Role Of Administrative Leadership In Influencing Employee Motivation

Shreekant Saraf, Kartiki Saraf

Abstract: Drive, engagement, and passion are more important than one's talent for professional success. This is how David Maister sees the idea of professionalism. In his article "Are You Having Fun Yet?" (Maister, 2007) the author practically worships the idea of importance of loving what you do instead of forcing yourself to do it. He also finds the difference between the job and career. This is, to David Maister's opinion, the starting point for changing tiresome and exhaustion from work into satisfaction. Nowadays, we live in the globalized world of information and technology where the competition is intense and there is an ever-growing pressure on organizations and workforces to deliver continuous improvement in products, systems and processes. In this constantly demanding world, it is really questionable whether a persistent employee motivation is possible at all, and whether one may ever enjoy what he is doing. More intriguing part is that employee motivation does not directly relate to any single aspect of the job viz. job type, income, position or industry. Highly paid lawyers and investment bankers seem to be no happier than dustmen or orderlies. As the job satisfaction numbers are in consistent decline during the past two decades (Gibbons, 2010), employers in today's world are facing a clear and present issue – what can the administrative leadership do to keep employees motivated, engaged and happy.

Index Terms: Motivation, Job Satisfaction, drive, employee engagement, career management, professional success, economic man.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Organizations and their employees have experienced enormous changes over the past half-century. There is more intense competition than has pertained previously because of globalization, demographic shifts, technological development and an acceleration in the rate of innovation and the diffusion of new ideas.(Ilinitch, D'Aveni& Lewin, 1996) Moreover, there is pressure on organizations and workforces to deliver continuous improvement in products, systems and processes (Parolini, 1999). As the job satisfaction numbers have been in consistent decline during the past two decades (Gibbons, 2010), it is imperative now than before to discuss the factors that keep employees motivated, engaged and happy.

2. ORGANIZATIONS AND HUMAN ASSETS

Today, human asset and agency theory have instigated major discourses that have influenced approaches to motivation, reward and performance management (Nigel & Geoffrey, 2005). To understand the main influencing factors that can improve the productivity and job satisfaction of an employee, it is necessary to examine the historical background for discoveries that were found years ago. It is also preferable to investigate the concepts and ideas of different researchers from different periods of time in history. This may eventually lead to better understand employee motivation today. Financial rewards for the application of this knowledge can often be high for both the individual and the organization. However, since the inceptions of these theories, employment continuity and opportunities for career progression available to the individual are generally considered to have deteriorated.

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Hiltrop postulated that it could be due to unilateral re-writing of the psychological contract by employers (Hiltrop, 1995) since Herzberg et al. (1959) formulated their two-factor theory that proposed that, beyond a minimum threshold, money does not motivate. After Herzberg's formulation of theory of human motivation, there has been a plethora of research in the fields of human motivation, job rewards and performance management. Most of the later research, however, was used to restore homo economics ('economic man') to an organizational default position in many contexts. When studies into motivation were undertaken from the mid-twentieth century, two views of human nature under laid the research. The one, which echoed Taylorism (Taylor, 1911), viewed people as basically lazy and work-shy, and held that motivating them is a matter of external stimulation. The other view, with its echoes of the Hawthorn (Carey,1967), findings, suggested that people are motivated to work well for their own sake, as well as for the social and monetary benefits they received, and that their motivation is internally stimulated. The frontrunners in the field of research of motivation were Maslow (1954), Herzberg et al. (1959), Vroom (1964), Alderfer (1972), McClelland (1961) and Locke et al. (1981). The research on employee motivation, generally can be divided into two sets of theories - content theories and process theories. Content theories, pioneered by Herzberg et al (1959), assumed a complex interaction between both internal and external factors, and explored the circumstances in which individuals respond to different types of internal and external stimuli. Process theories, the first exponent of which was Vroom (1964), discussed how factors internal to the person result in different behaviors.

3 OTHER RELATED STUDIES IN THE FIELD OF EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION

In early 70s, the researchers in the leadership field realized that certain aspects of leadership theory had implicit links to the external factors that influence motivation. It wasn't long before research in the field of leadership coincided and interwove with the research in motivation. In these studies, the researchers assessed group responses to management styles. Few examples of these researchers are McGregor (1960, 1987), Fiedler (1978), House (1971), and Hersey and Blanchard (1993). Collectively, these researches have

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combined with more recent rational economic theories such as Agency Theory (Fama& Jensen, 1983; Eisenhardt, 1989), Human Capital Theory (Gerhart, 1990; Barney, 1991), to for the foundations of contemporary reward and performance management systems. In parallel, another stream of studies emphasized the importance of team-work and personal empowerment (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Clutterbuck and Goldsmith, 1984) in the area of employee motivation. During the mid-1970s, a new generation of theorists tried to perceive motivation from the angle of behaviorism. These researchers proposed that human behavior was dynamic and could be influenced equally by an individual's internal world and by external factors. Bandura (1977) stated that employee needs are a function of personality and environment. Human behavior is a result of the cognitive processes in interaction with the environment. Individual's behavior is his reaction to the external social stimuli generated by his environment. Behavior can be influenced by appropriate goals and positive reinforcement. The workforce can be motivated if the organization provides such reinforcement through the offerings of appropriate rewards. Rotter (1975), in his theory of social learning, pointed out the relationship between behavior potential and human motivation. His theory was based on the precept that our behaviors are based on our conscious selection of behavioral alternatives; he further postulated that the behavioral choice we make is based on the expected rewards, its reinforcement value and the consequential freedom of movement that is experienced as a result.

4 DISCUSSION ON HERZBERG'S THEORY ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION

In 1959, Herzberg and his collaborators published "The Motivation to Work", which proposed two sets of factors that influence employee motivation – the hygiene factors that de-motivate when they are insufficient and inappropriate, and motivating factors (or motivators) that promote and sustain efforts. It provoked one of the most elongated contests in the area of management theory, mainly because of the contention that financial reward is just one very primitive factor that affects job satisfaction at the work place. Simply stated, Herzberg's results declared that even if insufficient financial rewards demotivate employees, beyond a certain threshold, money is but a hygiene factor and does not motivate the employee to promote and sustain efforts. The theory challenged the contemporary prevalent theoretical precept that job satisfaction is a function of pay, supervision, and prospects for promotion and it can be presented on a continuous scale. An improvement in one or more of these factors would result in increased job satisfaction, whilst deterioration would prompt increased job dissatisfaction. Herzberg and his team proposed that fourteen factors impart influence on job satisfaction in terms of frequency and duration of impact. In their study, they interviewed employees using a relatively new method of data collection, the critical incident analysis. When the factors were analyzed, it was observed that some factors affected dissatisfaction profoundly. Employees indicated strong dissatisfaction if they were unhappy with company policy and administration, technical and interpersonal supervision, financial reward and working conditions. What was found to be intriguing was that satisfaction with these variables did not correlate with increased levels of job satisfaction. And the other factors would contribute to increased satisfaction but would not affect the dissatisfaction. These sources of

satisfaction included a sense of achievement, recognition, the work itself, the opportunity to take responsibility and prospects for advancement. These observations gave rise to the "Herzberg's two factor theory'. The emergent two-factor model directly challenged the dominant paradigm that was based on the single scalar approach. Herzberg's theory was proven using the critical incident framework by many of his successors whose results were congruent with the original results. However, the researches that used surveys, supported the single scalar model of job satisfaction and their results contrasted Herzberg's theory. One of the most powerful critiques was offered by Vroom (1964), who claimed that ego played a role in describing the past events. Human ego would inherently be invoked when respondents were asked to attribute the sources of dissatisfaction in work, whilst same ego may attribute sources of satisfaction to personal achievement and capability. Hardin (1965) also challenged the critical incident analysis methodology on grounds of poor respondent recall. Opsahl and Dunnette (1966) found Herzberg's assertion that money was not likely to act as a satisfier (hygiene factor) mystifying. They asserted that there was no substantial proof that money can play a differential role in leading to job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction. They also asserted that Herzberg's data was inconsistent with his interpretation. Other opponents concluded that Herzberg's results were "method bound" (Hulin and Smith, 1965) and may give false positive results due to the inherent methodological flaw. Unfortunately, many of these critics had difficulty explaining why Herzberg's critical incident analysis method produced the results it did with such a consistency. Even in 1970s, the cynics continued to argue that Herzberg's results could be attributed to a range of factors including personality (Evans & McKee, 1970), and social desirability bias (Wall, 1972). In 1987, Herzberg reprinted his 1968 article in the Harvard Business Review, (Herzberg, 1987) and at the end, he offered a retrospective commentary in which he once again dismissed his critics and reasserted the distinction between movement and motivation. Historically, suggestion schemes have relied upon financial rewards to move employees to participate. The decline in their use alludes to the fact that suggestion schemes are being seen either to have failed or to be too costly in terms of time or money to operate. These results also suggest that the causes of this failure are not thoroughly understood. The problem may not lie with the concept of the suggestion scheme itself, but rather in the underlying managerial assumptions concerning motivation on the one hand, and management perceptions of employee creativity and attitudes to innovation on the other. In 1998, the advent of expectancy theory and equity theory tried to resurge the view that financial inducement is the critical motivator (Mabey et al., 1998). Duly, bureaucratic systems have been designed to ensure that rewards are consistent and reflect the value of the contribution. Typically, this has resulted in significant delays between the submission of ideas, and their adoptions. Such systems have also served to adversely affect the effectiveness of immediate line managers. A further problem has arisen because of the managerial time required to evaluate inadequately formulated proposals. From an employee's perspective, long delays can reinforce the view that neither they nor their ideas are valued, thus defeating the objective of the suggestion scheme. Only since the emergence of theories of Organizational learning (Pedler et al, 1991) and Knowledge Management (Schamer et al, 2000) has

creativity been seen as a cultural phenomenon associated with a social process, despite the fact that for decades, change management literature has emphasized that product and process innovations that are introduced without a sense of employee ownership and support, experience a difficult passage to maturity. Many suggestion schemes failed because of an absence of managerial creativity in developing processes that encourage employees to want to contribute ideas, and buy into the process of making them work Research into motivation is an ongoing phenomenon - for example, a brief search under "motivation" yields, in chronological order, among many others, Locke and Henne (1986); Hyland (1988); George and Brief (1996); Kanfer (1990, 1992); Locke (1991); D'Andrade (1992); Bagozzi et al (2003).

5 TAPPING HUMAN POTENTIAL

Ideas are inherently abstract and they exist only in the form of concepts. Each innovative idea that an employee possesses has a potential to become a source of opportunity both for the organization and for the individual. How can and should an organization facilitate the transfer of such a potential into workable knowledge and thereby into profitability? In other words, how can an organization facilitate and motivate its employees to bring up innovative ideas? Should the organization rely upon incentives to induce movement or should it use clearly defined policies and pathways that motivate the employees through career growth opportunities? Financial inducements necessitate a constant source of financial stimulii. This is sustainable in a context of upward market growth, but becomes difficult in a climate of cost-cutting when new ideas and perspectives may be imperative for that shear survival of the organization. Moreover, the studies in the efficacy of such incentive schemes have suggested that, statistically, the number of employees who were motivated because of incentives represent a comparatively small proportion of the population of innovation-contributors. In contrast, the skill and emotional intelligence of individual line managers to recognize and sustain opportunities for growth played a more important role. The extent to which they can employ these skills, however, would be mainly decided by the HR policies and practices associated with recognition, reward, performance management, development, redeployment and redundancy within which they are allowed to operate. High integration of HR with business strategy combined with a high degree of decentralized power, as Brewster and Larson (1992) suggest, can be the recipe for efficient elicitation of employee ideas into the main-stream business strategy. Along with the development of these motivational theories, leadership literature including the Ohio studies of 1945, Fiedler (1978), Blake and Mouton (1985), and Hersey and Blanchard (1993) also attested that motivation is influenced by the nature of the relationship between leader and follower. In that aspect, it would look obvious that leadership development should be the paramount priority in organizations that is trying to promote a culture of contribution. Motivational theories appear to oscillate from a rational economic ('economic man') perspective to a socio-psychological perspective to a human relations' view. However, there appears to be a predisposition in the managerial elite to favor the former, perhaps because it accords with their own worldview. There are a number of methodological limitations to the rational economic theory. These limitations stem from the inability to control the representativeness of sample population and with considerations associated with social desirability. In the contemporary context, Spender in his article "Human Capital and Agency Theory" (Spender, 2011) has tried to restore 'economic man' as an organizational default position in many industries. Both approaches are predicated on an assumption that the majority of employees would be moved to generate and contribute ideas by instrumental incentives founded upon money or gifts. Their dominance, however, can be attributed to a managerial preoccupation with expectancy and equity theory. Viewed from the perspective of ideas management, however, the induction approach is more conducive to fail than to succeed. These findings proved that intrinsic drivers outweigh financial inducement from motivational efficacy perspective. They also superseded in motivational efficiency with respect to the inherent competitive nature of a human being to be motivated by observing others benefiting from recognition and extrinsic rewards. For Herzberg, managerial recognition was a motivator. However, these results suggested that there were other intrinsic drivers that were even more efficient that managerial recognition. This can be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that organizations with shallower pyramids offer fewer prospects for promotion. However, in this study, it also got established that a poor supervisory relationship played a vital role in discouraging the employee's willingness to contribute ideas. This prompted the question as to whether the employee's need for recognition should be treated as a hygiene factor in the contemporary employment context rather than a motivator. Whilst financial inducements can move some employees to contribute ideas, the numbers involved are significantly less than those who are motivated through a desire to overcome frustration, and contribute to organizational success.

6 CONCLUSION

Employee motivation is a complex subject and it is mainly related to the drive, engagement, and passion of an employee. It is influenced not only by the internal factors, but it also affected by external factors such as financial incentives, his perceived organizational contribution, recognition and supervisory relationship. Keeping employees motivated is the primary responsibility of the administrative leadership of an organization. Administrators must take a proactive approach to positively influence employee motivation. Traditional methods of motivating employees are effective to a certain extent, however, with the advent of the modern organizational realities in the global context, these methods should be amended or replaced by a new and more sophisticated approach.Success of motivational strategies charted by an organization depends upon unambiguous understanding and appropriate execution undertaken by the administrative leadership. So long as the Taylorist (Taylor, 1911) attitude persists in the minds of administrative leadership, the organizational aspiration to create a highly committed culture is likely to prove intangible. In such scenarios, the paradigm shift that an organization can adopt, is to develop systems and processes that enable better employee-supervisor relationships and to promote a culture of contribution. This approach may enable the administrative leadership to create an organizational culture that intrinsically propagates deeper employee engagement which inherently can lead to a highly motivated and happier workforce.

DISCLAIMER

Any opinion expressed in this article is that of the authors and does not reflect any opinion or position of Avanade and/or Microsoft.

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