

Motivational structures

With the right motivational structure in place, people's motivation to work in some direction as a result of the motivational structure is enhanced. A classic example of an motivational structure is a carrot in front of a donkey pulling a cart; the donkey who saw a carrot on a stick in front of him/her and was motivated to walk forward in the direction of the carrot. Another motivational structure was the whip that the driver of the cart used. The carrot is a positive motivational structure, a pull towards a goal, a reward. The whip is a negative motivational structure, a push away from a certain situation, a punishment that discourages certain behaviour.

Several such structures are in place in the society you work. You are rewarded with a paycheck for working. You are punished to commit crime. You are rewarded with prestige and status if you do well, you are punished with disgrace and humiliation if you do things people strongly don't like.

I would think that social status - if other people regard you with respect - is a key factor. One worker once said, the highest form of flattery from the boss I see in the paycheck. It is not only the money in itself that motivates, but a gesture that the boss is willing to sacrifice company money on a accordingly valued employee.

Social status and work ethic (pride in the profession) is noted by colleagues and they look up on those with this. This may be more of a motivational factor than the paycheck itself, provided that the paycheck is giving a worthy living standard. The evidence for this is that public hospitals have higher quality and more bang for the buck than private hospitals, even though the opposite should be true according to market liberals. The nurses and doctors work in general is of high quality despite the fact that the pay is less in public hospitals compared to private.

On the other hand to balance it off, communism did not work. Imagine you have to work for your boss who is a party member. Politicians are not regarded highly, now in communism you have to work for them too, and all jobs on offer are with bosses who are politicians. Your freedom of choosing who to work for is highly restricted. An air of dissatisfaction spreads among the workers because they don't like who they work for and people don't do their best contribution, because they are not motivated to, since your individual extra contribution is not respected by the envious air and gives no extra pay; your extra effort is drowned in the swamp of equal pay, equal respect and equal envy. The only motivational factor left in such a society is fear of punishment, and since extra contributions can be regarded as a career threat by existing bosses who are afraid of losing their party privileges, extra contribution is not encouraged, and quality of goods and services produces is equally miserable.