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Human resource management in crisis: motivation of employees

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Abstract

Human Resource Management (HRM) is the function within an organization that focuses on recruitment of, management of, and providing direction for the people who work in the organization. Human Resource Management is the organizational function that deals with issues related to people such as compensation, hiring, performance management, organization development, safety, wellness, benefits, employee motivation, communication, administration, and training. Human Resource Management is also a strategic and comprehensive approach to managing people and the workplace culture and environment. Effective HRM enables employees to contribute effectively and productively to the overall company direction and the accomplishment of the organization's goals and objectives.

Keywords: Human Resource Management, HRM, motivation, crisis, management, development;

1. Introduction

Motivating employees is a never-ending challenge for managers. The basic principle of employee motivation is simple: people do what gets them what they want. You could ask your employees what they want but the old saying: ‘‘actions speak louder than words’’ is a better guide, so you need to be a keen observer.

The key to success in motivating employees is to avoid the ‘‘one size fits all’’ mentality. Beware of assuming that all employees are motivated by the same things that drive you. If an employee is just coming to work and putting in minimum effort before dashing home, then it is not this person's fault. It may be that nothing you have offered really excites this person. It's imperative to avoid a blame approach. You need to think harder about what it will take to engage this person.

2. Human Resource Management: motivation

Employee motivation is the level of energy, commitment, and creativity that a company's workers apply to their jobs. In the increasingly competitive business environment of recent years, finding ways to motivate employees has become a pressing concern for many managers. In fact, a number of different theories and methods of employee motivation have emerged, ranging from monetary incentives to increased involvement and empowerment. Employee motivation can sometimes be particularly problematic for small businesses, where the owner often has spent so many years building a company that he/she finds it difficult to delegate meaningful responsibilities to others. But entrepreneurs should be mindful of such pitfalls, for the effects of low employee

motivation on small businesses can be devastating. Some of the problems associated with unmotivated workers include complacency, declining morale, and widespread discouragement. If allowed to continue, these problems can reduce productivity, earnings, and competitiveness in a small business. [2]

On the other hand, small businesses can also provide an ideal atmosphere for fostering employee motivation, because employees are able to see the results of their contributions in a more immediate way than in large firms. Besides increasing productivity and competitiveness, a highly motivated work force can allow a small business owner to relinquish day-to-day, operational control and instead concentrate on long-term strategies to grow the business. "Workers really do want to be inspired about their work, and when they are, they work better, smarter, and harder," business coach Don Maruska told Entrepreneur.

Moreover, a business that institutes effective ways – whether tangible (such as a financial bonus) or intangible (say, a plum assignment for an upcoming project) – of rewarding employees for good work can be an invaluable tool in employee retention. "People enjoy working, and tend to thrive in organizations that create positive work environments," one business researcher told HR Focus. "[They thrive in] environments where they can make a difference, and where most people in the organization are competent and pulling together to move the company forward. Appropriately structured reward and recognition programs are important, but not exclusive, components in this mix."

One approach to employee motivation has been to view "add-ins" to an individual's job as the primary factors in improving performance. Endless mixes of employee benefits—such as health care, life insurance, profit sharing, employee stock ownership plans, exercise facilities, subsidized meal plans, child care availability, company cars, and more—have been used by companies in their efforts to maintain happy employees in the belief that happy employees are motivated employees.

Many modern theorists, however, propose that the motivation an employee feels toward his or her job has less to do with material rewards than with the design of the job itself. Studies as far back as 1950 have shown that highly segmented and simplified jobs resulted in lower employee morale and output. Other consequences of low employee motivation include absenteeism and high turnover, both of which are very costly for any company. As a result, "job enlargement" initiatives began to crop up in major companies in the 1950s.

On the academic front, Turner and Lawrence suggested that there are three basic characteristics of a "motivating" job:

1. It must allow a worker to feel personally responsible for a meaningful portion of the work accomplished. An employee must feel ownership of and connection with the work he or she performs. Even in team situations, a successful effort will foster an awareness in an individual that his or her contributions were important in accomplishing the group's tasks.
2. It must provide outcomes which have intrinsic meaning to the individual. Effective work that does not lead a worker to feel that his or her efforts matter will not be maintained. The outcome of an employee's work must have value to himself or herself and to others in the organization.
3. It must provide the employee with feedback about his or her accomplishments. A constructive, believable critique of the work performed is crucial to a worker's motivation to improve.

While terminology changes, the tenets of employee motivation remain relatively unchanged from findings over half a century ago. Today's buzzwords include "empowerment," "quality circles," and "teamwork." All of these terms demonstrate the three characteristics of motivating jobs set forth in the theory of Turner and Lawrence. Empowerment gives autonomy and allows an employee to have ownership of ideas and accomplishments, whether acting alone or in teams. Quality circles and the increasing occurrence of teams in today's work environments give

employees opportunities to reinforce the importance of the work accomplished by members as well as receive feedback on the efficacy of that work. [3]

In small businesses, which may lack the resources to enact formal employee motivation programs, managers can nonetheless accomplish the same basic principles. In order to help employees feel like their jobs are meaningful and that their contributions are valuable to the company, the small business owner needs to communicate the company's purpose to employees. This communication should take the form of words as well as actions. In addition, the small business owner should set high standards for employees, but also remain supportive of their efforts when goals cannot be reached. It may also be helpful to allow employees as much autonomy and flexibility as possible in how their jobs are performed. Creativity will be encouraged if honest mistakes are corrected but not punished. Finally, the small business owner should take steps to incorporate the vision of employees for the company with his or her own vision. This will motivate employees to contribute to the small business's goals, as well as help prevent stagnation in its direction and purpose. [1]

Conclusion

Human Resource Management is moving away from traditional personnel, administration, and transactional roles, which are increasingly outsourced. HRM is now expected to add value to the strategic utilization of employees and that employee programs impact the business in measurable ways. The new role of HRM involves strategic direction and HRM metrics and measurements to demonstrate value. Motivated employees are needed in our rapidly changing workplaces. Motivated employees help organizations survive. Motivated employees are more productive. To be effective, managers need to understand what motivates employees within the context of the roles they perform. Of all the functions a manager performs, motivating employees is arguably the most complex.

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