected they would, therefore confirming their original opinion, even though at the time it was formed it may not have been accurate. It seems as though Janet did not think George was right for the job after her first two interactions with him in the work place, the first being him not having an input in the group meeting, and the second being the report he submitted. From these two interactions Janet did not appear to like George as an employee, therefore, when looking through his report she may have been harsher than usual as she expected it to be at a low standard. When George got this harsh feedback he felt defeated, consequentially, he began not caring or trying at his job, which confirmed Janet's (originally incorrect) opinion that he is not a good employee.

Self-Determination Theory: Motivation played a huge role in the undoing of George's perfect job. Following receiving negative feedback George's

motivation plummeted and he was no longer enthusiastic about his new job. Arguably, his lack of intrinsic motivation (own desire/interest) was his largest detriment. By the end of his three month period, there was only one thing motivating George to continue working for the company, and that was the bonus, which is an extrinsic (external) factor. There are three main factors that lead to intrinsic motivation; autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy is feeling as though someone is doing something as they want to do it, and not due to external pressure. Competence is the worker believing they are capable of completing the task, and finally, relatedness is feeling part of a community and connected to other people. Within the first month of working at ABC Consulting, all three of these facets had been damaged for George. He stated when accepting the job that work-life balance was very important to him. However, after being allocated an important report due in a week time, he was working 7am to 7pm every day, this is clearly not what George wanted to do. His self-belief and feeling of confidence was reduced in the first project meeting, the further damaged when his report was harshly criticized. Finally, his relatedness suffered as he did not seem to have any friends in the work place, and clearly not a good relationship with Janet. The destruction of these three bases needed to build intrinsic motivation means George's intrinsic motivation was eliminated. This resulted in the reliance on extrinsic motivation for previously intrinsically motivated tasks. This is an example of self-determination theory, which states allocating extrinsic rewards to tasks that were previously intrinsically rewarding decreases overall levels of motivation. Essentially people want to feel like they are

working because they want to, not for some extrinsic reason. George lost this intrinsic motivation, and hence his work suffered.

Expectancy Theory: The expectancy theory, originally developed by Vroom explains that workers evaluate the different causes of actions they make take (e. g. amount of work they can put in) and the consequences that may occur due to these actions (e. g. a raise), and according to the attractiveness of each of the possible consequences they chose what actions to undertake. Porter and Lawler developed on this original idea, stating that if previous actions have not led to the expected consequences it may impact persons incentives. This can be seen when George puts a huge effort into his client report, only for it not to get the reward he was expected. Therefore, when editing the report and doing future work, he is not as driven to put this much effort again.

Job Satisfaction: George seems to have lost all job satisfaction, job satisfaction is having a positive feeling towards ones job. The components that contribute towards job satisfaction according to Herzberg are: achievement, recognition, responsibility, the work itself, advancement opportunities, and personal growth. George did not see any of these things in his job at ABC Consulting, in fact his personal growth seemed to move backwards as his work ethic dropped.

Job Dissatisfaction: Herzberg also said there is a second side to job satisfaction, and that is job dissatisfaction, which is affected by things we call hygiene factors. According to the theory hygiene factors are things such as: base salary, benefits, working conditions, supervisor quality, and company

policies, and it states that as long as these hygiene factors are kept to a high level, job dissatisfaction will be minimized. Prior to George's meeting with Janet and the HR Director about the bonus, although he had low job satisfaction, his job dissatisfaction still remained rather high. His salary wasn't as high as it could have been at one of the bigger firms, but he has the expected bonus coming and his working conditions were satisfactory. Therefore, he wasn't dissatisfied, however once the bonus was removed, he became dissatisfied also, therefore driving him to quit.

Solutions

Many issues are clearly present for George and the ABC Consulting company in this situation, but there are many easy and small things that could have been done to prevent this situation.

Firstly, in order to reduce the impact of the primacy effect on Janet during George's interview, Janet should have more accountability for who she is hiring. It should be asked that she assesses each potential employee on set guidelines and criteria. This has been proven to help reduce the use of shortcuts in judgments in job interviews, and therefore could help to ensure both that the right employee is chosen, and that the expectations of them are more realistic.

In future, Janet should meet with new employees when she assigns them projects, this would give her a chance to set clear expectations. She could also give them access to some similar reports that have been done previously so that they have a sample of what she is looking for. This could

have helped to prevent the misalignment between the expectations of the report.

This would improve the process and support for the new employees, which could dramatically improve the employees experience.

Along with this, throughout the project Janet could work to provide more guidance for the employees. If a future employee doesn't submit the client report early and has errors as George did, the company would not have a suitable report to present. In the future, employees should have meetings throughout the week to look over and edit their write up. They could also be required to submit a draft earlier, similar to what George did, to allow senior employees to review it and give recommendations.

Style of feedback was another key issue in this workplace scenario. It is suggested Janet did not provide feedback that was supportive while still being constructive. It seems that the quantity of the feedback may have been an issue, Janet criticized almost the whole report, this was discouraging for George. A better feedback strategy would be to prioritize the things she thinks need to be fixed and emphasize those. Oral feedback would have also been beneficial in this situation, meeting with George to talk through the report would give her a chance to touch on more things, and explain reasoning if he was confused. This would work to ensure the feedback as a whole was still specific while still addressing all the issues she saw, without coming across as over the top. Meeting with George in person to discuss his feedback could have also reduced the impact of the fundamental attribution error that George experienced. Rather than assuming Janet doesn't value his

opinions or ideas, he could have had the external factors that caused Janet's actions explained. On top of this, Janet needed to include some positive comments within the feedback, ideally she should aim to begin and end her feedback with a positive, in between these two she can add the constructive comments. This utilizes the primacy affect and the regency effect, meaning he will look back on the overall content of the feedback with a more positive point of view and continue to feel valued. For example, Janet never commented on him submitting the report early, she could have begun her feedback by thanking him for submitting it early and stating they appreciate his work ethic. There are many books and guidelines available that discuss the characteristics of good feedback, such as, *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students* Janet should read one or multiple of these prior to giving feedback in future.

My last recommendation for this company is that, if they see an employee's motivation and work ethic drop so dramatically in the future, they need to address it earlier. When the senior staff first noticed a drop in conscientiousness at work, they should have met with the employee, discussed why, and how to fix the issue. An employee feeling as though they have a voice is one way to improve job satisfaction. However, after George having such negative first interactions with Janet he did not feel comfortable voicing his opinions, ideas or even grievances with his job. If Janet had have spoken directly to him regarding his performance earlier he may have felt like he had more of a voice, increasing his job satisfaction. This could have stopped the issue in its tracks and given George a chance to express his grievances. Therefore, in the future ABC Consulting should look to ensure

they meet with any employees who have notable declines in motivation at an earlier time.

CONCLUSION

Many factors contributed to George's unpleasant experience with ABC Consulting, there was no one person at fault, but rather it was a mixture of mistakes and miscommunication. Consequently, there are many things that could have been done in order to improve George's experience in the workplace. In the future ABC Consulting should work to ensure their expectations for new employees are realistic, and that the new employees are also aware of those expectations. Furthermore, their feedback style and delivery method could be further improved to ensure workers stay motivated and keep feeling capability. Improving communication in the work place would be a huge step towards reducing their turnover rate of new employees.