

Employee motivation guidelines

By Rafikul Islam

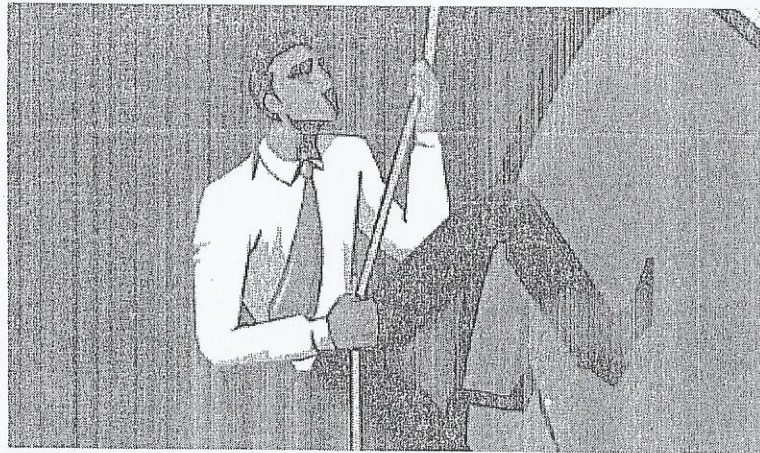
HOW can we motivate people to work? How can we create a situation in which people can achieve their personal goals while fulfilling the goals of the organisation?

There are three determinants of employee performance – skills, the working environment, and motivation. If an employee lacks skills, appropriate training can be employed; if there is an environmental problem, altering the environment to promote higher performance is the key. However, if motivation is the problem, the solution is usually more complex and challenging.

Motivation is what moves us from boredom to interest. It is like a steering wheel of a vehicle that directs our activities. It is a force that energises behaviour, gives direction to behaviour, and underlies the tendency to persist.

Individuals at different organisational levels with different earning power may have different motivational values. Hence what motivates individuals at one level of the organisation may not motivate those at another level.

The best source of information



regarding effective motivation is the employee himself/herself.

The present author with the help of one of his colleagues conducted a survey involving 505 middle-level Malaysian managers to know their motivators. We arranged them in the following in terms of their preference:

- High wage
- Good working condition
- Promotion
- Job security
- Interesting work
- Full appreciation of work done

- Providing opportunities to grow through learning new things
- Job responsibility
- Sensible company rules, regulations, procedures, and policies
- Management's help to solve personal problems

Based upon the survey results, we provide the following guidelines:

Competitive compensation package. To keep employees motivated and retaining them, employees' salary package must be competitive.

Bonuses and other fringe benefits are expected to be paid. Furthermore, employee promotion should be based upon fair and mutually agreed upon criteria.

Good working condition. Employees want to work in an environment that is productive, conducive, respectful and provides a sense of belonging. Employees must be asked to know the deficiencies in the working place. It is widely known that an effective suggestion system improves organisation's working condition and saves its resources from getting wasted.

Job security. Naturally, if the fear of losing the job hangs upon one's head constantly, he or she will not be motivated. Employee retrenchment should be the last resort for an organisation to stay competitive in the market.

Interesting work. According to motivation expert Herzberg, the most successful method (in US context) of motivating employees is to build challenge and opportunity for achievement into the job itself.

Employees are motivated by offering challenging tasks with clearly attainable objectives, timely feedback, and more responsibilities for innovative

assignments.

Appreciation. Employers should show appreciation and give employees credit for their work, as being appreciated through praise helps employees develop a positive attitude and meets their needs for self-esteem, self-actualisation, growth and achievement. Praise for a job well done is probably the most powerful yet least costly and most underused motivation tool.

Employee development. Employees prefer to work in environments that provide opportunities for advancement and personal development. Many companies provide some forms of training as part of their motivation programme. Job rotation and enrichment are also good options. Attention should be given to developing clear career path as part of human resource planning.

Whatever be the motivation programme, the manager needs to be the role model for his/her subordinates.

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