REVIEW ARTICLE

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN MOTIVATION: THE KEY TO SOLVING THE ENGAGEMENT PROBLEM

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Some people are engaged with their work while majority are not because of the lack of motivation. The issue of what truly motivats is self-interest-pursuing the satisfaction of needs that are important to them. From birth to death our behavior is completely defined by our pursuing the satisfaction of inborn needs. Self-interest is the single driving force behind all human behaviour. This means that if you are a leader & expect employees to get excited about giving all their energy, creativity and passion to performing their jobs, we have to accept the fact that they come to work already motivated to pursue their self-interest not ours. It will be difficult to make individuals self-interest, look like ours. We have to find a way to connect their self-interest with the interest of the organization. This is what employee engagement is all about.

INTRODUCTION

Keys to understanding Human Motivation

We are motivated to pursue the satisfaction of the set of inborn/innate needs. It is important that we should understand what those needs are and how they work.

1) Human beings are perpetually wanting animals:

Abraham Maslow said "Man is a wanting being". As soon as one need satisfied another appears in its place. Ex: While walking dreams about cycle and work to get it once he gets cycle, he will dreams about car and work for that once he gets car, he will dream about specially designed car or more cars.

2) A satisfied needs is not a motivation of behaviour:

When we are hungry, we think about food. Once the stomach is full, food will not motivate us. So people are only motivated by unsatisfied needs. Human needs are organized in a hierarchy of importance:

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The above theory is proposed by Dr. Abraham Maslow in 1943
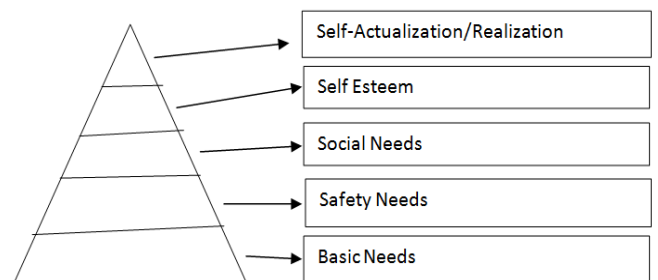
Basic/Psychological needs are the lowest one and are requirements for our survival i.e. food water and air. When these needs are fairly satisfied, safety needs emerge, i.e. safety for job, safety for self (Social needs relevant to society i.e. recognition from society). If these needs one are not well satisfied, this will actually prevent employees from becoming engaged with their work. Unsatisfied psychological needs create distractions for employees which mean they cannot give their full attention and effort to perform the job. SAS South West Airline, Google provide their employees with compensation that is at par or above industry average along with Benefit package that is fairly generous.

Safety needs

When Physiological needs become fairly well satisfied, the needs at the next level emerge and begin to dominate our behaviour. There are safety needs i.e. safety from harm, accidents, personal security job security, Secured job and work place that is relatively pleasuring and safe.

1) South West Airlines makes it a point to provide their employees with a pleasant work environment and secured job and do not have a lay off policy.
2) NTPC and other Navaratnas such as ONGC, IOC companies also provided a secured job.

Social Needs

Once physiological needs and safety needs are fairly satisfied, social needs emerge and take over our behaviour. Social needs includes need for friendship, to be busy, to be accepted by others. The ultimate form of love or acceptance to any group is to be accepted as an equal. Human being are genetically wired to be treated as equal not as subordinate or second class citizen. Google refers to their employees as associates and family members or fellow Googlers. It is to reinforce the fact that everyone who works there is equal and therefore has the autonomy to do their job as they see fit.

Esteem Needs

When our physiological and safety needs as well as our need to be treated as equal are fairly well satisfied our esteem needs surface and take over our behaviour. According to Maslow: All of us have a need or desire for state firmly based high evaluation of ourselves. Furthermore this higher evaluation must be authentic based on real capacity, real achievement and real respect from others. We have to earn through our action satisfaction of self-esteem needs results in feeling of self-respect,   self-confidence,   achievement   and   self-worth experiencing satisfaction of our esteem needs is that makes us feel really good about ourselves. That's why companies with high level of employee engagement operate from a leadership philosophy of, giving people the tools they need to do their job and then get out of their way.

Need for self Actualization

The need for self-actualization is the need to find meaning or fulfilment in our lives. Even when all other needs are fairly satisfied people will still have a craving for something more unless they are doing something they feel is "Worthwhile". At work, people want more than just a job they want to be part of something

special. Ex: We are building a new facility in New York or we are getting ready to introduce a new product the company is something they own. They have assimilated their work into their personal identity. Self-actualization and employee engagement are the same thing.

Conclusion

It is impossible to motivate people at work

They are already motivated. They come to work every day motivated to pursue their self- intent, the satisfaction of needs that are important to them. The leadership, if they want their employees to perform at high a level need to engage the motivation that is already there.

Behavioural Scientist: How do you motivate people is – "You do it". Man is by nature motivated. One does not motivate him because he is motivated. When he is not he is dead. Company need not provide authority or rewards. They can create an environment where employees are free.

Self-actualization & Employee engagement are same: Employees become engaged with their work when they are able to experience the satisfaction of all five need levels. Employee has to feel the work they are doing worthwhile. "What is not worth doing is not worth doing well –Maslow.

People want to be engaged with their work

If the employee works in a conducive environment where he is free, without any distraction and being treated as equal, has opportunity to exercise autonomy, feeling the work is very worthwhile and feels good about themselves. Work is enjoyable yet productive. I leave work tired often dirty but fulfilled and happy. At the end of the day I can look back and see what I have been able to accomplish with great feeling and satisfaction. To conclude, the employee very much wants to be engaged with their work. They are trying to become engaged with their work.

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