

The Motivation as Managerial Tool for Increasing Professional Performance. National Challenges and European Perspectives

Micu Angela-Eliza
„Ovidius” University of Constanta
angelaelizamicu@yahoo.com
Necula Ramona Valentina
„Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati
ramona.necula@yahoo.com

Abstract

Increasing the professional performance of each employee is an objective that any manager has. Employee, surnamed "company heart", is the only resource capable of generating other resources, reason for which, it is especially important for the managerial act.

Even in today's society, dominated by innovation and information technology, the human resource has enormous potential for growth and development, being the only resource that can overcome its limits.

Our study aims to demonstrate the connection between the achievement of the desired performance and the use of the managerial tool called "motivation" with which the manager must obtain the perfect mix of orientation, direction, resources and rewards so that he could stimulate employees, to engage in their true capacity, using their full potential.

Key words: personnel management, motivation, decision making, performance, job satisfaction

J.E.L. classification: M12, J28

1. Introduction

From the managerial point of view, the human resource is the most important asset, regardless of the field of activity approached, and the way the manager succeeds to get the employees to step on the road of excellence, represents the biggest challenge of the managerial act.

From this perspective, we consider that the theme of the managerial capacity to motivate the staff is of particular relevance, especially in the context in which the accent falls on the process of stimulating each employee, in order to accomplish the work tasks that lead to the realization of the organizational mission, taking also into account the satisfaction of their personal desires and the achievement of their professional interests.

Without indolence, the managerial mission is difficult, but not impossible. The manager must always be concerned about finding the right strategy to know the inner state of employees so that they can be motivated enough, in order to be able to direct and shape their behaviors for the benefit of the organization, acting under the impulse of their own feelings of compulsion.

Certainly, any behavior manifested by an individual is based on motivation, and the human conduct is usually centered on the fulfillment of goals, correlated with the need for reward.

Motivation is the internal state of employees, a state that generates and stimulates human action, while incentive act is about managerial strategies, through which the leadership of an organization can practically increase employee motivation to increase organizational performance.

In this sense, the real managerial challenge is to know the physiological, psychological or sociological desires of the employees, especially as their failure would lead to organizational tensions and uncertainties.

2. Current Literature Review

According to the new approaches specific to modern management, in the contemporary period, a new system of motivation of the personnel is wanted, in order to make possible the alignment of the professional objectives of the people with those of their organization, to ensure the desired performance at the level organization.

Obtaining organizational performance can not be achieved without a motivated staff, willing to dedicate themselves to the real capacity and invest their full potential in organizational mission accomplishment. Performance has to be achieved at both the individual and the organizational level, and the real managerial challenge is to control the "demotivation" identified and to eliminate this phenomenon that threatens organizational success.

"Demotivation is the process of alteration of motivation, generated by the lack of interest, difficulty and psychological discomfort in achieving the person's goals, in a professional context, in achieving the objectives and tasks of the function." (Levinta-Perciu, 2011).

Each manager, in his / her own decision-making act, in the proposed motivational context, must take into account both the financial motivational component (consequently applying strategies in terms of the possibilities of remuneration available to him / her: reasonable salary for the work done, bonuses, prizes, bonuses and, last but not least, a decent pension) as well as a non-financial motivational component (power delegation, professional promotion opportunities, public praise and congratulations, autonomy in execution, encouraging creativity, pleasant atmosphere generated in the organizational environment, support of good cooperation with colleagues, additional free days, treatment tickets, preferential credits, staff development facilities, training courses in the country and abroad, stability at work, flexibility of the work program, possibility of providing a service apartment, including the photo of people with outstanding results on the employees' panel of honor, gifts for holidays, birthdays or special events, free trips and so on).

From the aforementioned aspects, we believe that we must emphasize the relevance of training our own employees. „Training is required to increase the performance of employees, if employees are trained, they will be well aware of their job specifications, skills required to work well and would be able to use new technology. Then their motivation level will be increased, which will also be beneficial in enhancing performance, working environment and management behavior will also result in maximized performance that will help to effectively achieve your organization goals. Competitiveness is based on the concept of performance, which is very closely related to that of training. As every organization through out the world wants to compete against their competitors, they must increase their performance to do so. When employees are given training they feel better in their own performance and hence work harder to achieve personal and organizational goals". (Khan, 2012).

Equally, the leader needs to know and master the factors that may demotivate employees (repetitive and long-term tasks, inconsistency in decision making, unclear work instructions, unequal treatment of employees, many and unnecessary rules, imposing cumbersome execution procedures, the lack of communication and feed back, the excessive tolerance of poorly prepared staff and frequent mistakes, public criticism, discouraging communication formulas, excessive control that generates discomfort, denial of achievements, and so forth), trying to be more objective in applying the act of coordination and control.

Knowing and mastering all these aspects, a successful manager is the one who can answer the next question: „What makes the employees of any organization „go the extra mile" to provide excellent service" (Nurun, Monirul, Tanvir, & Abdullah, 2017).

From this perspective, we must also point out that any manager who claims to be successful must understand the true impact and overwhelming importance of the IT component in influencing organizational performance. „...Data and people are inexorably linked as never before. Either one without the other is suboptimal....Management's responsibility today is to combine people with information on a timely basis for several purposes. Information is one key to performance management and improvement" (Gabcanova, 2011).

Both literature and practice reveal that organizations struggle to survive in the current competitive environment, and employees are also competing with each other. However, „each person has a different mixture and strength of needs, as some people are driven by achievement,

while others are focusing on security. If the managers are able to understand, predict and control employee behavior, they should also know what the employees want from their jobs" (Dobre, 2013), thus being able to use, in the true sense of the word, the motivation as a managerial tool for increasing performance.

3. Collection of Data

The present case study, conceived in an inductive and comprehensive manner, was conducted through an interview, applied to a number of 10 deciding subjects, with leading positions.

The study complies with the conditions of validity considering the fact that the respondents are of different ages (38 years and 68 years of age), both sexes, have high work experience (between 13 and 48 years), coming from both sides, public and business environment.

The construction of the interview was conducted using non-repetitive, unique, open-ended questions, the interviewer interacting directly with the respondents, addressing 2 directive questions, 5 semi-direct questions and 3 non-directional questions.

As far as the duration of the interviews is concerned, we mention that the average was 40 minutes, a timeframe in which, very relevant qualitative data, regarding the topic under discussion, were obtained.

Responses were provided by 6 government leaders (public institutions), as well as by 4 managers with experience in the business environment, with the mention that some respondents hold top management positions and others occupy the organizational chart the institutions from which they originate, functions classified as middle management.

4. Data Analysis and Results

Starting from the idea that the respondents, in their capacity as people assumed as decision-makers, know the notion of motivation, they are asked a first question related to its definition, taking into account the personal opinion and experience. Thus, using a qualitative type of content adapted to Van Vlock (and presented by prof. dr. Septimiu Chelcea), in our research we started from the hypothesis that motivation is a fundamental concept in psychology, also used by other sciences and which expresses the fact that, at the basis of a certain human behavior, there are a series of states of necessity, which the individual wants to satisfy, by moving to action.

Analyzing the responses of the interviewed managers, by analyzing the content of the key terms used, it was found that 8 of them defined the motivation in our sense (with a different vocabulary, but with approximately the same keywords used) and only 2 of the respondents defined insecure concept. For the purpose of the method, the answers have the following mathematical configuration:

Figure no.1. Configuration of responses. Adaptation after Van Vlock

According to the hypothesis	8 persons	80%
Unsure, reported to the hypothesis	2 persons	20%
Disagree with the assumption	0 persons	0%

Source: Own research of the authors

Using another method of analyzing the contents, respectively the trend analysis, we analyzed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis no 1: Motivation is a managerial tool for increasing professional performance

Hypothesis no 2: There is a direct connection between organizational culture and motivation of staff, in order to increase professional performance.

Figure no.2. The trend analysis

$$AT = \frac{F-D}{L}$$

AT - the trend analysis index
F -number of favorable units
D- number of unfavorable units
L-the number of units related to the theme
T-total number of units

Source: (Stefanel, A., *Content Analysis*)

Concerning the first hypothesis discussed, it was found that the persons in senior management interviewed emphasized that motivation is indeed a managerial tool for increasing professional performance, confirming and arguing the hypothesis, compared to the demonstration of the trend analysis in figure no.3.

Figure no.3. The situation of the responses reflected by the analysis performed

Total number of units - responses ticked by respondent : T =10
Number of favorable units : F = 7
Number of unfavorable units : D = 1
The number of units related to the theme :L = 1
So, AT (alternative 1) = (7-1) / 1 = 6.0
AT (alternative 2) = (7-1) / 10 = 0.6

Source: Own research of the authors

When questioning the second hypothesis, the 10 interviewed respondents expressed for the most part, confirming the hypothesis and thus highlighting the causal link between organizational culture and motivation of staff, in the context of increasing professional performance, bringing up that private sector individuals have expressed an unfavorable point of view, considering that this link is somewhat more theoretical than practical.

Figure no.4. The situation of the responses reflected by the analysis performed

Total number of units - responses ticked by respondent : T =10
Number of favorable units : F = 6
Number of unfavorable units : D = 3
The number of units related to the theme :L = 1
So, AT (alternative 1) = (6-3) / 1 = 3.0
AT (alternative 2) = (6-3) / 10 = 0.3

Source: Own research of the authors

To highlight the managers' view of the extent to which their subordinates are "happy at the workplace", and with regard to their agreement or disagreement on the expression "money is the magical solution of motivation", but also to the expression "public recognition of success and outstanding results is a solution of exceptional non-financial motivation and at the expense of any manager" , the oldest form of content analysis, named thematic-categorical, was used, which consists in the realization of a transversal cutting of the discursive corpus (a fragment of the discourse) and its analysis, in the sense of favorable, unfavorable or neutral direction, which the respondent has in relation to the proposed subject.

Figure no.5. The attitude scale used in analysing the hypothesis

very favorable +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 very unfavorable
The zero point (0) -the neutral attitude to the hypothesis assertion

Source: Own research of the authors

Next, we present the scale used in analyzing the three hypotheses we have referred to earlier and with the help of which, all the registered response units could be analyzed and evaluated, and the algebraic sum was then calculated.

Concerning the discussion of „happiness at work”, the sum of the answers obtained $\Sigma = + 6$ and given that the number of respondents is 10, then the attitude according to the scale used is in the range $[0, +1]$, the attitude being $A = 0,6$, thus less favorable to „the happy employees at work”.

Regarding the expression „money is the magical solution of motivation”, the results of the analysis were as follows: $\Sigma = +11$; $A = 1,1$. With the interval $[+ 1, + 2]$, we find that the respondents were oriented in the direction of expression confirmation, but, however, we mention that they considered that money is not the only solution (we mean 70% of respondents).

Taking into account the fact that in the diagnosis carried out by the third hypothesis listed in the categorical thematic method, the following results were obtained: $\Sigma = + 18$; $A = 1.8$. The interval $[+ 1, + 2]$ shows that the respondents expressed favorably that the public recognition of success and outstanding results is a solution of exceptional non-financial motivation and at the expense of any manager, although they all point to a series of shortcomings such as : the lack of enough time for meetings dedicated to the topic and prior discussion of the relevance of successful work for the organization's overall objectives.

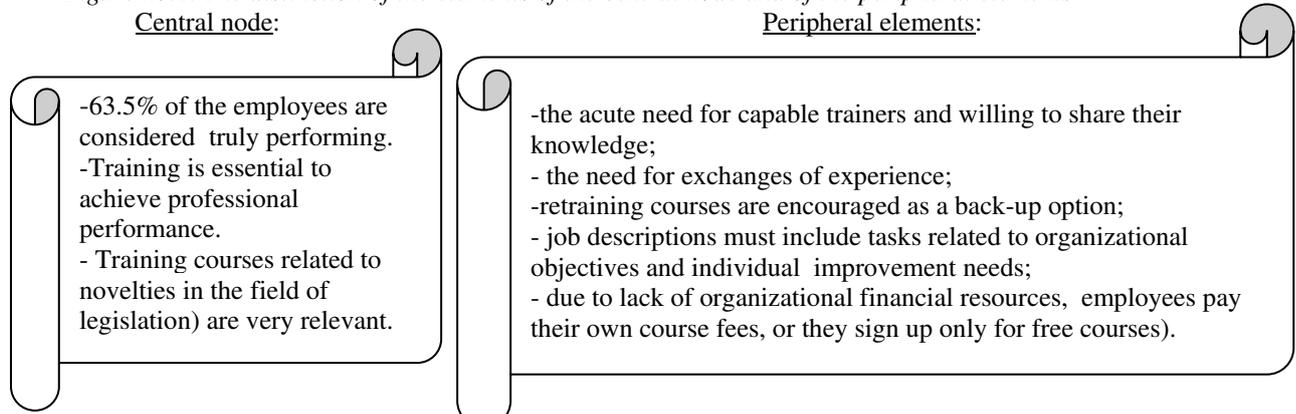
Another open question addressed to the interviewees was the way they motivate the staff they are coordinating. In this case, we consider it particularly relevant to detail the responses in the way they were expressed, stressing that the only approach that all decision-makers have agreed on, was the pecuniary one. In addition, the following have also been mentioned: the demonstration that the manager has confidence in the employees' profession, by including them in imported projects; supporting employees in exceptional situations when they faced with particular personal problems; ensuring a pleasant work environment and appropriate conditions; leadership through the power of personal example, the manager being also part of the team; encouraging employees to overcome failures; the granting of special allowances in exceptional circumstances; righteousness and equal treatment of employees; appropriate communication, ensuring transparency.

Another method of research used and adapted by Jean Claude Abric, it uses cognitive analysis on the one hand, and socio-linguistic, on the other, highlighting the constructions that represent the central node of communication while also referring to the peripheral elements.

In this regard, a study hypothesis was put forward, which was analyzed using three different questions in the structure of the interview, positioned in such a way that the subjects did not necessarily notice the logical connection between them. The hypothesis studied is as follows: „Managers consider that their subordinate staff is mostly performing, and one of the most relevant methods emphasized to achieve this goal was to encourage employee training, along with many other methods that have led to a high yield and competitiveness in the specific field of activity.”

From this perspective it is mentioned that the hypothesis was confirmed by the analyzes, made on the answers formulated and interpreted with precision and from the detailed study of the key words and expressions used by the respondents resulted the following conclusions, specific to the Abric method:

Figure no.6. The distinction of the elements of the central node and of the peripheral elements



Source: Own research of the authors

The study reveals once again that determination lies with employees and motivation lies with managers, both of which are complex and individualized, which is why there can not be, either a theoretical or a practical one, a unique success formula, which can be applied as a major tool for increasing professional performance.

However, the interconnection of the three concepts is certain, the logical thread of the elements involved demonstrating that motivation is a technique that governs the action to be taken, taking into account that the internal motivation of the employee may be the desire to be performing, and that performance may even be the expectation of the employee, not just the employer's desire.

5. Conclusions

Thus, we can conclude by pointing out that employees are the wheels of the organizational mechanism, without which its operation could not be possible, neither theoretical nor practical.

Wheels are powered by determination energy – „internal motivation”, and the mechanism must be maintained continuously, sustaining it permanently, using the appropriate substance: „external motivation”, used in controlled quantities to perform.

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