Job Satisfaction

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Job satisfaction is viewed as a solid definition of whether a person is content and fulfilled with their job. It’s a simple definition, but underneath all of that are large variables that reflect on whether individuals enjoy working at their place of employment or not. Job satisfaction is important, because it does encompass many components of the work place environment and culture. Whether employees have high satisfaction or not can reflect in both the affective and behavioral components of work. Employees that are part of different working generations also effect these components and what is important to them for their job satisfaction. Leaders must the recognize the differences in employees and what is important to everyone that impacts their job satisfaction, specifically recognizing how they can influence job satisfaction positively for everyone.

Job satisfaction is a dependent variable that team leaders can be held accountable for and an indicator about people feel about their work and their work setting (Schermerhorn, Uhl-Bien & Osborne, 2014). This dependent variable is important as job satisfaction is not one variable but has many components that compose why a person enjoys their work, how long they will stay, their dedication to their place of employment and their productivity. When individuals are pleased with all aspects of those components their performance improves. Jobs satisfaction is important as it promotes productivity, it’s reflected in counter productive work and linked with organizational citizenship both interpersonal and organizational to positively effect organizations (Schermerhorn et al., 2014).

Striving for staff satisfaction can be difficult as not all team members are the same and with the generational changes it can be challenging to please all members. Currently in the work force there are multiple generations all with different values, work ethic and expectations. For leaders the lack of generational understanding and stereotyping can lead to organizational failure, as leaders it’s imperative to understand generational differences and how to lead them to success.

One generational group is the Millennials, they are young adults born between 1976 and 2001 and it’s estimated by 2020 nearly half of the United States workforce will be comprised of this generation (Brack & Kelly, 2012). In the work place the Millennials have expectations of having active and involved leadership, they look for teamwork and collaboration, they don’t bank as much on structure and view flexibility as highly valued and from their leaders they look for coaching, collaboration, measures and motivation (Brack & Kelly, 2012).

The generations before them such as the Baby Boomers were more individually focused on work, looked for job security, structure and appreciated a command and control management style. This generation was a bit more rugged and liked clear boundaries while generally having an inward-looking perspective (Barack & Kelly, 2). Baby boomers have years of experience, dedication and commitment to productivity (Schermerhorn et al., 2014). While the Millennials often are perceived as blunt, self-entitled and naïve. These generations have different characteristics but do value the same job factors as important. They value meaningful work, high pay, sense of accomplishment and responsibility all as important (Brack & Kelly, 2012). They do value the factors on different levels, but they have deemed them all important in some way.

Millennials were a generation that were encouraged by their parents to challenge authority, assert themselves and ask for specific treatment if necessary (Burkus, 2010). Their expectations are for open communication that is supportive and frequent, they also have a lack of formality with status, structure or propriety which can often feel disrespectful to senior workers (Burkus, 2010). Some traits of Millennials may be viewed as barriers, but they have also developed broader perspectives, cultural diversity and are able to use communication and technologies to enhance organizational performance and productivity (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). It’s important for leaders to develop trust and support Millennials to have open communication with them and to include them in decisions and opportunities, so they can feel challenged and not get bored.

Job satisfaction factors vary based on generations. For Millennials coaching, collaboration, measures and motivation are all important in job satisfaction. They grew up in a constant coaching environment and this will keep them engaged in their work, whether it be an email, text or face-to-face conversation (Burkus, 2010). They view collaboration as a groups objective and want clear deadlines and business boundaries (Burkus, 2010). Millennials also want structure and measuring systems, so they understand how they will be judged and assessed (Burkus, 2010). Motivation is a large job satisfier, as they want to be in an area that is comfortable where they can speak freely without criticism and rewarded for a job well done.

Baby Boomers have their own set of requirements for job satisfaction. They look for a leader with a command-and control management approach and they want structure (Schermerhorn et al., 2014). Baby boomer with leaders who set clear expectations and give them structure to their day will have higher job satisfaction. By setting schedules, checklists, and a consistent day will positively influence their job satisfaction. Baby Boomers value working individually, so allowing them to work independently under structured schedules would set them up for success.

One study conducted investigative differences between three generational groups in the work force and looked at their work values, job satisfaction, commitment and intentions to leave. What it found was that person-organization values fit for all generational groups is important and that generational differences really should not be over-generalized (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). It’s important for leaders to recognize not only their staffs individual personality types, but to recognize their generational differences as well. People behave and operate in different ways based on their personality types and their generational behaviors. To have job satisfaction leaders must look at all components that lead to satisfaction and address them with each individual employee. It’s imperative to recognize why people behave in certain ways, how they expect to be treated and what they expect out of leaders. When leaders recognize all these aspects they can focus on employee happiness which leads to productivity, retention and good business.

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