

Workplace Satisfaction: What should an employee do

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Abstract

Motivation of an employee, to a major extent, has always been ascribed to the role of an employer, as if only employer gets benefits from employee motivation. Regrettably, little has been said about what an employee gets out of it. A motivated employee is personally, socially, professionally and psychologically very much content and this weighs more than what an employer finds in his motivation. So an employee should be more concerned about what keeps him happy at work rather than what employer has to offer. This article talks about the employee's aspect of motivation at work. The article breaks off from the traditional discussion of Employer-driven-motivation and focuses on Employee-driven-motivation. The discussion in this article finds its base from the fact that a "Happier employee begets the happier culture" and an employee should himself work towards the attainment of job satisfaction. We suggest some common principles to be followed at work and then move on to specific personality types and see how they can make their work worth doing.

Keywords: Motivation, Employee, Job Satisfaction, Work

Introduction

Being effective at work is the function of how much you love to do that work, which in turn depends on motivation you derive out of doing it. We speak of two dimensions here that actually make someone stick to their work and get happiness, not just living out of it. The first one being External, something that you don't have any control on. These are actually the activities that your employer indulges in according to their assessment of creating motivated workforce. I would include both of the Fredrick Herzberg's Motivational and Hygiene factors under this dimension. It is to be noted here that these factors may or may not lead to one's job satisfaction or happiness (as we call it), depending on what the policies of your employer are. Take for example, one of the Herzberg's Hygiene factors - the Technical Supervision. An employee may or may not be happy with the level of supervision given or available, which depends on his expectations and job knowledge. All other factors which are called "Motivators" - achievement, recognition, responsibility etc - bear the same fate of being subjective. We speak of the second dimension now, the one that we are more concerned about - the internal one. This dimension is rather more important than the first one, in a way that it forms the base of what effect the external factors will have on an employee. Some people are just better subordinates, they don't want to be held accountable for anything and avoid being given responsibilities. In fact if given responsibility, their productivity goes down. This could best be exemplified by world cricket teams. The best batsman often doesn't remain so when given the option to lead the team as captain. This is because responsibility has some bearing on psychology, which in turn has detrimental effect on performance. So the "responsibility" - one of the motivating factors, as many motivation gurus call it, is not motivating for an employee who is averse to it. The onus lies on you, to do what keeps you happy irrespective of what employer has to offer.

The employers would do what is affordable for them to motivate their workforce. It is ultimately workforce motivation

that brings them laurels. However, what is done is not usually done for an employee in particular, it is done for masses - I mean for you and your colleagues. So I suggest you act a bit selfish here and see what works for you. Because if something works for you and this becomes the reason of you loving your job, it ultimately works for employer as well. People would like to work in USA than in Germany because more number of workers in USA (53%) love their jobs than Germany (34%). Two in every ten Americans love their jobs so much that they would do it for free (Adecco)

Objective

The workplace motivation is very popular concept and enough attention has been given to it through various well accepted theories, studies and books. However the world seems to have an unconditional drift towards the employer aspect of the motivation, i.e. what should an organization do for workforce motivation. This article is one of the few of its kind drifting away from the conventional discussion and focusing on what's the role of an employee in his workplace motivation. The objective of the reading is to bring forth some common principles one should adhere to, that will keep him happy & motivated at work. This article proposes that all the policies adopted by an organization for workforce motivation would have fruits only if employees are receptive to them. An employee should try to create a fit between these policies and his expectations. Consequently, the organization that's more fitting would be the one where he would be more happy and motivated.

Literature Review

- Brian Tracy (2015) ^[10], author of numerous career books including Find Your Balance Point, recommends taking advice from Japanese decluttering expert Marie Kondo's run-away bestseller, The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up. "She says put everything in a heap, and pick each item up, and ask 'does this item spark joy in me?'" You can do this with your job too. "Instead of being passive and doing

what someone else told you to do, actively look at your work and ask what would I really like to do?" Most people have the misconception that in order to be successful, they have to sacrifice their well-being now, with the idea that success will lead to happiness later (Emma, 2016) ^[9, 8]. An employee should not have fear of being unaccepted. When you have an Idea, believe in it and let the world know it. When you think it is gold, it probably is. Sticks may motivate people in the short run, but if employees worry that their jobs are on the line, research finds that they become less engaged and performance suffers (Laura, 2015) ^[11]. A study led by Spanish psychologists has concluded that the feeling that one is going to lose their job worsens satisfaction levels in other areas of life, such as family, health, financial circumstances and the work-free time balance (FECYT, 2012) ^[4]. It's good to socialize at work and make friends. In fact, if you did not meet your spouse in college, chances are you met him or her at work. The evolution of quality relationships is very normal and an important part of a healthy workplace (GALLUP, 1999) ^[5]. An employee should analyze his personality type and choose the organization of his type to work with. An Introvert likes calm and opportunity to think and this is what makes him happy. Work for a smaller company with fewer than 100 people. (You're 25% more likely to be happy at work in a small company than one with more than 1,000 people (Rachel, 2012) ^[3].

Success is your well being

Most of us sacrifice our well being now with the notion that success will bring happiness later. But let me just add to your happiness by saying that research shows, "a person taking care of his well being is more resilient to stress, is more innovative and creative and able to think out of box". Such people tend to have better relationships with everyone around. In a quest for success, one should not avoid his well being now. Being kind to yourself, taking time off, building positive relationships – are few ways how you prioritize yourself and be averse to stress at work.

Happiness is not being always excited

Excitement has to do with your physique and it reflects from your expressions. Happiness is about your inner self, it is being content. High intensity emotions, whether positive or negative, will burn you out and you run out of energy. Remember that eight-hour shift – sometimes extended - demands the energy be utilized wisely. So one should keep his calm and reserve the high intensity experiences for times when we really need them. Wear a smile though, that doesn't use much of the energy.

Minimize the bads & maximize the goods

An employee should avoid or at least minimize the common mistakes people commit at work. No employer around the globe would want you be late to work quite often, exceed your break times or be late to the meetings. These things may go unnoticed for a while, but they certainly call for management attention if not rectified. So anything that makes you answerable or is not expected of you is a BAD, and you should minimize it.

In contrast to the BADs there is some stuff that you should actively engage in. Staying a few minutes longer at work doesn't always hurt anyone. It is a nice thing to do as long as

people around you notice this. Remind your colleagues of the meeting in the afternoon, it may just have slipped off somebody's mind given to the busy schedule at work. Doing such things occasionally or repeatedly gets you the peer and management appreciation. It is a GOOD stuff, try to maximize it.

Avoid the garbage

You will find people of every kind around you, that's what makes up the organizational culture. Someone could be eyeing the same promotion that you are chasing and would always be ready to stab you in the back, put you down before the management – This is organizational politics. You don't always have to respond. Avoid being bullied. Keep your calm and take a deep breath. I guarantee your response in normal state of emotions is going to be hundred times better than your response when you run high intensity emotions. People have burned themselves out and they live in total stress. When they leave for work in the morning, they leave with truck-load of garbage in the mind which they want to through at people. When they start throwing it at you, pass on a smile and their hands get dirty.

Be kind to yourself

One may wonder how I can be kind to myself. It is nothing new, you will just have to treat yourself well, with compassion and mercy. One's career graph is not a linear curve with continuous upward direction; it is rather a perfect mix of ups and downs. There are times when you feel broken and there are times when you are Michael Angelo of your work life, feeling on top of the world. Now what defines your career success is not the intensity of happiness in the times of great performance, it is what you do to yourself through the bad times – through the troughs of your career graph. Don't criticize yourself on the mistakes, rather learn from your mistakes. Focus on what's right in you and leave away what's wrong. Of course keep some knowledge of wrong as well.

You would just have to be kind to your own self as you would be to someone who is despair and has lost hope. Try this and say to yourself, "Don't worry, it's going to be alright, Things are going to change, not a big deal, I am sure you can do this next time". This is what we call as control on emotions – Emotional Intelligence, one big inner motivator that doesn't let you down and helps you bounce back without taking counsel from any external source.

Make most of your time

Time management is one of the key competences an employee could have. You should know what to do and when. We recommend you be social and extrovert, speak to people around, make jokes and laugh it out. But this should not be at the cost of your performance. Don't get too much involved in socializing and you forget the report you needed submit before leaving office today. Progress is the opposite of distraction. "If you're wasting time all day with distractions, then you don't finish tasks," says Brain Tracy (2015) ^[10]. Now is the time for report, may be not for socializing. Obviously you don't want to carry the burden back home and spoil the time of family. Remember intelligence is right thing at the right time. Know how to strike a balance between your work life and your social life, know how to manage the time.

Conclusion

We discussed the common principles to be followed at work. Anyone who sticks to these principles will benefit. However there is lot more to it. There are some things that work for you and others don't seem to be benefiting from them, or you may just notice some stuff working for somebody – not so for you. In the concluding section we would discuss this people-specific stuff.

A democratic manager likes the people participation in decision making and an achievement oriented, hard-headed employee would feel pride working with such a manager. However, an introvert may not just dislike this manager, but he may render this type of manager as incompetent. There are some things that work only for specific personality types.

While we discuss the people-specific factors of satisfaction, I suggest the first thing you should do is to move to the work of your kind, the work you think you belong to. It keeps you psychologically content. Once you find this state, things will start falling in place. An executive who has been managing an online retail store for a decade would obviously find it problematic to manage a physical retail store. An MBA graduate with expertise in production floor management would not be at ease selling products in the market. If you can find something of your type, you are half satisfied.

So while you shop for a job, look for the one that you can make most of. Don't overlook what employer has to offer, rather compare the offering with the demands of your inner self. Once you are inside the job, do it your way? Remember, the employer needs results, which comes by you being in love with your job.

“The World doesn't motivate you, you choose to be motivated”.

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