Low Morale at Workplace

Name

Institution

Executive Summary

Low employee morale has become a common problem in contemporary organizations. Exoduses, routine-based strikes, and organizational resistance are products of staff demotivation and the management must use any resource in their reach to effect employee retention, morale boost, and improved product and service quality.

The paper; thus, discusses the causes, effects, and ways of improving morale at workplace. Reasonable working hours, good working environment, good income, and rewards make employee proactive. No manager would desire to see poor work quality, unthinkable absenteeism, and complaints from workers, clients or even customers; thus, it has become a mandate to ensure that the needs of employees are met with satisfaction. Organizations lose millions of dollars per year due to low employee morale and it is up to managers to fix this problem once and for all.

As stipulated in the discussion part, achieving high employee morale is easy. The manager must equip themselves with soft skills such as effective communication, interpersonal skills and the will to listen to others. Other things will automatically fall into place.

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Introduction

Unhappy, demotivated and disengaged workers cost the global economy billions of dollars annually in the form of absenteeism, productivity, mistakes, turnover and poor customer service. Managers and CEO are left with a mountain to climb when employees choose to behave in certain rebellious ways that seem to act to the disadvantage of the organization. This is a huge setback to organizational prosperity and survivability. Smart managers discover low employee morale early enough to fix the problem before things get out of hands, while some are not in luck to notice under-motivated workers at early stages (Lee, Scheunemann, Hall & Payne, 2012).

Low employee morale is accompanied with pricey consequences. The good thing is that improving employee morale has never been complicated. Very simple things done by the manager can cause an up-turn in employee morale, productivity and engagement. For instance, simple rewards, handshakes, and promotions can work miracles.

Morale is analogous to fire. Fire is believed to be a good servant but a bad master depending on how it is handled. Morale can be an insurance policy to fortune or be the driving force toward the fall of organizations. At the end of the day, it is the duty of the manager to identify and monitor the signs of low morale in employees to come up with a long-lasting solution. With that in mind, it is a decent assertion that the paper would make less sense if the meaning of morale at workplace remains unclear.

Definition of Staff Morale

What employees feel about the organization, good or bad, represents their morale. Human resources management scholars have authored hundreds of books with the view of making the concept of morale known to managers and their staff as a whole. Such different scholarly works speak the same language; workforce morale is a very delicate issue that greatly impacts job performance. From these suggestions, it can be concluded that employee morale is "the degree to which an employee feels good about his/her work and work environment". Having understood what staff morale is all about; wouldn't it be a good idea to look at the indications of low morale at workplace? (Lee, Scheunemann, Hall & Payne, 2012).

Signs of Low Staff Morale

If one is a manager and notices the following eight signs, then the organization is in deep trouble. The problem becomes even more serious when over 80% of workers send such signals at work ("8 Signs of Low Morale").

- ✓ Poor work quality
- ✓ Lack of enthusiasm about job
- ✓ High turnover
- ✓ Complaints from customers, clients, staff and the society regarding the products and services
- ✓ Necessity to re-do work in high frequency
- ✓ Jealousy or fighting among employees
- ✓ Excessive absenteeism
- ✓ Climbing number of mistakes in work ("8 Signs of Low Morale").

The manager has a role to play to ensure that the workforce is in high spirits at all times. While it still remains impossible to notice behavioral changes that signify demotivated employees, it is imperative to try to see the smoke as early as possible. They say cure is never better than prevention; though, and the manager is obligated to know all possible causes of low staff morale and conduct counter-measures.

Causes of Low Staff Morale

Poor leadership tops the list of the reasons behind low employee morale. Organizations are normally impacted by leaders, who handle almost all activities. The vision and decisions of the leadership hierarchy determines success or failure (Lee, Scheunemann, Hall & Payne, 2012).

Poor leadership – that results in the distrust of management, unhealthy interpersonal relations, and inappropriate working conditions- negates employee morale. In addition, contract conflicts, over-expectations, labor negotiations, changes in leadership, departmental layoff or closures may cause low staff morale, and lack of opportunity for individual growth due to unchallenging surroundings precipitate into low employee morale (Lee, Scheunemann, Hall & Payne, 2012).

To start off, poor working conditions such as absence of air conditioning system, equipment, poor lighting, bad office décor and layout, extended work hours, low pay, undignified supervision, and lack of respect from the managers are the greatest poison of morale. Workers are the backbone and must be given the same respect they are showing to the organization. The working environment must be clean, spacious, and ventilated to allow the circulation of fresh air. On the other hand, offices ought to be air-conditioned. Optimum light and high performance equipment are also basic needs at workplace.

Employees, like the managers, need a decent income. They have to pay bills and be able to save something for the future. Paying them less would trigger under-motivations. Strikes, poor work, tardiness, and stealing are some of the things expected. Salaries and allowances must be allocated in adherence to internal and external equities. Internal equities show how much each worker within the organization is being paid, taking into account their experience, level of education, type of job and the number of working hours. External equities disclose how much; say, a secretary of Samsung Electronics is paid in comparison with his/her counterpart at Apple, Inc. Observing external equities guarantee employee retention and morale as none goes out in search of greener pastures.

More than often, managers who do not embrace career development of their employees end up being frustrated by poor quality of work. The staff must be subjected to challenging environments to sharpen their skills and problem-solving capabilities. As a manager, make available a clear path to the top management for employees. A departmental manager should be promoted into a general branch manager in the next two or three years. Monopoly of responsibilities would only bore workers and force them to look for a more challenging environment somewhere else.

Contractual disputes erode employee trust and motivation. For instance, a manager may acquire a tender to supply office furniture to government offices. Then all over sudden, management-induced conflicts erupt that see the termination of the contract. The sales department and employees would obviously feel demotivated when they realize that poor overall leadership led to the loss of a hard-fought fortune. The organization I am currently managing experienced a similar problem three years ago when I was still the marketing representative. I convinced a stern-faced client to use our beauty-enhancing products and that our company could manufacture voluminous products to meet demand. Unluckily, poor co-ordination between the production manager and the CEO led to the manufacture of inadequate items on time. In fact, the $500,000 order was delayed for four weeks and it had to be cancelled. The client wanted to give us a multi-million dollar contract to make products that he would be reselling to his globally-established network, and what happened was a complete disappointment. To be sincere, I was annoyed and demotivated (Neely, 1999).

Changes of leadership may also have a negative impact of staff morale. Leaders who lack charisma cannot succeed. To labor this point, let us consider a departmental manager who had poor relations with his juniors getting promoted into the CEO. For sure, most workers would seek exodus or develop some artificial resistance to frustrate the CEO's ideas and decisions. Bringing in a previously failed manager into the organization may also bring down staff morale as they overtly fear that being led by such an individual will only cause more losses to the organization and staff as a whole. Internal resistance is the biggest problem managers and CEOs face nowadays, so changes of leadership must be executed with prudence. Organizations should strive to employ capable managers in order to realize its goals fully.

There are many qualities of an effective manager; but charisma, the will to listen more and talk less, courtesy, the ability to make the staff feel appreciated steal the day. It is indeed a futile endeavor to try to buy employee loyalty without showing loyalty to colleagues in the first place.

Charismatic managers lead by example. As a manager, struggling to convince employees to arrive at work at six thirty in the morning while you come one hour later cannot work with ease. If you want employees to report at six thirty in the morning, be seated in your office half an hour early. Do not preach respect among employees while you spend hours daily rebuking and talking to your workers in low regard. Respect, loyalty, and charisma are earned and not bought.

The workers must feel loved and at home. This can be achieved through genuine handshakes and smiles, customization of offices and car parking zones, salary increment, loyalty bonuses, certificates, staff parties, and alluring allowances. The employee must feel the organization is nothing without them being around (Neely, 1999).

Conclusion

Unhappy, demotivated and disengaged workers cost the global economy billions of dollars annually in the form of absenteeism, productivity, mistakes, turnover and poor customer service. Managers and CEO are left with a mountain to climb when employees choose to behave in certain rebellious ways that seem to act to the disadvantage of the organization.

The signs of low morale might be unnoticeable, but negative feedbacks from customers, clients, staff and the community, high turnover, envy, the need to re-do work, frequent absenteeism, too many errors, and poor work quality should be enough to tell something is wrong. Workers lacking morale often exhibit such behaviors and something must be done to fix the problem as soon as possible.

Under-paying the staff, lack of appreciation, and poor management are; however, the hugest contributors of low morale. The manager cannot; therefore, relieve themselves of the responsibility to engineer counter-measures to re-ignite employee morale. The best way is to identify the things that promote employee demotivation and work on them early before workers realize the organization has taken too much for the owner to notice.

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