Marvin bower

The late Marvin Bower, who transformed McKinsey & Co. into one of the best management consulting firms in the world, said that the " ability to inspire and require workers to be their best is the greatest resource of any business, and that the rewards for doing so include growth for the business itself, and growth in competitive position, size, and profits" (Edersheim, 2004, p. 65). Much literature about theories ofmotivationand work relate to the subject of inspiring employees to do their best (Gagne and Deci, 2005; Ambrose and Kulik, 1999). This paper explores how managers can use theories of motivating employees to make the workplace better, more profitable, and efficient.

A manager's job is to get things done through their employees, so knowing how to motivate employees is always a challenge that has never been easy. Many changes driven by worldwide social and economic forces are happening at the workplace. The end of theCold Warin the early 1990s and theglobalizationof businesses are transforming corporations – public and private, large and small – in a radical way (Stiglitz, 2002). Global competition and the rise of democracy are pressuring companies to be more competitive, agile, and lean, changing the nature of organizational structures and the relationships between managers and workers (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2000).

Another change agent is the progress of information and communicationstechnology, especially the Internet and mobile computing, which has altered the nature ofcommunicationwithin the organization and the quality of the workforce. Workers are more educated and knowledgeable, able to gain quick access to information and perform knowledge-based tasks

in an atmosphere of teamwork and collaboration (Heerwagen, Kelly, & Kampshroer, 2005). As the workplace structure and the workers themselves change, management faces the problem posed by Gerstner (2002) after a successful ten-year effort to bring IBM Corporation out of a crisis:

-How do you pull the levers of motivation to change the attitudes, behavior, and thinking of a population? Of course, different people are motivated by different things. Some bymoney. Some by advancement. Some by recognition. For some, the most effective motivation is fear – or anger. For others, that doesn't (sic) work; it's learning, or the opportunity to make an impact, to see their efforts produce concrete results. Most people can be roused by the threat of extinction. And most can be inspired by a compelling vision of the future. Over the past ten years, I've pulled most of those levers (p. 203).

Effectively changing the attitudes, behavior, and thinking of workers demands that a manager knows what levers of motivation to pull in the first place.

Much research has been done to identify empirically-proven theories and methods that managers can use to motivate their employees (Gagne and Deci, 2005, p. 333).

Maslow proposed that a person is motivated by satisfying five levels of human needs: (1) physiological (hunger and thirst); (2) safety (bodily); (3) social (friendshipand affiliation); (4) esteem (for oneself and others); and (5) self-actualization (growth and realization of potential) (Chapman, 2004a).

Herzberg stated that work satisfaction results from the presence of hygiene factors like salary, status, working conditions, supervisor and management, security, relationship with subordinates, and policies, and motivational factors like achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and personal growth. A worker will be satisfied if the motivation factors are met (Chapman, 2004c).

According to Adams's Equity Theory, what workers put into their work (inputs) is fairly balanced with what they expect to get out of it (outputs). Motivation will get the most out of employee inputs like personal effort andhard workby making the employee see it balanced by outputs (salary, benefits, and intangibles like praise and achievement) (Chapman, 2004b).

Vroom's Expectancy Theory states that three factors should be present for motivation to take place: valence (value placed on the expected reward), expectancy (belief that efforts are linked to performance), and instrumentality (belief that performance is related to rewards). Knowing each employee's valence and expectancy, and showing the instrumentality between the two, will help the manager trigger the motivation of the employee.

Porter and Lawler built on Vroom's theory by proposing a model of intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, which states that people are intrinsically motivated if they do something they find interesting and from which they derive satisfaction, and that people are extrinsically motivated if they do the activity because they are satisfied with the tangible or verbal rewards attached (Gagne and Deci, 2005, p. 331). Schwab (1985) equates this with

Herzberg's motivation (intrinsic) and hygiene (extrinsic) factors but contemporary authors claim that it is closer to Vroom's Expectancy Theory (Ambrose and Kulik, 1999, p. 257).

All these theories may be said to be based on Skinner's reinforcement theory, which states that behavior can be shaped, changed or maintained through the use of positive and negative reinforcement, implying that a person can behave in a certain way through the use of motivational levers.

Motivation can be used to improve employee performance and productivity. As Bruce and Pepitone (1999, pp. 38-42) point out, employees can be motivated to do their work better, that is, improve their work performance, and to work more efficiently and more effectively, that is, improve their productivity. One way is to share information (like profit and loss or quality of service) on how your department is doing in comparison with others in or outside the company. Asking employees to help you solve a problem appeals to their need for self-actualization (Maslow) and helps them set high personal standards of growth and potential. You may motivate them with bonuses (Vroom's rewards or Adams's outputs) they will get if performance improves. Use the tools depending on what you think your employees need. This first step can make your employees want to improve their performance and be more productive.

Getting employees warmed up is good, but it is not enough. After getting them initially motivated, the manager has to help each one establish and achieve highergoals. Motivation can be a useful tool in goal-setting by pointing out targets that will bring employees out of their comfort zones to

attain personal growth. Hiam (1999, pp. 213-216), warning us against confusing goal-setting sessions with employee manipulation, states that the motivational key is to make employee realize that aiming for a higher goal is good for different reasons, presenting both tangible (pay raise and bonus) and intangible (self-esteem and personal growth) rewards.

Some employees are motivated by financial rewards, but many are equally motivated by seeing that their work is meaningful (Hiam, 1999, p. 222). In discussing the rewards of work, Bruce and Pepitone (1999, p. 53) state that if employees are properly motivated and helped by their managers to aim for higher goals and succeed in achieving it, employees will feel that the work they do is fun and enjoyable, making it part of the reward itself that they are willing to share with the organization. In effect, work becomes its own reward.

Heller (1998, p. 43) adds that motivation is a useful tool not only when setting higher work performance goals but in assessing the success orfailureof employee efforts. Employee evaluation and assessment can be a forum for further motivation in two areas: to encourage the employee to build on strengths and accomplishments, leading the way for higher levels of future performance, or for helping the employee overcome personal weaknesses that hamper job performance.

Through the use of positive reinforcement (praise and encouragement for success and achievement) and negative reinforcement (suggestions for improvement or behavioral change), managers can sustain organizational morale and help employees overcome falling enthusiasm or a lack of

personal ambition. Hiam (1999, p. 122) notes that positive feedback (" You can do it because you're good enough …") is more motivating than negative feedback (" Why can't you do something that others can?") and encourages managers to use positive reinforcement to build up employee motivation and morale, although negative reinforcement (not the same as negative feedback) may be helpful for disciplining or correcting employees.

Boosting self-confidence is one of the best ways to maintain high levels of motivation in employees (Bruce & Pepitone, 1999, p. 114). The reason is that people grow in confidence when they see that someone, especially one in a position of authority, believes in them. This creates expectations that, as we learn from Vroom and Porter, motivate people. Therefore, a manager who believes in his employees can sustain high levels of motivation. Doing the opposite (showing lack of confidence and trust) can be fatal for the organization and thecareerof a manager whose task is to motivate and, therefore, trust and believe in his employees.

It is a scientifically-proven fact that men and women are different (Ridley, 1999). They differ also in their motivation styles. Several studies (Su and Bradberry, 2004; Marano, 2003; Sachs, 1995) show how women and men differ (for example, women are more intuitive and perceptive, while men are more systematic and rules-based) in their communication and social skills, vital for the process of motivation. While men find it easier to motivate using the basic needs and tangible rewards, and women may be better at using higher level needs and intangible factors, all good managers, regardless of

gender, should combine the ability to motivate using all the tools available (Gerstner, 2002; Sachs, 1995).

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