



Down Under

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Practical Guidelines to Successful Implementations

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How Do You Motivate Employees to Provide a High Level of Customer Service and Satisfaction?

In my last Column I asked the question, “Should we ‘really’ be customer-centric when we are improving or developing our business processes?” or should we be putting our people (employees) at the center of our process redesign?

I concluded the obvious, that we need to do both. Without customers there is no business and therefore no employees. Without employees there is no business and therefore no customers. So customers and employees are the Yin and the Yang of business. We need to get *both* elements right, supported by customer and employee focused culture and business processes.

Many organizations claim that “our people are our greatest asset” and yet do not spend anywhere near enough time developing and caring for them.

I would like to spend a short time with you exploring how we should be caring for our greatest asset. Many of the points are going to sound obvious. Unfortunately, while the obvious seems obvious, many of us do not implement it.

Many years ago Frederick Herzberg proposed the Motivation-Hygiene Theory (1959) of job satisfaction. While this was a very long time ago, it is absolutely relevant today. He suggested that people were influenced by two sets of factors:

- Motivation factors; and
- Hygiene factors.

The figure below shows the typical components of each factor.

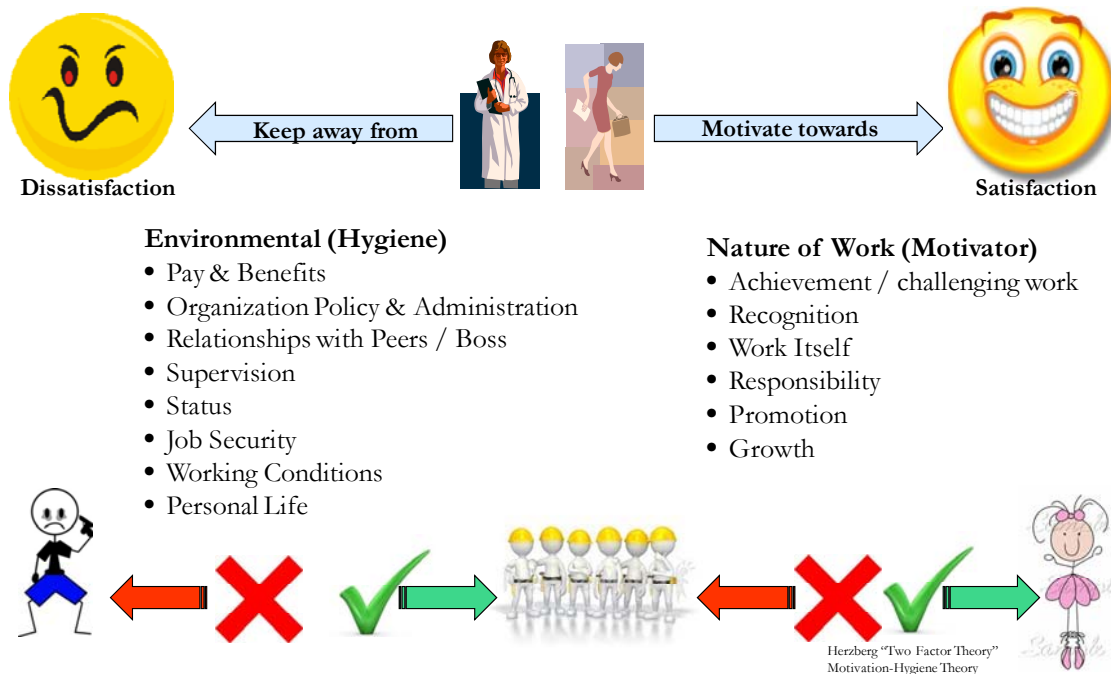


Figure 1: Employee Motivation and Satisfaction

You can see that there are certain factors in the workplace that cause job satisfaction, while a separate set of factors cause job dissatisfaction.

Simply stated:

- If you wish to motivate employees and have them continuously add value to your business and customers, then management needs to create an environment that moves employees towards satisfaction. To enable this you need to focus on the motivation factors outlined in the figure.
- However, unless the hygiene factors are taken care of, you will cause employee dissatisfaction. No matter how hard management works on the motivation factors, there will never be a movement towards satisfaction, unless the hygiene factors are "neutralized".

Essentially, hygiene factors are needed to ensure an employee is not dissatisfied. Motivation factors are needed to motivate an employee to deliver a higher level of performance.

Many regard the hygiene factors as maintenance activities that are simply necessary to avoid dissatisfaction, and that is true. Of themselves, they will not move employees towards satisfaction.

Some years ago I was the number two person in the IT area of a large insurance organization. The cultural survey of the entire organization revealed that IT ranked very low on the employee satisfaction index. I was asked by the head of the department (the CIO) to investigate why and what we could do to remedy the situation.

After interviewing many employees and running focus groups (23% of all IT staff were involved), it became obvious that the hygiene factors were the first things that needed to be addressed. All the hygiene factors were actually comparatively simple things for management to fix, it was just that at the time, employee care was not on management's radar screen. and there was no mechanism for employees to voice their issues.

As you would expect, the more difficult aspects to remedy related to the motivation factors. However, once these motivational factors had been identified, work could begin to determine the

actions required and then implement them. The key for me was the involvement of the employees in this process. Once employees were involved, they felt they had a level of control and ownership.

In summary, management must work on the hygiene factors to neutralize and avoid employee dissatisfaction. However, it is the motivation factors that require attention to move towards employee satisfaction and a high performance environment.

This is not a one-time event. It requires continuous management attention and a process to ensure it is achieved.

In the next Column I will outline how Expectation Theory of Victor Vroom provides a framework for motivation based upon expectations.

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