

SHAPING THE SAFE BEHAVIOR OF EMPLOYEES IN THE ENTERPRISE

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Abstract: The paper focuses on the issues related to motivating employees to work safely in the enterprise. The characteristics of the motivational process and definitions are presented. The general approach to the process of employee motivation is discussed, including the instruments used to stimulate work motivation, both pay and non-pay methods of motivation, e.g. the possibility of promotion, participation. The chosen model of activities shaping safe behavior of employees was also presented, as well as specific methods and means of motivating to work safely.

Keywords: motivating process, company management, work safety, work organization, human factor.

1. Introduction

The human capital of an enterprise, i.e. the knowledge, skills and experience of its employees, determines the development and success of the enterprise. However, to achieve success, every company must motivate its strategic human capital. Enterprises are looking for more and more advanced and effective instruments to motivate their employees. It is well known that an effective system of motivating employees enables them to develop their full potential to perform the tasks and objectives of the organization, which results in the enterprise being more likely to achieve planned objectives.

Preventive success in improving work safety in an enterprise also depends, to a large extent, on effective influence on the motivation to safe behavior. The employer, including management and direct supervision, should strive to ensure that all employees in the company perform their tasks in accordance with safety regulations, even when there is absolute certainty about the lack of control (Studenski, 1996).

2. The characteristics of the motivational process

The word “motivation” is derived from the Latin words *motus*, which means movement, running, mind activities and *moveo*, which means to put into motion, encourage someone to do something, to do something, to influence someone. Thus, it can be stated that motivation is a pursuit in a certain direction (Benedikt, 2002). In management, the shaping of motivation is considered to be one of the main functions and techniques of leadership (Penc, 2000). Management through motivation is a constant search for the answer to the question that bothers every employer: what can be done to ensure that employees work effectively and safely?

The general definition of motivation can be summarized as follows: “motivation consists in influencing a person’s attitudes and behavior through specific incentives, which transform into motives (reasons) for actions that trigger their activity” (Bieniok et al., 2004).

When discussing motivating to work, T. Kotarbiński notes that: “it is about people willingly doing what they have to do; to do what they have to do, not only because they have to; to find pleasure in doing what they have to do and to improve their work, showing generosity in devoting themselves to it” (Bieniok et al., 2004).

J. Stoner, on the other hand, defines motivation as: “what causes, directs and sustains people’s behavior” (Stoner and Wankel, 1996).

S.P. Robbins considers motivation to be “the willingness to exercise high levels of effort towards organization goals, conditional by the scope, in which those efforts can facilitate satisfying some individual needs” (Reykowski, 1975).

3. Instruments to stimulate motivation

Stimulating motivation is a complex and multifaceted process. This is due to the fact that every person has their own system of values, which includes both universal (general) and individual (personal) values. These values depend on each person’s individuality, needs and life aspirations. In order to motivate properly, it is necessary to create an environment in which different needs can be met, that is, to enable workers to meet both the deficit (shortage) and growth needs, including the needs of self-realization (Penc, 2000; Vierendeels et al., 2018).

The motivating process should be treated broadly and not be limited only to the policy of creation and differentiation of wages. It should include a complete set of interactions adapted to the expectations and value system of employees. B. Gliński (1980) lists the following activities:

- identifying qualifications, predispositions, passions, needs and aspirations of employees in order to select and adjust work to their expectations,
- providing comprehensive information and organization of work to ensure the maximum conscious participation and involvement of employees; understanding the interdependence of their work with the work of their colleagues, and with the requirements of the recipients and the environment,
- assigning tasks and measures of their performance in a manner enabling self-control of the progress, as well as including the contribution of work in the determination of remuneration,
- providing clear determination of basic wages, as well as the variable component of wages based on additional work input and invention,
- enacting periodic performance appraisals of employees in order to make adjustments in their work, control their development etc.,
- launching a range of non-pay incentives, including shaping of positive interpersonal relations.

A significant element in shaping employee motivation is the so-called ‘internal motivation’, which, according to Penc, (2000), Ünal et al. (2018) and Tappura et al. (2019), depends on factors such as:

- perception, i.e. an individual way of perceiving and awareness of reality and experiencing impressions resulting from its acceptance or negation,
- views and values that determine what goals a person sets for themselves, whether they accept external goals, how they make decisions, how they communicate with other people etc.,
- interests that determine the degree of acceptance of the work, the intensity of involvement in the work, the success orientation etc.,
- feelings that determine the attitude towards other people, willingness or unwillingness to cooperate and to interact, internal mood of the employee (satisfaction, apathy, frustration etc.), intensity of actions,
- personality, which determines the particular ways in which an individual can adapt to their environment and to the requirements created by the work itself and its organization.

In literature, the instruments of motivation stimulation, also known as ‘motivators’, can be divided into three basic groups:

1. Coercive.
2. Incentive.
3. Persuasion measures.

Coercive measures include all orders (injunctions and prohibitions), instructions and recommendations, supervisor’s advice, as well as own commitments and duties undertaken voluntarily, forcing specific behavior and actions within the organization. These measures vary

in the degree of firmness associated with the time limits, manner and method of implementation and involve submission to the will of the supervisor or the interests of the organization, regardless of the interests and needs of the employee. Two types of coercive measures can, therefore, be distinguished. The first one, of obligatory nature, such as an order or instruction, contains a deadline in which the employee must perform a given task. The latter, such as a recommendation or advice, is optional and allows the employee to decide on the task itself, as well as on the manner of performing the task. Other measures of this kind, such as own commitments, which are subject to free choice or pressure from the group, are not formalized, yet have a moral imperative which forces a certain behavior, in line with the declared attitude, position or commitment. These behaviors become necessary for the employee to be in harmony with the environment and with themselves.

Incentive measures include any promise to the employee that the supervisor will consistently reward them when they comply with the instructions. The intention of this type of measures is to interest the motivated person in better performance of work, which leads to the achievement of their objectives and, at the same time, the objectives of the organization. Incentive measures can be divided, by convention, into material incentives, offering the employee economic benefits that change their possessions (e.g. wages, bonuses, promotion, social benefits), and intangible incentives that add authority and dignity (e.g. promotion, social recognition, prestige, self-development opportunities etc.).

Persuasion measures are motivational measures that refer to an internal motivation and result from mutual negotiation or consultation with the motivator and the person being motivated. The reward is the interference of the person being motivated with motivator's goals in a long term, greater attachment to the workplace, strengthening one's own position as a partner, approval of meaning, awareness of participation in decision-making (sense of sharing power with the supervisor). Persuasion can be unilateral, as well as bilateral. In the first event, persuasion is based on interference in the emotional sphere of a person – we are dealing with the so-called “making someone believe”, suggestion through advertising, propaganda, authority etc. A bilateral persuasion is based on mutual partnership convincing and flow of information, i.e. consultation and negotiation, in which the motivated person determines the most appropriate behavior and tries to implement it. Such convincing (negotiation) should give the motivated persons the opportunity to maintain their well-being and the confidence that the motivator, while taking care of their own interest, also takes care of the interest of the partner. This is an essential condition for ensuring the good will of the motivated person and the subsequent reliable execution of the arrangements (Borkowska, 1985; Stemn et al., 2019).

4. Motivating to safe behavior

The vast majority of accidents are the result of human error, the most frequent being the violation of safety regulations, and the rest being mistakes made because of carelessness, forgetfulness or ignorance. Preventive success can be achieved through effective influencing the motivation for safe behavior. It should be the task of supervisors to make sure that everyone in the facility performs the assigned tasks in accordance with safety regulations, including when they know they are not being controlled.

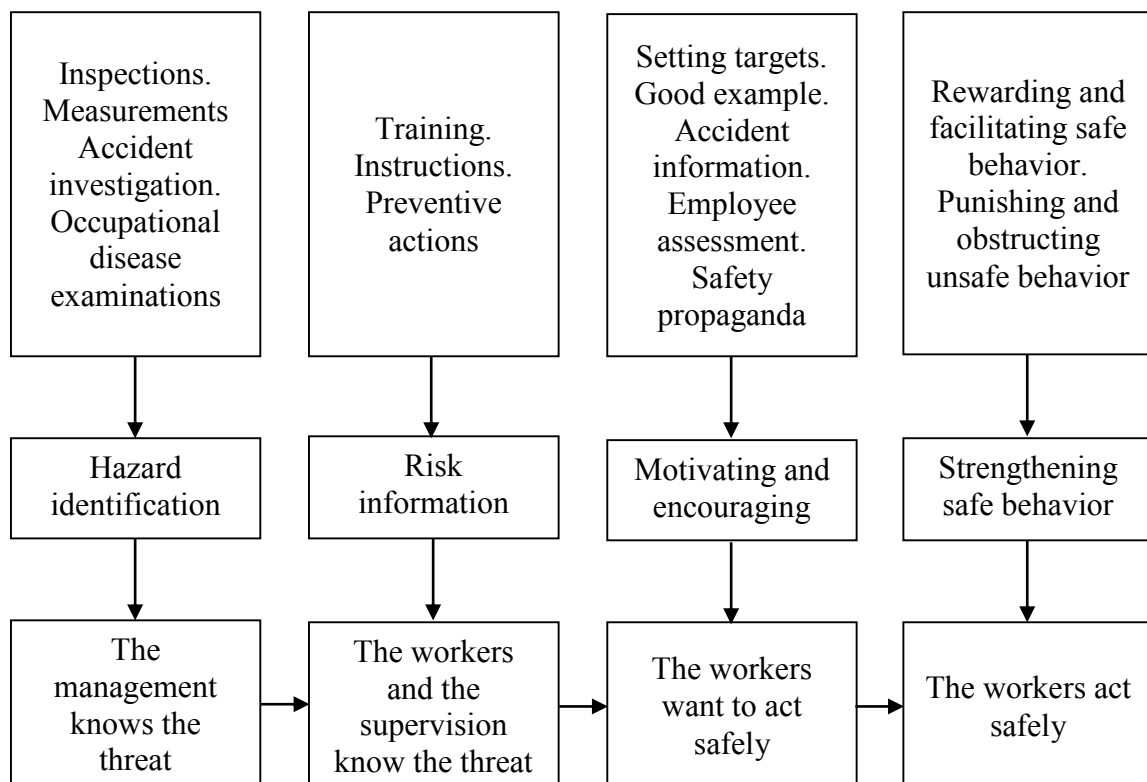


Figure 1. Model of activities shaping the safe behavior. Adapted from: “Organizacja bezpiecznej pracy w przedsiębiorstwie” by R. Studenski. Copyright 1996 by Wydawnictwo Politechniki Śląskiej.

The model presented in Figure 1 shows that the most important element in accident prevention is the employees’ knowledge of hazards. Such knowledge is the basis for the formulation of all kinds of preventive actions (technical, organizational and psychological). The first and basic step in the model of motivational activities is the identification of threats, and it is particularly important to know the errors that lead to hazardous events. The second step in the model is to provide employees with information about risks and mistakes they can make. The third step is to motivate people to act safely, and the fourth step is to strengthen safe behavior and lower their tendency to take risks.

5. Methods and means of motivating to work safely

Motivation can be described as a specific state of the human psyche. An employee's feeling of need to adapt to regulatory working methods and patterns is called the motivation to work safely. This need is due to the belief that compliance with applicable methods will reduce or eliminate the risk of death or injury.

According to R. Studenski (1996), influencing the employees in order to make them feel the need to adapt to safety standards is called motivating to safe behavior. This type of motivation involves several factors, including, but not limited to:

- providing information on accidents, their causes and the resulting losses,
- setting a good example,
- setting targets for subordinates,
- promoting safe behavior,
- evaluating supervision and employee behavior,
- rewarding and disciplining.

Knowledge of accidents provides a clear picture that workers learn little from their mistakes. Where some people lose their lives or health as a result of their mistakes, others repeat exactly the same actions that led to the accident. It is important to investigate each accident and identify its causes. Accidents not only result in suffering or death, but also in significant economic losses. These losses can be divided into direct losses, which are determined by the amount of compensation paid to the injured parties or their families, and indirect losses, which include amounts actually spent on removing medical, technical and organizational consequences of accidents, as well as amounts not earned by the plant due to downtime, production reduction, non-conclusion of a contract, termination of a contract etc. (Studenski, 1996; Samarth et al., 2018; Stoffregen et al., 2019). It is very important to properly investigate and explain the accident and its causes. It is also necessary to investigate what has been done against the rules and why it has been done. The knowledge gained in accident investigations should be communicated to the employees. Descriptions of the accidents that are presented to employees during periodical trainings for self-recognition of the causes, teach them to predict the consequences of risk-taking that may result in accidents.

Another factor is setting a good example, especially by the supervision and management of the enterprise. Every manager can influence employee safety by organizing technical prevention, as well as by communicating with supervisors and employees, and by setting a good example. Communicating the value of safety and setting a good example is manifested in:

- demonstrating by management of a high priority attached to safety,
- placing safety objectives first, before production objectives,
- expressing the belief that accident-free work is a real achievable goal,

- seeking to bring decisions, assessments and actions into conformity with the stated safety rules and preferences,
- integrating safety issues into production management.

All employees, regardless of their function, are subject to safety regulations. This applies to both regular employees and executives. When junior employees perceive that their supervisors act in accordance with the rules, this confirms their belief that it is necessary to maintain work safety (Studenski, 1996; Lafuente and Abad, 2018; Reiman et al., 2019).

Another motivating factor is to set targets for subordinates. Each supervisor should make it a primary objective for their team and individual employees to perform their tasks in accordance with applicable safety regulations. In order to achieve this goal, the conditions and threats should first be examined and the necessary safeguards should be applied, and then proceed carefully and in accordance with the applicable standards of conduct in successive operations and activities.

Other objectives may include:

- attempting to go a week, quarter or year without an accident,
- working a specified period of time without a lost working day due to an accident,
- introducing other, safer methods of operation,
- abandoning risky procedures and replacing them with less risky or more safe ones.

The achievement of the abovementioned goals should be noticed and rewarded by the management.

Promoting safe behavior is another element of motivating to work safely. The factors that influence a person's behavior are their attitudes, their competence and experience, and attitudes that determine how to act in a specific situation. Attitudes condition psychological readiness to behave in accordance with set values. In order to shape such readiness, the sender must influence the attitude of the recipient by means of a persuasive message. It is very difficult to change a person's attitude, and if it is successful, it is usually impermanent. The characteristics of the message provided and the way it is conveyed to the recipient, the assessment of the characteristics and intentions of the sender by the recipient, as well as the knowledge and characteristics of the recipient, are of great importance. The above-mentioned factors determine, to a large extent, whether attitudes change to the desired. In order to manipulate positively the attitude of the recipient, messages must attract the recipient's attention, provide new content and present the benefits of a change in attitude. Only a person who is credible and competent and has no intention of changing attitudes in order to obtain self-benefits will be positively perceived by the recipient. Furthermore, safe behavior should be promoted in relation to all employee behavior, i.e. both at work and outside of work.

A necessary part of motivation to maintain safety is the evaluation of the supervision and employees. An assessment of compliance with safety standards should be undertaken at least once a year in each workplace, department, team, and with regard to management and all

employees. The assessment criteria are usually: accident rate, incidence of occupational disease, inspection results and targets achieved, as well as special achievements in the field of safety improvement. People's assessments shall include the degree of compliance with the arrangements in the scope of responsibilities that relate to the achievement of safety objectives.

The assessment of the facility and of the management shall be executed by the management or a superior body, and the assessment of the organizational units of the facility and the members of supervision and the employees are to be executed by the management or by the safety committee within the facility. The results of such an assessment should be accurate, ranging from very good in the event of high performance to good, average and bad in the event of serious negligence.

Evaluations should be recorded and then included in position classifications and promotions. All employees should be guided by the belief that a condition for promotion, especially to management positions, is high performance in safety assessment (Studenski, 1996; Robbins and DeCenzo, 2002; Găureanu et al., 2019; Matuszak and Żabińska, 2019).

The last factor influencing motivation to work safely is rewarding and disciplining employees. Everyone wants to be rewarded and to avoid punishment. If we can choose between two behaviors, one of which can lead to a prize and the other to punishment, we choose the one that will be rewarded. This principle forms the basis for the use of rewards and penalties to stimulate safe behavior and prevent behavior that can lead to accidents. From the psychological point of view, a reward can be defined as what a person perceives as pleasant and satisfactory, e.g. money, good assessment, praise. A penalty, on the other hand, is what causes unpleasantness and pain, or is perceived as undesirable. One of the tools to motivate people to act safely is the use of rewards and penalties. Rewards can be granted, for example, for safe behavior, reduction of accidents or introduction of new solutions in the area of safety. Behavior that is contrary to the safety regulations must be punishable, even before it leads to an accident. A common mistake in applying awards and penalties is not recognizing the desired behavior and thus not rewarding those who act safely. It is also a mistake to punish too late, e.g. for behavior that has already led to an accident.

The punishment is not just the opposite of the reward. The awarding shows what is needed to be done in the future to receive a prize again. Therefore, rewards accelerate learning of desired behaviors. Penalties, on the other hand, have the ability to block, often for a short period of time, unwanted behavior.

Rewards and penalties must be applied (Studenski, 1975; Gembalska-Kwiecień, 2017; Erdal et al., 2018):

- with a comment, so that the recipient knows what they have been rewarded or punished for,
- quickly, i.e. almost immediately after positive or negative behavior,
- according to the merit or fault.

In addition, it should be noted that occasional rewarding is more effective than rewarding for every desired behavior. However, this rule does not apply to penalties, which are more effective the more unwanted behaviors are punished and the less unwanted behaviors are left unpunished. Praises and reprimands are an effective means of rewarding and punishing employees. Their effectiveness depends on the content and the way in which they are communicated. The recognition, rewarding and praising of employees for safe work by supervisors is the best incentive to maintain a high level of safety within the enterprise (Studenski, 1970; Forsyth, 2004; Aburumman et al., 2019).

6. Final conclusions

The aim of this work was to present and analyze selected methods and means of motivating employees to safe behavior, which have a positive influence on raising employees' awareness of health and safety at work. To sum up, it should be emphasized that the improvement of the motivational system in the enterprise, and, in particular, such responsible task as creating and increasing the level of motivation for safe work among employees, requires from managers, a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the methods and instruments of motivating existing in the enterprise, their possible correction and adjustment to constantly changing technical, organizational and social conditions. This process is necessary to achieve the objectives and mission of the enterprise – which is to make profit using safe working methods.

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