

MOTIVATION – A PERFORMANCE INCREASE METHOD FOR THE MANAGER

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ABSTRACT

The connection between MANAGEMENT and PERFORMANCE is mediated by motivation, which proves to be one of the most efficient elements from the range of tools at the disposal of the leadership meant to ensure constant increase of the final performance in the activity of an enterprise.

KEYWORDS: *management, performance, stimulation, demands, competences, motivation, work / production climate, ergonomics.*

Whatever its type of ownership and individual competition, a company's successes in a certain field are the direct consequence of the good results achieved in a different area. In this context, the MANAGEMENT-MOTIVATION-LABOR QUALITY-PERFORMANCE relation becomes especially important, as it represents the most important trigger in determining each and every employee to give his full potential of knowledge, experience and creativity. The company management must ensure the best conditions for people to feel really motivated by their work. This will benefit labor quality and implicitly individual and collective performances.

The successive theoretical models of motivation have developed as management concepts evolved:

- the traditional model, associated with F. Taylor and the classical management school, which gives a rather simplistic account of motivation, as an exclusive response to material pressure;
- the human relations model, developed by E. Mayo's school, according to which motivation is created by a sensible increase in the job satisfaction among the employees, through increasing their decision power;
- the human resources model, created by Argyris C., A. Maslow and R. Likert; the basic idea is that employees are motivated by a wide variety of factors, not only payment level and job satisfaction, but also other superior factors, such as a personal fulfillment need, self-image within the work group and outside it, accomplishing some personal objectives and becoming aware of the social role of their work.

A synthesis of all these models is achieved by L. Porter in a systematic perspective on motivation. According to this perspective, in any organization there are three major variables that influence motivation and the relations among these variables determine the employees' degree of motivation. These variables are:

- a) *individual characteristics*, interests, attitude toward one's self-image, one's job and its importance, the labor safety needs, social and personal fulfillment needs;
- b) *job characteristics*, the degree of independence, the range of tasks and assignments, the level of performance control, types of specific rewards;
- c) *working conditions*, organizational environment, compensation system, the attitude of superiors and co-workers.

A well-balanced consideration of the above-mentioned variables, followed by appropriate action, is reflected by an increase in the employees' motivation level and results in an improvement of labor quality and their performance.

From the aspects briefly presented above, we can emphasize a few essential ideas regarding the management-motivation-performance relation, which show their usefulness in the managerial activity. As everybody knows, a business company performs two major functions, which combine to define its role within society:

- an *economic* and *technical* function, which consists in the production of goods, performance of work and provision of services;
- a *social* and *human* function, which means meeting the demands of the community, training and educating its members, integrating them within a system of professional, ethical, attitudinal values, which shape them according to the social personality of the company.

The two functions are complementary. This is clearly shown by the fact that a company's employees may have, depending on the available conditions, high professional enthusiasm, generated by a high level of job satisfaction, or, on the contrary, they may experience feelings of frustration, social and professional alienation. These two opposite situations will be reflected in their work performance.

In this context, the relation between MANAGEMENT and PERFORMANCE is mediated by motivation, which represents a collection of motives (needs, tendencies, effects, interests, ideals) that support certain actions and attitudes. Motivation is one of the most efficient elements available to the company management in order to ensure a continuous increase of the final performances of the enterprise. It is one of the manager's top concerns to understand this idea and to use this motivation tool skillfully and wisely, so as to ensure a rise in labor productivity and implicitly of the economic and financial results.

In using these efficient tools, managers must take into account the three types of motivation that every individual possesses:

- ✓ *material / economic* motivations – regard the fulfillment of basic needs and, at a certain developmental stage, represent the strongest motivational impulses;
- ✓ *psychological / emotional* motivations – refer to the psychological working conditions, to the positive emotional incentives, to the understanding of affective and emotional displays and the necessity to fit in the work group;
- ✓ *social* motivations – regard the individual's need for recognition in his social and spiritual expressions.

From this motivational perspective, every manager's concern with respect to his subordinates will be to ensure a rational balance in the steps and measures taken for each of these categories of motivations. A manager should gradually direct his actions toward the fulfillment of higher level motivations, provided that the basic ones are already met. This motivational approach implies making the right managerial decisions. It also presupposes that the manager knows his employees' personalities in detail, in order to ensure differentiated and appropriate ways of motivating them.

It is beyond any doubt that such a personalized approach will make employees use their working potential to the full, which will directly benefit their productivity and performance levels.

An important part in optimizing the above-mentioned relation among MANAGEMENT-MOTIVATION-LABOR QUALITY-PERFORMANCE is played by the informal structure of the organization and its relations with the organizational structure. The *informal structure* means all the phenomena and psycho-social acts that occur, happen and

evolve among the members of an organization. It has a subjective motivation, as it expresses the social and psychological needs of the members of the organization, their motivations, satisfactions and the extent to which they fit in the larger group. These needs trigger certain types of behavior that do not always fit the rules of the formal structure.

There is a gap between the two types of organizational structure, formal and informal, and the size of this gap influences the performance of the organization in indirect proportion.

The formal structure is conceived and applied according to principles and requirements of rational organization. It is established beforehand. In contrast, the informal structure is spontaneously formed, as a direct result of human interaction. It therefore represents a *de facto* outcome, which is subsequently observed. This means that managers should be particularly careful to maintain this gap within rational limits. If they succeed in doing so, it will once more have beneficial effects on work performances.

The entire managerial process and, implicitly, the network of formal or informal relations within the company are supported by *communication*.

Communication is a particularly complex process, as it involves all aspects of the organizational structure: technical, hierarchical, psychological, economic and even ecological.

Reaching the established targets depends in a decisive way on the quantity, quality, structure and expeditiousness of information. On the other hand, the quality of communication has direct implications on the employees, thus affecting the level of achievement of individual objectives, working environment, the degree of integration, the motivation level and job satisfaction.

Generally speaking, the major obstacles against successful communication are related to the human factor, namely to the psychological component of the process. Managerial practice analysis shows that communicative obstacles are caused by:

- managers;
- employees (subordinates);
- listening capacity.

Apart from the aspects presented above, an increase in managerial performance also implies the use of a wide range of methods and managerial techniques, which the individual manager may resort to, in order to raise his work efficiency. A special part is played by:

- *diagnosis* (detection), which allows us to highlight the causes of the main malfunctions, strengths and weaknesses and thus elaborate recommendations and decisions;
- *delegation* (of authority), which ensures a better use of the time resources available to the manager, as well as of the employees' potential;
- the *dashboard*, an important way of connecting the informational system, is a valuable managerial tool, which helps managers get the necessary information in a fast, complete and relevant manner and thus make better decisions;
- the *meeting*, a collective way of solving complex problems by means of decisions and actions;
- *decisional techniques and methods*, which allow managers to make decisions under circumstances of uncertainty, risk or certainty;
- other decisional techniques and methods.

The use of this managerial tool may increase the level of decision-making and of the initial steps taken to implement them, to cancel and orient the managers' efforts and their collaborators toward a quantitative and qualitative achievement of the established objectives.

Though scarcely discussed in economics textbooks and completely neglected in practice, the ergonomic organization of managerial work represents an important means of increasing its efficiency.

In the ergonomic organization of managerial work, there are certain characteristics, which pertain to the specifics of the manager's activities, as compared to the subordinates' work. Since the source of managerial work is represented by *information*, the problems that occur aim at ensuring a highly efficient data collection, recording, transmission and processing on the one hand, while on the other hand at their optimum use in the managers' making the right decisions and taking the necessary steps. The ergonomic organization of the manager's workplace and his activity should facilitate these two issues in a differentiated manner, according to the hierarchical level, the characteristics of the business sector and company where the manager works. The growing complexity and importance of microeconomic management caused significant changes in the leadership activity, with the stress increasingly falling on the elements of content that can consolidate its quality and efficiency.

The organization of labor is a sum of processes that aim to ensure the suitable working conditions, to establish and apply the staff's working techniques and methods, as well as the main relations and organizational forms that help integrate it within every division or unit of the company. Given these characteristics and components, a large part of these organizational processes can and must be analyzed at managerial level, because by improving their content, managers can get a better use of their available time.

Starting from the structure of the managers' working time and given the fact that the basic object of activity for executives is information, one must design a sensible workplace, with the best working conditions for the manager to perform his tasks and functions.

Such a workplace should be organized according to the ergonomic principles that aim at optimizing the relation man-working tools-environment. The main requirements that it should meet refer to:

- * convenience and comfort;
- * the appropriate positioning and combination of furniture form a functional and aesthetical perspective (the furniture should be simple, ensure the right body posture during work and meet the ergonomic and aesthetic requirements);
- * normal conditions of the working environment;
- * the right technical equipment (phone, line extensions, computers, fax machine, copier etc).

The physical and mental (stress) factors, as well as the working environment, play a very important part in organizing the workplace and have direct influence on the quality and performance level of managerial work.

Physical factors include: micro-climate components (temperature, humidity, air flow, radiations and electro-magnetic waves), lighting and noise level. Creating a favorable working environment requires harmonizing all these factors accordingly.

Mental (stress) factors basically refer to:

- ⇒ the manager's training level and profile, required by the work he does, as well as by the necessary background and collateral knowledge;
- ⇒ the personality traits required by executive work (intelligence, the right temper, ambition, determination, courage, sensibility, empathy, etc)
- ⇒ the general working environment, the relations between the manager and his subordinates, as well as between the manager and his superiors;
- ⇒ the organization of spare time, etc

It is worth mentioning that all these factors have both objective and subjective underlying causes.

An additional category is represented by the *psycho-social* factors, which also have a major impact on the leadership style. Although such factors (including family relationships, transportation problems, rest, leisure, cultural life / activities, etc) are rarely considered in the process of rationalizing managerial activity, their importance is not to be neglected in the attempt to find the right means to increase a manager's working performance and efficiency.

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