Factors Affecting Motivation among Employees in Consultancy Companies

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ABSTRACT: *Motivation is one of the most critical elements in the area of Human Resources Management. Enterprises design motivation systems not only to encourage employees to perform their best in the most efficient way, but also to attract future candidates to apply for specific posts. To be able to create an efficient motivation system, the key is to answer the question: What really motivates employees in an organization? This is an in-depth study of a Construction Consulting Company in Vietnam and the purpose of our research is to find the main factors affecting motivation amongst the employees of the company. A questionnaire survey was undertaken among 135 employees of the company to analyze their perceptions regarding motivation in workplace and also investigating the opinions of the coordinators of each department and also with the General Manager about this same issue. At the end of the study, we make some recommendations for the company to counter this issue. This study would be a prelude and of great help to managers and Human Resources professionals to raise the productivity of the company by increasing the motivation of their employees.*

KEYWORDS: *Motivation, Promotion, Salary, Workload.*

I.   INTRODUCTION:

There are lot of factors augmenting to the pressure on today's organizations such as globalization, frequent organizational changes and diversity. To overcome these challenges there arises a greater significance and responsibility for the Human Resource function in every organization. Human Resources Management plays a critical role in making organizations more efficient and also strategically facilitates the improvement of talent acquisition, training & development, remuneration, performance management and most important of all, motivation. A special emphasis is given to motivation since it is extremely necessary to procures quality work and better output from employees. This paper undertakes an in-depth study on the factors that affect motivation in an organization that provides consultancy services, and explores how can the organization convert those challenges into opportunities for growth.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW:

This section gives an overview of the literature on the basics of Human Resources Management as well as an excerpt on Motivation, along with the various theories on motivation.

Human Resource Management

Human Resource Management is defined as a system of activities and strategies that are focused on managing the success of employees at all levels of the organization and also help them to achieve the organizational goals (Byars & Rue, 2006). Human Resources plays a crucial role in the process of increasing companies' effectiveness. Motivation is one of the most important functions of Human Resources Management.

Motivation

Motivation is the process of inspiring people to achieve their goals (Chaudhary & Sharma, 2012). Work motivation is a set of energetic forces that originate both within as beyond an individual's being, to initiate work-related behavior and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration (Kirstein, 2010). Getting people to do their best at work is one of hardest challenges of managers. The importance of employees' satisfaction and motivation is being more and more important everyday in the enterprises. Nohria, Groysberg, and Lee explain that the four drivers that underline motivation are: acquire, bond, comprehend and defend. They also point out that the organizational levels of motivation are: the reward system, the culture, the job design and performance-management, and resource-allocation processes (Nohria, 2008). Motivated people make decisions to dedicate considerable effort to obtain something that they value. Researches show that indeed there is a relation between motivation and performance (Deci & Gagne, 2005).

Motivation of an Employee : Motivation is an employee's intrinsic enthusiasm and drives the employee to accomplish the activities related to work (Chaudhary & Sharma, 2012). Salanova and Kirmanen explain that the process of motivation starts with the recognition of unsatisfied needs. Then a goal needs to be established to satisfy this need. Rewards and incentives may be established for employees to better accomplish the given goal. The social context also affects the motivation level. This context consists of organizational and cultural values, but also includes leaderships and management as well as the influence of the group or team (Salanova & Kirmanen, 2010). Motivation increases effectiveness beyond the organization by improving the willingness of the employees to work.

Theories of Motivation : There are many theories of motivation, however Maslow's Hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory will be analyzed more in details since they are related with this research. The most known theory is the Maslow's Hierarchy of needs which consists of the physiological levels: safety and security, social, esteem or egoistic, self-fulfillment or self-actualization. Maslow's Hierarchy of needs can illustrate a theoretical explanation of why salary is important. In Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, when basic necessities of human being are fulfilled, the individual wants to use his capabilities at a full potential (Maslow, 1943). If the organization is not providing him opportunities to overcome his job assignments up to the level of his abilities, he will never be satisfied. It also increases the level of stress in the place of work. According to Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, to create satisfaction it is needed to address the motivational factors that are associated with work (He calls it "Job Enrichment"). Every job should be examined to determine how it could be improved to satisfy more the employee. Considering the above, this theory is applied to our research because training and development opportunities help employees to pursue their satisfaction in the company and in their position.

Motivational Factors : Motivation is yield to many elements as salary, promotion, personal goals, job security, working environment, training and development, recognition, administrative practices and workloads.

Salary : Money has been pointed out as a motivational factor by a large number of researchers. It is often seen as a symbol of success and also associated with comfort and security (Engelberg and Sjöberg, 2006). It is considered as an advantage for the managers, because they can use money as a strategy since money can have a great impact on employees' performance. Some researchers have stated that motivation is the main instrument to be used. Knowing that it exists a direct correlation between salary and the results obtained (Androniceanu, 2011). Some researchers suggest (Murphy, 1981) that the employee should be motivated through a proportional salary according to the efforts done in the job. There are other important factors as well, but having a satisfactory salary is among the top factors.

Training and Development : Training and development is the process of generating work experiences related with knowledge and skills that exist to improve systematically the performance of the employees. It is known that organizational training has prodigious potential outcomes. Training has to begin with the recognition of the training needs through job analysis, performance assessment and organizational analysis. After identifying training needs, training programs are organized. As indicated by Nesan and Holt, a system of "performance measures" is developed in order to monitor improvements among building teams (Tabassi & Bakar, 2008).

Workloads : Workloads refers to the intensity of the job assignments. It has commonly been the amount of work assigned or the amount of work expected to be completed by a worker in a time period (Dasgupta, 2013). It is a source of mental stress for employees. Stress is an active state of mind in which human face opportunity and constraint (Robbins, 1996). Workload can negatively affect it's overall performance. The main objectives of assessing and predicting workloads are to achieve an even distribute, manage workload and determine the resource s needed to carry out the work (Dasgupta, 2013). It is difficult to have a full control over all the workloads at all the time. But it is possible to recognize it's effects and take in advance some actions. Finally, for using the workload analysis as a methodology, it is important to set time, efforts and resources with the idea of enforcing the department's activities and achieve their objectives.

Promotion : Promotion is one of the most efficient ways to keep employees motivated by offering them opportunities along their careers, giving them more responsibilities or even more authority. It may be applied by giving the opportunity to increase the salary compensation. This commodity can also cover a part of security needs by increasing the buying power of the employee. Promotions help assigning workers to jobs that better suit their abilities and is a way to move up quickly the talented workers (Gibbons 1997). It can be used to reward the employee's past efforts, promote investments in specific human capital and have lower rates of job turnover.

Background of the Organization under study: The Organization under study is a Vietnam-based one, engaged in the provision of consultancy services for construction companies. It provides investment and project management consultation services, architectural design, interior/exterior design consultancy services, infrastructure and hydro electrical project design consultancy services and supervisory services. Several of its completed projects include: Song Da water supplying system, An Khanh - Splendora new urban area and Cua Dat hydroelectric power supplier project in Thanh Hoa Province, among others.

Principal Offerings of the Organization:
The main tasks are the investment advice, bidding advice, design consultant planning, research and application of technical advances, etc.
- Investment Advice: Making investment projects. They have investment appraisal projects in the fields of civil, industry, transportation, irrigation, hydropower, water supply and environment.
- Bidding Advice: Prepare bidding documents, bid files, bid evaluation consultancy, project management and construction supervision.
- Geodesic, topographic survey, geological, hydrological services of process designing and project planning investment.
- Design consultancy planning for residential areas, urban areas and industrial zones.
- Design consultancy for industrial places, residential places, schools, hospitals, cultural facilities, arts, sports, interior decoration, port facilities, irrigation, hydro, transmission lines and substations of 35 kV. Water supply and environment.
- Research and application of technical design and architecture. For water treatment, water waste, environmental protection, transfer of research results and new technologies.
- Investment supply works in amusement parks, residential areas and urban areas.
- Designing road constructions.
- Experimental construction of water treatment and sewage. Developing new technologies to apply in the construction. And other business sectors according to the law.

Composition of employees
The organization has a Leadership Department and 6 Separated Departments (3 Divisions and 3 Design Offices)
- The Staff Department:
- Human Resources Department: 10 employees
- Financial and Planning Department: 5 employees
- Technical Management and Economic Project Department: 10 employees
- The Operational Department:
- Design architectural infrastructure planning office (1): 30 employees
- Design architectural infrastructure planning office (2): 26 employees
- Design environment and water supply office (1): 20 employees
- Design environment and water supply office (2): 22 employees
- Construction supervision Office: 12 employees

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The Research Problem:
- There is a dip in the performance level of employees, coupled with higher attrition rates.
- The quantity of finished projects has decreased than that of the previous financial year.

The Research Objective: To find the main reasons why employees are not motivated and make some recommendations for the company to help them overcome this problem.

The Methodology: Two methodologies were implemented in this research in order to evaluate the problem better: qualitative and quantitative. The first method (qualitative) gives a general view of the company and helps to detect the problem. The second method (quantitative) evaluates in deep the problem with the objective to propose at the end some recommendations.

Qualitative Method – Interview with the manager and the coordinators : Knowing that identifying the problem is a difficult task, firstly, an interview was done directly to the highest management levels of the enterprise. It means the General Manager (for the General Background Interview) and the Coordinators of each Department (for the Core Interviews that detect the problem). The interviews in this research are based on standardized questions (structured or formal interview with a determined format) and can be complemented with free talk (unstructured interview). Structured and unstructured interviews were combined in order to obtain confidential information and analyze in detail the subject.

Quantitative Method – Questionnaire survey with the employees : The second method consists of a questionnaire survey to be done by the employees. The idea is to cross the information collected in the interviews with the polls for employees. The purpose of these polls is to discover if the lack of motivation is one of the main reasons why they are leaving the company. The questions are prepared based on the interviews done by the general manager and the coordinators of each department with the purpose of crossing information and discover whether these three levels have the same view of the problem or not. The questionnaire was circulated among 135 employees within the organization and since the survey was undertaken in person, the response rate was ensured to be 100%.

Data Analysis : The method of statistical analysis must be appropriate to the aims of the research and the nature of the data collected. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis. In the following sections, the key findings of the study are summarized.

IV.   FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION
Descriptive Statistics for Perceptions of Employees Regarding Motivation:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Satisfaction of Workloads and Distribution of Responsibilities

N	Valid	40
	Missing	1
Mean		2.92
Median		3.00
Mode		4
Std. Deviation		1.289
Percentiles	25	2.00
	50	3.00
	75	4.00

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Satisfied	6	14,6	15,0	15,0
	Slightly Satisfied	13	31,7	32,5	47,5
	Satisfied	2	4,9	5,0	52,5
	Very Satisfied	16	39,0	40,0	92,5
	Extremely Satisfied	3	7,3	7,5	100,0
	Total	40	97,6	100,0	
Missing	System	1	2,4		
Total		41	100,0		

In terms of satisfaction level of workloads and distribution of responsibilities, while there are 14,6% of the employees very dissatisfied, only 7,3% of them are extremely satisfied. Representing the smallest percentage, 4,9% of the employees are satisfied. The employees who are slightly satisfied and very satisfied count 31,7% and 39% respectively.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for the Satisfaction for the Flexibility of the Work

N	Valid	40
	Missing	1
Mean		2.72
Median		3.00
Mode		2
Std. Deviation		1.086
Percentiles	25	2.00
	50	3.00
	75	3.75

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Satisfied	5	12,2	12,5	12,5
	Slightly Satisfied	13	31,7	32,5	45,0
	Satisfied	12	29,3	30,0	75,0
	Very Satisfied	8	19,5	20,0	95,0
	Extremely Satisfied	2	4,9	5,0	100,0
	Total	40	97,6	100,0	
Missing	System	1	2,4		
Total		41	100,0		

As can be seen from Table 2, 29,3 % of the respondents are satisfied with their current work in terms of the flexibility of the work, while 12,2 % of them are very dissatisfied. However the employees who are extremely satisfied represent only 4,9 %. Finally, the employees who are slightly satisfied constitute 31,7 % as the satisfied employees.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for the Satisfaction with Training and Development Programs

N	Valid	40
	Missing	1
Mean		2.40
Median		2.00
Mode		2
Std. Deviation		1.150
Percentiles	25	2.00
	50	2.00
	75	3.00

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Satisfied	9	22,0	22,5	22,5
	Slightly Satisfied	16	39,0	40,0	62,5
	Satisfied	7	17,1	17,5	80,0
	Very Satisfied	6	14,6	15,0	95,0
	Extremely Satisfied	2	4,9	5,0	100,0
	Total	40	97,6	100,0	
Missing	System	1	2,4		
Total		41	100,0		

The majority of the employees (39%) are slightly satisfied with the training and development, which they have. The number of respondents who are satisfied and very satisfied is quite similar with 17,1 % and 14,6% percentage. Nevertheless, only 4,9% of the employees are extremely satisfied with the programs while there are more people who are very dissatisfied (22%).

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for the Satisfaction with the Salary

N	Valid	40
	Missing	1
Mean		2.75
Median		3.00
Mode		2
Std. Deviation		1.080
Percentiles	25	2.00
	50	3.00
	75	4.00

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Satisfied	5	12.2	12.5	12.5
	Slightly Satisfied	13	31.7	32.5	45.0
	Satisfied	10	24.4	25.0	70.0
	Very Satisfied	11	26.8	27.5	97.5
	Extremely Satisfied	1	2.4	2.5	100.0
	Total	40	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.4		
Total		41	100.0		

According to the satisfaction with the salary, 5 employees (12,2%) are very dissatisfied, 13 employees are slightly dissatisfied with the highest percentage (31,7%), 10 employees are satisfied (24,4%), 11 employees are very satisfied (26,8%) and only 1 employee is completely satisfied (2,4%).

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for the Satisfaction with the Rewarding Systems

N	Valid	40
	Missing	1
Mean		3.40
Median		3.50
Mode		4
Std. Deviation		.982
Percentiles	25	3.00
	50	3.50
	75	4.00

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Slightly Satisfied	9	22.0	22.5	22.5
	Satisfied	11	26.8	27.5	50.0
	Very Satisfied	15	36.6	37.5	87.5
	Extremely Satisfied	5	12.2	12.5	100.0
	Total	40	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.4		
Total		41	100.0		

As can be observed in Table 1.5, there is no one in the company who is very dissatisfied with the rewarding system. On the contrary, the second lowest percentage belongs to the employees who are extremely satisfied (12,2%). Furthermore, 26,8% of the respondents are satisfied and 36,6% of them are very satisfied with the highest percentage.

V.   RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the results of the test it was observed that there are some variables with a big discrepancy between the different answers of the employees, and also after the feedback of the employees in personal, the most important variables related with dissatisfaction or low motivation from workers are the following:
• Salary
• Workload
• Training programs

Following The Maslow's Theory, we can observe that these three variables affect different levels of the hierarchy of needs. The salary affects either Safety Needs as well as Esteem Needs levels and the training systems affects self-actualization level. And even if the workload is not considered inside of the hierarchy of needs, based on the information from Disrupt, the level of workload promotes a better atmosphere for employees and helps them to stay longer in the company. In other words if a person feels that he has overload of

work, he will feel that there is no equilibrium in every aspect of his life and he will try to change that aspect whether leaving the company or changing his performance at work. However, we found out that dissatisfaction is related with the age of the employees and also with the time that people has been working in the enterprise, saying that these group of people are those who are beginning in their careers and try to look for better careers opportunities at the same time they develop their talents quickly, and so according with the article Getting a Handle on Employee Motivation offering promotions and better salary compensation can collaborate to appeal this motivational goals.

Considering the previous analysis, the model is created in order to orientate the company in this situation. It is composed by three main factors

- Rewarding System: BOMS (Motivational system that works giving the employees an additional bonus to their salary. The variables that are taken into account are: the limit of time to achieve the goals, the necessary resources to encourage the motivation and measuring how much the objectives benefit the company)
- Workload manager: Scorecard
- Training and development: Strategic T&D Plan

- **Salary**

    Data shows that the people between 18 and 30 years old are the most dissatisfied employees with the salary and with the training programs. Younger people are always looking for a development with better opportunities in the work.Salary is one of the variables that cannot be changed easily. Hence, following these ambitions, the solution is to change the rewarding system instead of changing the salary. That means to offer a different way to obtain the same results, more benefits and opportunities of reward the productivity of employees.The current rewarding system is based on the results of finished projects per year, but since not all the projects bring the same benefit, the rewarding system is not constant. Even if the employees make a very big effort, they are not sure what they are going to receive a good reward (Androniceanu, 2011). The new rewarding system needs to be based on an objective plan for each employee (not all the employees work the same). In addition, this plan needs to reach a timeline to finish the project and to accomplish the objectives respecting the appropriate time. Thus, this system will help to employees feel more secure about their work by reaching their own objectives. The company should create Works Council to motivate the employees by improving their social needs. For example, the tickets for the cinema, theaters, museums, expositions, amusement parks and etc, may be sold with discounts. Also, for the vacation time, the company may pay half of the flight ticket to encourage their employees.

- **Workload :**

    As a result of the questionnaire survey, it is clear that many of the workers are not satisfied with the responsibility of workloads and even the managers are unaware of the responsibilities handled by each of the employee. As we already mentioned, workloads represent a source of mental stress for employees (Robbins, 1996) and it leads the employees to have an inefficient performance of their activities. To solve this problem, activities, tasks and responsibilities should be reassigned based on a new Workload Analysis made by managers in joint with the Human Resource Department.

These workload analysis needs to accomplish three important factors:
- Time
- Effort
- Resources

    With this new system, managers will be able to observe which areas have inefficient resources and time. Thus, reassigning activities not only helps to maintain a good work environment, but also to increase the performance of employees and preserve the resources of the company in positive. Some workload tools analysis are: qualitative tasks analysis, visual workload scale, workload balancing lines, crew performance model, etc.

Considering that the enterprise is having every time more and more exit rate of people, the employees who stay in the company, have an exaggerated workload due to the uncovered work that is not being done. The reason is that they are having too much pressure and added to the economical environment the situation is becoming critical. Thus, the Balance Scorecard is proposed as a strategy of Performance Management. It helps managers to control de execution of responsibilities of their employees. This tool is flexible and is continuously restructured and uploaded in a specific frequency of time. It needs an agreement between the manager, the employee and the team. It is a methodology that needs the participation of people, because all the team is always involved in it and they are together distributing the tasks equitably with achievable goals.This tool also gives an additional value to the company, because thank to it the company can articulate their strategy in actionable terms. It provides a road map to achieve the goals and coordinates the necessary resources to make it possible. It

alerts managers to achieve the tasks of the team on time and to encourage them to work.
What the tool can do is to:
1. Translate the vision of the company into operational objectives for each area
2. Link the vision of the company to the employees performance and to the resources available
3. Work hand by hand with the planning
4. Define the impact that the performances have in the organization
5. Have a feedback of the work and adjust the strategy according to the results

• **Training System :**The younger people and also those who do not have enough working experience are the ones who are discontent with the training and development programs provided by the company. According to the coordinators and the answers of employees, the trainings given by the company are not adapted to the different profiles of specific work. This generates training failures and become useless and inefficient since the workers cannot apply them to their ordinary work. If the right organizational training is found, the whole company can achieve the potential outcomes. (Tabassi & Bakar, 2008). So, trainings should be identified with the purpose of making a segregation of the different prototypes of employees. Each manager should have a feedback from the team to evaluate the courses and trainings so that they might need to improve themselves into their works. Also to satisfy the employees in terms of self-development, the company should provide the books according to their employees' demands. Following the information received by the employees, the manager in coordination with the Human Resource Department should focus on prepare a budget for the training package in a specific period. It will help both, the company and the employees to invest time and resources to maximize the profit and also to be in a continue improvement of their abilities. According to Sergay group, the following table is recommended to recognize the elements needed to achieve a good implementation of an Strategy Training System. (An important consolatory for training implementation company).

VI. CONCLUSION

After doing the interview for the managers and the coordinators and the poll for the employees, it was detected that the company under study is facing some problems related to lack of motivation and lack of working enthusiasm in their employees. After the analysis of the poll for the employees, the main reasons were identified: training, workloads and salary were the principal factors that affected motivation. Analyzing the results, it was seen that especially the youngest employees are having more problems with the company. It is difficult for them to balance their personal goals and their needs with their workloads. Another important factor is the training programs, because the youngest employees are not feeling supported by the company in terms of working skills. The third factor is the salary, which somehow could not reach their expectations.After analyzing the academical references, some recommendations are given by targeting and solving the three main factors mentioned before. Concerning the salary, the rewarding system should be changed. The new rewarding system should be based on an objective plan and timeline of each employee to determine productivity and an equal benefit. To deal with the problem of the workload, a new workload analysis system should be developed in order to achieve three objectives in: Time, Effort and Resources. This system will help the company to detect the problems of performance, to reorganize the team, to distribute the workloads and to accomplish the better results. In terms of training, the company should be more engaged with the Human Resource Department and the coordinators of every department, trying to understand more their requirements related with knowledge and to provide them effective trainings. By this way, the company can maximize their budget regarding their investments in training courses for the employees.

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