

Business & Management: Is there any limit for motivation?

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ABSTRACT

Exploring emotional elements of Human Behavior is vital for enhancing the performance of the workforce. This may contribute in deciding steps to exploit the motivating factors as building block for work productivity. Managers at various levels needs to study the human behavior with respect to exploitation of professional skill towards achieving organizational goals. The scope of the study was limited to aviation armed forces where workforce encounters everyday new scenarios. Thus degree of motivational requirements varies individual to individual and situation to situation. Need is to use the relevant motivational tool for enrichment of competences and efficiency consolidation. Supervisors / Managers required to be proactive and determined to handle such developments and need to be cautious about any counter productivity.

Key Words: Motivation, Limit of Motivation, Stop Motivation

INTRODUCTION

1. Every organisation aims to achieve the new heights of productivity to meet the demand, thus ensures increase in gains or profits. Even if profits cannot be increased from existing levels, then no stone is left unturned to ensure the optimum productivity for sustaining existing profit atleast. It is usually professed that the responsibility for better performance rests with the workforces. But envisaged performance is function of interface among physical, financial and human resources. If profits are not optimum, it is primarily 'Lack of employee's motivation'. 'Lack of Knowledge and / or skill' may also be reason in a few cases but these may be bridged by subjective training programs.
2. Motivation is the process of creating the 'spark' in a person so that 'Fire' for doing work gets properly ignited. Also, it acts as catalyst to enhance the individual's working efficiency.
3. Objectivity of motivation may be achieved by dedicated and organized approach. Such process needs to be happy mix of all the elements which give impetus to workforce to perform. The methodology does not have fixed tools or procedure to operate. The tools required are specific to individual, place, environment, task, time etc. Primary objectives of employee motivation are as follows:
 - a. To create conducive working environment where people are eager to work with pride and enthusiasm.
 - b. To make workforce to work with a high sense of responsibility and personal satisfaction.
 - c. To enhance resourcefulness and loyalty towards company in workforce.
 - d. For improvement of discipline and confidence among the workforce for effective output to achieve a desire rate of production.
4. Peter Drucker, the legendary author was speaking to a group of senior level executives and he asked them to raise their hands if there was a lot of "dead wood" in their companies. Many in the audience raised their hands. He then responded, "Were the people dead wood when you interviewed them and decided to hire them or did they become dead wood later?" One may be able to perform up to stipulated standards provided they are motivated.
5. Motivating people is abstract and systematic activity for the management. We need to first to analyze the degree of necessity for application of Motivational tools on workforce. Two vital aspects of this application are to be critically studied are:-
 - a. Motivation of individual is required or not, &
 - b. Extent of application of Motivational process.
6. The criticality of the motivational process may be well appreciated for its effective applicability. Hence, limitations of the process need to be known. Consider the following cases.
 - a. Top management of an enterprise was struggling to enhance their profits. They made sincere efforts to optimize all elements of the productivity. Necessary measures were initiated to motivate the team to enhance the efficiency. Work force was regularly motivated as few slow movers were also part of the team. After all efforts performance of Mr. Alpha was not improving. He was interviewed and motivated by supervisors. But no improvement was observed.
 - b. In another case, management was struggling to motivate Mr. Beata to learn and perform. He was dragging in the system. He was well qualified but had inadequate 'hands on' experience. Best of motivators could not succeed.
 - c. Mr. Charlie was working from last 3 years with same zeal and enthusiasm. Management was too happy with his performance. Seldom efforts were made by the management to motivate him as the necessity was not felt.
7. Number of examples may be quoted where 'motivating workforce' was challenge for the management. In normal scenario also ensuring effectivity of motivational

applications is not easy as number of factors have bearing with performance of a worker.

8. Cause of Inefficiency. Various studies on the subject has inferred that the poor performance or lack of motivation of the workforce may be due to any one or combination of the following factors:
 - a. Ill-structured job / functioning
 - b. Unskilled Workforce
 - c. Uncertainty in the job-design
 - d. Lack of clarity with respect to 'What is required'
 - e. Non-functional under-currents among the worker and supervisors
 - f. Personal needs and other factors of workforce.
9. An employee is recruited only when he / she is found competent adequately for all intents and purposes. But over the period not performing up to the expected standards, missing deadlines, or just isn't "getting it". Such performance may severely affect the credibility of the management & the enterprise. Remedial measures are to be initiated at the earliest. If nothing else is left to do, then he / she may be shown 'Exit' gate.
10. The employees with various needs and expectations work in an organisation. Different employees have different beliefs, attitudes, values, backgrounds and thinking. Practically keeping track of all the attitudinal diversity in their workforce is tedious task. Thus, different ways of motivation are to be explored for the diverse workforce.
11. Conditional Motivation. The first step is -- to understand 'what motivates the employees'. What drives them to their peak performance will effectively help to develop strategy that both motivate and retain the best employees for the business. Various tools of motivation are applied. The target individuals are promised for additional increment, or any other pecuniary benefit if they perform as envisaged. This is termed as 'Conditional Motivation'. Concept of 'Conditional Motivation' is also found very effective across various business groups.

Motivating May be Waste

12. Fundamentally, a worker is excited and eager to work better every day. He / She wants to be the part of the productive team as it gives them recognition in the society as well as job satisfaction. But this excitement gets eclipsed with time due to unfavorable 'Hardware' and 'Software' factors of working environment. In majority of the cases, it is the work environment that demotivates a worker.
13. There are number of toxin factors which may impact the individual's mind. These may be in expressed or abstract, direct or indirect, external or internal, directly or remotely connected to the individual. It is not so, that only case of demotivation will have significant effect. It affects more when the consistently working environmental elements fail to meet the worker's expectations. Their desire gets suppressed, frustration or helplessness start penetrating their minds. This results in drop in their efficiency. Degree of inefficiency keeps on increasing if mentor / supervisor does not intervene. Avoidance or delay in redressal of these toxin factors adversely affects and starts damaging the mindset of workforce.

14. When work environments consistently fail to provide the direction, resources and respect employees require, their desire to achieve is suppressed or redirected. They experience frustration and helplessness. They become motivated to retain their jobs rather than to perform them in a way that delivers optimal value to the organization. This is a common organizational problem. Once workers come out of such a depressing work environment, their motivation to work gets triggered. Same needs to be achieved for sustenance of the productivity.
15. The common problem faced by number of employees at various levels is not their own motivation. It is work environment that demotivates the workforce. Identifying what motivates all the divergent members of a staff is complicated and confusing. Motivating a group is even harder than motivating an individual. What may motivate one employee can easily demotivate others.
16. When all sincere and systematic attempts to motivate a person could not succeed then it is the time for some unpopular decision for the management. Such individuals need to be fired.
17. While the decision to fire an employee is never welcomed by anyone due to its inherent ill-effects. Also, it is unethical and legally unacceptable to terminate an employee on basis of the Caste, creed, Sex, race, color, ethnicity, Religious faith etc. Nevertheless, there are some acceptable reasons by the business community and are treated as necessary for business growth. These are as appended below.
 - a. Indiscipline or immoral conduct
 - b. Poor performance at work or low productivity
 - c. Non-adherence of the organizational guidelines

Limitations of the Unpopular Actions

18. Premature, or action in haste may have counterproductive effects on the working environment. Process of firing any employee exposes the organization to potential risks ranging from motivational elements to productivity. While it is possible to replace employees, there can be a temporary decline in the organizational productivity. During course of man-management common risks observed are:
 - a. Loss of Trained, Skilled and Experienced Workforce. Rehiring and training a replacement to reach the desired level of performance needs both time and money.
 - b. Possibility of Productivity Loss. If key person leaves, effect is more on output.
 - c. Team De-motivation. It may result in distress at workplace. It may also trigger chain reaction of other workers reacting adversely.
 - d. Litigation risks. Whenever an employee is fired, he / she may seek legal advice for employment related discrimination.
 - e. May result in Violent Reaction. A victim may be violent at times or provoke other coworkers.
 - f. Not the least, humanely also a bread earner of the family will get penalized.
19. Study on Motivation Factors. A study was conducted to find out the effectivity of motivational tools, in a state

organisation dealing with provisioning of services. The salient inferences are appended below:

- a. Results are encouraging if systematic approach is followed while applying various motivational tools. Initially study the factors to be addressed and consistently applied in the approach.
- b. Notional or casual handling of the motivational process is wastage of efforts and resources.
- c. Respondents (98%) opined that the most effective tool to motivate workforce is positive handling the staff without prejudice and biases.
- d. Majority of the members (82%) of management was of the opinion that if successive motivational sessions with variety of dimensions of approach if target individual is not responding positive, then the individual needs to be fired.
- e. A group of respondents (63%) claimed that no additional effort is to be made to motivate an efficient worker, as he is self-motivated.
- f. Only 11% agreed that atleast three chances to be given to a poor performer before termination of his services. Others recommended up to two lapses may be ignored.

Recommendations

20. Motivation process is to be structured specific to organizational goals. Various factors like state policies, geographical and political environment etc. are to be also considered while implementation of the process. Hardline execution may be detrimental to the organisation reputation.
21. You need a practical and fair process to reduce the liability. Moreover, it's best to give employees plenty of time to improve, and give them the tools needed to get there. Whenever a manager or supervisor requests for a termination, HR should critically analyze the case and find if it is a performance related, discipline related or something else.
22. All necessary documentation is to be completed prior to terminating any employee. Should there be requirement legal counsel may be consulted for adherence of laid down policies specific to wage regulations etc.
23. In releasing employees, transparency and honesty is to be maintained. The process should not embrace any individual. In no case one should cover a performance-based termination as a 'layoff' or request the person to resign.

Conclusion

A motivated workforce means a highly productive staff, all of which will help to achieve business goals. And this should be a main objective in any organizational plan. All sincere efforts are to be made to motivate a worker for stipulated output from him. Exhaustion of application of all feasible motivational tool, the worker needs to be dealt firmly. In these cases, it's best-practice to follow a progressive discipline process – which generally includes a series of increasingly severe penalties for repeated offenses – if want to conduct performance-based terminations the right way.

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