

The effects of motivation on work

Psychology, Motivation



In a world of abundance filled with unmatched economic lows, there has never been a greater calling for the understanding of the effects of motivation in the workplace. We will look at motivation as the light needed to see positive change in our work life, the change necessary to improve the economic stature of our family and peers. Though motivation cannot be taught, it can be stimulated by an employer or an individual. Stimulated in a way that creates the foundation to breed and exceed expectation.

To understand why motivation plays such an important role in one's career it is clearly definite we must understand the true meaning of the word and how it works in different forms. Motivation comes from the Latin root meaning "to move" (Wade & Tavris, 2009). As if this root meaning is not enough to grasp the idea, Psychologists define motivation as the process of which a person or animal move toward a goal, or away from a negative situation (Wade & Tavris, 2009).

There is no difference in the way motivation works when we are trying to achieve within the workplace or the motivation to eat when we are hungry. The force it creates is the same though the desired need is different.

Motivation is also broken down into two varying factors. These two factors of motivation must be understood because they influence our mentality of achieving or more so, why we choose certain aspects of following our motivations. Intrinsic motivation is the pursuit of an activity for its own sake whereas extrinsic motivation is the pursuit for external rewards (Wade & Tavris 2009).

We can see that motivation propels us in a way that we consciously and subconsciously move forward to attain what it is that we seek, and it also used to push or pull away from a situation that would be possess negative attributes to our motivations. We also know that motivation is influenced by different motives. In this research paper we will discuss motivation in the workplace, be it positive, negative, or null. We will also discuss some studies behind the thoughts of how we function mentally at work, to work, and for work.

Working within a company that creates a positive mental attitude mantra is detrimental to the success of the company and well-being of the employee. Companies can launch campaigns to replicate motivation, but unless the companies approach is truly sincere and consistent the value is lost. In Douglas McGregor's book, "The Human Side of Enterprise," published in 1960, McGregor states that human beings have a natural dislike for work and avoid it if they can (McGregor, 2010). So if we as human beings dislike work in general, how could we ever become motivated?

In Frederick Herzberg's book, "The Motivation to Work," Herzberg discusses how a workplace can create a motivating environment for its employees. He lists factors that result in motivation and dissatisfaction in the workplace. He calls them motivators and hygiene factors (Herzberg, 2002). We will discuss the hygiene factor later in this paper. The satisfying motivators he lists are as follows: achievements, responsibility, work itself, recognition, advancement, and growth (Herzberg, 2002).

These factors provide positive motivation in the work place. His beliefs of how a company can motivate also include ideas such as when an employee shows the ability to take on more responsibility the company should honor the individual, that the company should work to utilize the full capability of the employee, and that if a person's capabilities cannot be used the company should replace the individual to maintain the state of motivation in the staff (Herzberg, 2002).

A company can try all that it can to motivate the work force, but what causes one employee to be more motivated than another in the same position. An individual's positive motivation they bring to work each day can produce tremendous success in their career. Where does their desire come from? What makes one employee more motivated than others? These are two great questions that will assist in determining what fuels an individual to perform at work with non-motivational attempts by the company.

There are several conditions that positively affect our individual motives for attaining success. One answer is goals. Goals are said to improve performance when three conditions are met: the goal must be specific, challenging yet achievable, and designed to gain what you want rather than what you don't want (Wade & Tavriss, 2009). This means when someone knows exactly what they want, as long as it isn't ridiculously out of reach, and they work in a direction that when completed provides maximum satisfaction, one will begin to perform better.

A goal is just the vehicle of motivation, the vehicle requires the fuel of motivation to reach your destination. So in essence, goals breed motivation.

There are two types of goals that assist in growing as a person. A performance goal is framed to do well in front of others, be judged respectfully, and avoid criticism (Wade & Tavris, 2009). A mastery goal is designed to increase one's competency and skillset. (Wade & Tavris, 2009) When these two goals are set into motion, our motivation is called upon and we will ultimately produce further success.

Another factor that will cause motivation is very definition of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factor (Wade & Tavris, 2009). For example, a new car, new family home, sales contest, bonus, and advancement are all attributes that require an individual to become more motivated at work and produce greater results. Also in Frederick Herzberg's book "The Motivation to Work," he lists factors that create motivation within an individual to succeed at work as achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth (Herzberg, 2002).

Motivation from within also can spawn from self-expectancy (Wade & Tavris, 2009). When one expects to succeed, they work harder and become more motivated to work (Wade & Tavris, 2009). In direct correlation to expectations is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief that he or she is capable of producing desired results, mastering skills, and achieving goals (Wade & Tavris 2009). This too, cannot be taught. It is developed.

We now see a relationship with how a company and an individual can produce motivation at work and why it is important. What we see is that it is the same basic process, but it all starts with an understanding that the person must be willing to both do and want greater results. There are also

motivating factors that can discourage an employee at work. We will call this motivation, a negative motivation. As with all the factors that cause positive motivation, when their values are reversed negative motivation will occur.

If there is no advancement opportunities, tasks are repetitive, the work in itself is not meaningful, there are poor relationships with superiors, or the worker does not feel appreciated then the motivation and overall mood of the individual turns awry (Herzberg, 2002). The “Hygiene Factor” we touched on earlier explains that the dissatisfaction one finds at work is a motivator buzz kill (Herzberg, 2002). He calls these dissatisfying factors hygiene because just as in unhealthy hygiene, these factors are maintenance factors (Herzberg, 2002).

Maintenance factors are what we must do to avoid dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 2002). These factors include: company policy, problems with superiors, work conditions, salary, and problems with peers (Herzberg, 2002). These factors are directly related to the effect of the work environment. In summary, it seems when one has to work, to work, the mindset becomes negative about the specific job. As with detractors in the workplace, one can have detractors within themselves that are disturbing their ability to become motivated in a career.

These detractors are feelings, emotions, and events in one’s personal life that are causing negative influence on their work mentality. Finances, time, family life, and lack of fulfillment are all negative factors that weigh against one’s motivation. If one believes they are not following their dreams or living up to their full potential they will suffer, if one isn’t spending enough time

with their family they will also suffer, and if one is struggling financially they will obviously have issues within themselves. Depression is another factor that can take away motivation.

Depression causes the inability to function in several varying forms. These are just a few rationales as to why an individual may struggle to motivate themselves. When motivation is lost within the mental confines attributed to our career, whether individually or bred by the employer, one could become resistant to change, null to growth, and inconsistent in task. This makes it hard for one to complete daily tasks, yet alone go to work with the motivation achieve great results. However, motivation is a multifunctional psychological ability.

Multifunctional because it can possess negative, positive, and null results. It can also produce an effect where one will work with the fear of losing their position. They will do what is necessary to maintain their status, all the while living with the fear of their comfort level changing. Working in this capacity causes a poor mental attitude both at work and at home. We have studied the multiple sides of the effects of motivation in the workplace. We found many common ideas, theories, and studies that associate both positive and negative motivation.

For a workplace to provide a positive environment there are clearly defined structures to produce the desired outcome. As an individual, we must sincerely feel comfort, challenge, acceptance, and growth to become and remain in a motivated state. A tall list sure, but in order to grow as individuals these are all very important aspects that we must understand

and be able to handle. In conclusion, motivation clearly affects each and every one of us in different ways, at different times, with unpredictable results.