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M O T I V A T I O N   I N   T H E   W O R K P L A C E

INTRODUCTION

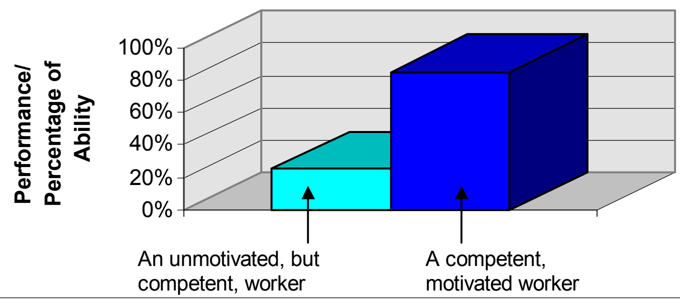
A manager's duties in today's corporate world are multi-faceted. Not only do managers need to be versed in finance, economics, and information systems; it is now essential for them to have a firm grasp on organizational behavior and psychology. They must know how their people *think* and what makes them do so. Making sure managers are aware of this psychology is the job of the human resource department, but all managers of the organization have a responsibility to understand it.

A key aspect of organizational psychology is motivation. Managers must know why their people behave the way the do, so that these "buttons" can be "pushed" at the manager's discretion. A motivator is "that which impels or compels an individual to act toward meeting a need" (Winning, 1996, unpaginated). In this case, the need is a successful, profitable business. Keeping employees highly motivated, therefore, is important, and will be discussed in this paper. Some major motivational theories will also be explored. Finally, practical ways of applying these theories to real people will be considered.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MOTIVATION

While the result of motivation may be a happier worker, managers have an ulterior motive in beginning a motivation program. Effective motivation results in increased output and/or reduced costs, which improves profitability (Davidmann, 1989). In fact, a study found that most workers can keep their jobs (i.e., not be fired) by working at 25% of their ability. However, once these same workers are motivated--are working towards something or for some reason--they achieve 85-90% of their ability (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988). This concept can be understood best in the below graph:

Figure 1



Satisfied people (who have their needs--or motives--met) are happy people and happy people are productive people. Therefore, the goal is to “create a working environment in which people like working and in which people work well, a working environment which helps to enrich the life [sic] of those who work” (Davidmann, 1989, unpaginated).

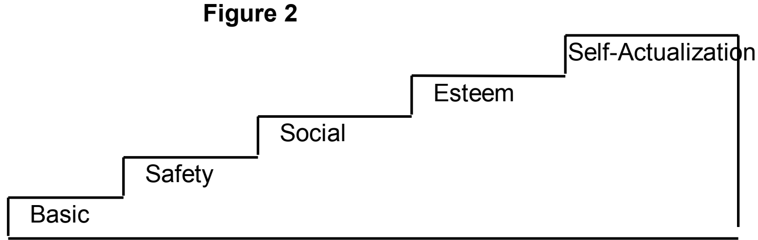
SOME THEORIES OF MOTIVATION

The two most well-known theories of motivation are from the so-called “glamorous management guru’s of the 1960’s” (Bowey, 1997, unpaginated): Maslow’s Need Hierarchy and Herzberg’s Two-Factor Concept.

MASLOW’S NEED HIERARCHY

Abraham Maslow published his famous theory of motivation in 1954. Since then, it has been reproduced countless times, in several formats. Typically, the hierarchy he described is represented as a pyramid. However, a series of stairs seems more appropriate:

Figure 2



Reprinted from Hersey and Blanchard, 1989, page 35

According to Maslow, human needs work on a sort of continuum, whereby when all the needs of one "step" are met, the person no longer needs them. They then stop acting as a drive, or motivator, and then the needs of the next step will become the focus. This model will prove true, he asserts, in any arena, but for the corporate arena, these needs are specific. Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, creators of the famous Situational Leadership Theory of Management, have broken Maslow's hierarchy down with the business world in mind:

- Basic needs include food and shelter, and especially the money required to purchase them;
- Safety needs include the desire for job security as well as fringe benefits with insurance packages;
- Social needs result in social interaction and assembly in the office (parties, etc);
- Esteem needs include prestige and power;
- Self-actualization needs include competence/knowledge and achievement (1989).

Notice that money and the benefits associated with it are low on the hierarchy. Maslow contended that the need to reach one's goals dominated the need/want for money. Thus, managers must realize that simply providing pay raises will not necessarily result in any motivation, unless the worker is on that step of the hierarchy.

Maslow's theory can best be summed up as follows: First, a manager must satisfy people's basic needs--cooperation, security, etc. Then, these employees will seek independence and leisure. Lastly, employees look for challenging work, recognition, and a "fair share of the wealth." (Davidmann, 1989)

HERZBERG'S TWO-FACTOR CONCEPT

Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Concept, originally published by the *Harvard Business Review* in 1968, and republished in the 1991 edition, focuses exclusively on the corporate environment. First, Herzberg wrote that anything resulting in short-term stimulation (decreasing hours; increasing wages and benefits) should be avoided, because these end up becoming only outside "pushes." Employees, in order to be successfully motivated, should *want* to perform. Anything that is a "push" is not viewed as a reward by the employee; rather, it is considered a right.

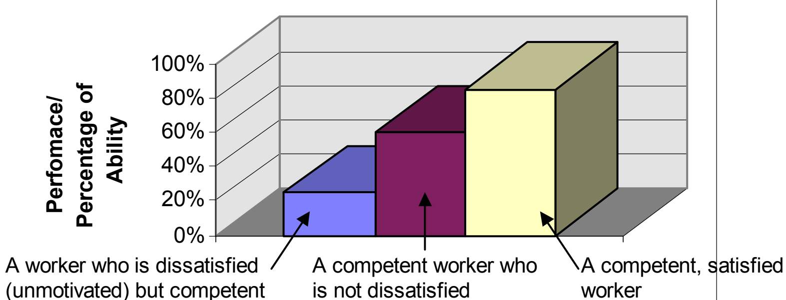
Herzberg thus developed a dual way to look at motivation: satisfiers, which come from the ability to achieve and grow , and dissatisfiers, which come from man's animal nature. He emphasized that satisfiers and dissatisfiers are "separate and distinct" from one another (p. 29). Unlike Maslow, Herzberg did not advocate a continuum of needs. Instead, he proposed that managers must deal with satisfiers and dissatisfiers separately. Dissatisfiers must be eliminated from the workplace *before* the satisfiers are implemented, otherwise workers will overlook the satisfiers. Included under each category are:

Satisifers ⇨ achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, growth

Dissatisifers ⇨ administration, supervision, work conditions, salary, status, security, relationships, etc.

When shown on a graph, it is evident that the dissatisfiers out-number the satisfiers by a three-to-two ratio. Therefore, eliminating all the potential dissatisfiers, while not changing any of the satisfiers, results in a worker that is performing at a level of 60% efficiency, rather than the original 25%. Plugging this new information into Figure 1, the thrust of Herzberg's theory is evident:

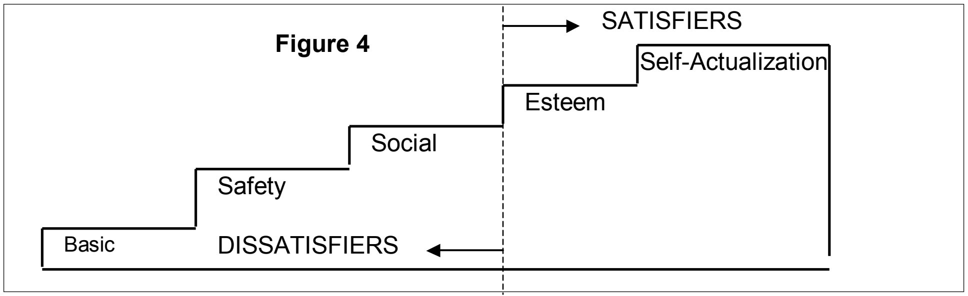
Figure 3



In order to satisfy employees based on his list, Herzberg suggested vertical enrichment of the job, which means increasing employees' participation and involvement (Davidmann, 1989). Herzberg found that those with enriching jobs liked their jobs better and experienced lower absenteeism.

MASLOW MEETS HERZBERG

Each of these theories is simple and straightforward (Bowey, 1997). They each reject money as a motivator, focusing instead on self-fulfillment (Maslow) and enrichment (Herzberg). Combining the theories together, we get the following figure:



Reprinted from: Hersey and Blanchard, 1988, page 67

In both theories, money (basic need; dissatisfier) is "important only up to the point where basic needs are satisfied[,] then job satisfaction [self-actualization; job enrichment] becomes more important" (Davidmann, 1989, unpaginated). A smart manager, then, will focus first on the basic needs of his/her staff, then will progress to the higher-order needs.

PROBLEMS INHERENT IN THESE THEORIES

Because they are so simple, both Herzberg's and Maslow's theories try to put employees in neat categories of motivation. But, a motivator for one person may not be a motivator for a co-worker (Bowey, 1997). "People are motivated by different things. What drives one person to excel may have no effect at all on another's efforts. Unfortunately, managers tend to recognize people for the strengths they value in themselves" (Nelson, Good, Hill, 1997, p. 51). Therefore, the perfect theory would call for each employee having a reward system tailored to their specific needs. This, however, would be a "manager's nightmare" (Bowey, unpaginated).

CONCLUSION: RECOMMENDATIONS TO APPLY THE THEORIES PRACTICALLY

Managers, then, need to assess the personality, needs, and "valence" of each worker. "Valence" refers to the "motivating power of a specific outcome of behavior [which] varies from individual to individual" (Stoner, Freeman, Gilbert, 1995, p. 456). Valence can be demonstrated in a simple example: If a worker values money and prestige, a transfer to a higher-paying job in a new location would have high valence. However, if that worker valued friends and family, that transfer would have low valence. (Stoner, et al) By being aware of different personalities on staff, managers can assure they meet individual needs. Allowing the employees several options, and letting them choose for themselves, also accomplishes this goal.

Motivation expert Dr. Angela M. Bowey suggests that an eclectic approach be taken, combining the best of these theories (1997). The most important point to remember is that money is not the single motivator for an employee. Actually, ". . . it is not base compensation which drives the employee, but what that base compensation can satisfy in a higher level of needs" (Winning, 1996, unpaginated). Promotions, involvement on committees, more responsibility, and "prizes" (like a jacket with the company logo) are all motivators. Delegation in one of the most effective motivators, because it creates challenge and demonstrates trust (Josefowitz, 1983). The best system will combine both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Intrinsic rewards are those which are "felt" directly, and include accomplishment, increased self-esteem, and new skills; extrinsic rewards are provided by an outside "agent" and include bonuses, praise, and promotions (Stoner, et al, 1995). Employees value recognition most when it is initiated by the manager, and when it is immediate, sincere, specific, and positive (Nelson, et al, 1997). The key, then, is to link the effort to the reward, and the rest will take care of itself, because people work willingly for what they want and need.

In summary, the following steps will ensure effective motivation:

① "determine the rewards valued by each employee;

② "determine the performance you desire;

③ "make the performance level attainable;

④ "link rewards to performance;

⑤ "analyze what factors might counteract the effectiveness of the reward;

⑥ "make sure rewards are adequate" (Stoner, et al, 1995, p. 457-58).

Motivation is a benefit to all involved--to the employee, the manager, and the company. An employee who likes what he/she does, or at least feels that it matters, is an employee who will be happier and more satisfied, and thus will be a more valuable asset to the company.

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