

### Using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to Create Self-Determination

Company ABC has decided it wants to reduce waste by making its files completely digital and has put me in charge of the conversion. This is a very large task, and I have been assigned a team of administrative assistants to help complete the job. I realize that most of the employees I've been assigned have no interest in helping with the task, and it will be a problem to motivate them. To combat this problem, I will try to create a sense of self-determination with the help of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

To begin, this is a great company to work for. It goes above and beyond meeting all the physiological needs such as adequate heat, air conditioning, lighting, air quality, drinking water, and restrooms. Satisfying the employee's needs for physical survival will not be a problem.

Company ABC is very successful and safety is provided in more than one way. It is provided in the physical sense because of its safe and healthy working conditions. Employees do not feel as though they are in danger while they are at work. Also, working for this company is considered stable which gives employees a sense of job security. This security allows employees to freely work and not worry about employment resulting in more effort thus benefiting the company.

Company ABC provides a great working environment. The company puts an emphasis on teamwork and makes employees feel as though they are a part of a group and included in the work. While working here, employees often feel accepted by others due to the stress placed on creating team-based projects and because of social events allowing employees to interact with one another.

I will use this feeling of community to my advantage; because the project I've been assigned will require an immense amount of teamwork. I plan on choosing members of the staff that have an interest in technology, the project, and would be interested in learning new skills. I think it would be wise to meet with the team and ask the team members for their perspectives on how best to accomplish the conversion of the files. This will help establish a group atmosphere, while at the same, boosting self-esteem. Improving the employee's self-esteem will allow ABC's employees to make contributions that are creative, innovative, and help solve important problems. If some of the ideas are good they will be acknowledged and adopted as part of the solution.

The acknowledgment and adoption of ideas will provide employees with their desired recognition. Some employees may find it more rewarding to see their name recognized as a top company contributor and work hard to achieve a certain level of recognition. When employees work harder to achieve that recognition they could be rewarded with more responsibility subsequently reinforcing an employee's self-esteem.

At this point the team will be required to develop a timeline and a set of distinct tasks to perform. This will help avoid threats and deadlines, because the team has a hand in setting the timeline of completing the tasks. According to Ormrod (2012) "Threats and deadlines are typically experienced as controlling one's behaviors. As a result, they reduce self-determination and intrinsic motivation (p. 438).

I would then provide my teammates an opportunity to select who will perform each task in hopes of creating a greater sense of self-determination. If ABC's employees feel more

involved then they will want to complete the task instead of feeling like they have to. By giving my team choices, it will increase higher levels of learning and lead to more production.

I would follow up having daily meetings that provide positive feedback on project progression and new information on the task at hand. These meetings should provide extrinsic motivation that will continually boost self-esteem and encompass self-worth. Also, the positive feedback combined with the frequency of the meetings should help promote a feeling of self-worth. According to Ormrod "Achieving success on a regular basis is one way of maintaining or even enhancing self-worth" (p. 435).

At the same time, these meetings will also offer extrinsic motivation in the form of prizes. The prizes will either be additional vacation days or in the form of a monetary reward and shouldn't be detrimental due to the short period of time they will be offered. In fact, in some instances, extrinsic motivation can also promote learning. Because the prizes are being combined with intrinsic motivation, they will essentially be viewed as a bonus.

The combination of all the factors above will have likely increased intrinsic motivation by developing an environment of autonomy, competence, and good team relations. Hopefully, by this point, my team will start to feel some sense of self-actualization due to the fact that all of Maslow's levels have been met. This will further be encouraged by offering greater training opportunities to the people who have worked with the new technology. According to Ormrod (2012) "Individuals striving toward self-actualization seek out new activities as a way of expanding their horizons and want to learn simply for the sake of learning" (p.433).

## References

Ormrod, J. (2012). Human Learning (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson