

Employee Motivation and Morale

Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute

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MOTIVATION

Historically, we have thought about motivation in one way. For generations supervisors and managers believed the best motivator was money. From various management and leadership research conducted over the past 60 years, here is what we know about money as a motivator:

- It works best with low-skilled, “algorithmic” jobs;
- It may be effective as a short-term motivator;
- It is more likely to de-motivate employees rather than motivate them;
- It is not the most important aspect of a job for most employees.

The research yields the same results time after time, study after study. There are a few principles when correctly applied that have the power to unleash the efforts and achievements of your employees.

Motivation Truth:

You can never motivate anyone; people must motivate themselves!

The Role of Supervisors, Managers and Leaders:

The role of supervisors, managers and leaders is to create the kind of environment that will allow people to motivate themselves.

Two Types of Motivation:

EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

The source of the motivation is rewards and punishments. According to extrinsic motivation theories, people will work hard if we offer good performance appraisal ratings, incentives, prizes, salary increases, and promotional opportunities (i.e., rewards). They will also work hard to avoid the negatives, such as poor performance appraisal ratings, low increases, discipline, or dismissal (i.e., punishment).

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

The source of the motivation is the task itself. According to intrinsic motivation theories, people will work hard if the tasks they have to do are interesting and challenging. If so, they will get a sense of achievement and a feeling of accomplishment at work, which "turns them on."

CREATING AND MAINTAINING "INTRINSIC MOTIVATION"

The purpose of a supervisor, manager or leader is to create an environment in which people can become intrinsically motivated at work.

Intrinsic Motivation Principles:

PRINCIPLE #1:

Give Employees Interesting and Challenging Things to Do

PRINCIPLE #2:

Share Responsibility Where You Can

PRINCIPLE #3:

Set Challenging Goals

PRINCIPLE #4:

Collect Baseline Data and Give Feedback

PRINCIPLE #5:

Provide Support

PRINCIPLE #1: GIVE EMPLOYEES INTERESTING THINGS TO DO

The first motivation principle is at the heart of what "intrinsic motivation" is all about. If we want people to be "self motivated" at work, we must give them interesting things to do.

Five Factors That Make Work "Intrinsically" Motivating:

Skill Variety

The extent to which the job requires a variety of skills

Task Identity

The extent to which the work results in an identifiable whole

Task Significance

The extent to which the work has a significant impact on others

Autonomy

The extent to which the worker has discretion in doing the work

Feedback

The extent to which the worker gets feedback while doing the job

What Should the Supervisor/Manager/Leader Do?

- Determine ways employees can use different skills (Skill Variety)
- Assign responsibility for a "whole" (Task Identity)
- Reinforce the significance of what employees do (Task Significance)
- Allow employees to make important decisions (Autonomy)
- Provide feedback and develop feedback systems (Feedback)

HOW CAN YOU MAKE JOBS MORE INTERESTING?

Think of a job that you understand in your department or elsewhere in your organization. Write down one or more things you could do to make that job more intrinsically motivating.

Changes I Could Make in this Job:

1.

2.

3.

How these changes will affect the 5 critical factors:

If you could make the changes outlined above, what impact would these changes have on the five critical factors that make jobs intrinsically motivating?

Skill Variety

Task Identity

Task Significance

Autonomy

Feedback

PRINCIPLE #2: SHARE RESPONSIBILITY WHERE YOU CAN

Of the five factors that make work intrinsically motivating, one of the most important is autonomy.

Sharing Responsibility:

List below some of the things you now do as a manager or supervisor that you could allow an employee to do.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

RULE OF THUMB: Don't Dump!

PRINCIPLE #3: SET CHALLENGING GOALS

Under the right conditions, goals can be a powerful, and yet easily administered motivation tool.

Major Points:

- Goals are simple, but powerful motivators
- Under the right conditions, goals can make the work challenging and interesting (fun)!
- To be consistent with intrinsic motivation principles, goals should not be tied to external consequences
- Managers and leaders must set the direction, and then "back off" as their employees mature

Characteristics goals must have:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

PRINCIPLE #4: COLLECT BASELINE DATA AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Basic Ideas:

- Feedback by itself can be motivating
- Feedback is essential for improvement
- Feedback can cause teams to set high internal goals
- High achievers need feedback (Feedback is the "breakfast of champions")

Characteristics of Effective Feedback:

Specific

Timely

Descriptive

PRINCIPLE #5: PROVIDE SUPPORT

Major Points:

- Success motivates people to achieve more success
- People perform to their level of expectations
- All things being equal, someone with high self-esteem will perform better than someone with low self esteem

Ways of Providing Support

- Provide time to meet and talk
- Provide skills training
- Provide necessary tools and equipment
- Fight for resources to do the job
- Give encouragement and show enthusiasm

How to Create a Positive Climate

- Show interest
- Show concern
- Show understanding
- Give praise

Case Study: The Unhappy Administrative Assistant

Sue had worked as an administrative assistant in the City of Palmetto Junction water department for over seven years. By virtue of good performance she has been promoted through the ranks from administrative assistant I to senior administrative assistant III. In fact, the year before she won the Administrative Assistant of the Year Award given by the city manager's office and since then has displayed the silver cup on her desk. Besides being captain of the departmental bowling team, she has worked every year on the office sponsored charity drive.

On Monday morning Sue quietly announced to her boss that she was thinking about quitting. Quite shocked, he said "What do you mean quit? You just got a ten percent raise. We just moved into this beautiful new office building and you have a new computer on order. Sometimes I just don't understand what you girls want."

After work that day Sue met her friend Mary at Moonbucks and began talking about some changes that had been taking place at work.

Two weeks earlier the local newspaper had announced that the city manager was implementing a new reorganization plan which included consolidating some offices into a larger Public Works Department. Sue's office was one of them. The consolidation resulted in the creation of a pool of administrative assistants with a young business school graduate put in charge of the pool to distribute work among the administrative assistants. This eliminated working directly for any one individual exclusively.

When the changes were announced Sue had mentioned to her boss that she had taken a course in office supervision. In response he simply smiled and said, "Now you and I know that you wouldn't want responsibility for supervising the new administrative assistant pool."

Sue finished her latte and submitted her resignation the next day.

As a group discuss the case. Answer the following questions:

- 1. What motivates Sue?**
- 2. Why did Sue quit?**
- 3. How could this situation been handled differently to achieve a more positive outcome?**