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What is the most effective way to motivate staff?

Motivation is the force that moves individuals take certain actions as a response to different needs (Pearce, 2007). In the literature there is a wide range of theories researching the matter. The Content Theories of Motivation is a great example, attempting to elaborate the factors which contribute towards people`s motivation whilst at work, by recognising their needs, goals and interest accomplishing those goals (50 Minutes, 2016). One of those theories is Maslow`s hierarchy of needs theory (Mullins, 2016). Through this theory, Maslow offered different levels of arrangements of needs- from psychological needs on the first level, to the self- actualisation on the last one. Although, Maslow`s hierarchy represented a great steppingstone towards understanding what people get motivated by, today there is a broader angle analysing this.

According to an article written by Murray (2021), the key in motivating the staff lays in successful communication established between the managers, or the leaders and their staff. The article suggests that for the employees to feel stimulated and engaged, there is an essence of persuasive communication, which is mandatory to be built as a result of highly developed listening skills, which would assist the managers to listen and understand their employees. In other words, managers must learn how to listen first to their employees, and take in consideration their opinions, suggestions, feelings and needs, when bringing crucial business` decisions. Murray, also suggests that in order for the managers to foster a great communication with their employees, they must be straightforward, share openly all the information with their staff, provide them with feedback regardless the outcome of the staff`s effort over the business being positive or negative, be always present for their staff and their needs etc. By a great communication, both parties would be able to communicate their needs and make sure they are satisfied. This would inspire greater productivity, engagement and dedication on behalf of the staff.

An article published by BMJ (2009) analyses the ways used by the employee- owned organisations, in order to motivate their employees, opposite of the more business-oriented organisations such as NHS. The article takes an example of the John Lewis- alike

business models, suggesting that its success lays in the fact that their employees feel greater engagement at work, providing better service, by simply affording the employees the possibility to participate in the decision- making processes on questions such as how the business should be run etc. The article suggests that the approach of allowing the employees to take active participation in the decisions- making processes, motivates the staff to an extent where they demonstrate higher performance and productivity rate, there is a lower staff turnover, higher work attendance, better innovation, and commitment. This would offer the staff to also deliver better service and overall contribution within the business.

Besides great communication and better employees` involvement in business- decisions-making processes, another way of motivating the staff would be through providing the employees with a psychological safety at work. Research conducted by Filimonau, V. and Corradini, S. (2020), puts in the focus of its work the so called `zero- hours contracts` which has gained especially popularity in the catering industry in the UK right after Brexit. The research findings were based on informal interviews conducted in the working premises of the interviewees, with 18 interview participants in total among which there were both employees and managers. The research suggests that the biggest demotivation for the interviewed employees was the uncertainty around their income security, the stability of their life brought by the last- minute- hours changes etc. This has been supported by another research done by Ugurlyu, O. Y. and Ayas, S. (2016), implying that the psychological safety of the staff is associated with affective commitment, further suggesting that it plays a massive role as a bridge between the psychological safety the employees feel at work and their voice at work, which could contribute towards the productivity of the staff and their increased engagement while delivering their working duties. Once the employees would feel `safe` and the uncertainty in their life which could come from the income and hours worry would be taken out of the horizon, the employees could focus their energy towards being more creative and assist the business.

All the above-mentioned ways of motivating staff, inspire another way of motivation which is fostering a healthy, enjoyable workplace environment. Chris Pearce (2007) suggests that this could be achieved by positioning clear goals, matching people skills, providing

employees with constant feedback, managing failure greatly by rather than punishing the staff, emphasising the trust in them it is had, encouraging them to try again and better themselves etc. A healthy workplace environment is also crucial when there is a need of cherishing a positive outcome in especially more stress- oriented working environments (Heryati, 2020). Naturally, employees would feel stimulated and care for the company they work for if they in reciprocity feel cared for and looked after. By the staff being the most expensive asset of every business, putting effort into staff`s wellness would only inspire greater teamwork, increase productivity, inspire the staff to invest their intelligence and knowledge towards the business`s goals, take fewer sick days etc.

In conclusion, nowadays the staff does not get motivated only with their wages and the provided opportunity to work, as it was idea in the last century. As different theories suggest, employees go to work for answering to other needs as well such as self-actualisation. While there are different ways to motivate the employees, among the most successful approaches would be fostering a healthy, enjoyable workforce environment, where the employees would be provided with a psychological safety manifested to a secure pay, permanent working contracts, incentives etc, where they would further be invited in the decision bringing processes of the company, and there would be an impeccable communication established between the managers and the employees, how the employees would feel heard, listened to and reacted accordingly (Square, 2020). Motivated employees would mean higher productivity, better creativity and higher organisation`s success overall.

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