Importance Employee Motivation in Workplace

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Abstract

Introduction: Why do organization engage with an employee at work? Why do organization want the employees to work towards a common goal? The answer to these questions lies in motivation. Motivation is the key feature that drive employees to work hard and to devote more time. It is also known as the same force that encourages organizations to engage with their employees to attain a common organizational and employee goal. Employee engagement is a new construct to businesses, management, and human resources to adopt in an organizational setting. This report was based on the current organization that employed with - WSM– focused on the results of the previous Engagement Survey. The objective of the survey was to identify the employees' workplace engagement through motivational theory and a necessary to promote their drive towards job satisfaction.

Purpose: This study explored the relationship between job dissatisfaction and employee engagement in organizational settings. The study had been divided into two parts:

The first part was to analyze the job satisfaction/dissatisfaction between two departments which had turnover issues in the previous year (the following departments has been identified based on the turnover issue from the previous year):
Report 1: WSM Finance, Report 2: WSM Vessel Accounting
The second part was to compare with another department which is Report 3: WSM Global Procurement Services - known for their high motivational level and the turnover rate was extremely low. The intention was to analyze what factors they have used to identify organizational issues within their department.

The analysis was to identify the cause of job dissatisfaction and lack of motivation by assessing the work stressors through the WSM Engagement Survey results.

Conclusion: The study had found concerns in the area of Working Conditions which was derived from the lack of motivation. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation has a strong positive impact on employee engagement. Based on the results, excellent Leadership was required to maintain the motivation level and stronger employee engagement.

Keywords: Employee Motivation, Workplace, Engagement, Job Dissatisfaction, Turnover

Company Background

WSM is a global maritime industry group founded in 1861. It is known as one of the biggest maritime networks in the world. Over half of the worldwide merchant fleet with products and services, supply crew, and technical management for some of the most complex vessels in the world.

WSM provides an extensive range of solutions for all vessel segments offering third party management services, with a presence of over 2 200 locations globally.

The third-party ship management services included technical management, crew management, risk management & systems, vessel accounting, and procurement services. WSM also offers dry docking, new building supervision and inventory of hazardous materials.

501 employees onshore and 9,859 active and skilled seafarers. Our Ship Management Offices are based in Malaysia, Korea, Norway, Singapore, and the USA. The core operating services are based in Kuala Lumpur which are Technical management, Crew Management, Procurement, Risk Management & Systems, and Accounting.

Methodology

WSM Engagement Survey

The organization conducted an employee feedback/engagement survey session once a year. The engagement survey was an important tool for our managers to develop their team through the results. The results from the survey were varied from companies and departments. Examples of trends from the past results were:

- Stable at good levels
- Clear spread in results from the 63 participating countries
- Compliance process had proved to be a success
- Strategic leadership capabilities had deteriorated

WSM used an external third-party company called Ennova who specialized in employee surveys. Ennova had collected, processed, and analyzed all employee responses by providing WSM with reports of aggregated data. Individual responses were not accessible by any employees of WSM at any time.

The benchmark set is 60%, any scoring below 60% is a concern, and scoring nearer to 70% required attention.

Survey Process

The survey was conducted as below:
- Employees completed the survey during week 35 and 36
- Managers reviewed the results during week 42
- Managers and employees AIMED to make a difference (see explanation below) from week 43 onwards.

Survey Completion/Collecting Data

The survey was accessible via online, in several languages, and via mobile devices as well. A total of 39 questions to answered and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. All survey responses were anonymous. Ennova was the only party that can collect and process the individual responses. The survey was collected in a contractual, professional, and ethical obligation to ensure that all responses were

confidential and not accessible by any employees at any time. Basic employee's data had been provided to Ennova to send out the survey and group responses in aggregated reports.

Working with the Results and Making the Difference

All managers with employees had received a report with terms and conditions applied.
• Managers with four or more team members who responded to the survey had received an individual team report.
• Managers with less than four members who responded to the survey had received an aggregated report which included the results of the team combined with other teams. Ennova based on anonymity rules determined the level of the aggregated report.
• Ennova used a "rule of difference" which ensured that the scores from a few employees cannot be identified by comparing different unit reports. A difference of at least 3 responses between two or more reports was required to produce all reports.

Managers were required to use the survey results for individual development and the team's development. A team discussion was conducted to review the survey results and to achieve AIM.

What is AIM?

AIM is a 3-step process to assist managers and employees in working with the survey results and make a real difference in their daily working environment:

• Analyze the results
• Identify focus areas
• Make a difference

Refer to Appendix 1 for WSM Engagement Survey Questionnaires

Case 1

Department: WSM Finance

Background of WSM Finance Department

The Finance department has the overall responsibility for the proper execution of activities/tasks assigned in the Corporate Finance Department (CFD) in Kuala Lumpur. Finance also known as the Business Controller for WSM Asia Region, Crewing and within WSM Group. The CFD's role was to ensure smooth and efficient functioning in accordance with the organization's guidelines, instructions, and company procedures.

The Finance team consists of 16 employees and all of them were females. Majority of the employees were Malays, the minority were local Chinese and followed by Indians. The types of job roles in the department were Senior/Junior Account Executive, Accountant and Account Assistant. The team was managed by Finance Manager who reports to the Regional Finance Director.

Problem Statement

The high turnover that had occurred this year, especially after the bonus pays out. The finance department was known for their good reputation. Little complaint was found in this department and fewer concerns from the employees in the Finance department.

Objective

To identify the factor which has contributed to the high turnover rate.

Gathering Data

The data were collected from the WSM Engagement Survey which was conducted in September 2017. The survey was used to identify the improvisation in employee engagement. How satisfaction and motivation influence employees' behavior and performance.

Materials - Total of 39 questions with multiple choice was used in this study.

Sample size – A total of 200 employees attached to WSM KL.

Result

The results from the engagement survey for the finance team was narrowed down from the global results. Most of the scores were above 60% (the benchmark set is 60%). However, necessary actions were required to closely monitor the figures which are below 70 and the Finance Team focus area of Working Conditions seems to be an area which is showing some concern (refer to figure 2).

Question 1: I feel good about the physical working environment at my place of work

Question 3: WSM has clear processes and tools enabling me to carry out my job effectively

As mentioned in the 'Job satisfaction theories: Traceability to employee performance in organizations' journal' - the following factors on the working condition;

The environment under which employee's work has a tremendous effect on their level of pride for themselves and for the work they do. The provision of modern equipment and facilities, quality furniture, well-ventilated offices, well-spaced offices, secured, well-spaced staff quarters, and so on are some of the conditions that are required to prevent job dissatisfaction in the organization.

However, as for the environment in Wilhelmsen, it is equipped with good and well-spaced work station. They were also equipped with a clear process and system which can speed up their workload. Therefore, the issue was not mainly in the work environment.

Question 2: I feel good about the work-load in my job

Finance team needed to ensure that all relevant transactions for the accounts under her/his charge were properly transcribed, checked and posted to the accounting system on a timely basis. The Finance team also have overall responsibility for the proper execution of activities or tasks assigned in the WSM Corporate Finance Department. This could be the reason why the team had shown concerned under Question numbered 2 on work-load.

Summary of Focus Area for Finance team, refer to the Focus Are of Working Conditions showing 67%:
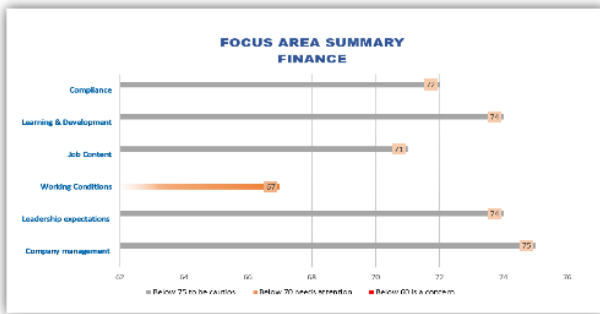
(Figure 1: Summary of Focus Area for
Finance team)

There were three questions posted for
"Working Conditions" and for Question
numbered 2 on work-load, there had been
some concern identified as the score was
only 60% (refer to Figure 2):

(Figure 2: Response level on Working
Conditions for Finance team)

Plan

Two-factor theory by Herzberg (1959)
emphasized the motivator-hygiene factors
sought to explain the satisfaction and
motivation in the organization. The theory
focused on outcomes of satisfaction and
dissatisfaction. The theory further found
that certain aspects of a job cause
satisfaction (motivation), but certain aspects
caused job dissatisfaction. Herzberg
explained that the factors that lead to
satisfaction or to dissatisfaction were
different. Accordingly, Herzberg (2003)
stated that 'the opposite of job satisfaction
was not job dissatisfaction but, rather, no

satisfaction; and the opposite of job
dissatisfaction was not job satisfaction but
no satisfaction' (Herzberg, 2003.91). This
theory stated that job satisfaction and
dissatisfaction was a product of different
factors – motivation and hygiene
respectively.

As seen with the Finance Team, their
concern was not mainly on the hygiene
factor as their hygiene needs were met.
Issues with workload were usually not the
main issue for job dissatisfaction, there
seems to be a possibility of lack of
motivation. As mentioned by Herzberg
(1959), motivation was an inner force that
drives individuals to attain personal and
organizational goals. Motivational factors
were those aspects of the job that makes
people want to perform and provide people
with satisfaction.

The plan would be to encourage the
employees in Finance with the following
factors on work itself, which can help to
overcome the stress from workload:

• Helping employees believe that the task
they are doing is important and meaningful.
• Setting goals would remind and
emphasize that their efforts lead to positive
outcomes and goal accomplishment
• Success stories and cases should be
shared on how an employee's actions made
a real difference in the organization.
• Also, show employees how their work
is essential to the overall processes that
make the practice succeed.
• Unnecessary tasks can be eliminated or
streamlined to bring about greater
efficiency in the organization.

However, the empowerment to
implement such an initiative comes from
good leadership.

Case 2

Department: WSM Vessel Accounting

Background of WSM Vessel Accounting Department

Vessel Accounting department assists ship owners through efficient web reporting tools (Salesforce) and vast accounting.
• Audited by reputed auditing firm
• Compliant with International Standard on Assurance Engagements (ISAE) 3402
• Supported by state of the art business tools
• Automated payment provides seamless P2P function
• Established processes

The WVA team consisted of 50 employees and only 5% were males. Majority of the employees were Malays, the minority were local Chinese and followed by Indians. The types of job roles in the department were Senior Manager Vessel Accounts/Managers, Vessel Accountants, Vessel Accounts Executive/Assistants, Treasury Executives/Assistants, and Assistant Manager for Global Payroll. The team is managed by a Head of Vessel Accounting Finance Manager who reported to the Regional Finance Director.

Problem Statement

High turnover almost every 6 months. Most of the employees complained that they were under stress as the workload was too much to handled and they must stay back daily to clear backlogs. The job was repetitive, and the employees did not enjoy their job. This department was also answerable to Vessel owners and seafarers when it comes to their salary payment/payroll.

Objective

To identify the factor which has contributed to the high turnover.

Gathering Data

The data used was from the WSM Engagement Survey which was conducted in September 2017. The survey is considered as an important tool to identify the improvisation of employee engagement. The present study also investigates whether satisfaction and motivation may influence employees' behavior and performance.

Materials - Total of 39 questions with multiple choice was used in this study.

Sample size - A total of 200 employees attached to WSM KL.

Result

The results from the engagement survey for the WVA team was narrowed down from the global results, most of the scores were above 60% (the benchmark set was 60%). However, necessary actions were required to closely monitor the figures which were below 70. This may enable WVA Team to focus on Job Content, Working Conditions, and Learning and Development (refer to figure 3).

The response on the level of engagement to Working Conditions: Question 2: I feel good about the work-load in my job was extremely low at 56% for WVA. This was the lowest scoring among all other departments in WSM (refer to figure 4).

Main responsibilities for Vessel Accounting was to input and consolidate data, prepare monthly financial reports,
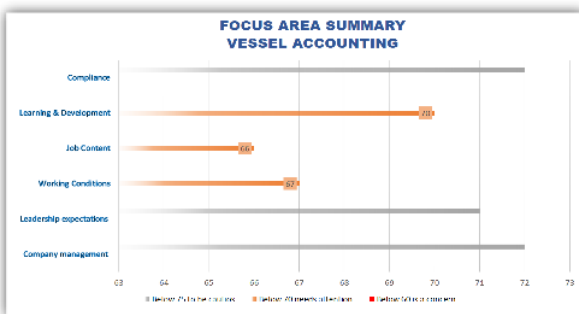
quarterly budget follow up reports and assist in any ad hoc task which may arise. They were also responsible to liaison with management centres in WSM, manning agents, port agents, port agents and Masters of vessels under management.

The response to the level of engagement to Job Content: Question 3: My job makes the best use of my skills is also rather low at 61% (refer to figure 4).

Their position will be measured against the accuracy and timely submission of the monthly report (soft and hard copies), thus higher chance for routine tasks which may make the employees feel that their skills were not maximized.

Summary of Focus Area for WVA team, refer to the Focus Are of Working Conditions showing 67%:

(Figure 3: Summary of Focus Area for Vessel Accounting Team)

(Figure 4: Response level on Working Conditions for Vessel Accounting Team)

Plan

Maslow (1943) put forward a theory with five levels in the hierarchy of human needs, which emphasized on employees needs at work. Maslow represented this theory as a hierarchical triangle. This shows how basic needs must be met before one can "climb" to the next hierarchical level.

For example, first one must meet the basic, physiological need for food, water, and warmth. The focus would be followed by the need for safety, the need to belong to social groups, and so on up the hierarchy. Levels of needs are: Physical, Security, Social, Self-esteem, Self-fulfilment

The important thing to recognize was Maslow's contention that one's sense of well-being. i.e. the 'feel-good factor' increased when the higher-level needs were met.

Maslow's main assertions involved:
• As one set of need is met, the next level of need become a motivator to an individual.
• A satisfied need is not a motivator.
• Only unsatisfied needs to motivate an individual. An innate desire to achieve the next hierarchical level enable an individual to pursue satisfaction in higher order needs.
• Self-actualization stimulates a desire for more due to what Maslow explained as "peak experiences".

The plan would be for the Managers to be more equipped in dealing with these types of employees, they should be open to attend training which helps them to improve their leadership skills and team engagement.

Managers needed to start recognizing that not all employees are motivated in the same way and not all move up the hierarchy

at the same pace. Employees are motivated by having each level of need met in order as they move up the hierarchy.

Report 3 – For Comparison Purpose

Background of WSM Global Procurement Services (GPS)

Function in the organization:
WSM Procurement comprises dedicated specialists to ensure the lowest price through:
• Contract Management
• Supplier Relationship Management
• Supplier Governance
• Operational Purchasing and Spend Intelligence

The GPS team consisted of 26 employees, 39% were males and 61% were females. There was a diversity in the team, an equal balance among the local races (Malay, Chinese & Indians), 19% were foreigners from the Philippines.

Types of job roles in the department were Procurement Manager, Assistant Procurement Manager, Senior Procurement Officer, Procurement Officer. The team was managed by a Regional Procurement Manager, who reported to the Head of Global Procurement Services.

Personal Observation

GPS team was a very cheerful team, the team showed a positive working environment. Even though the job responsibilities were directly involved in operations and at times they were required to respond within 24/7 (regardless of holidays/weekends etc), having to sacrifice holidays/weekends. The employees were still able to meet targets and achieve work-life balance.

Assessment Conducted

I had the opportunity to interview the Regional Procurement Manager of the GPS team to find on how a healthy and positive work environment was maintained. The turnover rates within GPS was extremely low compared to Finance and Vessel Accounting team - referring to Figure 5 on the Summary of Focus Area for Global Procurement Services Team. The team has scored above 70% for all focus area which the employees in GPS were highly engaged and motivated.

Data Gathered

The data used was from the WSM Engagement Survey which was conducted in September 2017. The survey was considered as an important tool to identify what we do and what we can do to improve employee engagement. How behavior and performance were influenced by employees' satisfaction and motivation.

Materials - Total of 39 questions with multiple choice was used in this study.

Sample size - A total of 200 employees attached to WSM KL.
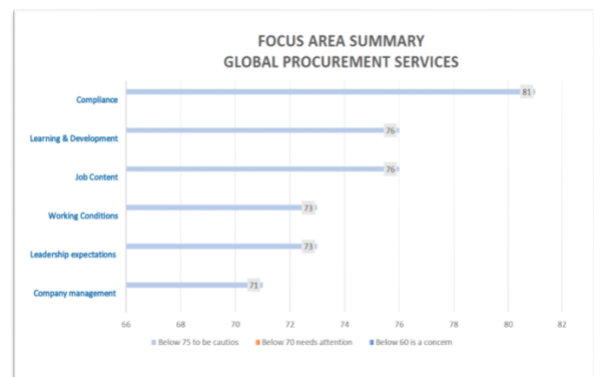
(Figure 5: Summary of Focus Area for
Global Procurement Services Team)

According to the Regional Procurement Manager of the GPS team, the non-monetary rewards were important to keep the motivation level high in a team. Work-life balance plays an important role among the employees. A frequent follow-up session was conducted to resolve any boiling matters. There was also a personal mentoring and coaching form to maintain each manager to ensures necessary skills to carry out their roles.

At the beginning of each year, the amount of fund was allocated for team activities. Two employees were assigned to execute the activities within the department. The role was to organize a series of activities for employee's engagement.

The following initiatives were done in GPS:
Employee Motivation & Reward System
• Quarterly Activities - Create a monthly or quarterly awards event which showcases the efforts of staff who continually excel in their field. Include peer-nominated awards to show off the employees who consistently show leadership and help their fellow colleagues.
• Festive celebration to respect the cultural difference – the employees in GPS are willing to contribute towards such celebration and it does help to keep up the team's spirit.
• Create a monthly office theme day to boost morale - e.g. international food day where each staff member brings a plate of food from their country of origin.
• Provide extensive training plans - both in the house and offsite - for staff to complete accredited courses
• Team Building (within the budget allocated) - improve workplace projects that involve teamwork. After completing team building activities, employees understand better on each other's strengths, weaknesses, and interests.
• Offer recognition for staff who consistently excel - either congratulate the employees based on their achievement via email, giving staff a handwritten note or mentioning their successes during monthly meetings

Randstad's (2013) conducted research on employer branding showed that the two top motivators for employees were job security and monetary rewards. Due to geographical factor and budget limitation that plays in the current economic situation, the organization experienced difficulty on hiring managers. Thus, non-monetary incentives were extremely useful to motivate and retain top talents.

It requires a lot of dedication from the leader or manager to ensure that the engagement within the team is at a healthy level to achieve a positive performing team. It is important to find out what motivates employees through a survey.

Conclusion

Employee recognition programs are essential in any organization, employees should be rewarded and recognized as a leading contributor to the company.

Leadership is also known as a key motivating factor. Both, as well as manager, must possess leadership and motivational traits. An effective leader must have a thorough knowledge of motivational factors for others. The manager is required to understand the basic needs of employees, peers, and superiors.

A manager who uses nonverbal immediacy, friendliness and open communication lines are more likely to

receive positive feedback and job satisfaction from a subordinate. However, a manager who is asocial, unfriendly and unwilling to communicate will receive negative feedback and create low job satisfaction in their subordinates in the organization.

The comparison between GPS with WVA and Finance team shows a significant difference in the employees' performance based on the effort from the leader.

Overall, the results of this study have shed some light on the 'Working Conditions' for Finance and WVA team, as it has demonstrated that there is a need on recognition and motivation among the WVA and Finance employees.

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