

# Herzberg's Motivators and Hygiene Factors

Enabling your people to move forward motivates them.

What do people want from their jobs? Do they just want a higher salary? Or do they want security, good relationships with co-workers, opportunities for growth and advancement – or something else altogether?

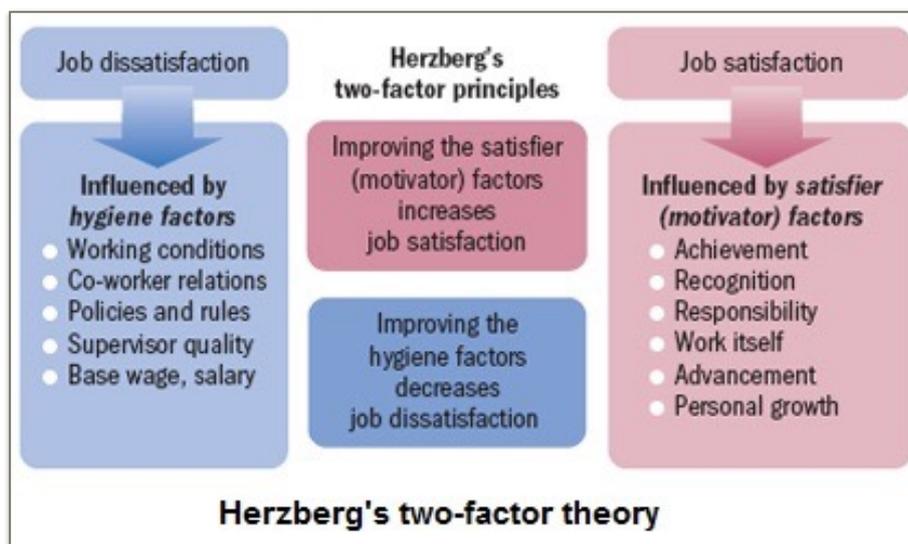
This is an important question, because it's at the root of motivation - the art of engaging with members of your team in such a way that they give their very best performance.

The psychologist Fredrick Herzberg asked the same question in the 1950s and 60s as a means of understanding employee satisfaction. He set out to determine the effect of attitude on motivation, by asking people to describe situations where they felt really good, and really bad, about their jobs. What he found was that people who felt good about their jobs gave very different responses from the people who felt bad.

These results form the basis of Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory (sometimes known as Herzberg's Two Factor Theory). Published in his famous article, "One More Time: How do You Motivate Employees," the conclusions he drew were extraordinarily influential, and still form the bedrock of good motivational practice nearly half a century later.

## Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Herzberg's findings revealed that certain characteristics of a job are consistently related to job satisfaction, while different factors are associated with job dissatisfaction. These are:



The conclusion he drew is that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are not opposites.

- The opposite of **Satisfaction** is **No Satisfaction**.
- The opposite of **Dissatisfaction** is **No Dissatisfaction**.

Remedying the causes of dissatisfaction will not create satisfaction. Nor will adding the factors of job satisfaction eliminate job dissatisfaction. If you have a hostile work environment, giving someone a promotion will not make him or her satisfied. If you create

a healthy work environment but do not provide members of your team with any of the satisfaction factors, the work they're doing will still not be satisfying.

According to Herzberg, the factors leading to job satisfaction are "separate and distinct from those that lead to job dissatisfaction." Therefore, if you set about eliminating dissatisfying job factors, you may create peace but not necessarily enhance performance. This placates your workforce instead of actually motivating them to improve performance. The characteristics associated with job dissatisfaction are called hygiene factors. When these have been adequately addressed, people will not be dissatisfied nor will they be satisfied. If you want to motivate your team, you then have to focus on satisfaction factors like achievement, recognition and responsibility.

Note:

Despite its wide acceptance, the theory has its detractors. Some say its methodology does not address the notion that, when things are going well, people tend to look at the things they enjoy about their job. When things are going badly, however, they tend to blame external factors.

Another common criticism is the fact that the theory assumes a strong correlation between job satisfaction and productivity. Herzberg's methodology did not address this relationship, therefore this assumption needs to be correct for his findings to have practical relevance.

To apply the theory, you need to adopt a two-stage process to motivate people. Firstly, you need to eliminate the dissatisfaction they're experiencing and, secondly, you need to help them find satisfaction.

### **Step One: Eliminate Job Dissatisfaction**

Herzberg called the causes of dissatisfaction "hygiene factors." To get rid of them, you need to:

- Fix poor and obstructive company policies.
- Provide effective, supportive and non-intrusive supervision.
- Create and support a culture of respect and dignity for all team members.
- Ensure that wages are competitive.
- Build job status by providing meaningful work for all positions.
- Provide job security.

All of these actions help you eliminate job dissatisfaction in your organisation. And there's no point trying to motivate people until these issues are out of the way!

You can't stop there, though. Remember, just because someone is not dissatisfied, it doesn't mean he or she is satisfied either! Now you have to turn your attention to building job satisfaction.

### **Step Two: Create Conditions for Job Satisfaction**

To create satisfaction, Herzberg says you need to address the motivating factors associated with work. He called this "job enrichment." His premise was that every job should be examined to determine how it could be made better and more satisfying to the person doing the work. Things to consider include:

- Providing opportunities for achievement.
- Recognising people's contributions.
- Creating work that is rewarding and that matches people's skills and abilities.
- Giving as much responsibility to each team member as possible.
- Providing opportunities to advance in the company through internal

promotions.

- Offering training and development opportunities, so that people can pursue the positions they want within the company.

Tip 1:

Here we're approaching the subject of motivation in a very general way. In reality, you'll need "different strokes for different folks" – in other words, different people will perceive different issues, and will be motivated by different things. Make sure you talk with your people regularly one-on-one to find out what matters to them.

Tip 2:

This theory is largely responsible for the practice of allowing people greater responsibility for planning and controlling their work, as a means of increasing motivation and satisfaction.

### **Key Points**

The relationship between motivation and job satisfaction is not overly complex. The problem is that many employers look at the hygiene factors as ways to motivate when, in fact, beyond the very short term, they do very little to motivate.

Perhaps managers like to use this approach because they think people are more financially motivated than, perhaps, they are, or perhaps it just takes less management effort to raise wages than it does to reevaluate company policy, and redesign jobs for maximum satisfaction.

When you're seeking to motivate people, firstly get rid of the things that are annoying them about the company and the workplace. Make sure they're treated fairly, and with respect. Once you've done this, look for ways in which you can help people grow within their jobs, give them opportunities for achievement, and praise that achievement wherever you find it.

### **Apply This to Your Life**

If you lead a team, take a little time with each of its members to check that they're happy, that they think they're being fairly and respectfully treated, and that they're not being affected by unnecessary bureaucracy.

You may be horrified by what you find once you start probing (bureaucracy, in particular, has a way of spreading), however you may be able to improve things quickly if you put your mind to it.

Then find out what they want from their jobs, do what you can to give this to them, and help them grow as individuals.

If you do this systematically, you'll be amazed by the impact this has on motivation!

Source: Mindtools.com