

INNOVATIVE METHODS FOR MOTIVATING EMPLOYEES

Ph.D. Student, Diana-Andreea DUMITRACHE

”Valahia” University of Târgoviste, Romania

Email: diandreea.rotaru@gmail.com

Professor PhD, Delia Mioara POPESCU

”Valahia” University of Târgoviste, Romania

Email: depopescu@yahoo.com

Ph.D. Student, Cristina Roxana IONESCU

”Valahia” University of Târgoviste, Romania

Email: ionescu_cristina_roxana@yahoo.com

Ph.D. Student, Andrei MATICIUC

”Valahia” University of Târgoviste, Romania

Email: maticiuc.andrei@gmail.com

Abstract: *As a premise of all companies, the most important resource is the human resource, which is practically the creator of value, the source of creativity and initiatives for progress. Employees are the key to every organization, the factor of evolution and promoter of competitive success, which is why their motivation is a well-defined concern of every company. In the context of the current economy, employee motivation knows new horizons, managers and human resources divisions trying to identify the most varied and innovative methods to motivate employees. In order to make the employee motivation process more efficient, employers try to come up with various motivation methods, as specific as possible to each person. In this way, the more an employee feels that he is appreciated and motivated on an individual level and not as a resource that only covers a position in the organizational chart, the more his involvement will increase and lead to favorable results for the company.*

Key-words: *Motivation, innovation, employees.*

JEL Classification: *J33, M12, M52.*

1. Introduction

Over time, the importance and appreciation of human capital has experienced impressive development, demonstrating its effectiveness and contribution in any field of activity. In the modern approach, from the perspective of human resources management, people are not only hired to fill certain vacant positions in the organization and be remunerated for the work performed, but also for their role and contribution that they can have within the institution, being perceived as an essential part of the organization.

In this context, staff motivation is the basic factor that determines and orients employees towards obtaining performance results, which are the basis of organizational development and ensuring a competitive position in the competitive environment.

From a conceptual point of view, motivation represents a sum of internal and external forces, energies that initiate and direct human behavior towards a certain goal, which, once achieved, will determine the concern for the satisfaction of another need, being at the same time an important lever in the process of self-regulation of the individual. Likewise, researchers define motivation as a process of initiating human behavior to achieve organizational goals in exchange for satisfying personal needs.

Employee motivation is a major component of company management. A first argument on which this statement is based is the role of motivation to support employee training. In fact, the quality of employee motivation conditions, to a decisive extent, the realization of management functions: foresight, organization and coordination, as well as the effectiveness of the evaluation that follows training and, through them, the very effectiveness of the entire enterprise.

The modern motivational system is a model consisting of a set of elements that contribute to the motivation of the company's employees. The components of the motivational system are numerous, they vary in origin, way of satisfaction and functions, so that they are as personalized as possible for each individual, to respond as best as possible to the needs of each and to stimulate the involvement of employees by offering individualized benefits according to each person's personality.

Literature review

Staff motivation is the management function where emotional intelligence is most strongly involved, so staff motivation policies must take into account the needs of individuals both at the group level and at the individual level. Staff motivation has been an attractive topic for many researchers, so that numerous motivation models can be identified in the specialized literature, the most representative being Maslow's and Herzberg's. Both analyze people's needs and represent a good foundation for defining the methods of motivation that can be identified at the organizational level.

The most representative model of needs is that of Maslow, who in 1954 proposed a primary model for the theory of the hierarchy of needs. Thus, Maslow's pyramid reflected a classification of people's needs, including the following categories: physiological, safety and security, belonging, esteem and self-realization. According to this theory, people have a tendency to validate needs starting from the base of the pyramid, tending to climb towards the top of the pyramid. The first level of the pyramid refers to the physiological needs that each individual has, respectively resources such as air, water, food, shelter, rest, clothes and shoes and reproduction. The second level includes elements related to personal security, employment, resources, health and property, while the third level includes friendships, the need for privacy, starting a family and sense of connection. At the fourth level we find the respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, power and freedom that an individual perceives, while the desire for self-transcendence is located on the last level of the pyramid.

Another approach to motivation is that of Herzberg, who exposes in his theory two main categories of motivating factors, respectively: motivation factors and hygiene factors. The motivation factors presented in the two-factor theory include the need for achievement, recognition, growth, responsibility, advancement, work itself, while the agency factors include elements such as security, safety, salary, supervision, work policies and environment For work.

At our times, there were initiatives that took into account the research of the needs underlying motivation, so that the study carried out by Nicolescu and Verboncu reflects types of motivation that can be classified into four pairs, as follows: positive - negative, intrinsic - extrinsic motivation, cognitive - affective and economic - moral.

2. Motivating employees

The methods of motivating employees have recently experienced a significant evolution, which has determined the increase in the diversity of methods by which employees are rewarded, appreciated and supported for carrying out their professional activity. Classic motivational techniques no longer have the impact they had a few years ago, which is why managers try to innovate and adapt the ways in which they motivate their staff in order to meet their needs as best as possible. In the following, we will present the techniques and methods of motivating employees that have become more and more popular among companies.

2.1. Communication of future plans

Ensuring transparency at the organizational level provides security to employees and motivates them in their professional activity. Effective communication between management and employees about organizational goals facilitates informing employees, reducing errors, and improving company performance. The transmission to employees of the future plans, the company's objectives, as well as the transmission of individual objectives, enhances the level of awareness among the employees and thus increases the chances of achieving them.

Showing the big picture promotes understanding of the purpose behind the work so employees can see how it fits into the big picture. Managers can help increase workplace motivation by making sure teams understand how each of their efforts affects the organization, customers, and community. Also, managers must ensure that employees know the purpose of their work and are aware of the importance of their work. Setting measurable goals provides a change for better employee motivation each time a goal is achieved and keeps the team on track.

2.2. Ensuring a positive and healthy work environment

Carrying out the activity in a safe workplace, where they can express themselves freely and have a balance between personal and professional life, increases both the productivity of employees and their motivation. A work environment in which employees have a sense of belonging and feel that they contribute to the company's success indirectly contributes to the company's performance.

The empathy shown by managers and the awareness at the managerial level of the fact that employees are not machines or resources that contribute to the achievement of tasks and have unique personalities, with varied needs, contribute to the motivation of the staff. Thus, positivity at work favors the motivation that employees have every day to come to work.

The awareness of the human side of each individual can also be emphasized by offering competitive medical packages, which include both components frequently found in companies, as well as innovative elements such as consultations with a psychologist, therapeutic or relaxation massage, career counseling, in organization, in financial education and other areas that have become topics of interest nowadays.

The involvement of employees in discussions in which top management participates is also a way of motivating employees, which aims both for top management to get to know high-performing employees, as well as to reduce the gap between organizational levels, thus creating the necessary environment for debating some topics, initiating some ideas or simply the appreciation of the merits of the people who were effectively involved in the success of the projects started at the organizational level.

2.3. Investment in professional and personal development

Employees who have the opportunity to learn continuously and are challenged in the workplace by their managers to become better are motivated by a sense of achievement and personal development. This challenge may be accepting a different role, managing a new or more valuable project, or representing the company and speaking in front of the public, even though the colleague has not done this before.

Employees whose work allows them to contribute to a greater cause they believe in are driven by a greater sense of achievement and purpose, which also helps boost staff confidence in their own abilities. Another example of how they can develop at work is to take over management activities. Thus, managers who allow employees to express themselves and get involved in the ongoing discussions offer trust and recognition among subordinates. Also,

in this way, not only can they share their opinions and be heard in this way, but they are motivated to put their words and ideas into practice afterwards.

Staff development from a professional and personal point of view can also be achieved through the financial and moral support of employees in the completion of specialization courses, professional training or participation in conferences, because through education, their confidence and motivation will be at another level. Also, access to information and to a library with valuable volumes in the field, updated periodically, is a way of motivation suitable for people who have reading as a passion.

2.4. Promoting flexibility in the workplace

Nowadays, flexibility at work is a very important factor, followed by salary. An approach that allows flexibility about where, when and how employees work will enable them to be highly motivated. A flexible company is a company that allows you to make up a lost hour, one that allows you to work from home, or if you have to go to the office, you can go. Flexibility can also be in working hours. It doesn't matter if you start very early or later, each of us has certain hours when we are productive. And a flexible manager understands and accepts this, as long as the job gets done on time.

Also, working from home is a highly appreciated advantage among young people who want to travel or relocate to another part of the country or to another country. Thus, they can continue working in the same company and capitalize on their personal plans. Another tool that has become popular is the adaptation of the program so as to offer flexibility for the activities carried out on the weekend, programs such as late Monday and early Friday coming for this purpose.

An innovative approach that recently appeared in multinational companies is the mobility programs that offer employees the possibility to work abroad in the short or long term, taking into account the needs of the employees. Mobility programs are opportunities that contribute both to the development of employees and to the formation of a cosmopolitan mentality of future leaders.

2.5. Celebrating victories and recognizing merits

Acknowledging successes and appreciating them is the easiest way to motivate employees. Appreciation of merits and involvement should not be underestimated because it is the best way in which managers can confirm to employees the recognition they deserve, assure them that they have done a very good job and make them realize how important is their involvement at the company level. Appreciation of merits can take very varied forms, which can be adapted according to each individual or situation. Among the forms of merit recognition are thank you emails, offering free days or a bonus to compensate for the effort put in, organizing outings in town for meals or team activities, recognizing merits in front of colleagues, offering valuable cards.

Also, the use of social media platforms has become increasingly used in both personal and professional life. Public recognition is a great way to celebrate an employee's achievements (having wider business impact) as it brings greater visibility and extends the employee's praise. At the same time, it represents an educational moment for informing the employees of the corporation about the importance of the work done. Appreciating an employee's success on social media platforms will make them feel rewarded not only by their own team, but also by the users who follow the account.

2.6. Providing opportunities for promotion and offering bonuses

Offering promotion opportunities represents for employees a confirmation of the fact that their involvement and the results obtained are appreciated, being considered employees who have a significant contribution at the company level. The degree of motivation of the employees who are promoted increases simultaneously with the new responsibilities, being thus aware of the skills that helped him climb the hierarchical ladder. Offering bonuses or financial benefits for various events no longer represent innovative ways of motivation, but combining classic elements with the new needs that have arisen among employees, new ideas can be outlined such as bonuses for special events, vacation bonuses, or material benefits such as a chair office for people who prefer working from home.

The permanent challenges also represent a way of validating the self-improvement needs manifested among the employees. The desire to learn new things from employees can be easily satisfied by involving employees in new challenges that will take them out of their comfort zone, help them assert themselves and reduce the risk of ceiling.

2.7. Adequate management between managers and employees

The relations between the direct manager and the employees often influence the activity and performance of the employees. Being the person who coordinates the employees' activity, the manager must ensure the existence of collaborative relationships and the existence of optimal working conditions, marked by freedom of expression and trust. At the same time, managers must be aware that when employees know that their voice is heard and that it matters, they feel motivated and confident about their position within the company. Also, avoiding control and micromanagement is primarily a proof of trust given to employees, as well as a way of motivating them by encouraging autonomy, expression and effective involvement in organizational development. Also, supporting new ideas and encouraging employees to express themselves can lead to the emergence of very good ideas.

At the level of many companies, one-to-one meetings have become more and more popular, being an opportunity to find out more information about employees both on a personal and professional level, thus being able to adapt future methods of motivation. At the same time, the fact that the manager allows time for an individual discussion with the employee is a way to confirm to the employees the importance they have at the organizational level, the appreciation they deserve and at the same time to appreciate the efforts and analyze the failures from the perspective of improvement opportunities.

2.8. The use of the latest generation applications and technologies

The use of the latest technologies and applications is an indirect way of motivating employees. In addition to the advantages they bring at the organizational level, many employees greatly appreciate the possibility of being able to work with the newest versions of applications, the newest technologies, thus allowing them to be in step with technological evolution and to have access to powerful tools, which at the same time make their activity more efficient. The use of outdated systems and hardware tools is most often associated with cumbersome processes, long response times, which determines both a long time for completing tasks and frustration among employees.

3. Conclusions

Motivation plays a very important factor in a person's life. Whether it's improving ourselves or our organization's performance. Motivated employees do not need to be told how to do things, they take initiative, are willing to take on additional responsibilities, are innovative and good entrepreneurs, which can translate into success, performance and organizational development. At the same time, motivation plays a very important factor and

ensures that employees remain active and contribute the best things to their organization, so that at the organizational level, the definition of strategies, means and methods of motivation is an activity that must be considered the organization's values and mission globally, as well as the individual as a piece of a complex puzzle, without which the picture would not be complete.

To successfully include efforts aimed at motivating employees, managers must have a real picture at both the macro and micro levels of the company. The macro level supports a motivational initiative through logic and context, and the micro level gives it consistency in action. As long as the employee sees his relationship with the company as an important one, the activity he performs brings with it personal fulfilment. In this way, the result of the motivation approach will have a decisive impact on personal motivation. After all, the need for self-actualization represents the inclination towards capitalizing on one's own potential.

References

1. Băieșu, M., 2003. *Human resources management*. Chișinău: ASEM.
2. Bîrcă, A., Băieșu, M., Abramihin, C., 2013. *Human resources management. Applied approach. Case studies. Integrame. Probleme. Tests*. Chișinău: ASEM.
3. Gîțu, A., Professional development - An instrument to motivate employees in the public service. *Teoria și practica administrării publice - Materiale ale Conferinței științifice internaționale*, pp. 544-547. [online] Available at: <http://dspace.aap.gov.md/bitstream/handle/123456789/1801/Gitu_A.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> [Accessed 08.04.2023].
4. Herzberg, F., 1966. *Work and the Nature of Man*. Cleveland, OH: World Publishing.
5. Maslow, A.H., 1954. *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper & Row.
6. Nicolescu, O., Verboncu, I., 2008. *Management of Human Resources*, 291, pp. 239–246.
7. Vlad, G., 2023. *23 ways to motivate employees through non-financial methods*. [online] Available at: <<https://gratielavlad.ro/motivarea-angajatilor-prin-metode-nonfinanciare/>> [Accessed 08.04.2023].
8. Vo, T.T.D., Tuliao, K.V., Chen, C.-W., 2022. Work Motivation: The Roles of Individual Needs and Social Conditions. *Behavioral Sciences*, 12(2), pp.49-67.