

MOTIVATION AS THE FUNCTION OF SUPERVISING THE MOBILIZATION OF THE WORKER

JERMAKOWICZ Piotr (PL)
Warsaw University of Technology, Poland

ABSTRACT

The article concerns work as an activity consisting, first of all, of setting a target, then, outlining the conditions that belong to reality and determining the resources leading to this aim. Moreover, this refers to an acting subject, i.e. a human being, who is accomplishing his/her physical or intellectual targets through work. The author is trying to explain, by referring to management theoreticians, what motives people are guided by in their behaviour. Motivation is, thus, the basic element and the motor in taking action, however, its effectiveness, as the author concludes, depends on many factors, such as: satisfaction provided by work, an employee's place in the organization's hierarchy as well as satisfaction that he/she has from the effects of his/her actions. Motivation is the causing force of human behaviour and actions, a necessary and one of the most important, in the author's opinion, factors of increasing the effectiveness of work. The most important link is, nevertheless, the human being, who is acting in a specific manner and is willing to assimilate specific knowledge as well as looking for a possibility of action. Referring to the motivating factors leading to employees' activation, the author is considering what position to take on the shape of the job market and the currently functioning methods of employee management.

KEY WORDS: work, motivation, human resource management.

INTRODUCTION

The issue being the subject of the article is connected with social sciences, which perceive work as a human activity aiming at production of specific material goods and cultural assets that constitute the basis and the condition of human society existence and development.¹ Work is subject to norms - prohibitions and values, and creates a complex axiological situation depending on its place in the system of values. This is, obviously, the consequence of the complexity of work as a social phenomenon and process reflecting this complexity in a specific form. Work as a social phenomenon is complex in the functional, subjective and objective meaning. Work as a social process shapes the subjectivity of social groups and expresses the nature of this subjectivity i.e. the force and direction of social influence.

Work is an activity that consists, first of all, of setting a target, then, outlining the conditions that belong to reality and, finally, determining the resources leading to this aim.² The work doer is an acting subject, i.e. a human being, who is accomplishing his/her physical or intellectual targets through work. Activities, on the other hand, consist of a series of simple actions, which Kotarbiński referred to as single-impulse actions.³ The effect of single-impulse actions or their more complex sequence is products that include both *creations*, i.e. intended actions, and *tracks*

¹ Encyklopedia Powszechna, PWN, Warszawa 1985, vol. III, p. 729.

² G. Hostelet - an extract from the article: Aperçu sur les positions de problèmes de l'action (in:) "Revue Philosophique" vol. 113, Paryż 1932 p. 249.

³ T. Kotarbiński: Traktat o dobrej robocie, Wrocław 1958 p. 35.

which are created unintentionally.⁴ Only an acting subject is able to determine subjectively what a creation is and what a trace of his/her activities is.

Management theoreticians have been trying to explain what motives people are guided by in their behaviour. Motivation is the basic element and the motor in taking action, however, its effectiveness depends on many factors, such as: satisfaction provided by work, an employee's place in the organization's hierarchy as well as satisfaction that he/she has from the effects of his/her actions. Thus, motivation is all the motives that influence an individual's decision: about certain behaviour, initiating or sustaining it, or about its direction. The effects of work depend on human talents, abilities and skills supported with proper motivation, will and willingness to act. Motivation is the causing force of human behaviour and actions, a necessary and one of the most important factors of increasing the effectiveness of work. The most important link is the human being, who is acting in a specific manner and is willing to assimilate specific knowledge as well as looking for a possibility of action.⁵ The models and theories of modern motivating introduced and integrated system of employee management. The result of schematisation and predictability of employees' activities is that performing work is connected with a planned process. The point is to use still more effective theories of management and motivation in order to gradually gain control over the employees, to make them controllable and to make their work come down to a series of reflexes and activities. This influences the isolation of employees in the working environment, while the value of work itself has a subjective dimension. This results in disappearance of the work ethos in modern economies.

Motivation is an important function in managing human resources. It constitutes the so called soft element of management. In human resource management, the fundamental role is played by motivation that should be shaped in the form of a motivation system. Thanks to such a system it is possible to facilitate all activities aiming at employees' activation and effectiveness of their actions. Motivation is a certain stimulator to perform a specific task. It provides the power to act and decides about perseverance and intensity of efforts which every person is capable of in order to accomplish his/her targets. Motivation plays a very important role in each organization. It might be called a "driving force" for the employees. Understanding motivation, i.e. what causes, directs and motivates human behaviour, has always been important for managers as they work with people and through people. Nevertheless, human behaviour is complicated and sometimes irrational. It is not always easy to differentiate motivation. There are many motivation theories. Most of them vary with regard to the guidelines referring to what a manager should do in order to obtain the highest possible activation of his/her subordinates. Nevertheless, most successful managers have discovered in practice that people react strongly to praise and encouragement - expressed not only through words, but also actions - and that, if they are to devote the greatest possible effort to the organization, they have to be aware of success at work. The motivation system has to be subject to permanent modifications in the organization under the influence of the internal and external surrounding. Motivating employees, in order to be effective, must be based on using the achievements of various theories related to motivation and must be adjusted to the needs of the employees in a given organization. Motivating in an organization should be built from the perspective of a given entity (organization) as well as from the perspective of an employee. A human being in an organization must shape the internal motivation, i.e. the willingness to work and undertake numerous activities in order to achieve a certain target.

⁴ M. Wallis: *Wyraz i życie psychiczne*, Wilno 1939 p. 13.

⁵ Borkowska S. , *Motywowac skutecznie*, Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych, Warszawa 2004, p. 317.

Motivating may be examined in the context of general management as well as a function of managing employee's activation. There is no ready recipe for achieving success through motivating employees. An organization, in order to survive, must shape the motivation system. The achievements of motivation theory may be used to create a system responsible for employees' effectiveness.

The development of motivation theory has proceeded from a traditional approach to an approach from the perspective of human resources. The best example of the traditional approach to employee motivation is the work of Frederic W. Taylor. He suggested the use of a stimulus salary system. He was convinced that the management has more extensive knowledge on the subject of work in individual positions than the employees themselves and assumed that the main common motivating force is money. The traditional approach also assumed that, for most people, work is something unpleasant and the financial profit is more important for an employee than the very nature of work itself. Therefore, it was claimed that people might be expected to be ready to perform any work provided that they are properly paid.⁶ Taylor confirmed this hypothesis with the studies he conducted himself. In this theory, he indicates the superiority of financial over non-financial stimuli. Nevertheless, as the effectiveness of the employees that Taylor was studying grew, it appeared that not as many employees were needed to perform the same work as before. Then, the employers began to reduce the workforce. As a result of such actions, it appeared that job security is higher motivation than salary.

Taylor's critics drew attention to the fact that it is difficult to specify the real influence of material stimuli due to their connections to work conditions and, in addition, other factors such as e.g. the attitude at work, the nature of work, team work or trainings are also of motivating character.⁷ The approach from the perspective of interpersonal relations comes from the works of Elton Mayo and his cooperates, which were the results of research conducted at Western Electric production plant. The supporters of this approach placed emphasis on the role of social processes in work environment. Their basic assumptions include the thesis that an employee feels a need to be useful and important and has strong social needs that are more important for motivation than money. The supporters of the approach from the perspective of interpersonal relations advice managers to act in such a way that employees feel important and to let them have a certain scope of independence and self-control in performing their daily duties. It was expected that the illusion of co-participation and importance will satisfy employees' basic social needs and, as a result, create stronger motivation to work well. For example, a manager may allow a working group to have an impression that they participate in taking decisions although the manager has already determined its shape. Allowing for symbolic forms of competition was supposed to strengthen the motivation although, in fact, it was illusory participation.⁸

As long as the representatives of the school of interpersonal relations were convinced that the illusion of contribution and co-participation would strengthen motivation, the approach from the perspective of human resources assumed that the participation itself has a value both for employees and for the organization. The attitude assumes that people have the need of participation and are capable of real and not only ostensible participation. The task of management is, thus, to encourage co-participation and create the work environment that makes it possible to use the available human resources fully. This philosophy is a guideline for the

⁶ Griffin R. W., *Podstawy zarządzania organizacjami*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1997, p. 459.

⁷ www.placa.pl/motyw4.html (February 2013).

⁸ Griffin R. W., *Podstawy zarządzania organizacjami*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1997, p. 459.

majority part of modern thinking about the subject of motivating employees.⁹ The motivation theory that is most frequently described in specialist literature is A. Maslow's structure of needs as individual motivators, known and presented as the pyramid of needs.¹⁰ The theory assumes that people have various needs, which may be ranked in accordance with the hierarchy of importance. Abraham Maslow, a psychologist representing the direction of interpersonal relations, claimed that people aim at satisfying five levels of needs (physiological, safety, belonging, usefulness, self-esteem, self-actualization, the need of transcendence). At the bottom of the pyramid, there are the needs of a "lower rank", i.e. physiological ones, while at the top appear the layers of the needs of a "higher rank" characteristic for human development.

All people have needs of the lower rank; the number of people and the level of needs from the "highest" group are significantly limited. The better the simple needs are satisfied and the higher the level of cognitive development of a human being, the more the significance increases of the needs of the higher rank in their life.

Maslow claimed that, first of all, the needs of the lower rank have to be satisfied in order to make it possible to satisfy those of the higher rank.¹¹ In the event when a need of the lower rank has already been satisfied, it is no longer a source of motivation.

Except for the above mentioned five needs, Maslow also distinguished additional needs. The additional needs should be understood as such that may reveal themselves only in some people. For example, these may be the needs of knowledge or aesthetic needs. In Maslow's opinion, it is difficult to say anything about them as they have not been thoroughly studied, but one may try to connect them to the needs of self-actualization.

Human behaviour, according to the theory of needs, is determined by two laws: the law of homeostasis and the law of strengthening. The first one is about striving for the balance of the needs of the lower rank. This means that lack of satisfaction of the needs of the lower rank will disturb the balance of a human organism, while satisfying them will bring back this balance and the state of tension will disappear. On the other hand, the law of strengthening applies to the needs of the higher rank. In accordance with this law, satisfaction of higher needs does not cause their disappearance, but, quite to the contrary, a human being perceives them as nice and will aim at strengthening them.

The structure of occurrence of specific needs is connected with human personality. As personality develops, increased motivation to satisfy the needs of the higher rank is noticed.¹² In reaction to similar critical opinions, Clayton Alderfer in his ERG motivation theory proposed a different hierarchy of needs. Letters E, R, G stand for existence, relatedness and growth. The theory divided the theory of needs developed by Maslow into three levels. *The existence needs* correspond to Maslow's physiological and safety needs. *The relatedness need* concentrates on human relations with their social surrounding (Maslow's needs of belonging and respect refer to gaining other people's respect). *The need of growth (or development)*, the highest level on Alderfer's schema, includes the need of self-respect and self-actualization. Although the ERG theory assumes that the motivated behaviour is arranged in a hierarchy in a manner that it slightly similar to the one proposed by Maslow, both concepts are separated by two important

⁹ Griffin R. W., Podstawy zarządzania organizacjami, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1997, p. 460.

¹⁰ Maslow A. H., W stronę psychologii istnienia, Wydawnictwo PAX, Warszawa 1986, p. 27.

¹¹ Karney J. E., Człowiek i praca. wybrane zagadnienia z psychologii i pedagogiki pracy., Wydawca Międzynarodowa Szkoła Menedżerów, Warszawa 1998, p. 155.

¹² www.placa.pl/motyww4.html (February 2013).

differences. Firstly, the ERG theory suggests that human activity may be provoked simultaneously by several categories of needs. For example, people may be simultaneously motivated by the desire for money (existence), friendship (relatedness) and a possibility of gaining new skills (growth). Secondly, the ERG theory also includes an element of *frustration and regression*, which is missing in Maslow's concept of the hierarchy of needs. Maslow claimed that an individual will stay on one level of hierarchy as long as a given class of needs is not satisfied. The ERG theory, on the other hand, suggests that if a given class of needs is satisfied, an individual will feel frustrated, go to a lower level and start looking for the methods of satisfying the needs of the lower rank. The ERG theory is relatively new in comparison to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, however, research seems to indicate that it might be a better and more accurate explanation of motivation in organizations.

An important element of managing employees' activation is their participation in the decision processes of the organization. It is through participation of employees in the decision processes that the concurrence of employers' and employees' needs is expressed. Its effectiveness depends on the development of the necessary bonds integrating the employees with the company. The highest level of employee integration is achieved in groups which are given the rights to make decisions within the scope of the tasks assigned to them and to take responsibility for performing them. Thus, such a team of employees who have influence on what they are doing may be considered a co-decisive group. The reason for introducing employees' co-decisions from the employer's perspective is aiming at the improvement of work effectiveness and quality. For an employee, it is a method of self-actualization, increasing his/her own role in the company and satisfaction from the work performed. The aim of co-decisions is, thus, the common good, i.e. the enterprise's interest, which is reflected directly in the situation of the people it employs.

Aiming at participation in the decision processes and in the management sphere also corresponds to the need of self-actualization of a still better qualified employee in a modern enterprise. Many studies within the discussed area conducted during the last twenty years of the 20th century in the countries of Europe¹³ confirm the need and willingness of employee participation in the significant issues of an enterprise, for example the change of ownership structure, organizational transformation, changes referring to the sphere of work organization and conditions, as well as all activities of social nature.

An important factor for the future, indicating the necessity of solutions facilitating co-decisions of employees in Polish enterprises is the fact that various forms of participation are present in companies functioning in the European Union. Employee participation is a permanent element of the enterprise's construction.

The need for introducing new solutions on the job market is perceived both by employers and employees. In particular, employers are worried by the following features of the new generation of employees called generation Y confirmed by pilot studies.¹⁴ Generation Y is characterised by: lack of patience as regards career development, lack of susceptibility to authorities resulting from

¹³ The studies and conclusions of people conducting research in the last twenty years of the 20th century were, e.g. included in the following positions:

Poole M., *Industrial Relations*, Routledge and Kegan, London 1986,

Grootings H. T., Gustavsen B., Hethy P. L., *New Forms of Work Organization in Europe*, New Brunswick Transaction Publisher, New Brunswick 1989,

Kulpińska J., Mazalkova J., *Uczestnictwo pracownicze*, in: *Zbiorowe stosunki pracy w procesie przemian*, collective work edited by Moerela H., IFiS PAN, Warszawa 1995.

¹⁴ Pilot studies conducted in the years 2010-2013.

the position in the organizational hierarchy, lack of ability of independent decision taking and treating supervisors as equal employees. Entrepreneurs, on the one hand, have to adjust to the different perception of work by the new generation and, on the other hand, need to take the initiative of changes in motivating employees if they do not want to have any problem with maintaining a qualified staff. The latest theories on the subject of changing employees' behaviour through their motivation, combine previous achievements within the scope of psychology, sociology and management studies. In these theories, the employees' attention is directed at various areas of their activity. For, employees focus their attention on what brings them measurable benefits. Focusing attention on phenomena and objects is accompanied by a strong adrenaline impulse, which helps to remember a particular situation and the stimuli connected with it. Through such influence on employees, it is possible to change their behaviour depending on the employer's needs.¹⁵ The supporters of this method do not negate the traditional methods of motivating because the use of all known theories may support an effective change in the behaviour of the employees identified as generation Y.

Moreover, the shape of the job market and the labour law should be considered. The job market should be created with remuneration that is adequate to work input and qualifications, with friendly atmosphere and a system of employee security. This requires a change in the labour law. A guarantee of a possibility of part-time work with basic social security, working time flexibility, facilitation of conducting one's own business activity or a possibility of a break at work for additional education or a change of profession. This will result in the job market in the future being based on people who will be able to change their qualifications and employers who will be able to motivate and manage new generations of employees changing their attitude to work. Discovering the sense and significance of work may constitute the most important source of motivation to work as work constitutes a significant part of human life and may, thus, influence their professional activation in the conditions of modern civilization. It is a kind of a strengthening feedback, whose mechanism supported by modern motivation theories leads to shaping of the job market and effective methods of managing employees.

REFERENCES

1. Borkowska S. , Motywować skutecznie, Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych, Warszawa, p. 317, 2004, ISBN 83-87890-56-1
2. Griffin R. W., Podstawy zarządzania organizacjami, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa, p.826, 1997, ISBN 83-01-12019-3
3. Grootings H. T., Gustavsen B., Hethy P. L., New Forms of Work Organization in Europe, New Brunswick Transaction Publisher, New Brunswick 1989, ISBN 0-88738-215-0
4. Hostelet G., Apercu sur les positions de problimes de l'action [in:] „ Revue Philosophiqu” vol. 113. Paryż, p. 249, 1932, ISBN 9782707322425
5. Jermakowicz P., Praca w świetle opinii i postaw przyszłych pracowników administracji publicznej. Badania pilotażowe, [in]: Kapitał społeczny w organizacji i regionie. Wydawnictwo Politechniki Częstochowskiej. Częstochowa, p. 16, 2011, ISBN 978-83-7193-498-8
6. Jermakowicz P. Uczestnictwo pracownicze w procesach decyzyjnych. MOK, Warszawa, s. 21, 2004, ISBN 978-83-906280-8-2

¹⁵ Król H.: Uwarunkowania zarządzania zasobami ludzkimi (in:) eds. Król H., Ludwiczynski A., Warszawa 2007, p. 348

7. Karney J. E., Człowiek i praca. Wybrane zagadnienia z psychologii i pedagogiki pracy, Wydawca Międzynarodowa Szkoła Menedżerów, Warszawa, p. 221, 1998, ISBN 83-86891-25-4
8. Kotarbiński T., Traktat o dobrej robocie, Wrocław, p. 551, 1985, ISBN 83-04-01204-9
9. Król H., Uwarunkowania zarządzania zasobami ludzkimi, [in:] red. H. Król., Ludwicyński A., Warszawa, p. 348 2007, ISBN 978-83-89437-77-8
10. Kulpińska J., Mazalkova J., Uczestnictwo pracownicze, w: Zbiorowe stosunki pracy w procesie przemian, praca zbiorowa pod red. Moerela H., IFiS PAN, Warszawa, p. 366, 1995, ISBN 83-86166-13-4
11. Maslow A. H., W stronę psychologii istnienia, Wydawnictwo PAX, Warszawa, p. 251, 1986, ISBN 83-211-0654-4
12. Poole M., Industrial Relations, Routledge and Kegan, London, p. 331, 1985, ISBN 0-7100-9796-4
13. Wallis M., Wyraz i życie psychiczne, Wilno, p. 13, 1939
14. <http://www.placa.pl/motyw4.html> [2013-02-17]

Contact address

Piotr Jermakowicz, 02-913 Warszawa ul. Zielona 34/3 Poland, e-mail: pjermakowicz@wp.pl