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Motivation for Total Quality Improvement

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Motivation for Total Quality Improvement

I   Introduction

Challenges in the work place are increasing as customers are
demanding better quality and global competition is providing
more options.   Private businesses must either improve
quality of products or go out of business.   In the same
manner, governments must either produce better services or
face privatization, the equivalent of private enterprise
going out of business.   The challenges for today's
workforce, both managers and front line personnel, is to
increase quality with limited resources.

The issue this paper addresses is motivation for employees
in the workplace.   "A motivated workforce is the foundation
on which any well-conceived program can produce superb
results." (Saba, 1993, p.43).   How do you motivate personnel
to respond to today's challenges by improving quality and
quantity of performance?   What makes some people work

harder, take on difficult tasks, and go the extra mile? Some people automatically take on additional responsibility, are accountable for work performed, and continuously improve themselves. Whereas others are content with being told what to do, when to do it, and do not offer any input unless specifically requested.

It is insufficient to hire talented individuals with great potential. The individuals must also be motivated to excel. My interest is in understanding the necessary issues and environment to encourage peak performance and commitment to a common goal. The group I'd like to motivate is not only fellow team members; but, I'd also like to motivate myself to excel, and motivate management to provide the necessary tools to encourage excellence.

The following sections define motivation, and present motivation theories and models. A discussion at the end of the paper relates this information to recommendations for motivation in the workplace.

II Background

Definition

What is motivation? According to Websters Dictionary a motive is "something (as a need or desire) that causes a person to act". All behaviors are motivated and are a response to an individual need. (Evans and Lindsay, 1993,

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p. 289, Wynn and Guditus, 1984, p. 173). Characteristics which define motivation are "factors which initiate and direct behavior, and those that determine the intensity and the persistence of that behavior." (Houston, 1985, p. 6). There is no lack of motivation in workers, however, the direction of motivation may be different from what is optimum for quality and production. The perception of the goals in the minds of the individuals performing the work may be different from the goals and needs of the organization (Wynn and Guditus, 1984, p. 173; Evans and Lindsay, 1993, p.290).
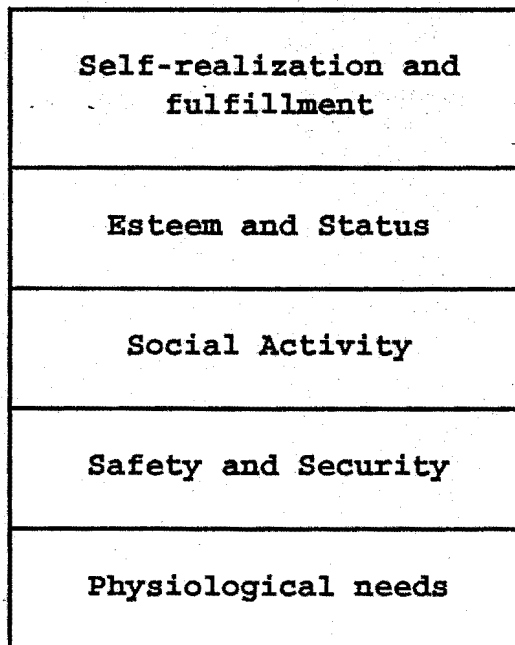
III Motivational Theories

Early Theories

Early motivational theories date back to the 1940's and 1950's. Abraham Maslow and Frederick Herzberg developed models that describe motivational factors at work. These models are simple concepts that explain why and how people work; but, do not address dynamic issues related to interaction of people and the system within which they work. (Evans and Lindsay, 1993, p. 290).

The principle of the Maslow and Herzberg models is very similar. There are basic needs that all workers have; and, until these needs are satisfied, esoteric concepts such as job satisfaction, the need to achieve, or the desire to advance, are meaningless, and therefore, not a source for

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motivation. (Evans and Lindsay, 1993, p. 291; Nash, 1985, p. 101; Saba, January 1993).

Maslow's model defines a Hierarchy of Needs, (see Figure 1), starting with physiological needs and safety/security needs. Until an individual is able to feed and clothe themselves, and is able to feel that he can count on having a job for the foreseeable future, he is not interested in status in the company or a self fulfilling position. (Evans and Lindsay, 1993, p. 291; Nash, 1985, p. 101; Saba, January 1993).

Self-realization and fulfillment
Esteem and Status
Social Activity
Safety and Security
Physiological needs

Figure 1;   Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Model
Source: Evans and Lindsay, 1993, p.291

Herzberg's model is known as a Motivation-Maintenance Model. The maintenance factors, referred to as dissatisfiers or hygiene factors, are important to everyone in the workplace. If these factors are not provided for the employee, there will be dissatisfaction. However, meeting the maintenance factors does not necessarily mean workers are motivated to excel. (Evans and Lindsay, 1993, p.290-292; Nash, 1985, p. 101; Saba, January 1993, p.43).

The Herzberg maintenance factors are (Saba, January 1993, p.43):

- company policy/administration
- supervision
- relationship with supervisor
- work conditions
- salary
- relationship with peers
- personal life
- relationship with subordinates
- status
- security

Not providing these maintenance factors may be roadblocks placed in front of workers by unknowing management which could result in problems. Workers may become cynical, frustrated, and dissatisfied.

Money is often used to motivate people, but it can actually demotivate workers. Short-term gains can be accomplished by monetary rewards, however, if the money does not continue to

increase, or is taken away, people become upset and frustrated. (Saba, January 1993, p.44).

Motivating factors include (Saba, January 1993, p.43):

- achievement
- recognition
- work itself
- responsibility
- advancement
- growth

Achievement is the highest motivator in the above list. Implementing the above factors will provide continued motivation for the workers and can result in continuous improvement if quality is incorporated into the work. (Saba, January 1993, p.44).

Current Theories and Models

As old as the Herzberg and Maslow theories are, the current theories also date back to the late 1960's. Current theories state that the Maslow and Herzberg models are too simple, and do not explain the dynamics of what is actually occurring in the workplace. (Evans and Lindsay, 1993, p.290-299).

Process models provide more details on how choices are made by workers, and how they respond to stimuli in the environment. The basic assumption is that performance is the result of positive reinforcement and that negative

reinforcement is to be avoided. Workers will not respond

positively, if given negative reinforcement and hostility

and resentment will result. (Evans, 1989, p. 292; Lynch,

1991, p.34).

Porter and Lawler Expectancy Model

Porter and Lawler developed a model to describe how

motivation to work occurs. See Figure 2.
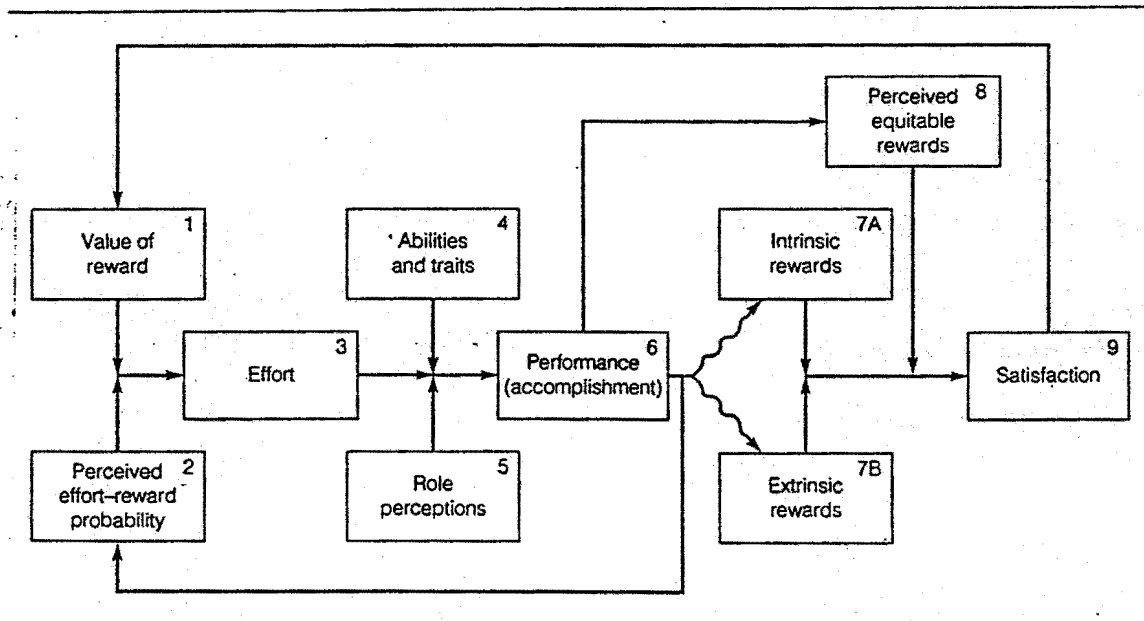
Figure 2; Porter and Lawler Expectancy Model

Evans, 1989, p. 294.

The above model is known as a contingency model describing

connections between variables that impact motivation. The

variables include similar rewards as in the simpler models

of Maslow and Herzberg. However, in the complex Porter

Lawler model, shown in Figure 2, the value of the reward is

taken into consideration along with the effort necessary to obtain the reward, and the probability of success in obtaining the reward.(Evans, 1989, p.294).

The interactive model shown in Figure 2 explains the relationship between effort, performance and satisfaction. Variables influencing effort include the reward value and the perception of the worker of the effort necessary to achieve the reward. Performance is impacted by the worker's abilities, traits, and perceptions of their role in the work. Rewards are the result of performance. Intrinsic rewards involve job satisfaction, and self esteem; while extrinsic rewards include monetary compensation, and non-monetary elements such as praise or recognition. Satisfaction is affected by the rewards provided along with the individual's perceived equity of the reward with the level of effort involved. (Evans, 1989, p.294).

Three major components of the Porter and Lawler model are:

- expectancy,
- instrumentality, and
- valence.

"Expectancy is the probability of reaching a goal." (Thamhain, 1992, p.357). Instrumentality is a function of accomplishment, the level of effort necessary to achieve performance. Abilities, traits, and perception of the role of the worker affect accomplishment. Valence defines the rewards provided. Management can motivate workers to

improve the quantity and quality of their performance by matching effort and accomplishment with expectancy. (Evans, 1989, p.294, Thamhain, 1992, p.357).

Expectations

The expectations that we have of ourselves and the expectations that others have for us are very important. Our beliefs in what we are capable of performing are more likely to provide us with what we wish to achieve than our actual abilities. In addition, we are able to not only impact our own behavior, but change the people around us such that other workers help us to achieve our goals. (Nash, 1985, p. 103).

Theory of Achievement, Power, Affiliation

Out of the basic needs of individuals, there are three needs which impact work (Nash, 1985, p.105):

- need for achievement
- need for power
- need for affiliation

The most successful persons in business have been motivated by a strong need to achieve. The need to achieve is not necessarily a need to achieve wealth; but, rather, is a striving for continuous improvement and excellence in the workplace. (Nash, 1985, p.107).

Power, on the other hand, involves a strong desire to control and influence other workers. If the need for power is greater than the need for achievement, then goals set by these workers may not be accomplished. (Nash, 1985, p.111).

A need for affiliation places great importance on working with friends who provide warmth and companionship. Workers who place a high value on affiliation select co-workers based on friendship rather than expertise. Humanistic Personnel Management emphasizes affiliation in the work place. Indeed, managers that operate on a need for affiliation have lower employee turnover rates than managers with needs for power. Friendship in the workplace provides a high degree of job satisfaction, but will not increase productivity. (Nash, 1985, p.111).

The work to be performed must be structured to fit technical requirements of the industry as well as meet the human needs of the workers. (Evans, 1989, p.297; Nash, 1985, p.132).

IV Motivational Techniques

Management and Administration

Motivation is not necessarily a function of workers not willing to work harder, but can be related to organizational and administrative problems. The organization must provide the appropriate environment for productive work (Wynn, 1984, p.173, Lynch, 1991, p.32). Problems encountered may be due

working hard. Rewards may be in the form of satisfying work, or monetary and non-monetary compensation (perhaps recognition and praise). (Harper and Harper, 1992, p.11).

Enlarging job descriptions and duties provides greater motivation for workers. Jobs become more interesting with increasing skills required, and decreasing supervision provides workers with greater freedom to perform work efficiently and productively. If the job requirements become too great, workers may feel overwhelmed resulting in stress related health problems. (Houston, 1985, p. 263).

Achievement

Similarly, high achievers require (Nash, 1985, p.114):

- autonomy
- control over their environment
- independence
- dislike of tradition
- optimism
- self-confidence
- specific feedback on performance

The need for achievement can be increased through training. Steps involved in achievement include setting goals, planning to achieve the goals, striving to meet the goals, and evaluating the successes and failures of implementing the goals. (Nash, 1985, p.116).

Setting goals is very important to improving productivity, particularly if the goals are difficult. Optimum issues for goal setting include:

- setting of quantitative goals
- setting of difficult goals
- sharing and communication of goals

Setting goals is so important that having any goal is better than none. (Nash, 1985, p.136). The better educated the employee, the more performance will be achieved by setting challenging goals. Goal clarity and feedback provides better performance for workers with less education. (Nash, 1985, p.152).

Employee Participation

Providing employee participation in management of the organization will increase productivity. Participation requires workers to provide input to managing the direction of the organization and the day-to-day work of the employees. The benefits of participation from workers include:

- greater understanding of entire processes in the organization and individual worker's contribution to the process
- added responsibility for each worker
- better worker perceptions and therefore changed behavior
- increased commonality between individuals
- increased commonality of organizational goals
- higher goals being set by employees for themselves and for the organization
- increased determination to meet the goals;

Participation also increases job satisfaction and motivation to meet the goals. (Wynn, 1984, p.114-131).

Compensation

Compensation as a motivator is controversial. Nash and Lynch both state that proper compensation programs will improve productivity and encourage appropriate behaviors. Rewards are an important means to provide encouragement and incentives for a desired behavior. Regardless of the reinforcement or feedback mechanism used, rewards must be given immediately in order to be effective. (Lynch, 1991, p.34).

V Discussion and Analysis

There is some truth to each theory and model presented in this paper. No single concept provides all the answers to the very complex issue of developing a motivated workforce.

The concepts however do allow me to understand some of the situations with which I have been associated and some which I see around me today. Three years ago I left a job in a consulting engineering firm to work in the public sector. Typically a position in the public sector is viewed as easy to perform with good benefits. I was told I would be unchallenged and bored. Even so, I took the position knowing that it would be unlike typical positions in government. The position was a new one, in a new field, in

other words there was no job description, and no track
record.   The position required development of a new program,
development of my own job description, hiring of 7 new
positions and development of their job descriptions.   In
short, the job was a real challenge.

As a consultant I normally worked 50 hour weeks,
occasionally 80 hour weeks, with a great deal of evening
work and weekend work.   In the public sector, while I work
just as hard as at consulting, I do not work more than 50
hours a week.   There are a lot of evening meetings, but I
rarely work weekends.

One of the reasons that I left the consulting firm was a
lack of reward for the hard work that I performed.   There
was little recognition, no work advancement, and low pay in
consideration for the effort that was expended.   This ties
in with the Porter and Lawler model which states the effort
expended must provide equitable rewards.   This also agrees
with all the theories and models which state there must be
some reward, if only recognition, of work well done.

As a consultant, one works on only a small piece of a large
puzzle.   A project is designed, bid, and built; and then,
you move onto the next one.   In the public sector, you have
to not only conceive of the project, arrange to have a
consultant design the project, but you also live with the

results and maintain the structure. This issue addresses
the need to be able to have work that provides meaning to
you and to society, and to be able to see how the work fits
into the entire process from start to finish. These
elements were described in job characterizations.

In the public sector I am receiving the recognition that I
need in order to provide me with job satisfaction and I am
also receiving better compensation for the work performed.
The reward structure is an important part of this position.

My job is not clearly defined, which provides me with great
freedom to accomplish the work that needs to be done. The
lack of definition is limited to lack of task definition.
The goals of the program are very clearly defined; but, what
is unclear is how to get there. For myself, this freedom to
implement the program as necessary is an ideal situation.
For others, such as the new technicians hired to the
program, the lack of definition is very frustrating. In
this situation, the problem is not lack of motivation, but
one of unclear direction and expectations.

VI Conclusions and Recommendations
Understanding motivation is a very complex issue which is
still being studied today. Throughout the theories and
models presented above, there are some common elements that

are necessary for workers to perform their work well. The work environment must provide:

- a clearly defined job or goal
- measurement to meet the goal
- feedback on progress made

Individuals need different environments to thrive and perform their work. As described in the theories on achievement, some persons need more power or ability to socialize. Management is responsible for providing an environment that allows people to perform effectively, but also needs to recognize that there will be different requirements with different individuals.

To improve performance for quality or quantity, all the elements discussed in this paper should be considered for incorporation into the work environment. Not all techniques will work for all people, or in all situations. The information presented in this paper will help managers as well as staff understand what is occurring in the workplace, and offers techniques to improve motivation for effective and quality performance.

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