

Why my people are not motivated to work? 1

Part One



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PSYCHOLOGISTS define motivation as, “An inner state (either a need or desire) that energizes, directs, and keeps us moving toward our goals, objectives, and needs”. Motivators are forces acting either on or within a person to initiate behaviour. Being motivated has been an essential component in the success process of any kind. Being motivated is to be determined, focused, committed, and full of passion to achieve your desired goals.

We often hear managers and executives mention that their employees are not motivated to work. The question here, and it is the most important one, is, why are they not motivated to work?

The answer to this question might hurt the ego of some executives, managers, and CEOs. If there is lack of motivation at work, the fault is with the managers and the organization’s rules, system and practices, not the employees. In short, the lack of motivation is one of the results of poor management.

The lack of motivation at work occurs if the management failed to create proper decisions in five areas. The lack of motivation at work occurs if there is a wrong selection; putting the most beautiful woman at the front office just because she is pretty, putting an IT graduate, who loves his/her work, as a salesperson, or putting the best trainer as the training manager. How can we expect people to have passion and to be motivated to perform something they do not like!

The lack of motivation at work occurs when the goals of the organization are not clear and the employee does not know and understand the 'what and why' about these goals. In many of my seminars, I asked the participants about their organization's goals. The answers always varied; I will get the same answer from two or three of them, or five different answers from five of them and the rest of them do not know.

How can we ask people to be motivated to achieve something, which they do not know? We cannot hit a target that we cannot see.

It occurs when the organization's performance appraisal system is improper and done by the wrong people. Most of the time and for one reason or another, the majority of the employees believe that even if they give maximum effort, it will not be recognized in their performance appraisal. Thus, for the employee, it does not really matter if he/she are highly motivated or not.

Another reason for the lack of motivation at work is the organization's reward system. Most of the time, the majority of the employees believe that even if they give maximum effort, it will not lead to any reward. I came across many managers and executives who believe that there is no need for rewards since the employee is getting his pay. These managers and executives forgot or maybe they do not know that the paycheck (the salary) is not a reward.

If the management is unable to shape the employee's perception of the appraisal and the reward system, that is the fifth reason for the lack of motivation at work. All of the above are the management plans, decisions, actions, and behaviour, not the subordinates. Again, the poor management creates the lack of motivation at work.

However, it is not the lack of knowledge in marketing, finance, economy and or any of the subjects, which the MBA holders study, that cause poor management. It is the lack of people skills, psychology, and the knowledge of human nature.

In this regard, Peter Drucker said, "Managing people implies consideration of the human being as having personalities, citizenship, and control over performance level. Thus, they require motivation, participation, satisfaction, incentives and rewards, leadership, and status and function. It is the managers and the managers alone that can satisfy these requirements".

The taskforce of any organization must have passion and internal motivators to help the organization to succeed. That necessitates external motivators, psychology, honing, check-up, training and development, recognition, status and involvement.

They are not just employees; they are people, who require more attention than any other resource. Hence, when dealing with people, as Dale Carnegie said, "You are not dealing with creatures of logic, but with creatures of emotions; creatures bristling with prejudice, and motivated by pride and vanity".

To be able to understand how to keep their subordinates motivated to work, managers should study human nature, psychology and all of the motivation theories; Maslow, Herzberg, Adam, Dweck, Elliot, Drucker, McClelland, Mayo, Likert, Taylor, Argyris, Douglas McGregor, and the others.

Recent studies have shown that in order to improve performance and build a motivational working environment in this challenging knowledge-based economy and society, the organization must focus more on training its managers, not the workers.

I like what Bill Gates said in this regard. He said, "Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids working together and motivating them, the teacher is the most important."

Managers, executives and supervisors must keep their subordinates motivated. However, some people may say that no matter how they try, their subordinates will not be motivated for long. To this, I answer them as what Ziglar said. He said, "Motivation does not last long, so does bathing. That is why we need it daily".

Now, why motivation does not last long?

If you – as a manager or a person in charge – had studied the motivation theories, especially Maslow, you will know the answer. His theory – in brief – suggests that the needs that already satisfied cannot provide motivation.

People work for many reasons. Thus, increasing the pay, or giving a reward or benefits might increase the individual's level of motivation but not for a long time. Only the internal motivators will drive the person to a long-term high motivation level.

There are other reasons for people to work - and they are at the same time motivation triggers; power, recognition, fame, achievements, status and involvement.