

Employee motivation essay

[Business](#), [Employee](#)



Today's business environment is highly dynamic and competitive due to globalization and technological advancement witnessed in 21st century. As a result, the business environment compels organizations managers to be innovative and creative how to manage well the organizational functions to survive in the market. Therefore, this implies that the main focus of manager job today in the workplace is to get things done through employees.

However, it should be noted that to do this the manager should be able to motivate employees which is not an easy task (Wiley 1995; Accel Team 2004) as it may be perceived from the public sense. Historically, Motivation theory and practice has proved to be difficult subject area touching on several disciplines of human resources management (Accel Team 2004). Yet it is a critical issue in today's best management practices that requires placing people at the centre of success strategy.

Kenneth (2002) defines motivation as giving employees incentives that cause them to act in desired ways with objective to lead them to perform in ways that meet the goals of the department and the organization. As acknowledged by Gary (2006), he states that in spite of reach sources of researches conducted in relation to employee motivation, this management area is still not clearly understood and more often than not poorly practiced.

This is because many human resources managers fail to get the clue towards motivating their employees as a result of failure to understand human nature itself, though human nature can be very simple, yet very complex too. Therefore, appreciation and a clear understanding of this human nature is a prerequisite to effective employee motivation in the workplace that necessitates effective management and leadership (Dianna 2005). In this

context, it is important to note that essence of motivating employees is to enhance organization's performance.

According to Cindy, (2003), he that well suggests that motivated employees are more productive and creative which prove to be more fundamental to employee's management apart from the benefit and moral value of an altruistic approach to treating people as human beings and respecting human dignity in all its forms. Thus, organization performance can be considered to be a function of motivation and ability. The outstanding concern now is the approach that is appropriate to employed in motivating the workforce while being in line with the key incentives.

To shade light on key initiatives is Wiley, (1995) who reports about potential lessons from an elaborate study carried for 20year from 1945 to 1965 in relation to employee motivation that involved 31, 000 men and 13, 000 women. In this study, the objective of Minneapolis Gas Company was to find out what their potential employees desired most from a job. The outcomes of the study that resulted to slight different rating of the factors between women and men showed that employees desired most security followed by advancement, type of work and company; proud to work for (Wiley, 1995).

Surprisingly to many, factors such as pay, benefits and working conditions were given a low rating by both groups. Thus, it can be seen that contrary to common belief that money is not the prime motivator. Yet, some managers assume that money is the only motivation for all their employees. Though, it should not be regarded in negative dimension to reward employees unfairly or poorly. At this point, the assumption of some managers that money is the

prime motivator is worth of initiating a study curiosity drawing evidences from theories and practices of employee motivation.

Theories and practice of employee motivation The theories and practices which shall be reviewed in this section strongly support the notion that employee performance depends on motivation to perform. However, it should be noted that motivation leads to good performance when it is accompanied by ability, skills, equipment, supplies, and time (Michael et al. , 2007). These are basis of best practices that mangers can combine together with motivating factors to get things done in the work place through people (Accel Team 2004).

This section shall discuss wide range of theories that inform employee motivation: employee motivation using money, process theories and content theories. It is a point of worth to note that all theories depend on the individual's perception of what is a valued motivator, while what is valued as a motivator depends on the individual's needs (Bob et al. 2002). Money as a factor of employee motivator While some human resources managers assume that the main thing employees want out of a job is money it may hold truth to some extend.

But theory and practice in relation to motivating employees holds notion that money can be a motivator, but it is not the only motivator, and for some employees it is not the most important motivator. As a far as our today's global economic landscape is concerned, money is still a significant motivator but may not be the only one to be emphasized (Michael et al. , 2007). In order for money to motivate employees it must meet employee

needs, and employees must believe they are able to achieve the financial rewards the organization offers (Wiley 1995).

But, to use money well as a motivating factor for the workforce the manager has to employ varied financial incentives such as piecework systems, production bonus systems, commissions, suggestion plans, group incentive plans, profit-sharing, and gain-sharing. The application of incentive pay plans (Michael et al. , 2007) as payments for meeting objectives to the workforce is varied depending on the department and tasks of various persons. For instance, Piecework system incentive is payment according to the amount people produce, can be paid according to individual employee or a certain department.

But most often is applicable to independent contractors as farm workers. Production bonus system focus on giving employees in a production department salary plus a bonus that consists of a payment for units produced usually emphasizes on quality and quantity. Commissions are applicable in sales departments whereby employees earns commissions on top of basic salary. Payment for suggestions is an incentive whereby employees are paid for suggestions for improvements leading to saving or realization of additional money y to organization as a result of employee's suggestion (Wiley, 1995; Dianna 2005; Cindy, 2003).

The group incentive plans focus on rewarding the group financially and not individuals of the group to foster team work, good relationships and collaboration at workplace. Gain-sharing is an incentive whereby management wishes to increase participation and incorporate views of employees in running affairs of an organization. In this case, the organization

encourages employees to participate in making suggestions and decisions on how to improve the way the company or work group operates, and as the growth is realized through improved performance employees receive a share of the greater earnings.

Additionally, the organization can share and inform the employees what they are going to earn by at least publishing pay ranges. If the incentive pay plans are approached as stipulated then money can account up to 46.82% as a motivating factor for employees (Wiley 1995). Process theories and Employee motivation According to Gary (2006) states that employ motivation can be understood from process theories approach that looks at the process of motivation rather than specific motivators.

In this category, it includes Vroom's expectancy-valence theory, and Skinner's reinforcement theory. According to Vroom's Expectancy-Valence Theory (Eds. Teevan, Birney, RC 1994), the theory assumes that people act as they do to satisfy needs they feel. This theory further advances that people are motivated based on the Valence which is the value a person places on the outcome of a particular behaviour and Expectancy which refers to the perceived probability that the behaviour will lead to the outcome.

Therefore, the theory implies that employees are most motivated to seek results they value highly and think they can achieve. Therefore, it also imply to the managerial carder that they need to determine from the employees what is rewarding and what is possible to achieve and provide rewards that are valued. Second on the process theories is Skinner's Reinforcement Theory (Eds. Teevan, Birney, RC 1994) that stresses that people behave as

they do because of the kind of consequences they experience as a result of their behaviour.

This implies that people will continue a behaviour if it leads to consequences they like, while they will avoid the behaviour which results to undesirable consequence. The managers comes in the theory when it comes to encouraging or discouraging the behaviour pattern of employees; reinforcement (John 2004). For instance, good behaviours are praised in form of promotion, certification or financial increment and employees feel good, while bad behaviour is punished or negatively reinforced that leads to discouragement of the behaviour.

But managers are encouraged to use positive reinforced than punishment as employees who are repeatedly punished may eventually believe that they are unable to succeed. The implication of process theories to employee motivation, regards quality of arriving at employees motivation such that the managers need to determine from the employees what is rewarding and what is possible to achieve while considering individual differences in designing rewards. Moreover, individuals are motivated differently and the organizational policy (Gary 2006), labour contracts, and laws may dictate what an employee may receive.

Thus, under process theories money usefulness as a motivator is highly dependant on how it is arrived at and given to meet the employee's needs, since it is believed that quality of the process used determines the process of the impact of the motivator. Content theories and motivation The category of content theories approach to explaining and understanding employee's

motivation focuses on the content of the motivator and not the process of motivation (Bob et al. 2002; Kenneth 2002).

In this category of content theories, there is Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of need theory, David McClelland's Achievement-Power-Affiliation theory, and Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor theory. According to Abraham Maslow, he believed that what motivates people is unmet needs which falls into five categories physiological needs; food, shelter as basic needs, sex and clothing, security needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs which is the highest-level need (Eds. Teevan, Birney, RC 1994). Thus, struggling to achieve these needs makes people motivated and work hard so that they can achieve.

McClelland's Achievement-Power-Affiliation theory assumes that that through life experiences, people develop various needs that informs their choices. These are needs for: achievement which is the desire to do something better than it has been done before; power as the desire to control, influence, or be responsible for other people; and affiliation which is the desire to maintain close and friendly personal relationships. Most people usually develop these needs, but the relative strength of the needs influences what will motivate a person (Eds. Teevan, Birney, RC 1994).

Hertzberg's Two-Factor theory assumes that employees' satisfaction and dissatisfaction stem from different sources. In this regard, Satisfaction results from the presence of motivating factors denoted as opportunities for advancement, and personal growth, recognition, responsibility; While, dissatisfaction of employees is due to the absence of hygiene factors like salary and poor relationship at workplace (Eds. Teevan, Birney, RC 1994;

Ruthankoon, Ogunlana 2001). It therefore follows that, content theories advocate that the motivator linkage to money should be in line with individual needs.

For example, an employees who is financially unstable can be motivated by financial gains while focus on achieving other needs or achievement of multiplicity of needs should be centre of motivation design for employees. In regard to financial or money motivator, content theories advocates that money motivates people when it meets their needs. Second, the employee with high financial demands and relatively low income, money may be a motivator. And lastly, when the employee is financially comfortable, nonfinancial rewards, such as affiliation, empowerment and sense of accomplishment becomes increasingly important (Wiley 1995). Conclusion

In conclusion, the paper has demonstrated that assumption that some managers cling on to that money is the only motivator for the employees is really not true, yet it holds some substantial truth in it. Based on the discussion, money can only serve as a prime motivating factor through combination of both direct and indirectly potential to realize and achieve the needs of employees, if well designed. For instance, an organization instead of increasing employee salaries, it can insure the employee and his or herfamilyin healthy and safety issues to enable employee achieve the need for security and in the process money is still a motivator.

Important to note is that there are other initiatives according to the theories and practice to enhance motivation. The incentives which focus on making workplace more conducive and interesting are job rotation, job enlargement, and job enrichment. Motivators should be recognized by the employee as

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linked to performance. The motivators should employees centered and resource based in their design which can be achieved through manager's communication with employees to learn about their need and what they value most, encouraging increased participation and good feedback mechanism should be encouraged.

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