

HOW TO EVALUATE COMPANY MOTIVATION IN A TRAVEL ORGANISATION USING PROJECT PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: The target of this paper is to identify current motivational trends amongst staff at ZZ Travel – a middle size travel agency based in Sofia, Bulgaria and to offer recommendations to improve their motivational level taking into consideration the theories of motivation and analytical frameworks. The purpose of this paper is to prove that motivation has a significant importance for achieving a company's success and according to the results to establish a more accurate framework on how to effectively apply motivation in the travel industry. The methodology for this paper has been conducted through evaluating motivation in Travel Agency ZZ, by way of a questionnaire completed by the staff. We received 21 responses from different people engaged in the company. The main research methods are based on cases from already tested world practices and our own research is based on "personal experience" of the staff. The "comparative method" is used by comparing different motivational methods in the travel organisation. Based on the cases and the conducted imperial research, common methods have been applied - analysis and synthesis (the individual parts are analysed and subsequently the synthesis of all analysed parts); induction - derivation of general cases based on case studies; deduction - transfer of general cases to private ones and comparison - comparison of characteristics and data. The results from this paper prove that motivation plays one of the most important roles among the company employees. The "statistical method" has been applied - data based on the statistical survey has been analysed, as well as the "qualitative method" (to emphasise the importance of the survey) and the "quantitative method" (as a summary of statistics from the empirical study). In the last part of the paper, there is an action plan to be used as a way forward to motivate staff.

Keywords: Project Portfolio Management, Motivation, Maslow's Pyramid, Herzberg's Hygiene Factor.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decades of the 21st century, project portfolio management has become one of the most current strategies in most global organisations and more and more large organisations are applying it as a practice and as one of the main methods of management. The relevance of project portfolio management is unquestionable, as it is a way of developing organizations in our millennium. Until now, companies have put this question aside and sought answers to their own questions. The project portfolio creates balance and coordination between many projects with the same goal. Projects are often in competition with each other and therefore priority must be given to one project over another.

2. METHOD OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

A questionnaire with 15 questions has been sent to all employees at ZZ Travel about the factors that play a positive role in the motivation of the company. We had 21 responses. We have compared the answers and using a qualitative and quantitative method (as far as possible), and based on the analysed statistics, we have made recommendations, conclusions and plans for future improvements on how to motivate employees.

3. PPM MATERIALS AND LITERATURE REVIEW IN DIFFERENT INDUSTRIES

(Rahman, Mina, Tavana, 2020) look at aspects of the project portfolio in the IT industry. According to them, the purpose of portfolio management in the field of IT is to ensure that projects are selected in accordance with the overall organisational strategies and their successful implementation. They argue that a huge number of IT projects continue to fail, despite management's efforts to improve the evaluation of the project portfolio. The authors offer a model that consists of two phases and six steps. The authors concluded that with an increased level of optimism, the number of employees in the organisation increases. In turn, this factor leads to an increase in costs, but also to a significant increase in revenue (due to more projects). (Komman, Kock, PKillen, Gemunden 2017), shows a problem as formal strategic processes in the organisation, are not flexible enough in a fast-growing business environment and as depending on the new creation should be charged new, appropriate solutions to the new environment and these solutions to be fast and adaptable and to change each other. It is also based on the author's research that "strategic control at the level of a portfolio of projects plays an important role in the purposeful management of existing strategies". (Maylor, 2010) summarizes the GTC and defines it as a central office that mediates between the project implementation team and the organization in a broader sense. The author discusses

interesting issues such as: the roles of project manager, program manager and project support office manager in organisations, considers and analyzes certain frameworks (frameworks) such as "The 7-S of project management: - strategy, stuff, systems, structure, skills, style, stakeholders. He plays role of people's motivation at work. (Harrison, Bosse, & Phillips, 2010) note that organisations have much more competitive advantages and much greater productivity if they use a stakeholder management approach. Also, the stability is much greater. According to the authors, organisations that manage stakeholders allocate more resources to meet their needs and requirements. When stakeholders are involved, much more valuable products are created, trust and good relations between stakeholders are created. Biggest part of the stakeholders are the employees and their motivation to work play a crucial role for the company success. (Halfdanarson, Mwesiumoa and Shlopak, 2022) collect data based on different approaches and conduct research on how to develop a project for sustainable rural tourism. Their analysis is based on four steps developed at the earliest stage of the project, which they believe are most important for its implementation. The steps are: 1. Construction of a project for development of rural tourism; 2. Hiring of human resources under the project; 3. implementation of a sustainable project for development of rural tourism and 4. Finding resources for the implementation of the project. The study is based on the example of a small town in Norway, Traena, with a population of 500 people, in which the idea of developing rural tourism is crucial. The authors argue that in the early stages of rural tourism projects, a plan with well-calculated actions should be created to prevent accidental mistakes. According to (Alexandrova, 2015): 'Evaluation is a process of critical analysis of the project proposal in terms of its justification, feasibility and potential effectiveness. 'The project can receive a recommendation for its implementation or be returned for improvement, which is a result of the project evaluation. (Alexandrova, 2015, p.82). According to (Kim & David, 2007), effective SCP leads to competitive advantage, but does not necessarily lead to organizational success. According to the authors, in order to realize a successful portfolio, good communication and cooperation between the employees of the projects is required. The survey was conducted on the basis of 32 interviews. Based on the research, Kim & David made several proposals for the implementation of a "learning organization" designed specifically to benefit from companies' experience in tackling the problem, namely the complexity of new products and their relationship to organizational learning. (Da Silva Lopes, Martín-Vide, Remoaldo, Ribeiro, 2021) consider the decisions of tourists before and during the COVID-19 pandemic to rest with Porto, Portugal. The authors conduct a study based on 417 questionnaires from 2019 and 2020, examining the changing views and decisions of tourists to travel before the crisis and during the crisis. The research method is based on main factors such as: 1. Duration of the purchased tourist package; 2. Tourist destinations to visit in the area of Porto; 3. Opportunity to attract tourists from countries where travel rules are stricter due to the COVID-19 crisis. After the research, the authors come to the following conclusions: 1. Tourists prefer tourist packages with shorter stays; After the research, the authors come to the following conclusions: 1. Tourists prefer tourist packages with shorter stays; 2. Tourists travel less often by plane, i.e. domestic tourism is overtaking international travel (using airplanes); 3. To bring tourists back to Portugal, a national plan must be made for the entry of already vaccinated tourists into the country. In terms of the results, the authors specify that all the changes to visit Porto are a direct consequence of the feeling of fear, which is widespread among almost all tourists. (Boostrom, Hsu, Maxwell and Su, 2020) examine the problem of how environmentally responsible behaviour (E-P) gives a positive and lasting impact on tourist destinations. They create a framework 'Stimulus - Organism - Response', which reflects how areas with an ecological reputation stimulate the destination as a tourist destination. The authors consider as the main factor the memories of tourists as a driving force for formation for future actions. 522 Chinese tourists were interviewed. The results show that areas with a good environmental reputation have a positive effect on positive emotions and tourist satisfaction, and negative emotions have a negative effect in every aspect. In addition, tourist satisfaction has a positive effect on memories and EPs. The authors also note in conclusion that the managers of travel agencies should develop various environmental programs and publish reports on their responsibility to the environment. They propose to develop web pages listing travel agencies with more ecological information about the respective destination they offer. According to the authors, in this way the destination can have a huge competitive advantage over other tourism organizations.

4. A PORTFOLIO MANAGER REPORT ABOUT CURRENT MOTIVATION TRENDS AT ZZ TRAVEL AGENCY (USING MASLOW PYRAMID)

The biggest motivational factor for the Portfolio Manager is the challenge of bigger tasks and achievements. Once bigger tasks have been achieved, the company is not only growing financially but professionally as well. This hinges at the top of the Maslow pyramid. However, bigger commissions from sales, more time off or projects abroad that combine work with pleasure remain primary motivational factors. As a project portfolio manager, the pressure each day is to make sure our business earns enough to cover costs, overheads and most importantly salaries. This is a key motivational attribute and a physiological need each day. This goes some way to reaching the other three levels on

the Maslow pyramid as well: safety, social and esteem needs. Securing a monthly income whoever you are - works towards Maslow's safety needs, its self-explanatory; financial security fulfils a lot of other securities. As far as Maslow's category of social and esteem needs go, it has been my choice to run a successful business and employ staff and pay their salaries. "I have found that my staff don't expect to find self-actualization in the workplace", he says. The best motivating factor for ZZ Travel is to ensure they have enough leisure time to pursue their outside activities! It's important to be aware of what makes them tick though, even while it is out of the workplace because fully fledged happy human beings are far more productive than unfulfilled souls. Horse riding at a competitive level, travel and children are among their outside pursuits which I do enquire about at work. 'However, I do require when they are at work to forget about their outside tribulations and problems and to concentrate on their clients, to be in a good mood and to attract customers with their own confidence.' The base of Maslow's pyramid to them is similar to Herzberg's hygiene factor: expecting work to fulfil physiological needs is taken for granted; it's expected to be there, improving it will not increase their motivation, not for very long anyhow and salaries have ceilings particularly in the current economic climate. As a whole, Maslow effect doesn't motivate them directly. Although it plays an important role in their lives at and beyond work it's not a direct method of motivation that has a positive effect on their performance and output at ZZ Travel. As a conclusion he says: 'Nonetheless, I do believe through the use of other motivational theories I could allow them to experience the upper reaches of the Maslow pyramid, subtly.'

5. WHAT DOES MOTIVATE STFF AT ZZ TRAVEL? (A PART OF THE INTERVIEW WITH THE ZZ TRAVEL MANAGER)

They were certainly motivated in their job interviews to get a good salary but that's no longer a day-to-day motivational factor by any means. I've tried performance related pay (PRP) although this had a positive effect for a short time, it then quickly slotted into the hygiene factor and was soon taken for granted. Although trying PRP I recently discovered something quite vital to sales and detrimental fault that needs repairing. With PRP the sales team have to make more phone calls to English clients rather than just receiving calls. Through this exercise, I learnt that most of the staff have difficulties to speak English fluently. I have learnt that the team environment matters at ZZ Travel. Staff do want to work in a good team and feel to be the vital link but a big disadvantage of this is they keep knowledge to themselves instead of sharing it. This I can say is anti-motivational and hinders the team spirit. Other motivational factors are time off to travel and, of course, job security.

6. RESULTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

In recommending ways to improve levels of motivation I do advise considering the Outcomes and Expectancy Theory. To explain it briefly, it examines the relationship between effort, reward, performance, and outcome. Rewards unrelated to effort are unlikely to be effective motivators. However, rewards linked to effort have high motivational potential, but performance and outcome still need to be monitored. The dream job of each employee is to have a secure job, to be financially independent, to be respected by the rest of the team, not to work too hard and to have lots of time off. This is what it should change in each company because this way of work is a very short-sited way of performance and it leads towards non-professional, badly finished or unfinished tasks. The way to set it off is to be clear what we want the motivation to achieve. Increased sales of course, but that's the end result. ZZ Travel is divided into three departments: Flight Sales, Hotel Bookings and Travel Packages. The outcome of increased motivation for all three departments would be to increase percentage of sales from incoming calls and also to contribute towards marketing, i.e.: finding methods to receive more customer requests via both the Internet and telephone bookings. Linking effort and performance is the next step. If ZZ travel staff feel like they can't achieve the desired performance because they don't have the ability and skills, resources, time, or the task is not in their job design they won't be motivated. These can however be turned around into positives. Effort that does not necessarily achieve performance or outcome could be turned into training sessions to provide staff with necessary shortfalls. Although there are financial costing implications here for the company, investing in people resources is another motivational factor perhaps linking back to Maslow's Approach and his higher needs. With these recommendations it is likely that job designs will change. It will be important in appraisals to review job designs and discuss with individuals a best approach to achieving set goals.

For motivation to exist the linking of performance and outcome with reward has to be positive. Most of us chose to work in the travel industry because of our love for travel. What better reward to offer our staff! There are often information tours where travel agents are invited to experience destinations they're selling to, these would be ideal rewards and beneficial to staff and company. Another benefit of such rewards is it will go towards adding intrinsic value to sales staff, particularly the tour packages team. With staff returning with positive experiences themselves from the destinations they are selling packages too they are more likely to find intrinsic value and task significance in recommending/selling packages to those destinations. Just to emphasis effort, performance and outcome need to

be monitored, measured, and valued. This could be done through a weekly or monthly spreadsheet and a chart measuring each team's sales figures or other performance management systems. I'd certainly recommend including it with a face-to-face meeting that makes a point of recognising good work. This is a motivational on its own when superiors acknowledge and congratulate staff on their performance. And we should mean what we say. As soon as it becomes mechanical or automated the effect on staff will also turn mechanical and automated creating the opposite effect to motivation.

The downside of the Expectancy Theory as Herzberg suggests is that there may be costs to staff as well as rewards associated with the effort. If costs out way rewards, then we will fail with our efforts to motivate. For example, longer working hours will certainly amount to negative results. My staff wish to avoid extended office hours so that they may pursue their interests away from work.

And of course, with reward we have to keep in mind fairness as expressed by Adam's Equity Theory. If our reward system appears unfair, staff will find ways to compensate themselves such as working less or through other devious ways. It is important when you work hard, when you make efforts, to have rewards, the rewards to be recognised and appreciated by your manager.

7. ACTION PLAN

Having made the recommendations here is an action plan to set the task of motivation in motion:

We need to provide more opportunities to staff at ZZ Travel to develop new destinations on the British market, including marketing to the final customer. This can be achieved by giving them the freedom to choose a destination of their choice. Providing incentives for staff to travel more. The idea is that broader travel experiences will increase their self-confidence. Organising monthly meetings face-to-face. The target will be for each staff member to expose their tasks at the beginning of the month and to show - in front of their colleagues - their achievements at the end of the month. These meetings need to review figures such as expenditure and profit, or at least a prognosis of the profit or a clear map on how to turn investments into a profit. Improve staff's English language skills by sending them to language courses and if it is financial valuable - sending them to our London office to build their self-confidence.

8. CONCLUSION

Once the system is in place and staff can see its effect, team dynamics should also improve. Self-esteem is contagious, success breeds success. Rewards for the few are likely to make the others more ambitious. Setting challenges and goals to inspire the whole team to push hard into achieving targets. The greatest advantage or achieving motivational goals is that the effort towards positive performance and outcome bring benefits to staff and company that lead to their individual professional growth. We may even get staff into the upper reaches of Maslow's triangle and self-actualisation in the workplace after all, this would be a huge success. According to the obtained and analysed results, we concluded that the motivation to work in the tourism organisation is one of the main reasons for the success of all projects in the portfolio.

The use of PPM in tourism organisations leads to finding the right solutions for project management, reduces the risk and increases returns. This undoubtedly increases the motivation for employees to reach goals. The use of PPM inevitably leads to increased competitiveness of the organisation and to new future successes.

DIAGRAMS

Diagram 1

How the motivational factors influence teams to achieve self-confidence using Herzberg model. The results are with marks from 1 to 6 where 6 is the most desirable result.

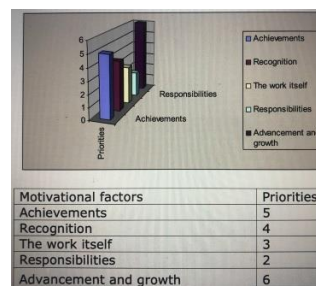


Diagram 2

How hygiene factors influence teams to achieve self-confidence using the Herzberg model. The results are with marks from 1 to 6 where 6 is the most desirable result.

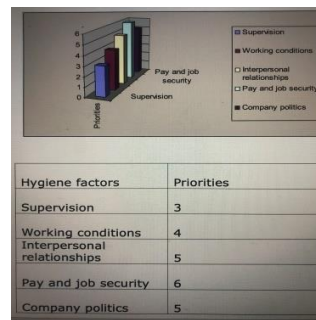
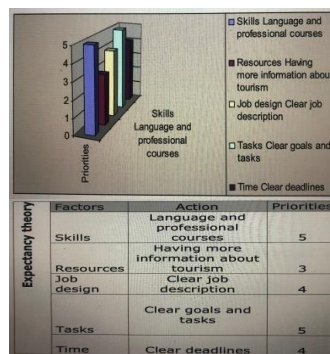


Diagram 3

How motivational factors influence teams to achieve self-confidence using the expectancy theory, the link between effort and performance. The results are with marks from 1 to 6 where 6 is the most desirable result.



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