

## MOTIVATING THE EMPLOYEE

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Motivating the employee stands for provision of a motive force to him—on institutional and inter-personal levels—so that he is inclined, on his own, to put in his best in the desired direction without having to be prodded and goaded at every step.

### WHY MOTIVATE?

In concrete terms, success in 'motivation' would lead to :—

- (a) Acceptance and implementation of objectives of organisation by the employees.
- (b) High morale.
- (c) Maximum productivity.
- (d) Absence of petty bickerings and conflicts.
- (e) Job-satisfaction for the group and the individual employees.
- (f) Need for supervision would be minimised.

### WHAT HAS MOTIVATED MEN IN THE PAST?

Men have ventured on undertakings—industrial and others—in the past, involving group efforts. The problem of motivation is, therefore, as old as mankind. Before the specific task of motivating the employees in an industrial undertaking, with a given background and limitations is studied in the light of a particular model, it may not be out of place to enumerate the factors which have motivated men to endeavour in the past :—

- (a) Reward—material or otherwise.
- (b) Appreciation of good work.
- (c) Exemplary leadership.

- (d) Self-preservation and perpetuation.
- (e) Participation in selection of goals.
- (f) Fairness.
- (g) Faith and fanaticism.
- (h) Ego satisfaction.

#### MOTIVATION IN INDUSTRY—THE FRAMEWORK

Industrial establishments these days conform to a more-or-less common pattern or model. The present day industry is typified by the following common features :—

- (a) Divorce between ownership and management, so that profit motive is considerably diluted, especially in public sector undertakings.
- (b) Emergence of strong trade unions of workers and supervisors, resulting in dichotomy of loyalty of work force.
- (c) Wage-structure and other service conditions are settled in bipartite negotiations with the unions : the Managers in the field cannot use wage-differentials as a motive force.
- (d) Labour legislation has fettered the authority of the management to fire unwanted elements among the work-force, making it difficult to get rid of bad employees.
- (e) Autocracy is at a discount in the industry, as in other spheres of life. Democratic ways and means of managing men are to be employed.
- (f) Rise in educational qualifications of workforce, leading to a change in their expectations of the managers in day-to-day dealings, and of the management in the matter of promotions etc.
- (g) Dearth of good managers in the face of increasing requirements.

#### HOW TO MOTIVATE?

All efforts at motivation must take into account the framework outlined above.

At the top management level, steps have to be taken to create a superstructure which is conducive to motivation, which will provide

the managers at the lower levels the necessary background to work around. This brings us to the institutional factors necessary for motivation.

- (a) Objectives of the organisation should be socially laudable, so that the workforce can take pride in being useful to the society. Profit should not be made out as the sole object of an enterprise, although it is the natural incident of all commercial undertakings. In determining, defining and enunciating the objectives or altering them from time to time work force should be associated to the extent possible.
- (b) Careful recruitment of suitable hands for managerial posts, their training and orientation and reasonable service conditions are an essential pre-requisite for motivation to percolate down the rank and file. It is the managers and supervisors at different levels who represent the top management. If they are not motivated, motivating the employees will be difficult.
- (c) Wages and other service conditions should be reasonable and determined as a result of negotiations with employees' trade unions recognised by the organisation. This will make the task of managers/supervisors easy inasmuch as major service conditions would be taken as settled. It is, however, essential, that the level of wages etc. should be competitive, need-based and related to cost of living, within, of course, the profitability of enterprise. Avenues for advancement should be merit-oriented. Promotion policy should be widely known and fairly implemented and the employees should believe so.
- (d) Norms of physical working conditions should be standardised making these as comfortable as possible. These should not be left to the fancy of individual supervisors or fortuitous circumstances.
- (e) Channels of communication should be provided and kept alive.

Given the institutional frame work, the managers at the 'Contact' levels have to motivate the employees to produce the maximum and contribute to the objectives of the organisation. Here, the whole gamut of industrial psychology comes into play. The situation in-

volves inter-personal relationships. The question of leadership, the so called use of human skills, is the most pertinent in this context.

All managers try-in their own way—to carry the employees with them. As a matter of fact there are as many ways of motivating men as the number of managers. The ways of each manager represent a certain distinct combination of inherent and acquired human skills.

While the text books on Personnel Management are replete with Do's and Dont's regarding motivating the employees, a mere knowledge of these is not enough. Each situation has to be assessed independently and steps have to be taken to meet it. This, however, should not discount the importance of certain traits and skills which are a must for all managers.

Sound job knowledge, pleasing disposition, keen and receptive ears, sympathetic outlook, unassuming nature, discretion in speech, cool temper, fairness, firmness, mental agility, and clarity in communication are some of the traits which good managers have been observed to have possessed.

It is necessary that all managers who would like to motivate the employees make efforts to cultivate and acquire these traits.

The following points may be made in this connection :—

- (a) A manager should adjust his expectations—in the matter of discipline, respect for authority etc.—according to the developments in the mainstream of life in general. This will correct the perspective.
- (b) A manager, vested with authority on paper, need not, ipso facto, be recognised as leader, especially in view of the dichotomy of loyalties referred to earlier in the paper. He has to establish rapport with the individual members and win their esteem as a leader, so that his orders are considered worth notice and are received well.
- (c) Staff relations should not be taken for granted by relying merely on institutional framework created by the top management. A manager should not be bogged down in his files and papers. He must consciously work for good staff-relations as a part of his duty.
- (d) Too close supervision is neither possible nor desirable. It smacks of 'policeman' mentality and works against motivation. As an alternative, the manager should direct his

efforts towards building up his own image as a good leader so that his 'image' can evoke the desired response, even in his absence, one could not, however, be very sure, if the image-building could be consciously worked for. The image or the legend, however, does get established in case of managers who are good leaders.

- (e) A manager should not be averse or antagonistic to trade unions. The unions are a manifestation of organised labour and have to be reckoned with as a force. No efforts should be made to weaken the union or to wean people away from it. A manager should, however, build up his own leadership so that day-to-day problems are tackled independently of the union, and only matters of collection interest are routed through the union.
- (f) Frequent group discussions regarding matters of common interest have been found quite useful in motivating the staff.
- (g) Staff counselling should be resorted to for corrective action. Resort to disciplinary action should be reserved for really incorrigible, hopeless and serious cases.
- (h) A manager's own conduct should be unexceptionable, if not exemplary.
- (i) A manager must have a flair for dealing with men. He should take keen interest in human psychology. He should take his assignment as a challenge and an opportunity to be useful to his colleagues and the employees. This approach is a must, before a manager can hope to succeed at motivation.
- (j) Never condemn an employee. No one is hopeless. A manager should endeavour to go deep into why certain employees do not respond. This will not only motivate them, but will be very rewarding for the manager himself in terms of experience.

Note:— Based on Paper submitted by Shri O.P. Sethi, Agent, State Bank of India, Tis Hazari, Delhi, at the Second Seminar on Management of Human Resources held at the Administrative Staff College of India during the period 8th October to 18th October 1969.