

What Is to Be Done to Reduce the Effects of Emotionality and Conflicts on One's Satisfaction at Workplace

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Abstract

The author of this article intends to bring into attention aspects of the correlation between the employees' emotionality, stress and conflicts at workplace, as well as some suggestions to improve the effects of all this.

Since IT development facilitates information analysis and increases decision-taking powers (thus creating new jobs and rendering useless other jobs), people are hired for their skills to perform a temporary role, caused by temporary or unexpected changes in the external world. For the new employees, coming into an organization means an effort to give the measure of their professional competence and to understand and adapt to the environment, to organizational culture, policies and procedures.

Key words: emotionality, conflict, stress, satisfaction at workplace
J.E.L. classification M1, M12, M , M54

1. Introduction

The myth according to which feelings and emotions don't belong to business, organizations and professional relations is outdated. One's adjusting to emotional aspects at workplace is major. A normal phenomenon faced by many young people when they become employees is "the shock of reality" and it's devastating. It's caused by the difference (disparity) between their expectations, sometimes unrealistic, and the reality they face at their first workplace. The consequence may be strong dissatisfaction even if there are additional enticing elements related to the employee's role in the organization. New responsibilities cause frustration and anxiety to new employees.

Not to ignore that negative emotional reactions can be caused by the subordinate status as such. In addition, the employees who are at the beginning of their career feel unsafe about their skills and work ability.

Conflicts at workplace are inevitable in most cases and they negatively influence the employee's productivity. However, each employee may conceive how to approach them and find the best way to solve them. In their turn, managers can mediate conflicts among their employees and it's even desirable for them to do it.

2. About sources of stress at workplace

It was foreseeable for the changes in the organizational-managerial psychology to be bigger and deeper than the previous ones. Logical to be so, since today's workforce differs much from the workforce of the past. The educational level of the candidates is higher, the percentage of working women is higher (also of women filling management positions), the nature of work has changed at an accelerated pace (many of the current professions require IT training, the number of part-time jobs has increased). Social and economic changes force people to learn and acquire new skills and competences (multi-skilled), to increase their adaptability to organizational requirements and

changes. To add other issues arising in many organizations: significant staff fluctuation, the return to work of the retired, increased costs with the employees, drug use at workplace.

Muchinsky points out that be the organizational-managerial psychology prepared or not to face these changes, they will anyway take place.

It is obvious that emotions influence life. Although the dynamics of emotions has been studied for a long time (since Ancient times, Aristotle made the difference between *ethos*: persuasion based on the stature of the speaker, and *logos*: persuasion based on the logics of the arguments and *pathos*: persuasion based on the appeal to emotions), for a long time, organizational psychology has not dealt with this topic.

Arthur Koestler wrote: "Emotional reactions seem anachronic for our times: our body goes through an involuntary shudder when we hear a sudden noise, we sweat when we take an exam as if we wanted to release the heat produced during our encounter with the examiner. These anachronic reactions are inherited through birth and can be triggered by certain stimuli acting in low, almost homeopathic dose...the salt grain that should be present in a story to create emotions, is actually a drop of adrenaline."

The rules of work are undergoing mutations. We are judged according to new standards, not only according to our IQ or professional competences but also according to our behavior towards ourselves and towards the others. The new "criterion" considers skills and technical know-how to be part of the professional activity and focuses on personal qualities: initiative, adaptability, empathy, persuasion. It is not a temporary whim or a temporary managerial recipe; research has revealed that personal qualities is the ingredient of an excellent professional activity – especially in the case of a leader -, and to understand how these skills can be cultivated may be major for ensuring satisfaction in work.

Wayne Leon Payne considers that emotional intelligence is a skill that implies a creative relation with fear, pain and desire. The first accurate definition of emotional intelligence was published by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer in 1990: they believe that emotional intelligence implies the skill to perceive emotions and to express them as accurately as possible, to have access to or to generate feelings when they facilitate thinking, and to understand emotions and regulate them in order to promote emotional and intellectual development; in 1997, the two researchers updated their definition with the idea that "emotional intelligence means also the ability to understand emotions, assuming that emotions and known and regulated in such a way that they contribute to intellectual and emotional development".

P.P. Neveanu, according to Mihaela Roco, underlines that emotions are those judgments that we make about the world and imply an assessment made by the individual on the significance of an event or a situation. This assessment depends on factors related to the individual's cultural background and personality, on the way in which an individual perceives a situation. The emotional propensities that are relatively stable and formed by what we think and feel about an object, situation or person are the attitudes. Attitudes often influence our behavior towards situations and people. For instance, if someone finds that: "I dislike my job" (attitude), most probably "will look for another job" (behaviorism).

Occupational burnout is a major source of stress. Not only overwork but also a lot of constrains on the individual's professional life that make the individual feel that life stifles him/her. It is equally true that lack of burnout can be also a source of stress for employees, because, the more professional employees become, the more they want cognitive stimulation and autonomy at workplace.

3. About work satisfaction

Individuals must manage change continuously. Change generates a work surplus, most of the times. Change also implies uncertainty regarding the possibility to achieve the expected performance. Change covers all elements of novelty: learning new techniques, new methods, new procedures, or developing abilities that we do not possess to a significant extent. The more unpredictable change is, the more stressful.

Aspects related to work satisfaction have been of interest for the HR experts during the last quarter of century. Theoretical, economic, cultural, functional and humanitarian arguments explain

the increasing interest. The economic arguments refer to the fact that managers invest time, energy (effort), money, to achieve the employees' satisfaction, according to a simple rationale: if satisfaction can be improved, the organization may save huge money with hiring and training new employees. Also, measuring satisfaction / lack of satisfaction in various groups gives the managers more opportunities to locate those groups and formulate solutions to improve.

Work satisfaction is an individual state that can be felt at a certain moment by an employee. A unanimously accepted definition of work satisfaction has not been formulated so far: satisfaction is any combination of psychological, physiological and environmental circumstances or, according to V. Vroom: „Work satisfaction is made up of affective orientations of an individual towards work roles he/she plays at a certain moment.” According to Hellriegel, Slocum, Woodman (1992): “Satisfaction is a positive or pleasant emotional state resulted from one's professional experience”.

What can be found in most definitions is that work satisfaction is a pleasant reaction / affective state occurred in the context of organizational work.

As organizations respond to the environment in a more dynamic and turbulent environment, managers must face a double challenge: pressure of the external environment and organizational changes.

In the organizational environment, managing conflictual states implies the manager's abilities to persuade and negotiate.

Conflicts that oppose the employees to one another can undermine the daily life at a workplace. The role conflict describes the situations where the employees report to several bosses.

4. Methods to improve the work environment

The employees will do something not only because they are asked (requested) so but they will accept only what is of interest for them, what they understand and see as beneficial. To be successful in what they do, a logical and objective approach of phenomena is not enough. Much subtle aspects of human relations should be taken into account: about communication, about emotions that are communicated and created among humans and between humans and the organization.

We learn to control feelings by recognizing them, identifying them and labeling them accurately. The control of one's own emotions needs practice, but it can be achieved, it is useful and it brings benefits in communication and in the relations among employees.

Th. Hatch and H. Gardner, cited by M. Rocco, consider that art of leadership to be a sui-generis form of social intelligence consisting of recognition of the others' feelings and of the ability to link to them quickly. In their opinion, the components of emotional intelligence are:

- Organization of the group – crucial ability of the leader involved in the initiation and coordination of the effort of the collaborators of the group
- Negotiation of solutions – the leader's mediator talent to contribute to solving the conflicts
- Personal connections – to recognize and reply to personal feelings and to take care of them, to empathize
- Social analysis - ability to detect what is behind feelings, motivations and personal concerns.

Emotional management does not seem to be innate but acquired, learnt and developed, as Adele B Lynn states. She says that experience modifies the level of knowledge and the emotional structure that contributes to people's spiritual growing up.

To note that both emotional intelligence and traditional (rational) intelligence have an adaptive nature and ensure the individual's survival.

The specialized literature mentions that communication improves at one's workplace, which results into lower stress at one's workplace, less diseases and lower absenteeism.

We all face a double stress: personal and professional (financial concerns, disease, death of a beloved person, or a happy event, as well as strains - increased physical and intellectual efforts, changes, frustrations and relations with colleagues and the boss).

Changes need adaptation and require dealing with stress. Change creates uncertainty. The more unpredictable and the less controllable or the less desired change is, the more stressful for the individual. It may look strange but a promotion can be also stressful as this change may place the

individual in a situation that he/she may control less and makes him / her doubt his / her competence. A promotion therefore can be a strong stress factor.

Project management means almost by definition conflict management, as a successful project is many times quantified by goals that are contradictory; goals and priorities that contradict each other (i.e. to manufacture a high quality product with low costs within a deadline as tight as possible). In addition, the groups interested in the project may be in conflict as the project may be something new that takes them out of their daily routine, so we can say that project management means conflict management. In projects, time pressure is permanent and strong, and disruptions are disturbing because at the psychological level, humans build up certain stages in their minds to engage in gradually, and disruptions block and result into anxiety and aggressiveness arisen from the fear of not performing appropriately and of not meeting the deadlines. Multiple-tasking, and the use of advanced technology are only 2 examples of sources that can generate tremendous stress, through psychological destabilizing imposed by the adaptive response and by the difficulty to put the action plans in hierarchical order (the above-mentioned stages conceived in one's mind).

Unfortunately, there are project managers who consider that employees are more efficient when are under pressure or fear; to note, however, that on short term, management through stress proves to be efficient in many cases, on long term, failure "is ensured".

Each employee should:

- look after and be concerned about one's health.
- avoid as much as possible the constant exposure to stress in order to avoid developing somatic and psychological syndromes.
- be aware that long term exposure to stress, even moderate, has a negative impact upon performance in work, even relative stress can disorganize and make someone focus more on negative emotions caused by stress, and less on tasks.
- be aware that emotional burnout causes loss of energy and motivation and has direct implications upon professional achievements.

5. Conclusions

There are more and more companies that admit that the encouraging of the characteristics of emotional intelligence is a major component of the managerial philosophy; the competition is no longer with products but with the ways in which you know to use your employees. Stress control, stress tolerance – the ability to fight stressful events and situations without stumbling and the ability to face them actively and positively are requirements to succeed in life.

For better adjustment, it would be desirable for employees to communicate openly with each other, to learn how to learn, to look for compatible available development sources. Mentoring and coaching can be key elements to improve the ability to learn, to communicate, to improve motivation and eventually to increase organizational efficiency. Through mentoring, the employees are helped to integrate into the organization and supported in their personal and professional development.

Coaching is a process by which employees are helped by the coach to identify and define their specific goals in order to organize their activity so that they could achieve their goals. Actually coaching is the way to facilitate manifestations of the employees' individual potential.

Counseling is also worth to mention – a process of interpersonal influence oriented towards providing assistance to employees in terms of psychological development.

Probably the most important thing (in our opinion) is that managers and employees should have a winner's attitude. This means that the psychological potential and its various cognitive, affective, emotional, relational and behavioral components are used to the greatest extent. If they constantly have the will and the wish to improve performance, winners will seek to face difficult situations that expose them to increasing stress. Uncertainty and risk will optimize the winners' efficiency and give them the opportunity to mobilize all their resources in order to win. Winners accept the idea that the road to success is neither smooth, nor deprived of various obstacles.

6. References

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