

MOTIVATION – A WAY TO RETAIN KEY EMPLOYEES

Jana URDZIKOVÁ, Jozef KISS

Abstract

The subject of this study is employee motivation. In the introduction it describes the importance and essence of motivation and points out the human factor as the most valuable resource of organisations. The second part contains knowledge about the application of motivation in Slovak organisations.

Key words

motivation, employees, motivational factors

Introduction

The need to point out the application of employee motivation at the time of economic crisis may appear to be negligible. However, the opposite is true. It is precisely the period of transformation and reorganisation in organisations when it is essential to retain key people and especially those who are critically important from the point of view of the organisation, but also many others who ensure its functioning and the satisfaction of its customers. Employee motivation is not easy, especially if there is very strong competition in the field of the organisation's business activities, concerning not only products but employees too.

Motivated workforce – the most valuable resource of organisations

People are a common and essential element of any organisation and constitute its human resources, who, using their creative powers and work skills, create new values reflected in the prosperity and competitiveness of the organisation.

At the same time, however, they constitute a force that - due to improper management - may cause an adverse economic situation in the organisation, thus contributing to its possible demise. Therefore, the area of human resource management in organisations is a vital point. One personnel action is motivation of employees, which plays an important and irreplaceable

Jana Urdziková, MSc. Eng., Jozef Kiss, Bc. – Institute of Industrial Engineering, Management and Quality, Faculty of Materials Science and Technology in Trnava, Slovak University of Technology Bratislava, Paulínska 16, 917 24 Trnava, Slovak Republic, e- mail: jana.urdzikova@stuba.sk

role, as it directly influences the conduct of people in the organisation. It is an incentive to encourage employees to work, and thus to achieve their individual goals. The aim of any organisation is to have motivated employees, because such employees work hard, and their diligence is focused on important goals.

Motivation means a certain state of internal activation in the individual which gives rise to a chain reaction based on their needs and satisfaction. Individual motives appear as internal motives and activities pursuing the achievement of the desired objective. They can be seen as possible causes of behaviour. People of various professions, occupations and ages might have a large number of different motives. These are interrelated and create some form of hierarchy. Figure 1 below shows the basic scheme of motivation.

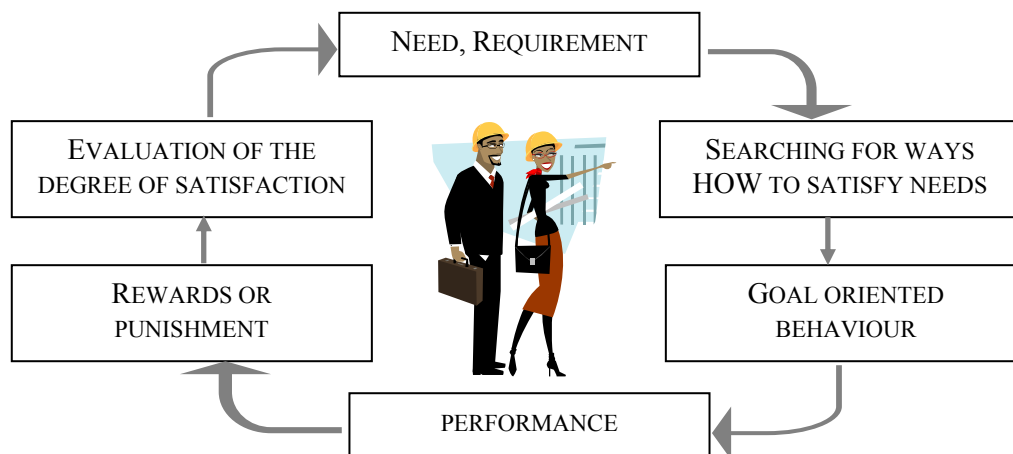


Fig. 1. The basic scheme of motivation [1]

Work motivation can be achieved in two ways:

1. *by self-motivation* – people motivate themselves by seeking and carrying out work, which is satisfying for them, or they think it will be satisfying for them,
2. *by management's efforts and stimulation* – through various financial and non-financial forms, they purposefully encourage employees to improve working performance.

Motivation strategy is based on the overall strategy of the organisation and is a part of personnel strategy. An elaborate strategy should clearly support the achievement of the organisation's objectives while enabling employees to achieve their personal goals. Decisions on the selection of motivational factors and means of motivation are an essential stage in the process of creating a motivation strategy.

Motivation at work is immediately reflected in the performance of the employee. Using appropriate incentives, employees doing the same tasks work harder and are higher performing compared to those who are not motivated properly.

According to Hekelová [2], “to encourage high quality work means to purposefully influence people so that it evokes desirable work behaviour”. The right motivation is a means of improving employees' relationships to their work activities, organization, and collaborators, and it is also a way of increasing responsibility for the quality of their work.

The current state of the application of motivation in Slovak organisations

A picture of how motivation is applied in Slovak organizations is given by the results of a survey carried out at MTF STU (Faculty of Material Sciences and Technology of Slovak University of Technology), Institute of Industrial Engineering, Management and Quality.

It was based on Herzberg's two factor theory characterised by two main groups of factors affecting work motivation (motivators and hygiene or maintenance factors) that created the basis for the acquisition of empirical data for the thesis.

Motivators (success, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, personal growth, etc.) represent a long-term need following psychological growth and have a high level of motivation leading to satisfaction. They are usually connected to the content of the work carried out. They enable psychological stimulation and allow the individual's self-realisation. They are necessary for his/her growth. On the other hand, hygiene factors are mostly related to work environment, which is an indispensable part of the process of motivation.

The survey was conducted in Slovak organisations having a developed quality management system certified according to international ISO standards and, as to their size (the number of their employees), they rank among the categories of small and medium organisations. Summarising the results of a questionnaire survey completed with the knowledge gained through conversations and expert talks, we can draw conclusions which are references for improving employee motivation for business subjects:

- create a separate motivational programme for selected groups or selected individuals in accordance with their career plans;
- focus not only on material or financial incentives, but put much more emphasis on the intangible, psychological motivation as acknowledgment for the work done, the possibility of career advancement and the like;
- put emphasis on the proper arrangement of the work environment and micro-climatic conditions in the workplace;
- use an appropriate personnel management style for each task;
- use an appropriate form of compensation for employees, as it is very important what form of remuneration the organization applies when rewarding their employees;
- provide employee benefits as motivational stimuli.

The survey results prove the importance of applying motivation since - when taking a comprehensive look at its results - we can state that most organisations prefer hygiene factors (salary, management style, work environment) to real motivators (recognition, career development, responsibility, etc.) in order to reduce dissatisfaction of employees. Improvement in the understanding of the principles of motivation – especially as to the provision of employee benefits and in the use of public praise – can be observed in all organisations.

Many organisations, however, believe that the greatest motivator to improve the employee's performance is financial motivation. It can be concluded that organisations do not use real motivators adequately, but prefer to use hygiene factors. Hygiene factors alone do not motivate employees as sufficiently as organisations think. They only reduce dissatisfaction, which may sooner or later arise again. The key is to find a suitable level of using real motivators combined with hygiene factors. Organisations must therefore concentrate

on understanding the needs of employees and their motivation, focusing on the aims and objectives of the organization as well as paying attention to their participation in continuing improvement. In this way the most effective process of motivation will occur.

Scientific contribution

This article's contribution is the demonstration of the current application of motivational factors in Slovak organisations and suggestions for improvement of employee motivation in business practices. Improvement of motivation increases the efficiency of organisational goal fulfilment. Therefore, it is very important to consider the choice of suitable motivators and not only hygiene factors, which are a necessary part of the motivation process. If the organisations choose suitable hygiene factors and join internal factor motivators with them they will create optimal premises for real working satisfaction and continuous output improvement.

People are critical factors of success, therefore we must support the initiative to give a chance for creativity and, of course, reward their results. Everyone in the organisation must have a sense of their personal importance, be sure that their share in the results of the organisation is essential, and thus become a part of it. Taking this fact into account, motivation of employees must become an integral part of the tasks imposed by top management of organisations as far as personnel management is concerned.

Conclusion

The subject of work motivation is serious, rather complex, and highly relevant nowadays. For a long time, theoreticians have been trying to understand its essence and create an adequate theory of it. On the other hand managers require a methodology and procedures for motivating employees as the success of organisations lies in the workforce and its satisfaction. In any case, great attention has been paid to motivation for decades, whereas a broad, but still open knowledge base has come to the surface.

The need to point out the application of motivation is given mainly by the fact that the success of an organisation depends primarily on the satisfaction of its employees. Increasing the productivity of human resources is a challenging task and its solution lies in modern ways of people management. Purposeful formation, development and implementation of human resources require a systemically outlined human resource management on the basis of the goals and objectives of the organisation. Motivation to improve work performance is to a large extent a part of satisfaction itself.

References:

- [1] FUCHSOVÁ, Katarina - KRAVČÁKOVÁ, Gabriela: *Management of motivation working*. Bratislava : IRIS, 2004. ISBN 80-89018-66-1
- [2] HEKELOVÁ, Edita: The meaning and form of motivation for effective management quality. In *Quality*, 2001, number 2, p. 34-36.
- [3] SOVIAR, Juraj: *Motivate people is never easy*. [online] [cited 13.3.2009] <http://hnonline.sk/kariera/c1-33178480-motivovat-ludi-nie-je-nikdy-jednoduche>

- [4] ŠEFČÍKOVÁ, Miriam: Managerial competence in the management of intangible assets of the enterprise. In: *Business, finance and quality in enterprises - determinants of competitiveness VI.: Proceedings of international scientific conferences*. Prague: Czech Agriculture University in Prague, 2008, p. 218-220. ISBN 978-80-213-1774-1
- [5] ŠUJANOVÁ, Jana - TÓTH, Lorant: Study: knowledge management in the medium enterprise. In: *CO-MAT-TECH 2005: Proceedings/ International Scientific Conference*, 13th. Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo STU, 2005, p. 1223-1225. ISBN 80-227-2286-3
- [6] MOLNÁROVÁ, Dagmar – JACINTO, Domingos: Corporate image and identity as sources of competitiveness of the enterprise in gaining customers. In *Modern approaches to the management of the enterprise*. Bratislava: GC-TECH, 2004, p. 278 - 281. ISBN 80-960189-0-7
- [7] VAŇOVÁ, Jaromíra: Career management as a tool to maintain the best employees in the organization. In: *Research Papers Faculty of Materials Science and Technology Slovak University of Technology in Trnava*. Bratislava: STU, 2006, p. 127. ISSN 1336-1589
- [8] VIDOVÁ, Helena - BENEŠ, Zdenek: The management analysis of decision process in the slough situations. In: *Research Papers Faculty of Materials Science and Technology Slovak University of Technology in Trnava*. Bratislava: STU, 2001, p. 155-160. ISBN 80-227-1852-4

Reviewers:

Miloš Čambál, Assoc. Professor, PhD. – Institute of Industrial Engineering, Management and Quality, Faculty of Materials Science and Technology in Trnava, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Paulínska 16, 917 24 Trnava

Jaroslav Rašner, Assoc. Professor, PhD. – Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology, Technical University in Zvolen, T. G. Masaryk 2117/24, Zvolen

