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HARNESSING MOTIVATION: A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION AND PRODUCTIVITY

Abstract:

A strategic approach to employee motivation focuses on combining intrinsic and extrinsic drivers to boost engagement and productivity. By offering meaningful work, recognising achievements, encouraging team building, and promoting work-life balance, organisations can enhance employee satisfaction, drive performance, and ultimately boost productivity. This integrated approach ensures lasting engagement and drives productivity across all levels of the organisation.

Keywords:

Harnessing, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, employee productivity.

INTRODUCTION

It is essential to note that, as human resource practitioners, the most effective way to increase employee productivity is to motivate them. An increase in employee productivity is directly related to organisational growth and development. Changes in employee productivity within an organisation can be attributed to several factors, such as the availability of resources, communication quality, leadership effectiveness, and the overall company culture. Motivation plays a crucial role in organisational development and growth. It is important to highlight that in an organisation, every individual is motivated by some different factors, which may include beliefs, values, gender, personality traits, and life experiences. As a human resource professional, gaining a deep understanding of motivation dynamics can offer valuable insights for enhancing employee productivity to its fullest potential.

Motivation refers to the "psychological forces that influence the direction of an individual's effort as well as their persistence when facing challenges" (Kanfer, R., 1990). [1] It encompasses arousing, persisting, sustaining, and directing desirable behavior. When we tap into this reservoir of energy, motivation provides individuals with the drive and focus necessary to interact with their surroundings in a flexible, adaptive, and problem-solving manner (Reeve, 2015). [2]

Generally, motivation serves as an essential tool that enhances organisational performance and productivity. Most organisations where employees are not motivated often experience situations such as low performance and productivity, high labour turnover, and reduced profitability. In order to curb these problems, motivational strategies must be adopted.

Motivation can be classified into intrinsic and extrinsic types. Intrinsic motivation comes from within the employee, driven by the enjoyment of challenges and the work itself, without needing external rewards. In contrast, extrinsic motivation is fueled by external incentives like money, praise, or recognition. To maximize employee performance, organizations should adopt strategies that incorporate both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational approaches.

Aim of Article:

1. Effective strategies for motivating employees.
2. Impact of employee motivation on employee performance and productivity.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR MOTIVATING EMPLOYEES

When motivating employees in an organisation, it is paramount to adopt key strategies that will maximise the effectiveness of the motivational plan. As human resource managers, creating and applying effective strategies to encourage your team can significantly enhance morale and productivity throughout the organization. Below are some of the strategies we can adopt.

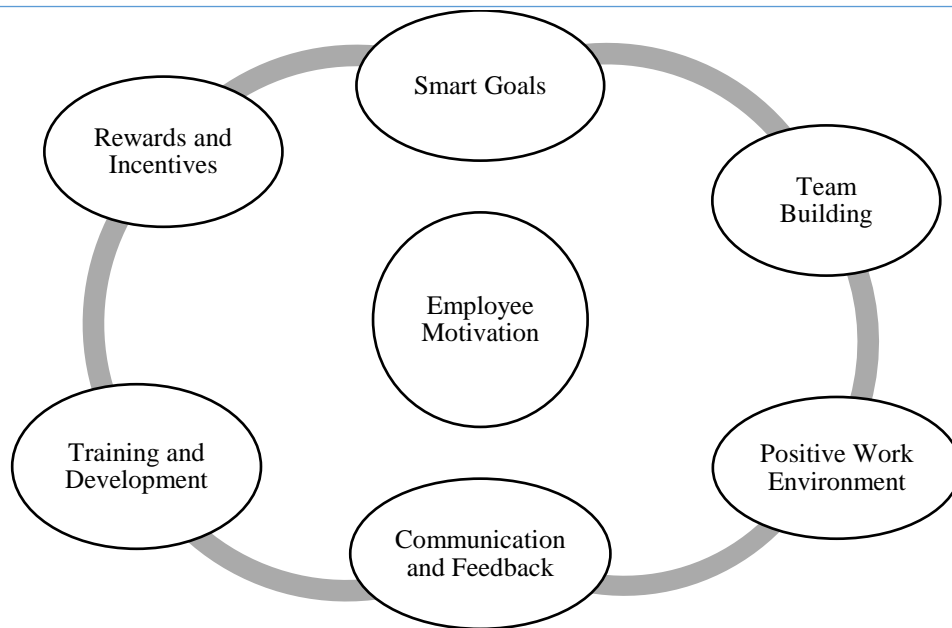


Figure 1 – Strategies for motivating employees (Source: prepared by authors)

Goal Setting: Organisations should develop SMART (specific, measurable, actionable, relevant, and time-bound) goals for employees to work towards. When establishing team-based SMART goals, clarify each employee's role in the objectives so they understand how they can contribute and what is expected of them. Employees excel when their goals are specific, measurable, and directly connected to the company's overall objectives. If the goals are broad, it should be broken down into small ones. By setting smaller goals, team members can clearly recognise their progress and see that their efforts have real significance. Engage them in the goal-setting process, ensuring that the goals are specific and realistic, and allowing employees to achieve them and know when they have. This way, you can celebrate each milestone reached.

Positive Work Environment and Culture: A positive work environment and a strong company culture can enhance motivation. When employees feel valued, respected, and part of a supportive team, they are more inclined to be motivated to contribute to the organisation's success. Utilising positive language in all communications and meetings with your team can boost their motivation. It fosters a sense of value and appreciation among employees, which in turn enhances their morale and productivity.

Rewards and Incentives: Rewards are essential for employee motivation. External rewards, like bonuses and promotions, can boost motivation, but internal rewards such as feelings of accomplishment, personal growth, and job satisfaction tend to have a more profound and lasting effect. Whenever possible, customise rewards to align with each employee's preferences. This personalised approach demonstrates that you value employees as individuals and appreciate their unique contributions.

Communication and Feedback: Effective communication and consistent feedback are vital for fostering trust, collaboration, and engagement among employees. Frequent, meaningful feedback helps employees grow by offering direction and boosting confidence. Positive feedback highlights their achievements, while constructive criticism should guide improvement. Regular feedback allows individuals to create improvement strategies. By providing praise and constructive criticism, employees feel valued and respected.

Team Building: The collaborative aspect of teamwork boosts motivation by prompting each employee to complete their tasks promptly and efficiently, leading to higher quality output. A strong desire not to disappoint their teammates serves as a powerful motivator for many employees. Most people experience a heightened sense of camaraderie and fulfilment when working as part of a team. Participating in enjoyable and rewarding team-building activities can enhance employee morale, leading to greater job satisfaction and motivation.

IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION ON PRODUCTIVITY AND ORGANISATIONAL GROWTH

Motivated employees tend to be more loyal to their organisation, deriving a sense of value and social recognition from their roles. When employees perform at their best, overall workflow efficiency improves, leading to higher-quality output. Over time, this enables employees to handle more responsibilities without sacrificing work quality. Motivated teams also experience greater job satisfaction, reducing turnover and related costs. Furthermore, they provide better customer service, improving the company's reputation and customer loyalty. Ultimately, employee motivation drives sustained growth, profitability, and long-term success. (Fig. 2)

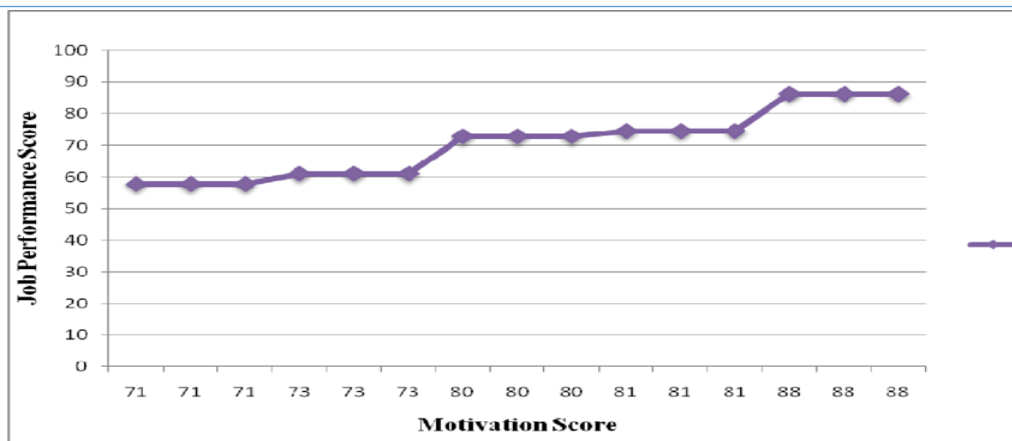


Figure 2 – A graph showing the linear relationship between job performance and motivation in expatriate construction companies. (Source [3])

Gallup's State of the Global Workplace: 2022 Report reveals that disengaged employees contribute to a \$7.8 trillion loss in global productivity, equivalent to 11% of the world's GDP. Additionally, employee disengagement significantly affects retention, with U.S. businesses losing \$1 trillion annually due to voluntary turnover. [4] Challenges in retaining top talent include dissatisfaction with pay, poor leadership, and limited career advancement, lack of recognition, unclear job roles, inadequate autonomy, and toxic work environments

Motivated employees excel at time management, task prioritisation, and meeting deadlines, leading to increased efficiency and higher output. Their motivation also contributes to a positive workplace culture, boosting collaboration, teamwork, and morale, further enhancing overall productivity.

Nectar surveyed 1,800 full-time U.S. employees about employee recognition and company culture in two separate surveys - one in November 2022 and the second in December 2023. Here is a summary of the key findings from these critical questions. (Fig. 3)

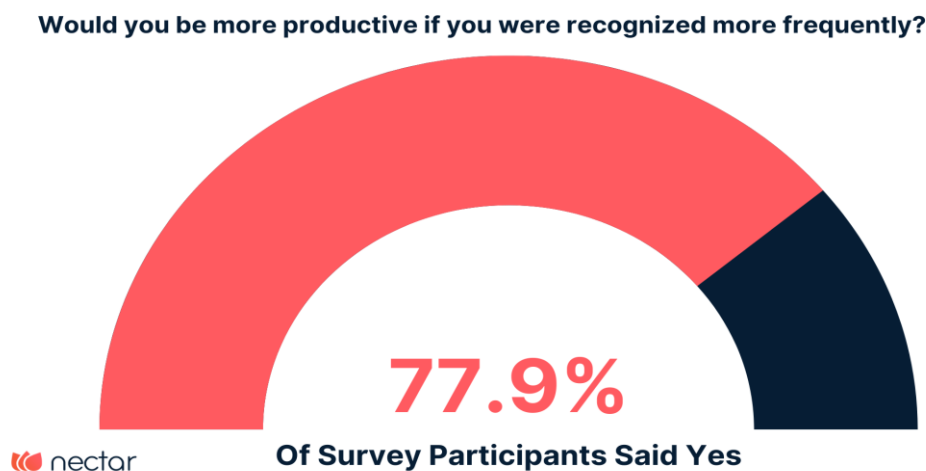


Figure 3 – Representation of response from survey. (Source: [5])

CONCLUSION

Fostering motivation through a strategic approach is essential for boosting employee productivity and engagement. By aligning individual aspirations with organisational goals, providing opportunities for development and cultivating a supportive and trustworthy culture, companies can fully tap into the potential of their employees. Motivated staff are more engaged, efficient, and dedicated, which drives sustained success and enhances the company's competitive advantage in the industry.

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