



THE TIMES 100

BUSINESS CASE STUDIES

Motivation – Virgin Media

Motivation is the driving force behind actions and behaviour. It leads individuals to take action to achieve a goal or to fulfil a need or expectation. Understanding what motivates employees at work ensures that a business not only has employees that have the knowledge, skill and ability to do the job, but who are also committed to achieve a high standard of work. There are many positive behaviours that indicate employees are motivated including taking responsibility, helping colleagues, a commitment to achieving company targets and goals, as well as interest and concern for the business. On the other hand negative behaviours can be indicators of demotivated employees. These behaviours include poor timekeeping, high levels of absenteeism, avoiding responsibility and poor customer service all of which can impact on business performance.



Although recognised as not a key driver of engagement, Virgin Media recognises that reward is one of many motivating factors for a lot of its people and offers competitive salaries. It also offers bonus schemes, such as its ASPIRE field pay and reward scheme. The scheme rewards every Net Promoter® score (NPS) of 9 or 10 with £10. However, as a forward thinking business it understands the importance of different motivational factors. It offers additional benefits including private health care, life assurance, company pension scheme and staff saving schemes. The opportunity to progress within the company is also an important factor. All Virgin Media technicians are managed through the ‘Your Story Framework’ for career progression. This includes regular meetings to discuss performance, review progress against set objectives and develop plans which offer a clear career ladder to enable progression within the company.

One theorist whose studies became influential is Elton Mayo. Mayo’s research concluded that motivating factors include recognition, a sense of belonging and involvement, as well as social aspects of the workplace. Virgin Media use a variety of strategies to recognise the achievements of its employees. One method used is its NPS Hero Championship scheme where employees receive a personalised letter congratulating them on a perfect 10 score. The employee forum VOICE is another way the company engages with its employees.

Research undertaken by Frederick Herzberg in the 1950s has broadened our understanding of motivating factors and job satisfaction in the workplace. From his research he concluded that employees have two sets of needs in the workplace. He described these as hygiene and motivator factors. Hygiene factors (satisfiers) include salary and working conditions. However, these factors on their own do not lead to job satisfaction and can lead to dissatisfaction if pay and conditions are poor. Motivators are factors such as recognition, responsibility, achievement and opportunities for progression. Herzberg found that a combination of these factors increased motivation and improved individual performance.

In 1943 Abraham Maslow published his theory of a hierarchy of needs. Maslow identified that as individuals we have five sets of needs. At the first level, basic needs are those of food, water, warmth and shelter with wages that meet those needs. Safety needs include protection from danger, for example health and safety at work as well as job security. Social needs include a sense of belonging in work teams. He identified esteem needs as those of self-confidence, feeling useful and needed by other people. Maslow proposed that having satisfied all the lower needs an individual would then be able to realise their own potential for self-actualisation.



Questions

1. What is motivation?

2. List the five levels in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

3. Explain how Virgin Media ensures Herzberg's 'motivators' are provided for its employees.

4. Analyse the importance of having a motivated workforce.

Task

Create a large Hierarchy of Needs diagram. To each level add the methods that are adopted by an organisation of your choice to motivate its workers. A possible organisation to complete this for is your school or college, as it should be easy to find out the relevant methods used.

What have you learned?

In exactly fifteen words, explain an aspect of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and motivation. Your sentence shouldn't start with 'In today's lesson I have learned that...' A better start would be, 'Physiological needs are the...'