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Increasing the Motivation of Human Potential via Identifying with the Meaning of the Business Activity

ABSTRACT

Objective: The purpose of this article was to analyse the impact of the meaning of business activity on employees' motivation. In the article, the basic contexts between the terms within the studied issue were presented.

Methodology: Several methods and thought processes have been used in the article, such as analysis, synthesis, comparison, abstraction, or questionnaire survey. After analysing the theoretical background, questionnaires, interviews and observations were conducted and evaluated and their results led to the creation of specific recommendations. The research was carried out periodically in 2016 and subsequently in 2018.

Findings: The basic sense of the functioning of the company must be properly explained to the employees in order to increase the level of their motivation. Only if employees identify themselves with the tasks assigned, they will take responsibility for them and will be willing to work with enthusiasm and interest. Such behaviour will have an impact on improving the efficiency of work performance and individual processes, which will also increase the overall efficiency of the organization.

The first questionnaire survey revealed the high positive impact of several factors on increasing employee motivation. For example: interest in work; strive to be a good employee of the company; involvement in the workplace. The respondents of the second survey identified involvement in decision-making and participation in problem solving as important factors.

Value Added: The core value of this article is based on the recommended model. In addition to the model that illustrates the basic elements in employee identification with the business meaning, a mechanism has been created to achieve this goal. If this mechanism, consisting of six key points, is used to implement a project, it can be assumed that employees will understand the importance of specific tasks.

Recommendations: Motivation as an inner force of shifting a person – an employee – to achieve specific goals can be influenced by the motivation process. This process uses specific motivational tools to influence the behaviour of individuals. In line with this idea, the motivation of employees should be explored and encouraged. The main recommendation is to pay attention to identification of employees with the business meaning. In this case, employees will be involved in the decision-making, will be identified with the assigned tasks and will be willing to work with enthusiasm and interest.

Key words: meaning, identification, motivation, employees, effectiveness

JEL codes: M12 Personnel Management

1. Introduction

Employees are a key element of any organization. The overall success of the organization depends on their work because they must carry out their work conscientiously and effectively to ensure quality outputs. Outputs can be understood as specific products or services that meet customer needs. In

order for employees to be able to work in an efficient way and to make their work a true asset for the organization, they must be sufficiently motivated to *carry out work activities*.

Today, many global organizations are focusing on defining values not only in relation to customers (external environment), but especially in relation to the internal environment. Managers are aware of *the need to define the meaning of doing business and set values* that will be used in everyday work. However, it is not sufficient to define these elements, but it is essential that employees also understand their meaning.

That is why the aim of this article is to highlight the key impact of *the importance of business on employee motivation*. The proposed recommendations relate to increasing the motivation of human potential through identification with a sense of business.

2. Analysis of theory or current knowledge in discussed area

The theoretical background of the selected topic relates to the concepts of the motivation, increasing the motivation and strategic phenomena of the company.

2.1. Motivation

Motivation can be understood as a force that gives people the desire to make an effort and thus moves its actions in a certain direction. This idea can also be confirmed by the opinions of other authors who are just looking at what one is experiencing, desiring or opposing. Thus, motivation represents what one is trying to achieve – *his/her ideals and desires* (Pardel, 1977, p. 63).

The key to defining motivation is *the concept of process*. Many authors explain the motivation just as an intrapersonal process of initiating, directing, and maintaining the physical activities of man in the desired direction and

intensity. The state described in this way contains various *internal mechanisms*, including:

- Preference of one activity over another;
- The enthusiasm and consistency of the person's response;
- Transforming the patterns of action that leads to achieving goals (Donelly, Gibson, & Ivancevich, 1988, p. 368).

Motivation in terms of work orientation can be defined as the internal setting of the employee, thanks to which he/she perceives the work by *bringing pleasure, joy, pleasant feeling or fun* (Stýblo, Urban, & Vysokajová, 2005, p. 74).

Different acts in an employee's behaviour can be followed, such as: *how often they talk about job responsibilities/tasks; whether they are talking about those tasks that they like or like to do; when he highlights the positive and the negative side of his or her work*. If an employee often talks about the activities that interest him/her and discusses them in a positive sense, this kind of task can be attributed to the employee's high willingness. They will be given them voluntarily, regardless of the time needed to process them (Stýblo, Urban, & Vysokajová, 2005, p. 74).

A prerequisite for working with motivation is exploring the reasons for human behaviour and experiencing the situations, because the reasons for the behaviour are based on the inside of the person (*attitudes, motives, feelings, values, motives*). It can therefore be concluded that if a particular situation is in line with the current motives of a person, *his/her behaviour cannot be separated from the motivation* (Lutz von Rosenstiel, 2014, pp. 5–6).

Since behaviour is closely related to the motivation, current motivation of a person may be understood as a result of the interaction of the reasons for his/her reactions and set goals. Employee is influenced by various opportunities, requirements and other factors of the external environment (Steiger, 2012, p. 135).

Figure 1. Motivation as a link between personality and situation

Source: Steiger, 2012, p. 135.

2.2. Increasing the motivation

Investigating the behaviour of employees (as mentioned above) is necessary to influence their internal motivation. In connection with this fact, motivating can be defined as “external influence on the inner motivational structure of man” (Blažek, 2014, p. 162; Brown, 2007, p. 8). In the course of the motivating process, the manager offers the employee what will satisfy his/her interests to achieve the goal (Plamínek, 2010, p. 11). Managers can therefore affect the motivation of using various suggestions while their main aim is to achieve a pre-desired goal.

To motivate employees effectively, it is necessary to identify those factors that are of great value to employees. The company must then focus on ensuring their availability (Lauby, 2005, p. 5). The goal of motivating can also be *to achieve a change in the behaviour* of an individual or group. It is necessary to consider the diverse effects of one and the same factor on different employees. The same factor will cause different responses for different employees because each person has a unique personality. In addition to the influence of personality, there can also be identified the effect of changing the situation on a particular individual, depending on which effect the selected factor is more or less effective (ineffective).

2.3. Strategic phenomena of the company

The strategic thinking/direction of the organization is embedded in its *mission, vision and philosophy*. The mission, as the main purpose of functioning of the company, should include a link to the relationship with other entities, stakeholders, as well as the long-term recognized values of the organization. Ideals and priorities that relate to the anticipated future state of the company can be named vision. In defining a vision, managers should not only think about where the company will be in the future, but also take into account the real situation, the current capabilities of the employees and the possibilities of the company. The vision is often referred to as the *biggest motivator*. The reason is its strength *to direct all employees in one direction* (Jakubíková, 2008, pp. 20–21).

Strategic management represent the long-term view of the organization. This term can be characterized as science. This term can be characterized as science, which includes the activities, formulation, implementation and evaluation of a series of decisions within all functional parts of the organization. These decisions result in achieving the goals (Fotr et al., 2012, p. 26).

The organization's long-term activities should be developed through a *strategy*. According to the classical view, this should also capture the progress of specific operations and the distribution of resources needed to meet the set goals. A new perspective not only points to the fulfilment of objectives, but also to meeting the needs of employees, groups and the entire organization. The strategy must be flexible enough to respond to changes in the internal (changes in resources and capabilities) and external (changes in the business environment) environment (Dedouchová, 2001, p. 1).

The goal as a term is defined as the future state that the organization wants to reach within a certain time frame. If it is a long-term horizon, the talk is about *strategic goals*. Objectives can be expressed quantitatively (can be described by measurable factors and are time-limited) or qualitative (the company's attempt to become more innovative; to become a stronger competitor; the pursuit of quality success) (Abraham, 2012, p. 224).

Figure 2. Strategy and its links to surrounding elements

Source: Dedouchová, 2001, p. 2.

Each of the functional areas of the organization should have its own strategy tailored to the actual needs of the area. In terms of building and enhancing motivation, *strategy of human potential* can be pointed to. Like every partial strategy, the human potential strategy should be based on a comprehensive company strategy. We can discuss it as a long-term *concept of managing and leading people in an organization* (Šikýř, 2016, p. 29).

It is also necessary to focus on *specific personnel activities* when developing a human potential strategy. Every strategy for a particular process of human potential management and development (such as motivation strategy) is understood as a complex system consisting of sub-goals and activities. Responsible employees of the given area take care of their effective fulfilment. Only if the sub-goals are met can the company achieve even the strategic ones.

In mentioned above intentions, *the understanding of the functioning of the organization* is based on the visualization of the entire operational culture and interrelationships (Monappa & Saiyadain, 2006, p. 157). In order to help employees, adapt and adopt new conditions and changes, it is essential *to build interpersonal relationships and to emphasize the basic attitudes and values* that are characteristic of the organization and should prevail in the working environment.

3. Methods

In recent years, we have conducted several surveys on employee motivation. First was performed in 2016 and second in 2018.

3.1. First survey (2016)

The first questionnaire survey was realized in 2016 on a sample of 700 employees. The number of responses received was 432, which is a representative sample at a 99% confidence interval and a 1% error rate.

One of the questions concerned the level of employee motivation and was investigated with respect to a particular area of motivation. The results show that the most common answers which concerned the possibility of a high and average level of motivation (Table 1). These responses outweighed the very high level, showing room for improvement and an opportunity to increase employee motivation in the areas. Subsequently, the reasons for this state were examined.

Table 1. The level of employee motivation

No.	Motivation area	Motivation level	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Quality of a work	High	236	54.63%
2.	Acquiring skills, knowledge and endorsement	Average	183	42.36%
3.	Desire for improvement	Average	249	57.64%

** (scale: very low; low; average; high; very high)*

Source: own study.

Respondents should indicate how they motivate themselves in these areas. Among the most motivating employees mentioned are:

- Satisfaction with well done work;
- Interest in a job;

- The pursuit of best performance;
- Engaging in the workplace;
- Trying to be a good employee for the company.

Further inquiries led to find the following: Employees tried to motivate themselves through engagement, interest in participation, and wanted to benefit the organization. *Their efforts, however, did not meet the response of the company.* The managers failed to identify motivators that have a high positive impact on employees. Therefore, the organization failed to explain the meaning of its functioning to employees. The company's values were not translated into everyday work and the future direction was not explained to the employees.

3.2. Second survey (2018)

The second questionnaire survey was conducted in 2018, applied in a medium-sized organization focused on educational activities, on a sample of 11 employees, with 11 responses. This can also be considered as a representative sample at a confidence interval of 99% and a tolerable error of 1% as in the first survey. The results were subsequently supported by additional methods – several interviews and observations were also conducted.

The 2018 research results support and confirm the importance of motivational factors identified in 2016. The first questionnaire survey revealed a high positive impact, for example, on factors: interest in work; trying to be a good employee for the company; engaging in the workplace. The second survey respondents included following important factors: involvement in decision-making and participation in problem-solving (Table 2).

Table 2. The importance of motivational factors

No.	Important motivational factors	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Joining the decision making process	3	9	81.82%
2.	Being a part of solving the problem	3	10	90.91%

* (scale 1 - 4; 1 = least important; 4 = most important)

Source: own study.

As already mentioned, the questionnaire research was supplemented by interviews and observations. Through additional methods, information was gathered about other motivators that link the findings so far. *Well done work, positive feedback from customers and the sense of work of the whole organization* have been identified as essential motivators.

3.3. Results and proposed model

Based on the study of existing knowledge and evaluation of own research, a specific process that can help to explain the basic meaning of the company's acting to employees in a way that increases the level of motivation, can be designed (Figure 3).

The very concept of the process most often represents an ordered sequence of activities or activities ensuring the transformation of inputs into outputs while using resources (Fišer, 2014, p. 55). The first step in the proposed process is to create the mission, vision and philosophy of the company. Neither of these terms can be defined separately. The necessary precondition for their correct setting is *mutual interconnection and coordination of their direction. Only in this way is it possible to define the meaning of the work of the whole organization.*

Consequently, it is necessary to set goals (both long-term and short-term ones), in direct relation to the defined meaning, when compliance will be respected. Partial objectives are milestones that need to be achieved in a certain time frame. Since they were built on the basis of the overall sense of functioning of company, it can be said that they also conceal the specific meaning of sub-activities. However, it is necessary to draw attention to this, to define it precisely, and to interpret it to working groups or individual employees.

The above steps were processed through a graphical model (Figure 3), which also contains two continuously running sets of activities. The first is the gradual *communication and interpretation* of individual steps by employees. Only if there is sufficient explanation of each part of the process, will the employees 'receive it for themselves' and the process will be successful. The second set of activities concerns the continuous *alignment and harmonization* of model elements. Not only the elements among themselves, but also the elements inside each element must be aligned.

Figure 3. Identification process with the sense of business

Source: own study.

Identifying with defined elements is a key part of the model. Employees will not be motivated when the mission, vision, philosophy, goals or purpose is properly set, but only if they understand and believe in their success and future direction.

5. Conclusion

Presented results revealed a problem area in the organizations surveyed, which concerns not only *the definition of the specific meaning of the organization as a whole, but also the meaning of the sub-activities*. Many organizations have a defined mission, vision and philosophy as fundamental aspects in which their meaning is embedded. However, it disappears when performing specific projects, assignments or tasks.

It is essential that the core business sense is sufficiently communicated to the employee. They are the key to ensuring quality work and producing results effectively, which is why they must understand why they are doing the job. Furthermore, it would be beneficial if companies were also focused on *specifying the expectations of a particular project and determining roles* in the implementation of individual activities.

The materialization of philosophy through its written record gives companies a huge advantage in that each employee has access to it, can study it and identify with it better. That is why it also acts as a strong motivator that leads employees to achieve goals by applying values and principles.

However, employees need to know what their organization's philosophy is and how it can be used. This understanding is the basis of the main idea of philosophy, which is precisely how to use the established values and principles of work so that the employees themselves can identify with them and are able to meet the needs of their customers (Hriníková, 2018, p. 68).

In accordance with presented model, since identifying with the sense of doing business, a mechanism to achieve it can be also developed. It may consist of six key points:

- 1) Specification of project requirements (activity);
- 2) Specification of project expectations;
- 3) Build a project team;
- 4) Defining project objectives;
- 5) Division of project tasks;
- 6) Determining roles in a project team.

If this mechanism is used to implement the project, it can be assumed that employees will understand the meaning of specific tasks. As they engage in decision-making and participate in setting each of the recommended points (*specification of requirements, expectations; goal-setting; division of tasks and roles, etc.*), they will be identified with the tasks assigned, take responsibility for them and be willing to work with enthusiasm and interest. A prerequisite for the successful use of the proposed model and implementation mechanism is their adaptation to the specific specifics of the organization as well as the working group.

Identifying the meaning of the organization is based on those motivating factors that are important for employees and positively influence their motivation and therefore their behaviour in the organization. These manifestations will have an impact on improving the efficiency of work performance and processes, leading to an increase in overall organizational efficiency.

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