

Employee of the Month as a Motivational Best Practice in Lebanese Hotels

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ABSTRACT:

This paper sheds the light on the Best Motivational Practices adopted by HR in the Hotel industry in Lebanon and focuses mainly on the Employee of the month approach as being one of the recent motivational practices in various fields and in the hotel industry as well. This paper scrutinizes the motivational best practices and how they affect the performance of the employee and then moves to the Employee of the month concept while elaborating on its features. Interviews were done from a sample hotel to assess the motivational best practices being applied and introduce the Employee of the month concept as a significant factor to boost motivation. Motivation takes a lot of shapes and has been a crucial topic addressed in many researches in the business field and it is still being considered a major issue that cannot be ignored despite the increase in the obstacles and difficulties many business industries are facing, but still employees need to be motivated regardless of the situation and here lies the core focus of this paper.

Keywords: *Motivational Best Practices, Employee of the month, Lebanese hotels*

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is a crucial factor in the engagement of employees in any organization and for this reason Human Resources tend to have so many practices in their respective activities to ensure this kind of engagement.

Thus, this paper tackles the best motivational practices in Hotel Industry in Lebanon while emphasizing the employee of the month as one of these practices and its effect on the efficiency of employees.

Hotels in general tend to have various employee levels and tasks and Human Resources tend to focus on the performance of each employee as quality of service is a crucial factor in the success of any hotel to attract and maintain customers.

In Lebanon which is known for its hotel industry being a county of tourism in its various types especially that of business need, medical, or entertainment, the engagement of employees is significantly needed so that they deliver a

distinctive quality of service that makes this industry remarkable despite the challenges that this industry is facing recently due to economic and political instability.

This paper examines how motivational best practices play a crucial role in HR activities in the Lebanese hotel industry and approaches the employee of the month as a motivational tool.

In this scope, a sample hotel case is tackled in this paper to verify the HR best practices in this hotel. How are these practices applied in the HR various activities? Where does Motivation stand in these practices? Is HR and managers aware of the importance of motivating hotel employees in order to have an effective and efficient performance? Is the employee of the month realized within Motivation? Do employees really need this concept to feel motivated? How will this concept if applied evolve employee's engagement and improve their performance?

All of the above questions will be further analyzed in this paper to reflect the impact of motivational best practices while focusing on Employee of the month.

Theory: Motivational Best Practices in HR

Motivational Best Practices in Human Resources are essential for an optimal alignment to compete in the global business climate. Over the years, problems and patterns have been revolutionized in human resources activities. Humankind practices are therefore vital to the effective and efficient implementation of HR policies in order to achieve the organization's objectives (Mathis and Jackson, 2008).

Similarly, HRM practices are valuable in order to enhance the efficiency and the engagement among employees of the organization (Deb, 2006).

Therefore, the successful use of human resources strategies can inspire and attract workers to improve the performance of individuals and organizations (Pablos and Lytras, 2008). There is a growing concern that the importance of human resources must not be viewed as an expense to the enterprise, but rather as a strategic consideration that promotes and leads to a sustainable competitive gain (Delaney and Huselid 1996; Wright et al. 2001; Sun et al. 2007). Successful strategies in human resources often lead in improved performance at both employee and corporate levels (Chang and Huang, 2005).

Several scholars have researched the definition and its relationship with employee and corporate effects in human resources activities. The impact of high-performance HR experience on workplace attitudes and behaviors have been studied, for example (Kehoe and Wright 2013).

They demonstrated that this highly effective HR practice is related positively to the attitudes and behaviors of staff that affect the organization's involvement and mediate the relationship between staff retention and HR.

However, Vanhala and Ahteela (2011) explored the correlation between human resources and confidence practices and discovered that employee loyalty is linked to the sense of fairness and operation of human resources processes.

Upon analyzing previous studies, the definition of HR activities and their ties with the

variations of the enterprise is explored. The researchers concluded that HR activities vary from company to company and from country to country and the factors affecting human resources practices. These can include internal (for example organizational size, organizational structure, corporate strategy, corporate culture) or external (economic, technological change, business, national culture, legalization and regulations, competitors and globalization) factors. These practices of human resources affect various variables within the organization directly or indirectly.

Recruitment, Selection and Employee Performance

One of the most important human resources strategies is recruiting and selection. It's a method to identify, analyze and get the right people in the right position. Recruitment, procurement and other processes that successfully affect the client income have been described as being in a positive relationship (Hausdorf and Duncan, 2004). It is also a mechanism in which applicants are scanned for work and potential candidates are encouraged to apply for jobs (Jain and Saakshi, 2005). The recruitment process was divided into four phases by Carroll et al. (1999). • role overview, definition of work, requirements and credentials of the candidate, evaluation of the need to recruit new employees to a vacant place.

This process has an impact on employees and the performance of the company.

The Web is the prevalent and most successful promotional tool used by 76% of the company surveyed for hiring managerial/ senior candidates (Rioux et al., 2006). Nevertheless, it is more important to ensure that workers engage in the accomplishment of corporate objectives than to ensure the right person at the right moment (Bloisi, 2007). The goal of the employer is to build during the recruitment process the large pool of candidates in order to select the best applicant to the competitive process of the open role (Beardwell and Claydon, 2004; Rogelberg, 2006).

Three gaps between SMEs and big companies in the recruitment process were found during the literature review:

- Number of positions
- Number of candidates
- Money available for the recruitment process.

Recruitment and evaluation are the basic Human Resources strategies since evaluating the previous studies and would be used as an independent variable in this report. Ensuring that the company is effective and productive in recruiting and selection results in improved performance for its workers.

Training and Development with Employee Performance

Education is one of the organization's main human resources initiatives which allows the business to achieve its targets. The organized work of information, skills and attitudes, in a particular situation, lead to better performance, according to Grossman and Salas (2011). The next step is the recruiting and procurement of employee training and preparation. The new recruited and existing personnel should be involved. Careful personnel selection, though, does not guarantee that new staff carries out their tasks effectively, so organizations can develop and enforce appropriate training plans for those workers to accomplish their tasks (Dessler, 2009).

Education and growth aim at optimizing employee performance, skill level and finally at maximizing operational effectiveness. Education frequently applies to a systematic approach to learning and development to improve the effectiveness of people and organizations (Goldstein and Ford 2002).

Training and development programs allow companies to evolve, thrive, develop skills, innovate, build and strengthen personnel welfare, extend business operations and meet client goals (Salas et al. 2012).

As a consequence, every organization, which aims to compete for the global economy, must realize the importance of training and development and its impact on employees and organizational performance on the basis of skills, knowledge and motivations of its work force (Aguinis and Kraiger, 2009). For order to remain competitive, companies must ensure the continued learning and development of their workforces regardless of the cost of schooling (Salas et al., 2012). Similarly, Della-Torre and Solari (2013) showed a positive relation between the staff perceived and the organizational achievement and efficient training practices.

Empirical evidence was found in previous

studies for the effect of training and development on workplace efficiency and employee mutual benefit (Conti, 2005; Ballot et al., 2006; Dearden et al., 2006; Konings, 2008; Rugimbana and Akong'o Dimba, 2010; Ayanda, 2011; Georgiadis and Pitelis, 2012; Omolo et al., 2013).

To maintain a competitive edge, companies need to regularly improve their workers' knowledge and skills to be cutting-edge. Inadequate or unwisely trained staff are therefore serious barriers to the success of the company. In fact, the way preparation is planned, delivered and carried out has greatly influenced the organizational efficiency. Learning and growth are considered an independent variable in this report, which explores its effect on the success of workers.

Compensation, Rewards, Incentives and Employee Performance

Compensation refers to the amount paid to the person who works for the company. The compensation system for internal employees shall be managed by the organization's compensation system, which in turn has an important role to play in fostering and enhancing employee performance (Kramer & Briffault 1991). The primary pay strategies are dictated by management structure and business requirements (Boyd and Salamin, 2001).

Likewise, various factors can influence the incentives of individuals based on their needs, education, social position or the environment (Gerhart and Rynes, 2003). The management and implementation of an appropriate compensation system is a key function for the company, according to Dubrin (2008). Linking the output of workers to the framework of pay therefore contributes to the overall performance of a company. Employees should therefore receive rewards, opportunities and social benefits that inspire them to perform better.

In favor of this opinion, Pfeffer (1994) stressed that incentive pay affects the performance of the company. Nevertheless, the relation between employee performance and pay program still has two important issues in literature.

- How can performance be assessed?
- How to assess the correct level of performance?

The design of performance reward programs used is vital to the organization's progress. Carrier (1994) has therefore pointed out that systems for rewards and compensation are key staffing practices which effectively contribute to individual and organizational results. Carlson et al. (2006) analyzed the cash, non-financial rewards for families in small-to medium-sized companies. At all levels of the company, they found more financial rewards for the achievement of sales growth.

They claimed that the more reward the organization and its employees pay the greater, as evidenced by the reasons for the analysis (Hill and Stevens, 2001). Gomez-Mejia et al. (2010), however, suggests that businesses will outperform others only when they have a successful business plan with fair salary that allows the most highly compensated management and the least paid workers to sustain them.

Many researchers spoke about the effect on employee performance of cash, non-financial rewards. For starters, James (2005), who is supposed to improve the contact at work, proposes basic or non-financial rewards such as appreciation and acknowledgement (Frey and Jegen, 2001). On the grounds of the argument above, incentive programs and reward structures can be used routinely to enable staff to perform better. In fact, the pay and rewards program will enhance the company's morale by making good decisions, strengthening disciplinary and preventative measures and encouraging workers to improve their performance. Employees in every company understand whether their employer charges them more than how the corporation talks or declares.

Nevertheless, the management of the compensation system is found difficult by companies as regards alignment between employee's career goals and the company's priorities. To order to determine the effect on staff and corporate efficiency, pay, bonuses and social benefits is considered, to light of the literature review, one of the independent variables.

Organizations must therefore strive at work in order to inspire workers to do more and to improve their performance.

Nonetheless, skilled and qualified workers must be provided to improve their performance at work and to reduce the turnover of the workforce. It is therefore extremely important that managers

know the expectations of workers at work and try to meet them in order to maintain and improve their performance. Nonetheless, there is no disparity in the desires of the workers at work.

Therefore, individual X is not inspired by people Y. Some workers may qualify for monetary incentives, while others may seek to be remembered at work. The company management must therefore define the interests of the workers so that they can be properly compensated. (Fig. 2005).

A report on the interaction between rewards and training and development systems was done at Abigail (2005). In a given study of 100 people, he applied both the quantitative and the qualitative method. The investigator analyzed the data obtained through the PLCS predictive method and presented results in terms of maps, Chi squares, and measurement of regression.

The results showed that the higher the salary incentives, the greater the number, and hence the higher performance and efficiency, workers are motivated to participate in training and development programs.

Performance Appraisal and Employee Performance

Cumming (1993) indicated that the performance evaluation provides an instrument for objective measurement of employee performance. The purpose of this appraisal is to increase the efficiency of a company by attempting to maximize the best efforts of its employees. A performance evaluation aims specifically at optimizing the use of the abilities, expertise and desires of all workers (Arthur, 2008).

Measurement and enhancement of employee performance are essential determinants of organizational achievement and competitive advantage (Ployhart et al., 2006). Nevertheless, performance evaluation is widely known as an important process in controlling and improving an organization's workforce (Lee, 1985; Eberhardt and Pooyan, 1988). Therefore, assessment and teaching methods may be modified based on the information provided by the examination of the required habits. Nonetheless, their performance will be low without being inspired to do their job (Sani, 2012).

Many previous studies also examined the effects on employee and organizational results of

performance evaluations. In their report, Murphy and Margulies (2004) stated, for example, that performance evaluation could be useful in a number of tasks, such as training employees and compensation. In fact, it is understood that the purpose of the output method is a serious problem. Most organizations still do not think that performance evaluations may be effective in several ways, including reviews, training and development of expertise, and the right to know and use knowledge (Kor and Sundaramurthy, 2009). Another research by Soomro et al. (2011) found that Human Resources Practices are strongly connected to the success of workers.

Motivation and Performance

The motivation plays a significant role in the company's workplace accomplishment. Apparently, highly motivated workers continue to provide higher productivity than those not inspired at work. To order to increase efficiency and accomplish client goals effectively and efficiently, the director must therefore rely on empowering his workers.

McEntire's (2012) research on the value of inspiration and its effect on workers' success at the workplace. The study was carried out by 200 workers of retail companies in the United States. The study conducted an analysis and summary of the data collected. Therefore, a regression model was conducted to assess whether or not inspiration affects career development.

The findings have shown a positive correlation between career development and opportunities. With the introduction of training and development programs, workers become encouraged to reduce attrition and the retention rate will increase to support their career development in the company.

There is a direct relationship between workers motivation and job growth. This encourages employees to take part in the decision-making process to achieve the goals of the business.

Empowering workers at work can however increase their morale and thus improve their performance which participates in the company's growth and development. (Marx, 2009). Newton.

The main aim of inspiring workers is to efficiently direct them so that they can make decisions without consulting the administration. Managers will participate in the decision-making at work in such a manner that the workplace

participation rate is enhanced, and morale raised and job satisfaction rates improved. (French version, 2015).

Sanderson (2015) announced a good connection between confidence and workers at work, which helps to direct potential employees to accomplish their assignments effectively and efficiently.

Empowering staff at work improves employee loyalty and accountability to their business bosses. Empowering workers can, therefore, increase the productivity, collaboration and appreciation of the business they represent.

Johnny (2012) investigated in a positive manner the partnership between leadership and training and development programs; he equipped workers with the power and authority to direct their staff and take strategic action to improve organizational efficiency. The quantitative method was applied in each sample of 700 citizens in Nigeria. In the SPSS computational method, the researchers analyzed the collected data.

The results show that leadership, training and development initiatives and professional development are in positive relationship. The larger the workers in training and development initiatives, the greater the degree of mobilization represents higher performance.

Ways to Award the Employee of the Month

Once a manager has established the main goal with the award scheme, the time is right to set up the application process.

One very common method to select the winner of each month is the establishment of a nominating committee consisting of managers and managers from all departments, including personnel. In that scenario, once a month, the Committee must appoint each participant based on the above-mentioned objectives; the Group debates each candidate's qualifications and voting for the winner.

The downside is that some managers can do better "campaigning" on behalf of one team member than others. In some other circumstances the committee will simply turn from the list of previous candidates and give everyone the word.

A second way to give the monthly employee is to include the entire business in the phase of recruitment. This can be accomplished by either using simple, low-tech appointment forms or by

using an extensive online application box to allow each nominator to enter his nominee's name together with a short paragraph justifying his or her decision.

While this is a more democratic approach to select the winner, it can be difficult for everybody to participate, particularly after a few months of the program. In fact, this kind of nomination process tends to promote workers, who typically communicate with more people within the organization by the nature of their work and are thus more recognizable and perhaps more common.

Process to Select the Employee of the Month

After a manager has received all the responses from the study, the average of each element and a general average of each reaction you provide about a specific employee can be determined.

A manager can either select a winner directly from the ratings or send the finalist to the jury who can decide for the winner.

The rewards of including everyone in the selection process would, therefore, not only guarantee acceptance of the right people, but also provide each team a sense of mission, fellowship, identification and belonging.

Employee of the Month Criteria

The criterion for hiring should include both a strong work performance and a high degree of emotional intelligence, which ensures that the organization and its workers are regularly in good shape.

Someone with a high Emotional Intelligence score is usually a very committed, positive employee. They are not only qualified and skilled workers, but also committed to the best work they can do. In turn, they devote time and energy to create an environment for themselves and their peers that is professional, enjoyable, imaginative and ultimately optimistic.

There are many parameters for determining how an individual blends into the organization and it was condensed to seven main indicators, creating a well-rounded person:

Credibility

This aspect tests the way the person's communication skills, strength, consistency, and honesty are viewed. A very trustworthy worker is generally very optimistic. They are showing up

on time and doing what they are saying. To their staff they are honest and straightforward.

Respect

Anyone who is polite is not one who necessarily identifies with everyone, but one who respects their coworkers' views even if they differ. Someone with high respect seeks to stop judging or insulting others for their choice or lifestyle. In other people's viewpoints, they are always appreciative, courteous, considerate and recognizable.

Fellowship

Being a strong fellowship citizen involves not being buddies and hanging out with everyone in the workplace every Tuesday during a Happy Hour. It ensures that a safe and warm working environment is generated each day. The greatest companies that work with usually display a very high level of humanity, only when a feeling of friendship and connection occurs.

Identity

Identity is the sense of belonging of team leaders when they are fully committed to their work and to the performance of their business. The best brand advocates are usually people with a high level of credibility. We help their company not only for their clients but for any potential employee. They feel proud to be more than themselves and every day they wear the colors of the company.

Equality

An individual who views others equally usually helps establish a culture where politics and business behind the door are seldom the route. Nonetheless, it is generally easier for people in supervisory positions to assess this dimension; everyone should obey the Golden Rule to guarantee that they never do to others what they would not do to them. People who avoid favoritism or show some form of partiality when working with their peers usually consider themselves to be very fair.

Work Commitment

People who come to work are dedicated to their job, not because they have to, but because they're excited about what they do. They typically do nothing to switching out the lights while the

meeting room is quiet or pick a garbage as though they are seen by nobody else. You come in early and leave late and mostly speak to your friends in a positive and optimistic manner.

Personal Performance

This aspect of emotional intelligence is not about observable KPIs but about how people view the company's professional development. It aspect examines closely how things are done and how the managers view the overall attitude of their workers. Given that the targets are typically not communicated to the superiors of the person, the other manager is very conscious of the individual's results.

RESEARCH METHOD

The qualitative methodology is the methodology which is implemented in the research to collect data. In-Depth interviews were conducted with 2 different managers in the Sample Hotel, to study the impact of implementing best human resources practices to boost performance and check if employee of the month is applied as a motivational Best Practice in the hotel.

For this reason, two interviews were conducted with HR Manager and Reservation Manager to further verify the motivational best practices being applied in the hotel. A bunch of questions were addressed to the respective managers who were knowledgeable in Motivational best practices common in Hotel Industry and have a deep understanding of the processes and policies of the hotel that allow easy or difficult implementation of such practices.

The questions are attached to this paper as appendix.

Case Study: Sample Hotel in Lebanon

To verify the motivational best practices being adopted in the sample Lebanese hotel, two managers were interviewed. The interviews focused on employees' motivation, motivation program, and implementation of the employee of the month.

From the interviews, it can be deduced that employees in general in the hotel lack motivation and this is due to the fact the hotel industry is currently facing in Lebanon taking into consideration the political and economic

instability especially in the recent years and especially this period in 2019 where the political security got worse, and this affected negatively the hotel industry in Lebanon.

However, this lack of motivation is not a recent one and it appears from the interviews that HR activities is not focusing much on the employee's motivation and their engagement despite their acknowledgement of the necessity of having the employees feel engaged and belong to have a better performance.

Motivational strategies are not applied in the hotel due to absence of implementation of human resources best practices. This is in fact leading to a high employee turnover rate and by that affecting the productivity of the hotel. Furthermore, to motivate employees, a performance appraisal system should be implemented to study their needs and based on their needs motivational strategies should be applied to satisfy their needs. Since what motivates an employee, does not necessarily motivate another in the same effect. This means, some employees are motivated throughout financial rewards, while others are motivated throughout non-financial rewards.

However, it can be deduced from the interview that HR is trying to provide kind of motivation spirit to employees by encouraging them to work on themselves and proceed with personal learning programs or post graduate studies, but there is no specific motivational program adopted by HR to have employees be motivated and more engaged. This made us ask in the interview if employee of the month is adopted in the hotel and it appeared to be that they apply this well on employees.

However, it seems that some managers are trying to apply individually something similar on individual basis like the reservation manager encouraging her staff who sells more than 100 rooms a month with some kind of non-monetary reward like a praise in front of other employees, but this is still done timidly in the reservation entity only and not generalized over the whole hotel employees in various sections and departments.

However, HR said that the employee of the month is being considered and shall be applied soon in the hotel in the various departments.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the employee of the month shall be taken into consideration in the sample hotel, since it will motivate employees to exert more effort to achieve the hotels objectives and goals. In addition to that, the implementation of such strategy will also help the employee to be retained and to minimize the employee turnover and by that minimizing the training and recruitment costs.

Famous International hotels apply the employee of the month program as a motivational tool to engage their employees and from these hotels we can mention Marriott International, Sheraton and Four Seasons.

This program seems to have its effect whether in monetary or non-monetary rewards.

The goal of the analysis is to examine the effect of Human Resources Practice on the efficiency of hotel employees in Lebanon and to propose changes in it. The current research findings show that the Human Resources Practice (recruitment and placement, education, and growth, pay and motivation evaluation and the performance appraisal) is strongly related to the success of the workers. The staff is one of the key strategic assets of any organization. In the same manner, Hotels will draw, train and improve their success, creativity, and enthusiasm.

The efficient and consistent application of Human Resources Practice empowers and greatly improves the efficiency of university employees. Employees have a significant and competitive role in improving the status of hotels in key areas of scientific excellence, academic reputation and quality improvement of university programs. The best practice in HMR thus improves the efficiency of university employees, thereby enhancing the output of the institution.

To increase the efficiency of their staff, HR in cooperation with managers at the sample hotel shall apply the employee of the month and this recommendation was in alignment with the managers interviewed. Thus, we recommend that they shall first set up rules to select workers as Employee of the month and these rules shall be clear in designing such a system while considering the following:

1. Does an employee need to have been working for a minimum period at the company before being eligible to win?

2. Can an employee win back-to-back titles, or should there be a break between wins?

3. Are part-time employees just as eligible as full-time ones?

Mix It Up

HR and Managers can very well turn the different dimensions each month and concentrate on one specific dimension depending on the objectives of the company. As an example, for a month, personal success could all be included, and the winner would be selected by choosing the individual with the highest score. In the second month, you will concentrate on reputation, personality, or any other aspect.

Choosing the Right Rewards

Each month HR and managers can very well adjust the different dimensions and concentrate on one specific aspect according to the company's objectives. For example, a month would include personal success and determine the winner by selecting the individual with the most valuable performance. You'll reflect on credibility, appearance or any other thing in the second month.

- Gift cards
- Parking space
- Plaque (publicly displayed)
- Cold hard cash
- One-on-one lunch with the CEO
- Free day off
- Trophy

HR and managers may change the multiple measurements very well every month and focus on a specific aspect according to the priorities of the business. One month, for example, would include personal success and determine the winner by choosing the individual with the greatest value. In the second month they can reflect on reputation, feel or whatever.

In conclusion, these recommendation was welcomed by the Sample hotel where respective managers welcomed a lot the idea of applying the Employee of the month especially in these tough, / unstable political and economic circumstances in Lebanon as this motivational practice, with its independency in a way or so form the monetary aspect, is ideal to keep employees motivated and productive.

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