MOTIVATION IN PROJECT TEAM MANAGEMENT

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Purpose: The purpose undertaken in this article is to present the results of a research study in the field of motivation, aimed at identifying the factors of greatest importance to project team members in project management.

Design/methodology/approach: The paper uses a diagnostic survey method and a survey questionnaire as a research tool. The survey questionnaire used for the research was prepared on the basis of a critical analysis of the literature (domestic and foreign) on motivation, motivation systems and motivating factors of project team members. The research was conducted on a group of 176 project team members.

Findings: The results of the research contained in the article provide answers to the formulated three research questions.

Originality/value: The paper has a cognitive value for the development of knowledge, learning and quality in the field of motivation factors of project teams.

Keywords: motivation, motivational factors, project team.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

Motivation plays a key role in the success of a project team. Motivated team members show greater productivity, creativity and commitment to achieving project goals. There are a number of different methods of motivation that can be used to increase the level of motivation in a project team. However, due to the varying individual characteristics of team members, there is no universal motivation strategy that will work in every case.

Therefore, when managing a project team, it is very important to use different types of motivation solutions, especially well-chosen motivation tools. The key to effective motivation is the proper adjustment of these tools to the specifics of the company and the needs of the project team members, which is possible by identifying the factors that motivate them.

The aim of the research undertaken in this article is to identify the motivational factors that improve the effectiveness of project team members. It will be achieved by achieving the set research objectives and obtaining answers to the research questions posed. Based on the analysis of the literature, a research tool, i.e. a questionnaire, will be developed to conduct the survey.

2. Literature analysis

2.1. Motivating the project team

Interest in the issue of motivation leads to numerous attempts to explain this complex process. Motivation is generally understood as a set of factors that stimulate individuals to take specific actions. These motives, which give rise to human behaviour, may include needs, desires, values or goals. It is these intrinsic motivators that influence an individual's decisions, prompting them to act. The literature often emphasises that motivation is not a uniform phenomenon - it can be shaped by many factors, such as personal experiences, culture, life circumstances or individual goals.

A key aspect of management is the motivation of employees who are the company's most valuable resource. As Kopertyńska (Kopertyńska, 2009) notes, motivation is a process aimed at managing human capital, which plays a decisive role in the achievement of organisational goals.

In turn, Reykowski (Reykowski, 1979) describes motivation as a set of incentives that guide an individual's actions, while Koźmiński and Piotrkowski (Koźmiński, Piotrkowski, 2007) point out that motivation is a readiness to act resulting from personal preferences and goals.

In the context of teamwork, adequate motivation is a key success factor. As Schermerhorn (Schermerhorn, 2008) points out, motivation shapes the intensity and sustainability of employee engagement.

One popular definition of motivation is that of Deci and Ryan (Deci, Ryan,1985), who see it as a process of self-determination in which an individual seeks to satisfy his or her intrinsic needs, such as autonomy, competence and relationships with others. Within this theory of self-determination, motivation is the result of both intrinsic striving and external influences, with the fulfilment of psychological needs being the key driver for action.

Motivation in a project environment requires a flexible approach that takes into account a variety of incentives, both tangible and intangible (Czerska, 2001). Koontz and Weihrich (Koontz, Weihrich, 1984) define motivation is a process that starts with the feeling of needs and ends with the satisfaction of those needs, leading to goal-oriented action. For this reason, proper management of motivation in a project team can significantly increase work efficiency and commitment, which directly affects project success.

2.2. Factors having the greatest impact on motivating the project team

Based on the literature review, several main factors can be identified that have a significant impact on project team motivation. Motivation is a complex process that can take different forms depending on the individual needs and goals of the project team members. The process is based on a number of key motivational factors, which can be divided into those related to financial and intangible factors.

Tangible motivators

Salary-related motivators such as wages, bonuses and monetary rewards have traditionally been some of the most effective ways of motivating employees. Armstrong and Taylor emphasise that salary is one of the most important aspects that influence motivation, especially in the short term. Their research indicates that the transparency of the salary system and the linking of financial rewards to performance are crucial to employee satisfaction (Armstrong, Taylor, 2014).

It is worth noting that, according to Shields et al. (Shields et al., 2015), bonus and bonus systems are only effective if they are linked to measurable outcomes. Project teams with clearly defined goals can more easily be motivated by variable salary elements.

Borkowska (Borkowska, 2006) adds that salary motivators also act as tools for employment stabilisation, providing a sense of security and satisfaction for employees, which influences their loyalty and commitment. In addition, Adams (Adams, 1965) points out in his equity theory that an important element of financial motivation is the fairness of pay. Employees who feel that they are fairly rewarded compared to others show higher levels of commitment.

Intangible motivators

However, contemporary research indicates that salary alone is not sufficient to maintain high levels of motivation over the long term. Pink (Pink, 2009) argues that people are more motivated by intangible factors such as autonomy, recognition and a sense of meaning. Autonomy, especially in project teams where team members have the ability to make decisions for themselves, is one of the most important factors in increasing engagement.

Grant (Grant, 2013) adds that social relationships and a collaborative culture are important motivators in project teams. Collaboration, mutual help and positive feedback can significantly increase the motivation of team members, especially in long-term projects.

Self-determination theory, developed by Deci and Ryan (Deci, Ryan,1985) also points to the importance of satisfying psychological needs such as autonomy, competence and interpersonal relationships. The authors emphasise that these intangible aspects of work are crucial to maintaining long-term commitment.

Hackman and Oldham (Hackman, Oldham, 1976) in their theory of job characteristics point out that task variety, autonomy and feedback are key factors influencing intrinsic motivation. In project teams, where creativity and innovation are important, the opportunity to develop competence and receive regular feedback plays an important role in sustaining high levels of motivation.

Individualising motivation

In the literature, the need for an individualised approach to motivating employees is increasingly emphasised. Cerasoli, Nicklin and Ford (Cerasoli, Nicklin, Ford, 2014) demonstrate that a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic incentives produces the best results in terms of work engagement. However, a key challenge for leaders is to understand which factors are most important to individual team members.

Bakker and Leiter (Bakker, Leiter, 2010) emphasise that regular conversations with employees about their expectations and goals allow leaders to customise motivational strategies. This approach enables stronger relationships and higher levels of commitment to be built, ultimately resulting in better team performance.

Based on an analysis of the literature, it can be concluded that effective motivation of a project team is based on a balanced approach, combining both tangible and intangible factors. Contemporary research, indicates that while salary can be an effective short-term incentive, long-term employee engagement requires that employees' intrinsic needs such as autonomy, competence development and interpersonal relationships are met. Leaders who are able to tailor motivational strategies individually, taking these needs into account, achieve greater effectiveness and commitment within the team, which translates into the success of ongoing projects.

3. Research methodology

The objective undertaken in this paper is to present the results of the research carried out in the field of motivation, aimed at identifying the factors that matter most to project team members in project management. The main objective will be achieved through the following sub-objectives:

C1. To clarify the concept of motivation and its importance in project team management.

C2. To identify the factors that motivate project team members.

C3. To identify the ranking of motivating factors of project team members.

C4. To identify the ranking of motivating factors of project team members according to the characteristics of the respondent.

The realization of the presented sub-objectives took place in the course of answering the following research questions:

1. What is motivation and what is its importance in project team management?

2. What are the factors for motivating project team members?

3. Which factors motivate project team members the most?

In order to find answers to the research questions posed, which were directed at identifying the factors that have the greatest impact on motivating project team members, a diagnostic survey method and a research tool, namely a survey questionnaire, were used. The survey questionnaire prepared for the research was developed on the basis of a critical analysis of national and international literature. The research used non-random sampling - the snowball method, meaning that participants were selected by contacting individuals who then recommended others with similar characteristics. The research was conducted using Google Forms, a survey tool that is part of G Suite.

The survey questionnaire developed for the research consisted of two parts. The first part included 5 metric questions. The second part of the survey questionnaire included 6 closed questions to answer the question of which (among those identified from the critical analysis of the literature) motivational factors are most important to project team members.

The survey was conducted between 11.03 and 11.04.2024.

Statistical methods such as arithmetic mean, median, percentage were used to analyse the survey results obtained.

4. Survey results

The survey questionnaire was sent to 236 respondents. A total of 176 respondents took part in the survey, including 116 project team members and 60 project managers. Assuming a maximum error of 5%, the fraction size is 0.5, while the confidence level is 95% and the sample is therefore considered sufficient.

The respondents in the survey were university graduates (40%), with half of the project team members (58 people) having a secondary education, and project managers (72%, i.e. 43 people), having a university degree. When analysing the respondents' experience with projects, 33% of them had worked on projects for more than 1 year. Only 11 % of respondents (i.e. 25 people) had worked on projects for more than 8 years, with 19 people being project managers. The majority, i.e. 37%, of respondents had worked on less than 6 projects. Respondents to the survey carried out projects in the industrial, manufacturing (39%), marketing, advertising (21%) and service, consulting sectors (15%).

Based on a critical analysis of the literature, the following motivational factors were listed as being the most important for successful project delivery, i.e.: salary, financial rewards, training and professional development, flexible working hours, team relations and communication, and working conditions and standards. These factors, were rated by respondents on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was the lowest possible rating and 5 the highest.

The results obtained from the survey allowed for the development of a ranking of factors influencing the motivation and demotivation of project team members. The ranking represents the importance of the motivating factors for the total respondents taking part in the research. It allows us to identify the factors that have the greatest impact on motivating and demotivating project team members.

Specifically, the factors with the greatest impact on the motivation of project team members include (in order of greatest importance):

1. Salary.
2. Positive working atmosphere.
3. Working conditions and standards.
4. Financial rewards.
5. Training and professional development.
6. Flexible working hours.

In particular, the factors having the greatest demotivating effect on project team members include (in order of greatest importance):

1. Conflict within the team.
2. Lack of recognition and rewards for contributions.
3. Lack of clearly defined procedures.
4. Problem with internal communication.
5. Mismatch between tasks and skills.
6. Monotony of tasks.

The results of the survey conducted among project team members clearly indicate that the key factors motivating them to work are, above all, salary and a good working atmosphere. The practice of such measures contributes to an increase in commitment and an improvement in the effectiveness of implemented projects. On the other hand, conflicts within the team and a lack of recognition for one's contribution are factors that worsen the level of motivation thus negatively affecting the project. The project managers participating in the survey indicated that motivational measures should be tailored to the individual needs of project team members. In addition, all project managers highly appreciated the impact of the motivation level on the effectiveness of the project implementation. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind the need for an individual approach to managing motivation in project teams, taking into account the diversity of staff perspectives and needs.

5. Ranking of factors influencing the motivation of project team members

It should be noted that the ranking presented in the earlier chapter is generalised. Hence, it was considered worthwhile to additionally analyse the obtained results in terms of the respondents' characteristics, in particular: a) the role they perform in the project team, b) the time they perform the indicated role, c) the number of projects in which they participated, d) the sector in which they implemented projects.

1. Factors having the greatest impact on motivating project team members, depending on the role they play in the project team.

176 respondents took part in the survey, with the largest number of respondents in the role of project team member, i.e. 66%, and the role of project manager in 34% of respondents. Respondents, regardless of their role in the project team, both project team members (63%) and project managers (52%) identified salary as the factor most influencing motivation and thus affecting successful project delivery. In last place in the ranking of motivational factors, among both project team members' and project managers' evaluations, are training and professional development. This was indicated by 18 project managers and 40 project team members. As far as the rest of the ranking notes are concerned, they vary. For project team members, financial rewards are an important factor in motivating the team - ranking second, while for project managers this factor is ranked fifth to last. Analysing the ranking of motivational factors by project managers, it can be seen that factors such as working conditions, positive atmosphere and flexible working hours significantly influence team motivation.

A ranking of the factors having the greatest impact on motivation according to the ratings of project team members and project managers is included in Table 1.

Table 1.
Summary ranking of factors having the greatest impact on motivating project team members, according to their role in the project team

Ranking of motivation factors according to their role in the project team	
project team member	**project manager**
Salary	Salary
Financial rewards	Working conditions and standards
Flexible working hours	Positive working atmosphere
Positive working atmosphere	Flexible working hours
Working conditions and standards	Financial rewards
Training and professional development	Training and professional development

Source: own elaboration based on survey results.

2. Factors which have the greatest influence on the motivation of project team members, depending on the length of time they have held the indicated role in the project team.

Most respondents indicated that they have been in a project team member or project manager role for less than 1 year (33%, i.e. 77 respondents). On the other hand, 25 respondents (11%) indicated that they have been in the role of project team member or project manager for more than 8 years. Comparing the ranking of motivation factors made by respondents

depending on experience (time of involvement in projects), it can be noted that people with the least and the most experience in project management indicated salary, followed by a positive working atmosphere as important factors influencing the motivation of the project team. In last place in the ranking, they indicated training and professional development. It is interesting to note that for people who have been involved in projects for 1-8 years, salary is not the most important factor influencing motivation. For these people, factors such as working conditions, a positive atmosphere and flexible working hours are important.

The ranking of factors having the greatest impact on motivation according to the duration of the indicated role in the project team is shown in Table 2.

Table 2.
Summary ranking of factors having the greatest impact on motivating project team members according to the length of time in the designated role in the project team

Ranking of motivation factors according to the duration of the indicated role in the project team				
less than 1 year	1-3 years	3 -5 years	5-8 years	more than 8 years
Salary	Conditions and working standards	Positive working atmosphere	Flexible working hours	Salary
Positive working atmosphere	Salary	Training and professional development	Salary	Positive working atmosphere
Conditions and working standards	Positive working atmosphere	Flexible working hours	Positive working atmosphere	Flexible working hours
Flexible working hours	Training and professional development	Salary	Conditions and working standards	Conditions and working standards
Financial rewards	Flexible working hours	Conditions and working standards	Financial rewards	Financial rewards
Training and professional development	Financial rewards	Financial rewards	Training and professional development	Training and professional development

Source: own elaboration based on survey results.

3. Factors having the greatest impact on motivating project team members, according to the number of projects they have participated in.

Most respondents had taken part in less than 5 projects in the last year (37%). 18% of respondents indicated that they had taken part in 11-20 projects in the last year and 11% of respondents had taken part in 5-10 projects. 9% of respondents had taken part in more than 20 projects in the last year. The factors that have the greatest impact on the motivation of the project team according to the respondents' assessments depending on the number of projects they have participated in varies (is shown in Table 3). For those who have participated in fewer than 5 projects, the most important motivational factors are a positive working atmosphere, salary, working conditions and standards. They ranked training and professional development last. Similarly, those who participated in more than 20 projects as well as those who participated in between 11 and 20 projects indicated the same. Salary as an important motivation factor was indicated by respondents with 5-10 projects as well as over 20 projects. From this ranking it is interesting to note that financial rewards are not an important factor influencing motivation, ranking 5th and 6th.

Table 3.

Summary ranking of factors having the greatest influence on the motivation of project team members according to the number of projects in which they participated

Ranking of motivation factors according to the number of projects in which they participated			
Less than 5 projects	**5-10 projects**	**11-20 projects**	**Over 20 projects**
Positive working atmosphere	Salary	Flexible working hours	Salary
Salary	Positive working atmosphere	Working conditions and standards	Positive working atmosphere
Working conditions and standards	Working conditions and standards	Positive working atmosphere	Flexible working hours
Flexible working hours	Training and professional development	Salary	Working conditions and standards
Financial rewards	Flexible working hours	Financial rewards	Financial rewards
Training and professional development	Financial rewards	Training and professional development	Training and professional development

Source: own elaboration based on survey results.

4. Factors most influential in motivating project team members, according to the sector in which they carried out projects.

The largest number of respondents who took part in the survey carried out projects in industry/manufacturing, i.e. 39% (92 respondents). 21% of respondents participated in projects in marketing/advertising and 15% in services/consulting. Factors significantly influencing the motivation of project teams implementing projects in industry/manufacturing as well as services/consulting are salary, a positive working atmosphere and working conditions and standards. For project teams in the marketing/advertising sector, the most important factors for motivation are flexible working hours, a positive working atmosphere and working conditions and standards. Salary and financial rewards do not have such a significant impact.

A ranking of the factors having the greatest impact on motivation according to the sector in which they carried out projects in Table 4.

Table 4.

Ranking of factors having the greatest impact on motivating project team members depending on the sector in which they carried out projects

Ranking of motivation factors according to the sector in which they carried out projects		
Marketing/Advertising	Industry/Manufacturing	Services/Consulting
Flexible working hours	Salary	Salary
Positive working atmosphere	Positive working atmosphere	Positive working atmosphere
Working conditions and standards	Working conditions and standards	Working conditions and standards
Training and professional development	Flexible working hours	Financial rewards
Salary	Financial rewards	Training and professional development
Financial rewards	Training and professional development	Flexible working hours

Source: own elaboration based on survey results.

The research carried out gathered important information on what motivates project teams to achieve project goals. The analysis of the collected data made it possible to identify the factors that should be paid attention to when aiming to motivate project teams effectively.

6. Conclusion

Nowadays, employees are described as a valuable asset of a company, who, through their engagement, influence the company's competitive advantage. The literature on workplace motivation closely examines the theoretical aspects that focus on understanding the various factors that influence employee engagement. These studies seek to establish how both intrinsic and extrinsic factors shape employee motivation, taking into account both individual predispositions and the influence of the work environment. Despite the abundance of literature on motivation, it is possible to notice gaps in the studies with regard to the motivation of project team managers in particular. Theoretical knowledge is often not applied to real-life work situations, and practice is often based on intuition or experience instead of a scientific basis. Therefore, the use of different types of motivation solutions and well-chosen motivation tools is very important in project team management. In order to select motivation tools appropriately, it is necessary to identify the factors that motivate the project team, and these can vary depending on the specific characteristics of the company as well as its employees.

Therefore, survey research was undertaken to find out the various factors on motivation in the context of project teams. Through the collection of empirical data and the analysis of survey results aiming to identify the specific mechanisms that underlie the motivation of project team members and the ways in which these mechanisms can be put into practice in the process of managing these teams.

The research results presented in this article show that motivation plays a key role in project team management, which in turn allows project success to be achieved. The research has identified the factors that have the greatest impact on the motivation of project teams. Motivation factors in terms of their importance to project team members include: salary, positive working atmosphere, working conditions and standards, financial rewards, training and professional development, and flexible working hours. In addition, the article presents rankings of the importance of motivating factors in terms of respondents' characteristics, in particular: the role they play in the project team, the length of time they have played the indicated role, the number of completed projects in which they have participated and the sketor in which they have carried out projects.

The conclusions of the survey are relevant to human resource management practice. By implementing motivational strategies based on the collected data, team managers can more effectively support and mobilise their employees to achieve common project goals. In addition, the identified motivational factors can provide a starting point for the development of personalised motivational strategies tailored to specific teams and projects.

On the basis of the research carried out, i.e. the literature analysis and the analysis of the results obtained, the following suggestions can be identified to increase the level of motivation among project teams contributing to improved efficiency. Suggestions include: guaranteeing adequate salary, building a positive working atmosphere, resolving conflicts, regular feedback, ensuring working conditions and standards and rewarding high performance.

The research presented in the artikel contributes to broadening the theoretical understanding of motivation in the workplace, but also to providing practical guidance for managers and project team leaders to help in improving the effectiveness of teamwork.

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