Motivation is always late

10.04.2012 21:39:03 | Agility Insights AG, Michel Lukas | 0 Comments | Motivation

Motivated employees are essential for the success of an organization. The literature is full of recipes on how leaders should motivate employees to perform.

Motivated employees are essential for the success of an organization. The literature is full of recipes on how leaders should motivate employees to perform. Leaders and HR professionals spend a lot of time inventing new gadgets and programs to motivate the workforce to do what it is supposed to do. With little success, but we keep adding more to a practice that does exactly the opposite of what it is designed for. Every motivation is demotivation. Recipes, tips, and best practices in motivation don’t work.

People have the creative energy that wants to be applied. We are designed for goal oriented work, and performance is part of every human being. As such, people search for work with goals that are acceptable, work that has a purpose, and that makes sense to our own life. Employees search for a playing field where they can use their potential. This means that organizations need to provide playing fields that make sense for employees.

People are motivated at their own will. Interferences limit their readiness to perform. The gap is always caused by demotivation, the lack of capabilities, or the lack of the opportunity to perform. This is a fundamental assumption on motivation.

Motivation is the responsibility of every human being. But, it is the task of leadership to provide the necessary degrees of freedom as choice on how to perform. Leaders are accountable to protect the degrees of freedom. In general, humans are free to choose the conditions, rules, and alternatives that determine their work. Everyone plays on the field of their own choice. This means

that organizations need to invest in choice and accountability rather than to motivate.

Most leaders demotivate. Motivation is a leadership action of control that comes from the outside for people. No being able to control things is one of the biggest demotivation factors. The immediate leader has the biggest effect on this. Often, the biggest fault is to ignore human dignity and pride. It is treating all people as children: reward, appraise, bribe, threaten, punish, … . Leaders limit the choice of employees and their self-control. Motivation has a short lever. Many sources of motivation are out of control for leaders. They are outside the organization. On the other hand, the nature of work, structure, budgets, information density, and leadership determine the situation at work. These are things that leaders can change.

The formal and informal communications often create what we call group-demotivation. Patterns and structures emerge that reinforce demotivation. The reasons for demotivation are hardly questioned – they are assumed. The dynamics of “viruses” for infection are huge.

There is a negative correlation between extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivated performance. There is no significant research available that suggest a significant convergence of the amount of pay in management and the performance of an organization. Incentives have a chain of paradox side effects: Tension among colleagues, lack of cooperation, and silos. It is the weak leaders that ask for tips and tricks on how to motivate employees to perform.

With the increasing stimulus of incentives, the need for self-initiated action decreases. Because stimuli deteriorate fast, there is a need for stronger stimuli. This leads to excessive incentives. The result is that the own initiative diminishes. The means sabotages its purpose.

What can you do?

About Management Insights

Founded by Lukas Michel, Management Insights draws on more than 25 years of research and practice to help people understand how their organizations work. The Organization Twin brings

organizational patterns into view for reflection, dialogue, and informed choice.

BEGIN REFLECTION

Private · Free of charge · Approximately 15 minutes

- Version zum Drucken
- Per E-Mail versenden
- Newsletter abonnieren

- Twittern

No comments yet.