

Simons and Enz Study on Motivation and Performance

Perhaps the biggest misconception is that all employees want the same things from their job. Although basic assumptions and some generalities can be made, for the most part, motivation on the job must come from within.

A survey and subsequent study by Simons and Enz (Cornell, 1995) looked at employees spread out over 12 hotel chains in the United States and Canada to try and uncover some key information about effective motivation management and performance.

The study attempted to examine the following questions:

- * What motivates hotel workers?
- * Do hotel workers want different things from their jobs and employers than do workers in other industries?
- * Are men and women motivated by different job factors?
- * Are workers of different ages motivated by different job factors?
- * Are workers in different departments motivated by different job factors?

Overall, hotel employees reported that the three things they most wanted from their employers were: (1) good wages, (2) job security, and (3) opportunities for advancement and development.

These results may suggest that high levels of effort can be bought by above-average pay scales. It is true that managers usually face constraints on the salary levels they can offer. It is also true that pay raises often lose their ability to motivate as employees come to feel that they "deserve" their increased levels of fixed pay. Variable pay, where bonuses are linked to specific, measurable performance outcomes (e.g., guest-satisfaction scores), represents a significant motivational opportunity.

In addition, this survey suggests that other employee rewards are valued as well. For example, a promise of job security is something employees want enough to strive for, and a chance at promotion is highly valued by most employees.

Good working conditions, ranked number four (4) by the respondents, are another high-potential motivator. The overuse of threats or reprimands may serve as a strong force against motivation. Hostile and distrusting supervisors can dramatically shape employees' working conditions, and, for many employees, can diminish motivation levels. Note that the friendliness involved in setting up good working conditions is distinct from sympathetic personal help, which was ranked last by the hospitality employees. The employees in our study did not want their bosses to be their parents, their buddies, or their psychotherapists - what they wanted were good working conditions, which might include a safe and clean work environment in which good relationships prevail. (Simons, Tony, and Cathy A. Enz. "Motivating hotel employees: beyond the carrot and the stick." *Cornell Hotel & Restaurant Administration Quarterly* 36.n1 (Feb 1995): 20(8)

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These results were also divided into categories of motivation by age, gender, and department. Similarities could be drawn between employees who were of similar age, sex, and department.

What this study could mean for Companies really depends on their operating environment. The study focused solely on the hospitality industry and not other industries. However, what could be taken away from the results, however, is universal. That is that managers/supervisors often forget that the desire to do the job must come from within the employee and not from the supervisor. The manager can merely set the stage for motivation to happen, but cannot force motivation to occur.

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