

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION IN A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKPLACE

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Abstract

Effective employee motivation is indispensable to the success of any organization in corporate environment. The conventional perspective of management was essentially methodical and balanced, and employee's emotions were not considered. However, it is critical for organizations to identify that employee motivation goes further than the usual monetary reward systems for a multigenerational workforce. In motivating today's human capital, organizations have to hold their minds and fascinate their hearts, which can be achieved by incorporating social and emotional intelligence. Social and emotional intelligence equip managers with skills to turn challenges of generational differences into positives. These skills give a hand managers attend to individual employee needs irrespective of their generation. Socially and emotionally intelligent managers enable their organizations to offer an environment that motivates and develops employees despite the generational differences in the workplace. This study discusses the implications of emotional and social intelligences by outlining how these Skills can enable organization to cultivate cultures that enhance employee motivation.

Keywords:

Employee motivation, Multigenerational workplace, Social intelligence, Emotional intelligence, Generational differences

Introduction

The current global economy, companies are motivated to survive in a highly competitive environment. An organization may have managers capable with a innumerable of impressive technical skills and extensive educations. But, can they efficiently relate to the employees and other managers? Can they stimulate the employees to be productive? Presently, employee retention challenges are familiar to managers regard-less of the company's size, technology and market focus. One terrific challenge is the management of a workforce that has prominent variations in perspective and goals due to generational differences. These differences must be addressed in an effort to recruit, preserve and motivate the best talent in an organization.

A multigenerational workforce is important to the growth of an organization. The benefits of working in a multigenerational workplace exceed the challenges involved. But the big question remains, how to keep employees motivated in a multigenerational workplace. The answer to this question is as diverse as the workforce itself. Organizations need to find ways to retain and make the most of their talent. In addition, they need to come across ways to meet the challenges of a fast-evolving multigenerational workforce.

In today's globally competitive business environment, successful employee motivation in a multigenerational workplace is still one of the biggest challenges to many organizations. Human capital has become an organization's foremost asset; its success is reliant on the employee performance. Ability and motivation are joints functions used to portray employee performance. Employee motivation is an complicated and sophisticated subject; considerable studies on employee motivation have been conducted, providing plentiful models and theories on motivation. These plentiful literatures provide mechanisms that organizations can get used to keep their multigenerational workforce motivated. There is no precise formula to the exact mechanism of motivating employees as every organization offers a unique workplace. Therefore, organizations must spotlight on employee motivation practices that meet employees' needs regardless of age. Managers need to be aware of a variety of employee motivational factors and the changes in priorities of these factors over time.

The concept of emotional and social intelligence in management has been popularized by academic world due to its positive impact on employee performance. Hence, many companies are changing towards this concept. Part of the answers to keeping a multigenerational workforce motivated lay in social intelligence principles since they give organization substantial ways of managing and harnessing diversity. A socially intelligent workforce is able to work cordially as a strong collective team. Moreover, it is able to build up relationships and business networks that will encourage the interests of the organizations over the long term. This ensures job security that is a essential motivation driver across all generations. An emotionally intelligent workforce is fervent, motivated and inspired.

This study intends to give a general review of the concept of emotional and social intelligence as vital parts of employee motivation in a multigenerational workplace. First, a general overview of the common mechanisms used by organizations for employee motivation in a multigenerational workplace is given. Next, the key elements of emotional and social intelligence as described in literature are outlined. Finally, a discussion on the connotation of social and emotional intelligence when used as skills in leadership is provided.

Multigenerational Workplace

Majority of today's multigenerational workplaces are represented by four different generations of employees, namely Traditionalist (Matures/Veterans), Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y (Millennial) . Multigenerational workplaces can bring out the best and worst of the organization and their employees. Consequently, managers must understand the values and attitudes of each generation to effectively influence the different generations' satisfaction in such a diverse workplace. The positive impacts of a multigenerational workforce can lead to increased productivity among the employees and eventually a successful company.

A successful multigenerational workplace understands the dynamics and challenges of generational differences and is capable to design a workspace that empowers effective communication and convey of knowledge across the generations. With decades of experience, the older generation conveys wisdom to the younger generation, who in turn convey fresh ideas and technical skills. On the other hand, challenges of communication and cooperation within the generations are evident on a daily basis in a multigenerational workplace . Additionally indicates that even though the challenges of accommodating the needs of its multigenerational workforce, a company creates an extraordinary opportunity in its overall business performance.

Different research literature express that employees from different generations have need of different management strategies when it comes to recruiting, retaining and motivating employees. To successfully manage a motivated multigenerational workforce, managers must take to account the diverse values and attitudes of each generation that may influence different generations' drive in the workplace. Considerate what makes each generation's talent mark is decisive to optimizing an organization's culture. Interestingly, most challenges within a multigenerational workplace are connected with the more traditional differences of gender and ethnicity. Management stereotypes consider that there are enormous differences between the generations in terms of employee motivating factors. Nonetheless, recent studies confirm that different generations in the workplace have more in common than early literature shows. Compelling research has shown that employees are motivated by equally related things in the workplace

Employee Motivation

The English dictionary defines motivation 'as the reason(s) one has for acting or behaving in a particular way'. Devadass (2011) describes Employee Motivation as a set of both environmental and intrapersonal forces that manipulate an employee's work related behavior. Hence, employee motivation can be seen to cuts across many disciplinary boundaries such as psychology, human resource management, economics, sociology and organizational behavior. In an attempt to increase effectual job performance amongst employee, many organizations' management struggle to implement effective employee motivation policies . Manzoor (2011) illustrates that motivating employees to perform to the best of their ability even in demanding circumstances has remained one of the most challenging tasks faced by managers. In our speedily varying workplaces, employee motivation relics a essential survival strategy for many organizations. When employees are motivated, they become responsive to the organization's goals and objective and can capably direct their talent towards achieving them. Early studies illustrate that monetary rewards had a great prominent value as a motivational technique. In management science, Fredrick Taylor attributes money to have a supreme effect to maintain and motivate industrial workers towards higher performance and greater productivity. Over time, organizations have used generally extrinsic rewards (increased pay, bonuses, promotion) as a management tool to persuade high employee performance as well as maintain high employee motivation . Nohria and associates defined a new model of employee motivation. In this model they argued that managers try to increase employee motivation by satisfying the four fundamental emotional drives; that is the drive to acquire, the drive to bond, the drive to comprehend and the drive to defend. Motivation is purely a leadership behavior that comes from employees wanting to do what is right for the people and the organization. Further, theories of transformational leadership understand managers and employees nurture one another to greater levels of motivation. The presences of several theories, models and views on motivation continue to point out that employee motivation is an complicated and sophisticated subject. More so, in a multigenerational workplace where monetary rewards have become less effective in keeping employees motivated. The younger generations of employees are driven by advancements in their careers. Subsequently, recognition and empowerment are playing an essential role in enhancing employee motivation in today's multigenerational workplace.

Social Intelligence

M Babu (2013), describes social intelligence as "the ability to deal efficiently and thoughtfully, keeping one's own identity, employing opposite social inputs with a wider understanding of social environment; considering empathetic co-operation as a base of social acquaintance." Social intelligence is the ability to successfully direct and convey difficulty of social affairs and surroundings. Ross Honeywell (2015), affirms it is a combined degree of self and social-awareness, advanced social views with approaches, capacity and desire to be able multifaceted social change.

Social intelligence as the ability to think, understand, manage and act properly in social human relationships. Social intelligence is concerned with the best interests of others; hence it goes beyond sheer self-interest. Social intelligence is basically understanding and getting along with people, above and beyond the skills to interact and cooperate successfully with them. Hence, social intelligence can be defines as the ability to interact effectively with others in any social situation. Further it is to be considered socially intelligent one has to be adept at human relationships not just about them. Even so described social intelligence competency as the ability to be aware of, understand and act on emotional information about others that leads to effective performance.

The five major dimensions of social intelligence as situational radar, presence/ bearing, authenticity, clarity and empathy. Even so, the reliable aspects of social intelligence among all researches in this field include: knowledge of the social situations, accurate interpretation of the social situation and the skills to behave appropriately in that social situation. Social intelligence requires skills that allow employees to get along with one another (Riggio & Reichard, 2008). Karl Albrecht (2009) also terms people with low social intelligence as 'toxic' people. They make others feel angry, inadequate, frustrated and devalued through their toxic behaviors that directly contribute to conflict, alienation and worse, animosity in the workplace (Wawra, 2009). On the other hand, people with high social intelligence have a 'nourishing' personality and presumably possess magnetic powers that attract others to them (Albrecht, 2009)

Joseph and Lakshmi (2010) elaborate that an individual's social intelligence depends on a lifelong learning process. Socially intelligent employees exhibit confidence in social situations, demonstrate a genuine interest in their fellow workmates, are assertive and appropriate in expressing their feelings and emotions, are capable of adapting, understanding and responding effectively, and show a great level of self-awareness (Joseph and Lakshmi, 2010)

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence as defined as the ability to identify, understand, use and manage one's and other's emotional states effectively. This involves an intellectual process that leads to the use of those feelings to motivate, plan and achieve. Emotional intelligence can be used as a term that refers to the ability to recognize, manage and influence one's and other's emotions. Therefore, emotional intelligence can basically be described as an interconnection between feelings and thinking; We can say emotional intelligence in simple terms as an individual's self-perceived skills of their emotional abilities.

There are four major clusters of emotional behaviors are outlined; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. On the other hand, emotional intelligence is best understood as a competency. Further it is described emotional intelligence competency as an individual's ability to perceive, understand and use their own emotional status leading to effective performance. According to the trait-based model emotional intelligence can be used to refer to an individual's perception of their own emotional abilities, and encompasses behavioral dispositions and self-professed emotional capabilities.

Emotional intelligence could be a better success interpreter of job performance and leadership ability than IQ. These claim led to more academic studies and researches exploring the concept in later years. Further studies show that emotional intelligence plays an important role in the organization, direction and motivation of human activity. Individuals who are emotionally intelligent exhibit better skills in people oriented services such as recruiting, sales, management and customer service. Current studies suggest that emotional intelligence is highly significant in development of human potential, teamwork, effective leadership, stress reduction, creativity and innovation.

Conclusion

Organizations continue to take great effort with finding the most effective way to keep employees motivated in a multigenerational workplace. People from dissimilar generations and dissimilar cultures are transforming office life. The popular conception is that generational differences in the work place show the way to differences in personality and motivation. Most personality differences observed are better explained by age. Job security and engagement to work are among motivational drivers that cut across all generations in the modern workplace. Therefore, it is essential for managers to obtain high level skills on social and emotional intelligence. These skills will support them to attend to individual differences irrespective of generations. Managers who value emotional and social intelligence come across it easy to turn the challenges of generational differences to positives. Obviously, emotional and social intelligence have the prospective to optimistically impact employees' behaviors with outcomes such as job satisfaction, positive work attitudes, self-efficacy, and leadership potential and change management. When people with different backgrounds cooperate, creativity and innovation happens. The result from this diversity in the workplace is that people learn how to communicate and generate ideas that usually creates high-impact change with low economic and emotional risk and high economic and emotional gain. Hence, social and emotional intelligence become key success factors for employee motivation in a multigenerational workplace.

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