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Article

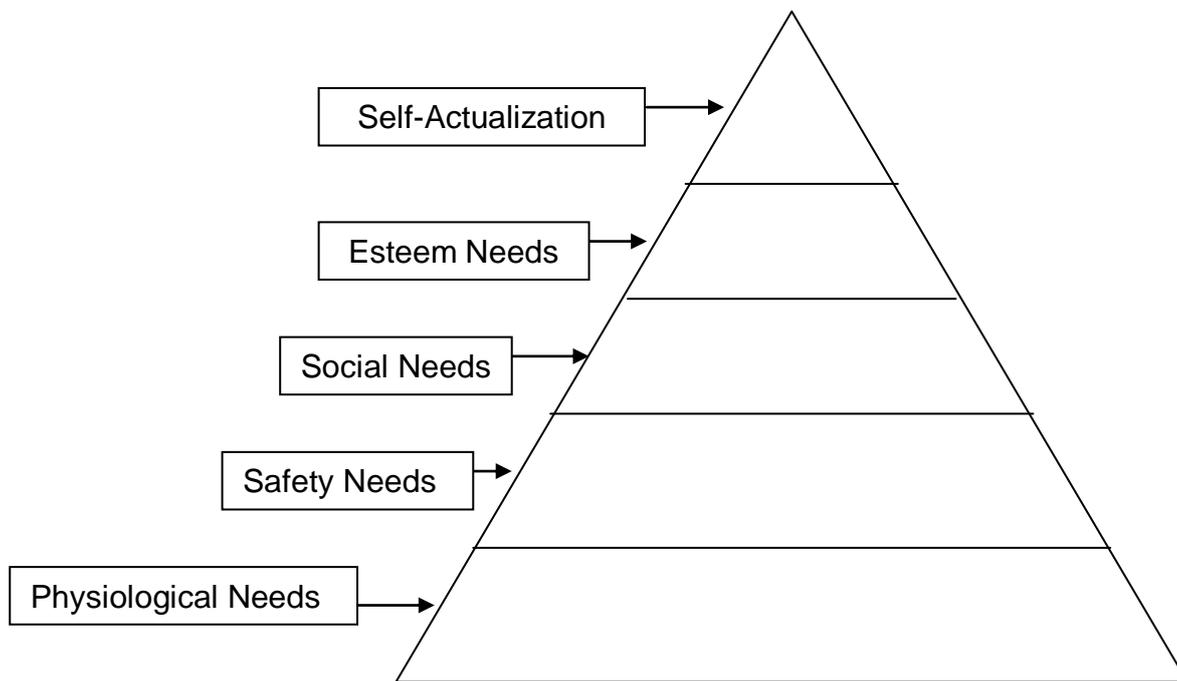
Back to Basics in Motivation Theory
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What is it that drives Human Behaviour? Man's search for meaning has led him along many a path and we have travelled a great dis

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Abraham Maslow perpetuated the very famous Needs pyramid called 'Maslow's Needs Hierarchy'. This theory talks about the various structures of needs that a person wants. The pyramid is divided into five essential areas. These are: -

1. **Physiological needs** – This includes basic physical needs like hunger, thirst, sex etc. a person will not proceed from this area unless all this physiological needs are satisfied.
2. **Safety** – This is the next level where the physical safety of the person is the most important then. This is where the person seeks a house with a shelter.
3. **Social Needs** – needs like love, belonging and acceptance are looked for in this stagea. Only if the previous two needs are fulfilled will the person desire social needs from others. The society for him will include his family, relatives, friends and acquaintances. Both the primary and the secondary system will be a part of his society.
4. **Esteem** – Achievement, self-respect and autonomy are the key factors in this level. Here external esteem factors also affect a person's motivation. These are status, recognition and attention.
5. **Self – Actualization** – Last but certainly not the least, is the self – actualization that any person will seek for. This is what one is capable of becoming, his growth and his potential. This is the self – fulfilling prophecy that is within one.



Need Dynamics

This theory hypothesises that every person cooperates from a certain level. The first two levels are termed as lower-order needs and as you go up the pyramid, i.e. the last three levels, are called the higher-order needs. Only when the lower order needs are fulfilled will the person move up to the next level. The lower-order needs are satisfied externally (i.e. by redesigning the pay scales) and the higher-order needs are satisfied internally by the person. This implies that in times of economic plenty, all the lower-order needs are satisfied. This theory has undergone a lot of criticism because it does not have substantial data to back it up. However, it is still the most popular theory and is used worldwide by managers to understand motivational behaviour.

THEORY X AND THEORY Y

Douglas McGregor proposed this hypothesis. Here there are two extreme views that can be held by a manager. These are positive and negative. **Theory X** is negative and the assumptions are: -

1. Employees inherently dislike work and will try and avoid it as much as they can

2. Employees need to be forced and controlled by the employer since they do not like to work
3. This formal discipline will be resisted by the employee and they will shirk responsibility
4. The only thing that employees are concerned with is job security and will display very little ambition

Theory Y is positive and is based on the following assumptions: -

1. Employees like going to work and view it as a natural part of their day
2. There is no need to exercise any control over employees as they function on self-control and self-direction
3. Responsibility will be sought by an employee
4. Those in management positions are not the only ones to be privileged with decision-making. It should be spread over the employee population

McGregor himself believed that the Theory Y was more plausible. The framework of this hypothesis is based on Maslow's Needs. The Theory X assumes that the lower-order needs will dominate whereas the Theory Y believes that the higher-order needs do. There is no evidence to support that if the behaviour on any one of these assumptions is changed then the motivation will increase. McGregor proposed ideas such as participative decision making, responsible and challenging jobs and good group relations, which could motivate and improve performance.

MOTIVATION – HYGIENE THEORY

Frederick Herzberg, a psychologist, proposed this theory. He asked people what they wanted from their jobs. All the different answers were recorded and then tabulated. The response he got generated enough data to conclude that satisfaction and dissatisfaction is caused by internal and external factors. Achievement, recognition, responsibility, Growth and the work itself are some of the factors that satisfied employees. Company policies, Supervision, Relationship with the supervisor, work conditions, salary, relationships with peers and personal life were the attributes that led to dissatisfaction. When employees are

satisfied they will attribute it to themselves but when they are not they will blame the organisation in some way or another.

Herzberg says that the opposite of satisfaction is not dissatisfaction. The opposite of satisfaction according to him is no satisfaction and the opposite of dissatisfaction is no dissatisfaction. This is because if you improve factors leading to dissatisfaction, then an employee will not necessarily be satisfied. He will be neither. He further categorizes the factors into motivators and hygiene factors. This means that if you eliminate factors that bring about dissatisfaction then you will merely bring in peace in the system. You will be able to motivate the employee. On the other hand, if you instill factors that bring about satisfaction, then you will manage to motivate. The factors, which are intrinsically rewarding will be recognised as motivators.

This theory has its share of critics. Most psychologists believe that this theory is limited by its methodology. It only provides explanation to satisfaction and fails to be a theory of motivation. It is inconsistent, as there is no empirical research to support it. Although Herzberg looks at a relationship between satisfaction and productivity, he cannot show data to back productivity. Only satisfaction has been worked on.

The above mentioned theories are regarded as pioneers in motivational theories. There are other contemporary theories, which are widely accepted by psychologists. These are just recently conducted research.

ERG THEORY

This theory is a take-off from Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Clayton Alderfer who did not think that people operated from individual levels at a time developed it. He believed that employees simultaneously worked from the different levels. He broadly classified the needs into three categories, which are existence, relatedness and growth. The existence group is concerned with providing the basic material existence. It includes the lower-order needs in Maslow's pyramid. The second group includes social and esteem needs. Here the interpersonal relationships are important to the employee. Lastly, self-actualization comprises growth of the employee. The ERG theory does not assume a rigid hierarchy, as does Maslow. There is a frustration-regression component in this theory. This means that when a person is frustrated in one level he will seek to fulfill the other. E.g. dissatisfaction

in a personal relationship with a peer will lead the employee to strive for greater incentives. Thus, the individual nature of a person is taken care of in this theory.

If an attempt to satisfy a higher-order need like self-respect frustrates an employee then he will regress back to the lower-order needs. Culture plays an important role in this hypothesis where variability is seen with different cultures. On the whole, this theory is in lieu with our general belief that every individual is different and behaves peculiar to his style.

EQUITY THEORY

In this theory, J. Stacy Adams talks about the equitable fairness of the reward system. How would you feel if your peer who has been working with you for the same amount of time and has the same job profile as you, was suddenly given a 20% bonus while you were given only a 15%? There seems to be no apparent reason for this difference since both of you have met your targets successfully. Are you going to be motivated to do better or are you going to irate and even think of leaving the job? Many employees where they feel either under or over rewarded face this situation. The four states that a person can see from are: -

1. **Self – Inside** – Here the employee looks within himself or the current organisation
2. **Self – Outside** – Here the person carries the his experiences from the last job
3. **Others – Inside** – The person compares with people who are within the organisation
4. **Others - Outside** – all other individuals from different organisation affect the employees thinking

People will compare themselves to what they were getting from the previous employment r with other people who are their peers, family, relatives, and friends.

Which referent an employee chooses to be in depends on the tenure of employment and the information he has. If the pays or incentives are unmatched then a feeling of frustration seeps in. due to inequitable pay, the following propositions were established: -

1. Given payment of time, over-rewarded employees will produce more than will equitable paid employees.

2. Given payment by quantity of production, over-rewarded employees will produce lower but higher quality units than will equitably paid employees.
3. Given payment by time, under-rewarded employees will produce less or poorer-quality output
4. Given payment by quantity or production, under-rewarded employees will produce a large number of low quality units in comparison with equitably paid employees.

Not all employees look for equity in pay. They might be equally or more satisfied with an increase in job title or a hefty bonus. Large proportions of people don't operate from equity at all. They will not get de-motivated if somebody else is paid more. In addition, overpayment seems to affect people a lot less than underpayment. They find ways to justify over payment. Although underpayment is seen, is de-motivating. Employees will then go into any one of these six modes: -

1. They will not exert greater efforts
2. They will try and produce better qualities or will produce greater amounts
3. They will think that they work a little better or worse than others
4. They will think that others work better or worse than them
5. They will compare themselves to others based on a different referent
6. They will quit the job

There are two types of justices as viewed by people. There is distributive justice where the person looks at the fairness of distributing the amount and allocation of the rewards and there is procedural justice where the person looks at the process of distributing rewards. Both these are important but research has shown that the distributive justice has greater influence. With procedural justice, the employee might view his boss as trustworthy and his commitment to the organisation will increase but he will still be unsatisfied with the allocation of funds, which might lead to his acquittal. The distributive justice gives the correct allocation and validating reasons for doing so. This is more palatable to employees who might be receiving greater or lesser amounts in rewards.

EXPECTANCY THEORY

so that they can apply their skill. They dislike succeeding by chance and will avoid those situations. Their need to excel at everything to do will compel them to work harder and better. On the other hand, some employees enjoy the position of power. They will strive for that position they want to have control and exert their influence on others. This need for power drives them to succeed. They enjoy competitive fields so much that they can even play dirty to achieve what they desire, in this case, Power. There are some employees who are peace loving and who get along with everyone. They believe in compromise and friendship and group efforts. They will go out of their way to ensure that this harmony is maintained at all times.

These different needs motivate a person according to this theory. Research shows that people with a high need for power and affiliation make for a good manager. When the perfect balance is struck between the two then you have your Ideal Manager! People with a high need to achieve will be terrible team players as they care only of their achievements. They will not be able to influence a large number of people and consider the job well done only if they perform alone. Thus, this solitary attitude might work against the organisation culture. These people need constant feedback and tasks with moderate risks. They will claim personal responsibility for all they have done but will be unable to perform in a team.

This theory is excellent to identify people with these traits. If trained the correct way, then people with a high need for achievement will be able to target it properly.