

Motivation as an important aspect of human resource management

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Motivation is a vital aspect in functioning of every organization.

It refers to the forces that arouse enthusiasm and persistence to pursue a certain course of action for accomplishing organizational goals. Nowadays, there are numerous motivation theories that human resource managers use in order to encourage high work performance. Generally, there are two types of rewards in motivation. The first is intrinsic rewards, which is the satisfaction a person receives in the process of performing a particular action. For example, a person selling educational materials may get an intrinsic award of helping children read well. The other type of rewards is extrinsic, which are the rewards that are generally given by another person, typically a manager and include promotion and pay increases. For instance, some person that does not get pleasure from doing his/her job may be motivated by an extrinsic reward of high payment.

Good human resource managers usually strive to help people achieve both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, far as it has been proven that most talented and innovative employees are usually motivated not only by rewards such as benefits and money but also with the satisfaction from the work they do. To create an environment that is rich in opportunity, challenge and reward managers need to implement one of the manager's theories. The three types of motivation theories include: content theories, process and reinforcement theories. Content theories usually stress the understanding of human needs and how they can be satisfied in the workplace. Thus, if a human resource manager realizes worker's needs, the organization's rewards system can be designed to meet them and reinforce employees for directing energies and

priorities toward attainment of organizational goals. One of the content theories is the hierarchy of needs theory developed by Abraham Maslow. This theory suggests that people are motivated by five categories of needs- physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization-that exist in a hierarchical order.

Self-actualization which is on the top of the hierarchy may include: opportunities for training, advancement, growth and creativity. Esteem needs generate: recognition, high status and increased responsibilities. While, belongingness needs may comprise: work groups, clients, coworkers and supervisors. Safety needs include safe work, fringe benefits and job security. Finally, at the bottom of the hierarchy there are physiological needs which are heat, air and base salary. According to the theory low-order needs must be satisfied before higher-order needs are activated. The other content theory is ERG theory that resembles a modified Maslow's theory.

It identifies three categories of needs: 1. Existence needs- needs for physical well-being. 2. Relatedness needs- need for satisfactory relationships with others. 3. Growth needs- developing human potential and the desire for personal growth and increased competence. One psychologist suggested that nowadays the need to have fun at work needs to be added to this theory, far as it can relieve stress and enable people to feel that their personal lives are not totally separated from their work lives.

There his also a two-factor content theory, created by Frederick Herzberg. After interviewing hundreds of workers he came to conclusion that two

separate dimensions contribute to an employee's behavior at work. The first are hygiene factors, which are factors that involve the presence or absence of job dissatisfiers such as working conditions, pay, company policies, and interpersonal relationships. The second set of factors is motivators, which include achievement, recognition, responsibility and opportunity for growth. Thus, on one hand providing hygiene factors will eliminate employee dissatisfaction, and on the other motivators will promote high satisfaction and performance. Process theories, unlike content theories focus more on determining how workers act to meet their needs and if those choices are successful. There are two basic process theories: equity theory and expectancy theory.

Equity theory focuses on individual's perceptions of how fairly they are treated relative to others. If people perceive their compensation as equal to what others receive for similar contributions they will believe that their treatment is fair and equitable. Equity is measured by ratio of outputs and inputs. Inputs include: education, experience, effort and ability, while the outputs generate pay, recognition, benefits and promotion. Thus, for example if some employee discovers that he/she is getting more money than people who contribute the same inputs to the company, he/she may feel the need to correct the inequity by working harder, getting more education or considering lower pay. Expectancy theory is a process theory that suggests that motivation depends on individual's expectations about their ability to perform tasks and receive desired rewards. For instance, if the company creates an incentive program which would be used in areas such as

distribution, where employees are recognized for accomplishment in safety, productivity and attendance it can appear rather effective.

The other type of theories is reinforcement theory. It is a motivation theory based on the relationship between a given behavior and its consequences. For instance a company implementing a reinforcement theory may reward salespeople for the kinds of behaviors that keep sales and profits rising. If people in this company don't perform, they don't get paid. However, they can reap huge economic rewards for high performance. A good example of a country, where different companies use different motivation theories in their human resource management is Ukraine. Analyzing the variety of company's in Ukraine it can be seen that most large company's functioning on the territory of our country are either subsidiaries of foreign company's or some multinational/transnational corporations.

Surely, those companies placed in our country use mostly some content theories that provide workers with bonuses, opportunities for training, growth and team buildings, which can be some trips paid-for by the company, in order to create a sense of team in the company's staff. An example of such companies would be Celenia, Kraft Foods, BMS Consulting, etc. Those companies, like many others of their kind use content theories that incorporate many useable tools for managers. As for local Ukrainian company's that are based soly in Ukraine, they usually might offer some fringe benefits which is a good motivation tool. However, hrm managers in those companies rarely use the system of bonuses, increased payments, or some incentive programs. Mostly, the motivation is associated with fear of

loosing the job or getting reduced payment if the organizational goals are not completed. It resembles a reinforcement theory of management, where employees are suggested a certain type of behavior and if they do or do not pursue it, certain consequences follow.

There are companies that give their workers so-called “ black balls” on every project they did not complete or that was not done on time and if the worker gets more than 5 balls he/she is out of the job. From my point of view, this type of motivation has a lot of shortcomings and it should be substituted by some content theory of management. Far as this type of human resource management, doesn't correspond to ethical norms of a democratic society. Thus, motivation is an important aspect in human resource management. Nowadays, human resource managers have an option of selecting out of numerous management theories. They include content, process and reinforcement theories. Content theories like hierarchy of needs theory or ERG theory focus on understanding and satisfying human needs at work.

Process theories on the other hand, focus on employee’s choices of action to accomplish company’s goals and determining if those choices are correct. While, reinforcement theory focuses on what consequences follow if the workers do or do not follow the given behavior. Choice of an appropriate motivation theory is a significant step to company’s success.