



Motivation

Unlocking the best in employees

Every employer would like to have consistently motivated employees contributing to better organisation performance. Motivation is complex and there is no single practice that an employer can implement to achieve uniform and sustained motivation of all employees all the time. Therein lies the challenge for employers

...To Page 2



tennant
human capital
solutions

taking care of tomorrow | today



Address:

Hurlingham Office Park | 59 Woodlands Ave.
Block A | Suite 3
Cnr. Republic Rd. + William Nicol Dr.
Hurlingham Manor | 2196

Tel:
Mail:
Web:
FSP:

(+27) 11 100 8110
info@tennant.co.za
www.tennant.co.za
Licence No. 43648

In this edition:

- **Motivation – Unlocking the best in employees**
- **Employment Equity CEE 19th Annual Report**
- **Dismissal: Misconduct charge formulaion**

Motivation – Unlocking the best in employees

From Page 1...

Introduction

In this article we examine aspects of motivation and review methods employers can use to improve overall employee motivation. A dictionary definition of motivation is *the need, reason or enthusiasm for doing something*. (Cambridge, 2019) In the work environment, employers want *highly* motivated employees willing to routinely apply discretionary effort reflected in superior work performance to achieve organisational goals.

On boarding an aircraft, you encounter two flight attendants working on the flight. One is positive, motivated, upbeat and enthusiastic – while the other is negative, bitter, angry and cynical. However, they were both greeted cheerily by the flight captain when they boarded, both work the same hours and shifts, both have the same pay, with the same uniform, with the same customers, on the same plane, and have been on the same employee training programmes (Goldsmith, 2016). The difference is that the two attendants' internal needs, reasons and enthusiasm to work well on that flight are not the same. The implication is that employers can at create a motivating environment, but motivated superior work performance originates internally.

Jim Collins (2011), best-selling business success researcher, said that a company's journey from good to great

begins with hiring the “right people”. He said that if you employ the right people, the challenges of motivating and managing employees largely goes away. Without taking away from the critical importance of hiring right, finding a competent person burning with enthusiasm does not ensure sustained motivated performance. Many employees have had their motivation undermined by the conditions of their work – a bad boss, long hours, no recognition for achievements, bad pay, conflict... The list is long.

The role of management is to create conditions that motivate employees. There are many tools and techniques managers can use to encourage motivated performance by employees. A short brainstorming session produced the following list:

1. Career progression
2. Efficient work processes / flows
3. Elimination of hygiene factors (Herzberg's Theory) i.e. conditions that demotivate. (Fixing a wobbly chair will not motivate an employee, but not fixing the chair will demotivate an employee.)
4. Flexible work arrangements
5. Identify the strengths of team members and build on those strengths
6. Incentives (performance bonuses, extra time off...)
7. Inspiring leadership
8. Job security
9. Learning and development (personal growth; transferrable skills; life-skills; study assistance)
10. Management by walking about (MBWA)
11. Organisation vision
12. Pay (consistent with peers; performance related pay; objectively determined; real increases after inflation; commission)
13. Punishing people who fail (the stick approach)
14. Purpose (I will work hard if I know my work is valuable and will accomplish something meaningful; employees must know what is in it for them.)
15. Recognition (e.g. “Well done” statements / notes from an employee's manager; peer recognition; employee of the month; team of the month; annual awards; merit certificates...)



- 16. Remove obstacles to performance of work
- 17. Respectful working environment
- 18. Satellite offices
- 19. Time off
- 20. Work environment / workstation

Pay as a motivator

Almost everyone works for money. To underplay the importance of money and benefits as motivation for people who work is a mistake. When an organisation has a fair remuneration regime in place, it can focus on other levers of motivation. (Heathfield, 2019)

Money as a motivator may be important but it does have limitations (Riggio, 2018). For example, money is an inefficient motivator. Most people are paid hourly, weekly or monthly, which represents a fixed interval reward system. There is no direct link between a person's outputs and the money they earn. Money is more efficient when it is used to pay commission on outputs achieved or for employees' productive outputs e.g. gig workers. After some time in a job money becomes a "given". Payment is made electronically into employees' bank accounts and there are no salient links between work effort and the pay received.

When employees perceive that they are underpaid or unfairly discriminated against, money becomes a demotivator. On its own, pay is unlikely to be enough to generate motivated (discretionary) performance by employees, and when it is perceived as unfair it will demotivate employees.

Needs, drives and motivation levers

Organisation's trying to prioritise initiatives to foster motivated work performance can refer to research by a Harvard University team which showed that four basic emotional needs or drives motivate employees' behaviour. Additionally, there are distinct organisational levers which management

can deploy to meet each of the four needs or drives (Nohria, Groysberg, and Lee, 2008):

(1) People have a **drive to acquire** scarce physical goods like food, clothing, housing and money as well as intangibles like promotions, travel and entertainment.

Lever – the reward system. A company must effectively differentiate good performers from average and poor performers, tie rewards to performance, and give the best people opportunities for advancement.

(2) People have a **drive to bond** which is associated with positive emotions such as love and caring. In the workplace employees want to feel like they belong to the organisation.

Lever – culture. A company can meet employees' drive to bond by creating a culture that promotes teamwork, collaboration, openness and friendship.

(3) People want to make sense of the world around them. This is a **drive to comprehend**, which in the workplace manifests as a desire to make a meaningful contribution. Employees are motivated when their jobs challenge them and enable them to learn.

Lever – job design. A company needs to design jobs that are meaningful, interesting and challenging. Employees should feel that their jobs are important and contribute to the company's success. Investment in training and development contributes to fulfilling employees' drive to comprehend. Research has shown meaningfulness of employees' work to be more important to employees than any other aspect of work¹, including opportunities for promotion, or working conditions.

¹ The research suggests meaningfulness of work is even more important than pay and rewards. Our stance is that motivation rests on the foundation of pay. One could invert the well-known saying as – "no pay, no work".



Meaningful work can be highly motivational, leading to improved performance, commitment, and satisfaction (Bailey and Madden, 2016).

(4) It is natural for people to defend themselves, their property and accomplishments, their family and friends and ideas and beliefs against external threats. This **drive to defend** may show in a quest to create institutions that promote justice and participation.

Lever – performance management and resources allocation processes. Fair, trustworthy and transparent processes for performance management and resource allocation help to meet employees' drive to defend. Performance management will be more effective when there is frequent performance feedback, employees lead the feedback process, and peers are involved in assessing performance.

Recommendations

Employers wanting to create conditions for high levels of employee motivation should implement the following:

- **Get the employment basics in place** – hire good people and establish a compensation system which creates a foundation for good performance.
- **Generate a range of possible motivation initiatives** and evaluate which could be implemented using assessment criteria such as cost, ease of implementation, precedent set, direct link between behaviour and reward, culture alignment, and unintended consequences.
- **Customise initiatives to as far as possible match individual preferences.** Management should test whether the work environment experience of each employee can be improved to optimise each employee's motivation. An

employee survey could determine what enthruses employees.

- **Implement, measure and change the motivation initiatives.** (Measuring motivation and the impact of any initiative to create motivating conditions is a challenge. Typically, employers will need to rely on indirect measures such as attendance / absenteeism, hours worked per employee, percent of deadlines met, online activity, client complaints, employee productivity (e.g. revenue per employee), unsocial behaviour, and satisfaction surveys. The organisation should regularly review the efficacy of its motivation initiatives and make changes where results do not meet expectations.

Conclusion

If an organisation succeeds in creating the conditions where high employee motivation is reflected in sustained superior work performance, then the organisation will be able to tap into those employees as a source of competitive advantage.

References

1. Bailey, C & Madden, A. (2016) What Makes Work Meaningful or Meaningless *MIT Sloan Review* pp 53 – 64
2. Cambridge Dictionary [online] Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/motivation> Accessed 24 September 2019
3. Collins, J. (2001) *Good to Great* London: Random House pp. 41 – 64
4. Goldsmith, M. (2016) The Biggest Mistake Made in Employee Engagement! <http://www.linkedin.com/pulse/biggest-mistake-made-employee-engagement-marshall-goldsmith> Accessed: 29 March 2016
5. Heathfield, S. (2019) What People Want from Work: Motivation. *The Balance Careers* [Online] Available at: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-people-want-from-work-motivation-1919051> Accessed: 24 September 2019
6. Lai, L. (2017) Motivating Employees Is Not About Carrots or Sticks. *HBR.org* (Online) Available at: <https://hbr.org/2017/06/motivating-employees-is-not-about-carrots-or-sticks> Accessed 30 June 2017
7. Nohria, N. Groysberg, B. Lee, L. (2008) Employee motivation: a powerful new tool. *Harvard Business Review* (July – August), 78 - 84
8. Riggio, R (2018) 5 Reasons Why Money Is a Poor Work Motivator. *Psychology Today* [Online] Available at: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/201805/5-reasons-why-money-is-poor-work-motivator> Accessed 23 September 2019



Employment Equity

CEE 19th Annual Report

The Employment Equity Act was introduced in South Africa in 1998 to undo the injustices of apartheid by creating a diverse workforce free of unfair discrimination. Each year the Commission for Employment Equity (CEE), a statutory body established by Section 28 of the Act, issues a report which reflects on progress with workforce transformation. The 2019 report was recently published.

The CEE says that in respect of racial and gender diversity there has been slow and steady progress. The employment of people with disabilities remains very low and this group has been neglected in affirmative action programmes. In respect of unfair discrimination, the CCMA dealt with a threefold increase in case referrals in the years 2015 – 2018 compared to the years 2000 – 2002. This increase reflects a broadening of the CCMA's jurisdiction through 2014 amendments to the law rather than being evidence of more prevalent workplace discrimination.

“In respect of racial and gender diversity there has been slow and steady progress.”

CEE 2019

The CEE report is based on its analysis of 27'485 employment equity reports for 2018 covering 7'415'876 employees. Employees are allocated into six organisational levels from top management down to unskilled workers.

At top management the representation of Africans constitutes 15% whilst this group constitutes 79.1% of their

Economically Active Population (EAP). 23.5% of Top Management are females which is about half their EAP. And 1.3% of Top Management are persons with disabilities. This latter statistic is described as “negligible”. (It is noteworthy that STATS SA which publishes EAP demographics does not set a persons with disability EAP statistic some 20 years into this legislation's existence.) The EEC reports a similar picture of non-transformation (although not as extreme) in respect of employees at the level of senior management. Diversity progress at the lower levels is noted in the report.

“The aim is to break the back of systemic discrimination.”

T Kabinde – Commission Chairperson

Transformation particularly at the top levels of reporting companies is happening much slower than the government wants. The EEC chairperson says that the main purpose of employment equity legislation is to break the back of systemic discrimination. The tools available to government to achieve this include complementary legislation such as Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) and enforcement agencies including the CCMA, Courts and Inspection and Enforcement Services (IES) of the Department of Labour. In our experience, in 2018 and 2019, IES inspectors have been very active across many industries closely checking statutory compliance. Further legislative amendments are in the pipeline and government focus and regulation will not relax.

Source: 19th Commission for Employment Equity Report 2018- 2019 Available at: <http://www.labourtesting.labour.gov.za/DOL/documents/annual-reports/Commission%20for%20Employment%20Equity%20Report/2018-2019/19th-commission-for-employment-equity-report-2018-2019> Accessed 23 September 2019



Dismissal

Misconduct charge formulation

In a recent judgement, the Labour Appeal Court (LAC) recognised that employers embarking on disciplinary proceedings, not being skilled legal practitioners, sometimes define or restrict the alleged misconduct too narrowly or incorrectly. An employer may impose disciplinary action even when it has wrongly characterised or labelled the misconduct, provided the employee is not prejudiced. The facts forming the basis for the case were as follows.

An IT employee at Wesbank sent to his girlfriend's mother Microsoft programme activation keys belonging to the bank. He said he did this in error when he attempted to resend her activation keys which he legitimately possessed. His act was uncovered in a forensic audit and the employee faced three charges in a disciplinary hearing: (1) theft, fraud, dishonesty or the dishonest removal of any material from the bank; (2) being in breach of confidentiality agreements and/or divulging such confidential information; and, (3) disregard or breach of the bank's code of ethics. The employee was found to have committed misconduct although it was not established that he had acted intentionally. He was dismissed for gross negligence.

A CCMA commissioner found the dismissal was substantively unfair because the employee had been found guilty of gross negligence with which he had not been charged. On review, initiated by the employer, the Labour Court reached the same conclusion. However, the LAC overturned the earlier outcomes.

The LAC addressed the question whether the employee suffered any prejudice as a result of him not being

charged with gross negligence. The LAC found that there is no requirement that competent verdicts on disciplinary charges should be mentioned in the charge sheet and prejudice normally will only arise where the employee has been denied knowledge of the case he had to meet. In this case, the employee would have been prejudiced if he would have had a different defence or conducted his defence differently if he was charged with gross negligence. The LAC found that such prejudice did not occur because, the employee's negligence was established on his own version. He took insufficient care when downloading and sending the Microsoft activation keys.

This is a judgement which provides employers with a valuable precedent. The LAC added further weight to the principle that employers cannot be expected to frame misconduct allegations against an employee as one would prepare a charge sheet in a criminal matter. And, courts and arbitrators must not adopt too formalistic or technical an approach to evaluating employers' practices.

Source

EOH Abantu (Pty) Ltd v Commission For Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration and Another Labour Appeal Court of South Africa, Johannesburg [ZALAC] JA 4/18 15 August 2019

- The contents of Human Resources Notes do not constitute legal advice. For specific professional assistance tailored to your needs consult our experts.
- Peter Fisher is the writer of these HR notes. His opinions expressed in the notes do not necessarily reflect the views of Tennant Human Capital Solutions (Pty) Ltd or other companies within the Tennant Group.





what we do

- We advise and help clients implement HR practices for business success
- We resolve clients' employee issues and harness the worth of employees

lower costs | reduced risks | productivity | growth | longevity
competitive advantage | profitability

top 5 services

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Outsourced HR partner | Regular on-site presence to identify, prioritise and proactively deal with employee issues affecting business performance. |
| 2. HR strategy | Identify people challenges and opportunities and implement initiatives to lever business performance. |
| 3. Governance | Implement a framework of policies, procedures and practices that are compliant with employment laws and support business operations. |
| 4. Learning & development | Develop and facilitate training in industrial relations, supervisory and management skills, performance management, negotiation, employment equity. |
| 5. Fair dismissal | Execute all aspects of the disciplinary process including investigation, charge formulation, initiation, charring. |

“Our goal is to provide HR consulting services which make client companies more profitable”



taking care of tomorrow | today

**the most
valuable of all
capital is that
which is
invested in
human beings**

- Alfred Marshall