

## Frederick Herzberg's Motivation and Hygiene Factors

What makes people do things?

Most would say it is down to their personal motivation.

So what motivates people? What works and what doesn't?

Frederick Herzberg (1923-2000), clinical psychologist and pioneer of 'job enrichment', is regarded as one of the great original thinkers in management and motivational theory, and he set out some ideas that help answer the questions raised above.

Frederick Herzberg's book 'The Motivation to Work', written with research colleagues B Mausner and B Snyderman in 1959, first established his theories about motivation in the workplace. Herzberg's work, originally on 200 Pittsburgh engineers and accountants, has become one of the most replicated studies in the field of workplace psychology.

Herzberg was the first to show that satisfaction and dissatisfaction at work nearly always arose from different factors, and were not simply opposing reactions to the same factors, as had always previously been (and still now by the unenlightened) believed.

He showed that certain factors truly motivate ('motivators'), whereas others tended to lead to dissatisfaction ('hygiene factors').

According to Herzberg, people have two sets of needs: one as basic as avoiding pain, and two as a more complex human being to grow psychologically.

He illustrated this also through Biblical example: Adam after his expulsion from Eden having the need for food, warmth, shelter, safety, etc., - the 'hygiene' needs; and Abraham, capable and achieving great things through self-development - the 'motivational' needs.

Herzberg's ideas relate strongly to modern ethical management and social responsibility.

Many decades ago Herzberg, understood well and attempted to teach the ethical management principles that many leaders today, typically in businesses and organisations that lack humanity, still struggle to grasp.

In this respect Herzberg's concepts are just as relevant now as when he first suggested them, except that the implications of responsibility, fairness, justice and compassion in business are now global.

Although Herzberg is most noted for his famous 'hygiene' and motivational factors theory, he was essentially concerned with people's well-being at work. Underpinning his theories and academic teachings, he was basically attempting to bring more humanity and caring into the workplace.

He and others like him, did not develop their theories to be used as 'motivational tools' purely to improve organisational performance. They sought instead primarily to explain how to manage people properly, for the good of all people at work.

Herzberg's research proved that people will strive to achieve 'hygiene' needs because they are unhappy without them, but once satisfied the effect soon wears off - satisfaction is temporary. Then as now, poorly managed organisations fail to understand that people are not 'motivated' by addressing 'hygiene' needs.

People are only truly motivated by enabling them to reach for and satisfy the factors that Herzberg identified as real motivators, such as personal growth, development, etc., which represent a far deeper level of meaning and fulfillment.

Examples of Herzberg's 'hygiene' needs (or maintenance factors) in the workplace are:

- policy
- relationship with supervisor
- work conditions
- salary
- company car
- status
- security
- relationship with subordinates
- personal life

Herzberg's research identified that true motivators were other completely different factors, notably:

- achievement
- recognition
- work itself
- responsibility
- advancement
- personal growth

**To what extent is money a motivator?**

This question commonly arises when considering Herzberg's research and theories, so it's appropriate to include it here.

People commonly argue that money is a primary motivator.

For most people money is not a motivator - despite what they might think and say.

For **all people** there are bigger more sustaining motivators than money.

Surveys and research studies repeatedly show that other factors motivate more than money. Examples appear in the newspapers and in other information resources every week.

For instance, a survey by Development Dimensions International published in the UK Times newspaper in 2004 interviewed 1,000 staff from companies employing more than 500 workers, and found many to be bored, lacking commitment and looking for a new job. Pay actually came fifth in the reasons people gave for leaving their jobs.

The main reasons were lack of stimulus jobs and no opportunity for advancement - classic Herzberg motivators - 43% left for better promotion chances, 28% for more challenging work; 23% for a more exciting place to work; and 21% and more varied work.

Lots of other evidence is found in life, wherever you care to look.

Consider what happens when people win big lottery prize winners.

While many of course give up their 'daily grind' jobs, some do not. They wisely recognise that their work is part of their purpose and life-balance.

Others who give up their jobs do so to buy or start and run their own businesses. They are pursuing their dream to achieve something special for them, whatever that might be. And whatever it means to them, the motivation is not to make money, otherwise why don't they just keep hold of what they've got? Why risk it on a project that will involve lots of effort and personal commitment?

Of course the reason they invest in a new business venture is that pursuing this sort of plan is where the real motivators are found - achievement, responsibility, personal growth, etc - not money.

The people who are always the most unhappy are those who focus on spending their money. The lottery prize-winners who give up work and pursue material and lifestyle pleasures soon find that life becomes empty and

meaningless. Money, and spending it, are not enough to sustain the human spirit. We exist for more.

Money is certainly important, and a personal driver, if you lack enough for a decent civilised existence, or you are striving for a house or a holiday, but beyond this, money is not for the vast majority of people a sustainable motivator in itself.