

## Chapter Nine: Motivation and Communications

### Model answers

#### Mini case 9(i): Motivating the workers at the Polish Competence Centre

##### Discussion point

**Do most university graduates trade-off financial rewards for a first step on the career ladder?**

Few students enter highly paid jobs soon after graduating as they lack experience and specific skills to command such salaries. Most accept that a career involves gaining experience and building skills over a longer period, perhaps through further education and training. In many ways the 'trade-off' between financial rewards and a step on the career ladder is bestowed upon them and is a reality that most accept.

##### Questions

**What are the main rewards for workers at the Polish Competence Centre (PCC)?**

The trade-off discussed in the discussion point is very much in evidence at the Polish Competence Centre (PCC). The Centre benefits from the energy, drive and knowledge of young workers, and the workers gain valuable experience that makes them attractive to other employers as they move through their career. The rewards are mostly non-monetary but are highly valued, such as enhanced skills, problem solving, time-management, teamwork, and other essential work-related competencies.

**Is the motivation model adopted at the PCC sustainable?**

As long as workers perceive benefits from the employment arrangement then the model is sustainable. The motivation of workers stems from the understanding that they are gaining valuable career enhancing experience and skills that they can use to good effect in future. There is a 'psychological contract' between the employer and the employee that is mutually beneficial.

**How can managers at the PCC measure the motivation of workers?**

Managers at the PCC can motivate workers by giving them increasing amounts of responsibility and giving them jobs that are varied enough to enhance their skills and experience. As these constitute the primary reasons for most of the young workers to choose the PCC as an employer, then management need to focus attention on ensuring that the work carried out builds competencies for the future.

**Mini case 9(ii) Smoke-free factory boosts worker motivation at Azucarlito**

**Discussion point**

**Does non-smoking policies of organisations undermine the job prospects of smokers?**

Yes. Although it is illegal to discriminate against smokers, it cannot help but colour the judgement of recruiters when taking on new workers in a smoke-free environment.

## Questions and task

### **Choose an organisation and highlight its policy on smoking.**

As an example, below is an extract from the smoking policy of Glasgow Caledonian University.

#### Smoke Free Campus

“GCU is committed to creating a high quality, healthy working environment for staff, students, and visitors. In accordance with that commitment, the University Executive and the Joint Consultative Committee have recently approved an updated version of the Smoke Free Campus Policy.

The main effect of the updated policy is that from 15th October 2007, smoking is prohibited on any part of the University campus. This policy applies equally to members of staff, students, visitors, and contractors.

The policy seeks to promote the wider health and wellbeing agenda, with the Occupational Health team and the Students Association providing a number of supporting initiatives to anyone who wishes to stop smoking”.

### **Does the implementation of sanctions against non-conforming smokers at *Azucarlito* violate their human rights?**

It has been established through research that passive smoking is harmful to health and, therefore, the rights of employees to work in a safe and healthy environment would override those of smokers wishing to continue to smoke in the workplace.

**What did management do to help smooth the transition to a smoke-free factory at Azucarlito?**

The management at Azucarlito undertook a number of initiatives to smooth the transformation to a smoke-free environment. These took the form of education and training on health issues relating to smoking, incentives for workers to give up the habit, healthcare support for those attempting to quit smoking, and peer support. Only after a suitable period of time to allow these measures to take effect did the management introduce sanctions for those in violation of the smoke-free policy.

**Mini case 9(iii) Peer recognition as a motivator at Informa**

**Discussion point**

**Why is peer-recognition perceived as more valuable than that of management?**

In some industry settings, the value of peer-recognition is higher than that offered by managers because of the nature of the work carried out. In industries that are highly creative or skilled, workers may perceive greater satisfaction from knowing that their performance is recognised by those whose opinions and skills they recognise as being similar to their own. Those who have displayed those skills or experiences and who have subsequently found themselves in management positions may command greater respect from workers who perform those tasks. However, in many industry settings, it is management who are in charge of rewards and very often it is those managers who have to be impressed. Consequently, for the purposes of promotion and other rewards it may be that the approbation of managers is more highly valued.

## Questions

### **Can you detect any flaws in the *Informa* peer-recognition initiative?**

The peer-recognition initiative at *Informa* may be compromised by collusion among workers to manipulate the process for their own ends. Work colleagues may also be friends and therefore the temptation to collude may be present.

### **What are the main advantages of the peer-recognition initiative at *Informa*?**

The main advantage of the peer-recognition initiative are that workers are motivated by reaching a standard of performance recognised by those who share their work tasks and who understand the skills and experience required to fulfil the tasks to a high standard. For the company, the initiative has the potential for raising standards, increasing quality, and building loyalty among workers. It also enhances the reputation of the company and helps to underpin core values.

### **How can the effectiveness of the peer-recognition awards initiative at *Informa* be measured and assessed?**

The initiative can be measured in the number of workers achieving the peer-recognition and then matching it with the increase in output, quality, or client satisfaction. There has to be a link between the peer-recognition initiative and the performance of the organisation. Managers can monitor performance and correlate the results in line with the number of workers achieving peer-recognition.

## **Case study: Total worker empowerment at Semco**

### **Discussion point**

#### **Is the transformational plan implemented at Semco universally applicable?**

It is not possible to replicate an organisational culture in other organisations. The culture at Semco was unique to the business and the circumstances and personnel driving the implementation plan forward were also unique. It is unlikely that the same results would be observed in other organisations if they attempted to replicate exactly the implementation plans put into action at Semco. Very often radical plans depend on the personality of the leader driving transformational change. Issues of charisma, personality, and communications skills become important when trying to get workers to 'buy into' the vision and aims of the organisation. In this regard it is not possible to assert that the type of transformational change seen at Semco would be universally applicable in its entirety.

### **Questions and tasks**

#### **Outline the main changes at Semco that improved the motivation of workers.**

The most significant change at Semco was the democratisation of the management process that allowed workers to shape their own destiny. Responsibility for all aspects of the working environment was transferred to workers, sometimes individually but most often through the work of a democratically elected workers' body. This brought about a change in culture in the organisation that proved the catalyst for further change. For example, the workers' group set up to advance design and innovation was a manifestation of the new regime established to make the company more competitive. This followed on from a diversification policy designed to explore

new revenue streams and extend the competencies of workers. Combined, these factors raised the motivation of workers as they felt a distinct stakeholder engagement with the company. Thus, the company's future was intertwined with that of the workers. This proved to be a great motivator for the workers as they each had a vested interest in the performance of the company.

**Identify possible sources of tension within the existing structure at Semco.**

The main source of potential tension within Semco was the differences in salaries that were decided upon by the democratically elected worker groups. Although the democratic element of this process adds legitimacy to the outcome, over time it may cause resentment among certain groups who perceive themselves to be disadvantaged. Another source of tension may be the personnel involved in the decision making process. Even under democratic conditions there may be a small group of influential people who come to dominate and wield greater influence. This could have long-term consequences for group cohesion and harmony. Finally, there may be some instances where strong management is required quickly. The democratic process may be more egalitarian but can undermine competitiveness. Tensions may arise if this results in poor performance.

**What were the biggest risks taken by Richard Semler in implementing the new regime at Semco?**

The biggest risk taken by Richard Semler was the reaction of workers to his proposed new regime. It would have been impossible to pre-empt what that reaction would be so it was a step into the unknown. The future of the company was at stake and required radical action. There was no blueprint or previous record of similar approaches to call on. Consequently, the risks were

much higher. Diversifying the activities of the company was also a risk as few in the organisation had much experience beyond manufacturing for the shipbuilding industry. This entailed the risk of acquiring new skills, building experience over time and expecting the workers to embrace the idea of innovation and change.

### **Chapter questions and task**

**Think about what the main motivators for you would be on entering a new job. Highlight what they would be and place them in a priority list.**

The majority of respondents to this task cite monetary rewards as the major motivator on entering a new job. However, this may be a short lived motivator as the novelty of earning money wears off. Most people look for other motivators such as greater autonomy in managing their workload, promotion and status, influence, freedom to explore new ideas, location of work, work schedules, etc. Although it is possible to prioritise motivators, they are likely to change significantly over time.

**Highlight five ways managers can influence motivation of workers.**

Managers can seek to influence the motivation of workers by:

- Offering economic rewards for improved performance;
- Improving physical working conditions;
- Offering greater autonomy in decision making for workers;
- Bringing more workers into the strategic decision making level;
- Formally recognising superior performance.

**Identify five key factors that can undermine worker motivation.**



There are many factors that can undermine worker motivation. Some include:

- Overly controlling management style;
- Management culture of punishment for poor performance;
- Poor and dangerous physical working conditions;
- Lack of stimulating work tasks;
- Limited scope for social interaction between staff.

**Do modern information and communications technologies (ICTs) help or hinder effective communications?**

There is no doubt that modern ICTs have helped to enable communications between workers. Applications such as e-mail, social media, teleconferencing, mobile phones, etc. have greatly enhanced the ability of workers to maintain contact with each other. The full benefits of these have become obscured by the fact that they are ubiquitous and part of everyday working life for most workers. The question of whether or not they help effective communications is a rather more complex issue. In some instances, new technologies can be detrimental to effective communication where there is no substitute for face-to-face dialogue. The use of e-mails now has a history of miscommunication and misunderstanding that can lead to conflict. The nature of the medium tends to encourage short (sometimes perceived as curt and rude) communications that can easily be misinterpreted. Teleconferencing is useful for bringing groups of people together across different locations, but it is still less effective than a round table discussion due to the rather stilted effect that a slight time lag on communications has. Overall, it seems that while modern technologies have helped communications in the workplace, there is still no more effective means than face-to-face interaction, where the human touch is more visible.