

**MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED WORKERS
PRODUCTIVITY IN
THE PUBLIC SERVICE: THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF NIGERIA
EXPERIENCE**

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the motivational strategies that could be adopted in motivating the workforce in the public service using National library of Nigeria as a focal point. It brought to bear the fact that a number of theories have been developed in an attempt to explain motivated behaviour and behavioral sciences, especially psychology has to a large extent, assisted managers in understanding some facets of human behaviour. It has also made it possible for managers to identify the needs of man, that when attended to, will propel him to action which will bring about better performance. The needs may be for intrinsic or extrinsic rewards, financial and non-financial incentives. However, it is obvious that a single reward policy cannot effectively motivate all employees owing to variability of needs. Consequently, productivity will be enhanced if the combination of financial and non-financial motivational policies are formulated and implemented in the Public Service. The strategies to be adopted were enunciated, efforts of National library in motivating staff were discussed, the challenges of motivating staff articulated and recommendations on the way forward proffered.

Keywords: Motivation, Strategies, Workers, Public Service, Management, National Library of Nigeria.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Motivation is a key factor in the management of human resources. As management is defined as the act of getting things done through others, it is obvious that human resources must be attracted, trained, developed and above all motivated in order to realize individual and organizational goals. An individual who has ability, skills and knowledge would not do much without motivation, while an individual with skills,

knowledge and ability with added motivation is a sure way to success. Ubeku (1984) observed that effective performance on the part of the employees is essential for the success of any organization. He maintained that while the knowledge and skills possessed by the individual employee are important in determining his job performance, these factors alone are not sufficient. Thus, an understanding of what motivates the individual is needed to reveal how abilities and skills are activated and their potential released.

The subject of motivation of workers has derived from so many attempts made by management practitioners to look for the best way to manage so as to accomplish an objective or mission with the least inputs of materials and human resources. Several theories, concepts, principles and techniques of management have evolved in response to these challenges. It is therefore apparent that the issue of motivation of workers has relevance in all managerial functions that are aimed at directing the productive efforts of the workforce towards achieving organizational objectives. However, public service is concerned with the provision of social services. The vision of the National Library is "to ensure the building of an informed and enlightened citizenry through the provision of information resources that are readily available and easily accessible", while the mission is "to acquire, process, organize, disseminate as well as provide links to information resources to all Nigerians for their educational pursuits and for informed decision making". If she is able to fulfill this mission, then productivity is achieved. And this is usually hinged on how motivated the workforce is in order to put in their best for the actualization of the organizational goals and objectives. The foregoing, informed the researcher's decision in the choice of this study, as Makama (1999) puts it that the ability of an organization to achieve a set objective depends largely on the management's ability to motivate its employees towards efficient and effective performance.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF MOTIVATION

Motivation can be defined as the act of stimulating someone or oneself to get a desired course of action, to push the right button, and to get a desired reaction. Steers and Porter (1991) defined motivation as a force that serves three functions: it energizes or causes people to act; it directs behavior towards the attainment of specific goals; and it sustains the effort expended in reaching those goals. Obisi (1996) defined the term as the "willingness to work. The desire and will to excel at work. It is the desire and stimulation which enables individuals to perform their work". While Makama (1999) puts it this way "Motivation – Behaviour – Performance. Translated, it means that when one is motivated, it precipitates a behaviour and thus positive performance". Akinola (1999) defined motivation as an inducement given to a worker so as to make him/her work willingly and well in order to achieve maximum productivity, while Amah and Daminabo-Weje. (2004) defined

motivation as the systematic art that propels an individual or worker to accomplish expected result. That is inducing people to work to the best of their ability. The concept of motivation refers to the way in which urges, drives, desires, aspirations, needs, influence the choice of alternatives in the behaviour of human beings. However, it is essential to point out that not all behaviours are motivated. Some behaviours are habitual or reflexive. But motivated behaviours are those which a manager can and must endeavour to inculcate in his workforce.

Banjoko (2002) postulates that the human element is the only factor of production that is capable of thinking, planning and executing. The human element holds the key to organizational success. Hence it is imperative to say that man is central to the growth, vitality and survival of any organisation. In view of this, it becomes necessary that organisations must develop effective work plans and human resource strategies for enhancing improved performance. He went further to assert that to be able to achieve the overall corporate objective of higher performance and enhanced productivity, the organisation must put in place effective motivational strategies as well as creating a work environment that could encourage and motivate people to be more productive. Appropriate stimuli must be sought and management must build its motivational strategies around these stimuli.

Unlike material resources that can be easily manipulated, and whose actions and reactions are predictable, human beings are much more complex in their actions and reactions. It is difficult and sometimes impossible to predict how a person would respond to certain stimulus. Also, a human being might respond or react to the same stimulus in different ways under different circumstances. People join organisations initially because they are motivated to fulfill certain personal needs. Whether the motivation is internal or external or both, the overall success of an organisation will bear direct relationship to its success in motivating members to peak performance. Managers in any organisation should build into it factors that will induce workers to contribute as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Drucker (1974) in stating that work and worker are fundamentally different phenomena maintained that "the worker must be managed according to both the logic of the work and the dynamics of working. Personal satisfaction of the worker without productive work is failure, but so is productive works that destroy the worker's achievement". This is still writing on the way of making the work interesting and the worker happy so as to enhance the productive capacity. Hence, organisations must be viable in order to fulfill the needs of individuals in that organisation, who are in turn motivated to give their best (performance) to the organisation.

Motivation process centers on needs, which produce motives that lead to the accomplishment of goals. Needs are caused by deficiencies or imbalances. Motives or stimuli produce an action taken to satisfy the need. In the motivation process, the achievement of the goal satisfies the need and reduces the motives. When the goal is reached, balance is restored, of course, other needs then arise. These other needs must be satisfied by the motivation process.

Motivation theories can be categorised into traditional and modern or content and process theories.

CONTENT THEORIES:-

These are theories that deal with the factors within the individual which start, energize, direct, maintain and stop behavior such as Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Frederick Herzberg's two factor theory and McGregor's theory x and theory.

PROCESS THEORIES: The process theories place emphasis on the actual process of motivation. They are concerned with the relationships among dynamic variables which make up motivation and with how behaviour is initiated and sustained. Process theories include Vroom's expectancy theory, Lawler and Porter's equity theory, reinforcement and goal theories.

Since the early days, more sophisticated theories of motivation have been developed. Some stress the importance of specific needs in determining motivation. Other theories emphasize the connection between work behaviours and outcomes- the influence of attaining rewards and achieving goals. Other theories focus on the role of job design in affecting motivation. Still another category of theories argues that motivation is a rational process and that workers cognitively weigh the advantages and disadvantages of expending work energy.

The practical implications of the content theories of motivation discussed above with regards to Nigeria as a developing country and National Library of Nigeria in particular are: That corporate leaders need to ensure that the rewards to employees in an organisation fulfill their needs otherwise, they will have little value. Content theories suggest that different people have different needs at different times. It also warns against relying too heavily on financial rewards as a source of employee motivation. Thus it can be deduced that motivation is generated when job is satisfying to the individual, when the conditions around the job and the people involved in the job are all contributing in such a way that the individual worker derives satisfaction from being part of the system.

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES AND THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF NIGERIA EXPERIENCE

Olugbemi (2003) asserted that we are always faced with the problem of which of the theories to apply in stimulating the employees. The problem is that their needs, desires, aspirations and motives differ and they respond differently to motivational instruments. Hence, what the manager needs is an intimate knowledge of the individual and what will stimulate him/her. He advocated that the basics required to stimulate or motivate an employee are as follows:

Operating tools must be appropriate and adequate.

The objective of the organisation and means of achieving it must be stated clearly.

The employee should be made part and parcel of the decision-making process.

There should be time limit or time frame for every activity done.

Management techniques of supervision and coordination should be instilled.

Training is critical in order to acquire new skills.

Providing the enabling environment for the employee to actualize his/her potentials.

The employee does not need the 'stick' but the 'carrot' to ginger him and what the manager needs to tickle the employee is the function of his perception of the employee. The key to improving productivity is motivation. Consequently, the Board, Management of National Library of Nigeria should learn what motivates their employee and make sure they understand the relationships among efforts, performance and reward. Performance is generally more positively affected by intelligent motivational effort than by forcing or coercing a certain kind of behaviour from employees or by imposing constraints on them. There is positive relationship between motivation and performance and if workers are rewarded for good performance, other things being equal, their productivity will increase. Such rewards would raise the morale of workers thereby increasing productivity. Thus, it is necessary for Management to build into it rewards that will raise and sustain the morale of the staff of National Library of Nigeria and know that when a staff is given more incentives, challenges and responsibilities, the person becomes more committed and result oriented on the job which invariably goes a long way to improve the overall performance of the organisation.

The key to an effective employee motivation strategy is to provide a range of incentives that will appeal to different personalities. While one individual may be highly money-motivated, another may find job satisfaction or creative opportunities as more powerful factors, (www.garnetroom.com). To some extent, a high level of employee motivation is derived from the effective management practices. Thus, to develop motivated employees, a manager must treat people as individuals;

empower workers, which could be achieved when individuals in an organization are given autonomy, authority, trust, and encouragement to accomplish a task; provide an effective reward system, which could be extrinsic rewards or intrinsic rewards; redesign jobs; and create a flexible workplace, (Cliff's notes.com). Thus, the following motivational strategies were also adduced:

Find the right job for the right person: This is because when people enjoy and are challenged by their work, they become self-motivated. Empower employees: Trust employees to make their own decisions and also make their own mistakes.

Organisations should value performance and results rather than encouraging a presentee culture. Involve employees in organization development: This means keeping employees informed on new developments in the organisation and how their work impacts on the organisation.

The employee must feel safe: This involves improving levels of trust between the leadership of your organisation and staff. For when staff feel secured and nurtured in their work environment they perform better.

For the above to be effective, as a leader, ask yourself how many of the following can be found in your employee motivation strategy?

Ensuring job security: This is possibly the greatest single factor for a motivated workforce. Thus, improve job security and fringe benefits.

Leading your staff: Enable supervisors to coach their teams and create opportunities for people who are keen to learn skills and grow within the organisation.

Creating a comfortable working environment: This involves developing areas for socialising, creative thinking, reading and giving employees' quality spaces to work in.

Treating employees fairly: When people feel they are treated fairly, they remain loyal to the organization and equally motivated by their work. While perceived inequality of treatment leads to resentment, low morale and lack of self-motivation.

The power of acknowledgement: This focuses on how to praise, acknowledge and give positive feedback. This may seem uncomfortable at first, or even excessive, but positive reinforcement is a highly effective, inexpensive and empowering way to achieve employee motivation.

"How often do we ask our staff 'how they are and listen to the answer?'. How often do we identify with our staff and find out what is bothering them at any point in time? Recognizing their participation as well as results: Encourage your team to share their thoughts, potential solutions and concerns making it safe to make suggestions. Standing up for your people: Part of the job of a leader is to be an advocate for his team. Instead of complaining about his team members, he should rather get their help in looking for solutions and moving forward.

Praising in public, correcting in private: At first they may be embarrassed by the public recognition of their achievement...but they'll get over it and glow on the inside. Equally, never undermine in public. Save those conversations for a safe, confidential environment. Praise is an end in itself: So do not use praise only as a prelude to criticism. Praise and recognize employee's successes many times as much as you constructively criticize them.

National Library of Nigeria maintains a welfare package/scheme that is functional but still needs to be improved upon. It could be emphasized that the Management and the various Boards that have governed the institution over the years have been magnanimous enough to put in place the following welfare packages:

LOANS AND ADVANCES: Loans and advances are extended to staff. These include rent advance, motor vehicle loan, and salary advance to mention but a few, to the interested staff who sought the facility.

TRAINING /SPONSORSHIP: Training/ sponsorship is granted in workshops, conferences, and seminars. But a lot needs to be done in this area as many people are still on the queue to benefit. There is also part sponsorship to various courses in recognized tertiary institutions, with full tuition fees made available to the beneficiaries and many of the staff have benefitted.

MERIT/ SERVICE AWARDS: In the past years, National Library of Nigeria had given merit awards to deserving staff on various criteria- productivity, neatness/best dressed, punctuality, relationship with staff, long service, dedication etc. on departmental level. However, for a very long time, such recognition has not been functional. Thus, there is urgent need to resuscitate such gesture, as it will go a long way in raising the morale of the staff.

CHALLENGES

INADEQUATE FINANCE: Inadequate finance has drastically affected some of the good dreams National Library of Nigeria has for her staff. In effect, it has affected the number of staff being sponsored for workshops, seminars and conferences. This has dampened the morale of the staff.

MERIT/ SERVICE AWARDS: There is gross inconsistency in the system in the area of award giving. The last time this was done was in 2001, and since then nothing has been done about it. This may be linked to lack of adequate fund, but it should not affect this good gesture that has a lot to do in motivating staff. Management should resuscitate the merit/service awards to deserving officers as a way of motivating officers for improved productivity. Recommendation for outstanding performance and commendation letters to deserving staff for honesty, etc should be improved upon too.

There is always a long queue of staff desiring to benefit from loans and advances for the purpose of improving their lives. This should also be looked into so as to alleviate the problems of the staff. Thus more funds should be allocated to the Staff Welfare. Management should organize send-forth ceremonies for all retiring officers on a yearly basis to appreciate officers' contributions to the organization during their service years. This would motivate the serving officers for dedication to service.

Transportation facility was cancelled due to the monetization policy. This has brought untold hardship to staff of the institution. Many parastatals have devised means of conveying their staff to and from office through a welfare scheme. Thus, there is need for the National Library of Nigeria to provide transportation facility to her staff in order to motivate them and make life easy for them too.

WORKING TOOLS/MATERIALS: There is problem of inadequate tools and this should be seriously addressed, as some staff that require computer systems and its accessories do not have functional computer systems. Cataloguing and classification tools are not adequate, most especially at this era of Information age, National Library of Nigeria should be able to adopt and embrace the use of online versions of all the cataloguing and classification tools most especially the open source integrated library software, to make work easier and faster. Adequate provisions should be made for other working tools and materials also.

Working environment is conducive in some departments, while in others, staff cluster in one office without privacy. Staff should be encouraged to work in an environment devoid of distractions. Air conditioners should work effectively and those that require big office space and bigger tables and even better chairs and other items of furniture and tools should be provided with such.

WORKING RELATIONSHIP: Lack of cordial relationship between supervisors and subordinates exist in some quarters and it is important that it should be eschewed and addressed so as not to affect team work.

LACK OF ACCOMMODATION/ HOUSING LOANS: Monetization policy has eroded the housing policy in the Public Service including the National Library of Nigeria. Many of the National Library staff are living in rented apartments and there is no housing loans to encourage staff to build their own houses. Some organizations motivate their staff by providing adequate finance that enables them build their own houses,

while some build houses for their staff and deduct the money in installment. However, Federal Government Loans Board is a way out, either for building house, renovation, or purchase of a house. Although getting loans from there takes time and requires exercise of patience, National Library of Nigeria should encourage her staff to avail themselves of such opportunity.

Lack of prompt payment of allowances is another challenge that disturbs the minds of the staff as there is gross delay in settlement of several allowances owed staff. Lack of staff canteen resulting in man-hour loss is also one of the challenges experienced as some staff go far to look for food.

Non- payment of responsibility allowance to heads of units, sections, divisions and heads of branches. These people have been found worthy to be saddled with responsibilities despite their designations and should be encouraged by being given an allowance for the supervision.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Since the key to improving productivity is motivation, the employees of National Library of Nigeria should be continuously motivated by monetary and non-monetary rewards.

The factors of motivation could be: reward of performance, promotion based on merit and as at when due to avoid waiting for promotion arrears, objectivity in performance appraisal, job enrichment, delegation of authority and resources to accomplish this responsibility, recognition of exemplary performance, good working condition/environment, job security, commendation/praises when necessary, effective supervision. Paying over-time to deserving staff, 13th Month Salary as is done in other organizations, giving Sallah / Christmas gift items, establishment of end-of-year programmes, packaging skills acquisition and training for deserving staff, giving award to deserving staff, provision of staff canteen facility, transportation facility, empowering staff, commendation and providing an effective reward system, provision of adequate working tools/materials, mapping out adequate money for loans and advances, training sponsorship for workshops, conferences and seminars, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities, developing good and cordial relationship between supervisors and subordinates, staff care, redesigning jobs to make it more challenging and interesting, responsibility allowance should be paid to the heads of units, sections, divisions and heads of branches. Most importantly, individual needs should be identified for proper and adequate motivation to be achieved.

It is also imperative for Board and Management of National Library of Nigeria to realize that the importance of employee motivation does not stop at increased productivity, but also brings about improved employee morale, more loyal workforce and better creativity. Thus the motivation strategies proffered in this paper should be adopted so as to realize a motivated workforce which will positively affect the realization of the objectives and goals of this esteemed institution.

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