FACTORS IN MOTIVATING GENERATION Y EMPLOYEES – POLISH REALITIES

Katarzyna Piwowar-Sulej

Wroclaw University of Economics

Komandorska Street 119/120, 53-345 Wroclaw, Poland

Abstract
Without achieving an appropriate employee motivation level, it is impossible to achieve high level of business efficiency. Therefore the issue of motivation is still important and worth being studied.

Four generations exist in the contemporary labour market. Given the fact that representatives of the Mature Generation currently account for a mere 5% of the total number of employees, more attention should be devoted to describing other generations, with particular focus on Generation Y. The aim of this paper is to present fundamental motivation mechanisms and to analyse motivational factors of Generation Y included a specificity of Polish society.

Key words: *motivation, Generation Y, Poland*

1. INTRODUCTION

Such factors as progressing globalisation, development of competition on numerous markets and the phenomenon of crisis imply the necessity to continuously seek methods for maintaining or increasing the competitive capacity of enterprises. Recent decades have brought many new organisation management concepts and methods. Regardless of the concept adopted in a given enterprise, most attention should be focused on people. It is those that determine the quality of all business activities. An employee is a source of knowledge which can be regarded as a critical success factor.

As is rightly noticed by M. Ward (1997, p. 118), if people are well-motivated to work, both managing them and succeeding will be much simpler. Without achieving an appropriate employee motivation level, it is impossible to implement a strategy, to successfully introduce changes in the enterprise or even efficiently carry out ongoing business.

The aim of this paper on the theoretical-cognitive layer is to present – based on literature review (including results of foreign studies) – fundamental motivation mechanisms and to analyse various groups of contemporary labour market participants with the specificity of Polish society taken into consideration. It was agreed that young labour market participants, representatives of the Generation Y, deserve particular attention. The discussion is concerned also with application. In the era of progressing globalisation it constitutes a valuable source of knowledge for entrepreneurs running or intending to run business activities in Poland.

2. FUNDAMENTAL MOTIVATION MECHANISMS

Richard J. Gerring and Philip G. Zimbardo (2009) begin chapter on motivation in the book "Psychology and life" with the question "Why did you get up this morning?". The basic notion in the theory of motivation is the motive defined as "the state of internal tension that determines the capacity and direction of the activity of the body" (Balicki 2002, p. 27). There are two general types of motives: intrinsic and extrinsic. An extrinsic motive is connected with consequential rewards and punishments resulting from the behaviour (Brovn 2007, p. 8).

Employee motivation is an internal process of mental regulation that determines the direction of employee actions and the amount of energy the employee is willing to invest in performing the tasks which set such a direction (cf. Strużycki 2004, p. 182). To put it in simplest terms, no or low motivation will result in low performance levels within a given task. Effectiveness of actions improves

in step with increasing motivation, up to a point. When motivation is too high, actions become disorganised. It is called the Yerkes-Dodson law (see more Lukaszewski, Doliński 2000).

Motivating is a management function consisting in shaping desired behaviours in subordinates for the purpose of conscious and deliberate fulfilment of their tasks (Korzeniowski 2010, p. 233). Two types of motivation can be distinguished here: negative and positive, influenced by corresponding motivation instruments: coercion or incentive, respectively. Negative motivation is based on an anxiety that stimulates people to work by creating the sense of insecurity. It can be based e.g. on a fear of losing a portion of a bonus as a consequence of the failure to perform the task in full or a threat of reprimand. Positive motivation, in turn, consists of providing the employee with increasingly better prospects for achieving employee goals in line with fulfilment of employer expectations. This is how e.g. the possibility to earn more or to earn a better position motivates employees (see more Penc 1996, p. 141).

The best-known typology of the theories of motivation distinguishes two groups (see more Hoffmann 2006):

- content theories – emphasising the significance of human needs (e.g. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's two-factor theory),
- process (cognitive) theories – focusing on the method of triggering, orienting, maintaining and suppressing human behaviours (e.g. the expectancy theory).

Bearing in mind the Yerkes-Dodson law, which was invoked above, it can be stated that the best situation is when an employee performs a job that only slightly exceeds his or her capabilities and capacity. This is because a moderately difficult job evokes the strongest motivation (Sedlak 1993, p. 106). However, before the motivation process begins, it is necessary not only to determine the task difficulty level but also to learn what motivates whom. In the case of some people, this can be the sense of security, while in the case of others – new risky challenges. Some people prefer stability, while others – change. The wiw-win concept has to be reflected in the employer-employee relations and that applies also to the process of motivation.

It needs to be remembered that motivation needs to evolve over time and money is only one of the motivational factors (Szczepanik 2009, p. 97). Changeability of human needs is linked mainly with age and the related stage of personal and professional life. What an employee found motivating a few years ago may no longer have the same effect. Trips abroad for sales people are a good example of that. They were motivating when the employees in question didn't have children or a mortgage. For a young father a trip abroad can be more of a problem than a source of pleasure.

The relevant literature points to the fact that various generational groups with diverse needs coexist in contemporary enterprises. Representatives of individual generations will be described further in this study.

3. CONTEMPORARY LABOUR MARKET PARTICIPANTS – THEIR CHARACTERISTICS AND EXPECTATIONS

The division into four generations functioning within the contemporary organisation: Mature, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y (Millennials) is the most frequent one in the relevant literature (see Tab. 1). New types, such as Generation Next, Z, M or Alfa, are also being discussed.

Given the fact that representatives of the Mature Generation (born before the Second World War), who are motivated by work itself, currently account for a mere 5% of the total number of employees, more attention will be devoted to describing other generations, with particular focus on Generation Y.

Table 1. Description of age generations that currently coexist in the Polish labour market

Name of the generation of employees	Characteristics of representatives	Employee expectations/motivational factors
Baby Boomers	• born between 1946 and the early 1960s • they constitute circa 1/3 of the population of employees in Poland • hard-working and loyal to the employer • work is their central value	• finance • stability of employment
Generation X	• born between 1965 and 1979 • they grew up in the world of enormous political, economic, technological and media transformations • unavailability of a broad spectrum of consumer services resulted in their sense of inferiority • they encountered the "job for everyone" phenomenon, and later high unemployment rate • they perceive mistakes as their personal failures	• stability of employment (the cult of permanent employment contracts)
Generation Y	• born between the late 1970s and the mid-1990s • representatives similar to each other regardless of their home country • individualists, consumerists • conscious of their value • task-oriented • multi-tasking • freelancing • accepting reality with a distant attitude (cold analysts) • skillful in modern technologies	• realistic, short-term goals • flexibility • frequent feedback • work-life balance • access to modern technologies • participation in undertakings that help improve competences (participation in projects) • teamwork

(Source: own work based on Piwowar-Sulej 2009; Piwowar-Sulej 2012, Kozłowski 2012, p. 21-27; http://www.hrnews.pl/News1.aspx?id=3223 (11.01.2012); http://hrstandard.pl/2013/06/17/przychodzi-y-do-pracy/ (17/06/2013)

Generation X are people born in the period 1965-1979. They remember a different reality and know that the way to professional success involves not only excellent education and competence but also commitment. They are also active outside the office, they develop their interests, yet not at the expense of work. They understand that it is worth working overtime for the sake of the project. Their younger colleagues (Millennials), in turn, feel that "the world is their oyster" when they enter the labour market.

The new generation in the labour market does not want to be bored, it wants to change the world to some extent and earn a lot. It is a true challenge for employers. People in their thirties are not willing to completely devote their personal life to their professional career. Their priorities include pleasant work, intellectual challenges (e.g. work in projects, more see: Piwowar-Sulej 2012), responsibility, and freedom to make decisions about their own lives. Generation Y employees are extremely independent and are not interested in the rules in the workplace, which makes it difficult for them to

conform. They do not feel obliged to be loyal to the employer, they reject criticism and demonstrate a demanding attitude. They are said to ponder on everything and first consider whether there is a point in what they are doing in their job. They prefer on-line communication than face-to-face talking (Cwalina 2001). In comparison to previous generations they are considerably more demanding.

The description of Generation Y employees presented above is mainly based on studies conducted in the West. For instance, what follows from the Universum Professional Survey, work-life balance is crucial for 60 per cent of the today's thirty-year-olds. The group in question also expects employers to take over responsibility for welfare and social issues, which is proved by the surveys conducted by Berlin Trendence Institute (Collen B. 2013).

As is demonstrated by the results of the survey carried out for Kelly Services, Generation Y employees communicate via instant messengers more often than those from Generation X and Baby Boomers, whereas employees from other age groups tend to choose face-to-face communication. These generations also have different preferences regarding bonus and remuneration policies. While Generation X and Generation Y prefer being remunerated in the traditional – financial – form, for example with bonuses, much older employees (Baby Boomers) appreciate non-financial forms of remuneration, such as additional days off or opportunities to participate in further trainings[1], more. And what is the situation in Poland? This question will be answered in the next section of this paper.

4. FACTORS MOTIVATING YOUNG POLES FOR WORK IN LIGHT OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Before results of the research on Generation Y are presented, it is worth analysing the results of comparative research on motivational factors in various European countries.

Table 2. Significance of motivational factors in selected European countries

	Satisfaction from achievements (% of responses)	Job retention (% of responses)	Usefulness of work for others (% of responses)	Getting a higher remuneration or promotion (% of responses)	Interesting job (% of responses)	Everyone should always do his or her best (% of responses)
Germany	40.3	23.1	9.8	5	10.8	9.6
Belgium	31.7	17.2	16.7	3.9	18.5	11.6
Croatia	17.7	40.1	9.9	12.9	5	13.6
The Czech Republic	13.9	44.2	8.1	17	9.5	6.6
Russia	17.1	16.5	14	31.8	12	7.1
Estonia	15.6	16.3	18	20.4	12.9	15.3
France	29.9	15.7	15.2	2.6	27.1	9.2
Cyprus	16	33.7	10.5	12.2	3.7	23.7

[1] Kelly Global Workforce Index is a survey presenting opinions about work and work environment from a generational viewpoint. Results of the most recent survey conducted by Kelly in North America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region will be published in the form of six press releases in 2009 (http://hrstandard.pl/2009/09/01/zarzadzane-pokoleniami-w-miejscu-pracy/, accessed on16.06.2014)

Poland	27	24.7	12.1	12.5	5.6	17.8

(Source: 'Co motywuje nas do pracy?' 2010)

It is proved by the table above that Poles gain satisfaction from achievements and job retention primarily. The survey conducted by the portal HRmapa.pl, in turn, shows that getting on well with team members and satisfactory fixed base salaries are the best motivators for work. Job security turned out to be the third most important factor (HRmapa.pl 2012).

The Kenexa WorkTrends survey carried out on a sample of over 30,000 employees from 28 countries implies that the Generation Y representatives do not differ much from their older colleagues[2]. In the period July-August 2012, the Gazetapraca.pl research team carried out an online survey in Poland on a sample of 1,175 respondents aimed at answering two questions ('Być czy mieć?' 2012):

1) Do younger employees differ from older ones in terms of their attitude to work?
2) Can we speak of a generation gap when it comes to attitude to work?

The survey proves for example that the conviction that work is a source of funds for one's passion weakens with age. In case of the group of the oldest respondents, work is mostly a place of establishing and maintaining relationships with other people. The response "work is a place where I build my prestige" does not considerably diversify the groups although it is insignificantly truer for older than for younger employees. Respondents from all age groups agree with the statement "I can afford pleasures thanks to my work." However, the oldest ones are more cautious about this statement and have doubts more often than other groups. The vast majority of the respondents agree with the statement that it disturbs them if they cannot pursue their interests because of work. Again, the oldest employees are the most likely group to have doubts about this statement. Respondents in all age groups most frequently say that they feel comfortable in their workplace and want to work there. That being said, ones (although the smallest number of them identify with that statement) are least willing to change their job. What is most important to this group is that the company rewards their work and this is why they are loyal to it. Respondents in all age groups usually do not avoid undertaking new duties. The older the respondents more frequently declare that they assume new duties regardless of their earnings and that they work overtime. When examining another significant area: the preferred management style, it can be noticed that people up to 40 years old in all age groups declare that they are interested in flexible working hours. Older respondents often declare that it is immaterial to them, which is, at the same time, connected with the amount of time they spend at work.

With the above in mind, it needs to be said that the answer to the first question asked is affirmative. Work means something slightly different to young people than to older respondents. The young perceive it as a challenge and a place of learning, whereas older employees find stability more important than learning in the context of work. It seems, however, that there is no generation gap in terms of approach to work. This is because the majority of the differences are specific for a given age, stage of family development, and stage of professional development of the respondents.

On the basis of an analysis of the questions asked to the respondents, it can be concluded that the issues of detailed factors motivating to work were not included in the quoted survey. Hence, it seems that a significant generation gap might be present at this level. This matter was addressed by J. Cewińska, M. Striker and K. Wojtaszczyk (2009). The authors carried out research in 2008 in the district of Łódź. A dream job for a young person has to meet following criteria:

- offer an opportunity to learn something new (through participation in projects) and/or be connected with interests,

[2] Respondents in the survey were full-time employees of organisations with over 100 employees. The survey covered 28 counties, including the USA, Canada, China, Brazil, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Russia, Spain and Great Britain, i.e. economies generating 71% of GDP in total (http://hrstandard.pl/2011/08/12/czy-ygreki-inaczej-oceniaja-warunki-pracy/, accessed on 16.06.2014)

- guarantee regular monthly income,
- provide healthy work-life balance,
- having a say in how the company is run,
- provide security of employment and stability.

According to results of research conducted by Alpharec Inc. (2009) Generation Y in Poland, at a larger scale than anywhere in Europe, presents features of the Generation X. They acknowledge work first of all as a way of earning money and expect relevant remuneration.

Finally, Deloitte, a consulting company, conducted similar research in 2013 in 11 countries of Central Europe. What follows is that opportunities to improve qualifications and develop interests are of primary importance to Polish Generation Y, while earnings are mentioned second. Young people highly also appreciate other non-financial values, such as career development, job stability, or a chance for work-life balance. Among those who enter the labour market it is young men who are much more optimistic. Women value their individual skills higher but they have considerably lower requirements concerning earnings: they expect remuneration that is circa 15 per cent lower than men's. Poles proved to be moderate pessimists. Every third Polish respondent assesses the situation in the labour market as moderate (see more Deloitte 2013).

Enterprises operating in Western Europe implement innovative solutions for this group of employees, such as Work-Life-Management, where childcare, yoga courses and social consultancy are offered. They provide foreign language teaching, organise online trade fairs for candidates and improve forms of employment (Collen B. 2013). In Poland, employers are now partly adapting to the needs of the new generation. This is why e.g. corporate health programmes or fitness cards (such as Multisport which enable using sports facilities all over the country for a relatively low price) are so popular (http://natemat.pl/6547,nadchodzi-generacja-y-mlodzi-zdolni-i-nielojalni-pracodawcy-w-strachu-bo-nie-sa-gotowi-na-ich-przyjecie, accessed on 05.07.2014).

5. CONCLUSION

Value creation and development in a competitive economy are becoming strategic imperatives. This encourages continuous searching for methods which allow an increase in effectiveness. This increase cannot be achieved without sufficient employee motivation for work.

Representatives of two generations: X and Y, prevail in the contemporary labour market, with the latter are considered to be "the future" of enterprises. There are numerous studies concerning specific characteristics of Millennials. This paper presented the factors motivating Generation Y representatives who function in the Polish labour market against surveys regarding Western countries. It can be concluded that there are some differences between the countries in terms of the object of the survey.

Finally, it is worth emphasising the fact that both literature-based discussions and empirical research on Generation Y usually focus on well-educated people who speak a few foreign languages, while not all Millenials can be described in this way. Only persons with the mentioned attributes, including representatives of older generations, fall into the professional category of knowledge workers. According to the best-known definition, such workers have a high level of specialised knowledge, education or experience, and the job they do requires creating, distributing and using knowledge (Davenport 2005, p. 10). Research proves that the primary factors motivating the analysed group for work are personal development and independence, which are issues that Millennials frequently emphasise (Bombiak, Kardas 2009, p. 19). Meanwhile, worldwide, the most difficult-to-fill vacancies in 2013 are for skilled trade workers (Manpower Group 2013). Therefore, it is worth conducting research which also includes less educated, yet extremely valuable, Generation Y representatives.

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