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## Promotion as a motivational tool based on the example of Antonin Forest Inspectorate

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### ABSTRACT

At present, motivation is gaining a special significance in the organization management process. It has become a management function that encourages people to work. The objective of a well-organized motivation system is to determine rewards at a level appreciated by the subordinate and to set ambitious but achievable goals. One of a number of such rewards is the promotion understood as moving a person to a higher position in the organization's hierarchy. An organization in which this type of motivational tool plays an important role is the *State Forests* National Forest Holding (hereinafter: the State Forests) - an organizational unit having no legal personality and operating for over ninety years. The purpose of this paper is to explain motivation techniques used in the State Forests based on the example of Antonin Forest Inspectorate. The study focuses on the promotion as the most important and most effective motivational incentive for the State Forests staff (15.32% of the surveyed said so).

**Keywords:** promotion, motivation, motivational tools, forest inspectorate

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the time of strong market competition, a great number of duties imposed on particular employees, time pressure and stress related to the performance of assigned tasks, skilful motivating and understanding of its techniques may have a positive influence on improving the effectiveness of each employee. The aim of this study is to explain motivation techniques used in the State Forests based on the example of Antonin Forest Inspectorate. The research on the effectiveness of motivation factors covered all staff members of the said inspectorate. They completed an anonymous questionnaire conducted in the middle of 2016 by answering questions regarding the effectiveness of particular motivators. The result of the study is a detailed description of the motivating methods used and a graphical review of their effectiveness with respect to employees from all organizational levels of the inspectorate. The paper provides a review of the subject related literature and a short description of Antonin Forest Inspectorate as an organization. In the further part, the authors compile and analyse obtained results, and finally formulate their conclusions stating that promotion has a motivational effect and is a reward for high performance and engagement.

## **2. THE ESSENCE OF EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION**

The most important factor influencing an enterprise's success or loss is motivating, in other words 'encouraging' employees, contractors, and service providers to perform their tasks in line with the will of the management, which is to lead to achieving the best possible results of work and improving its effectiveness. The basis of a success is motivating to high engagement and achieving ambitious goals [1].

Motivating oneself and other employees requires the following skills: the power of persuasion, objective-oriented approach, the ability to provide feedback, and empathy [2].

The first of those skills involves influencing the thinking and the activities of other people by using arguments without exerting pressure. People endowed with such a feature can convince others about the rightness of their point of view while keeping calm and composed at the same time [3]. The power of persuasion is manifested by:

- a) reacting to arguments with high certainty and rhetoric skills,
- b) sensitivity,
- c) ability to change the perspective of one's point of view,
- d) presenting arguments in a reliable and sincere manner,
- e) emphasizing concurrent points and common benefits for both parties in a discussion,
- f) ability to word incisive comebacks,
- g) refuting blames without showing emotions.

The next skill, i.e. a goal-oriented approach, means the ability to define a goal and put one's activities in the appropriate direction. In order to talk about strong motivation, all activities have to be oriented towards achieving a strictly established goal. Achieving an ambitious goal, being a challenge, heightens an increase in contentment and satisfaction as well as willingness to undertake further tasks in the future. The following features of character may be distinguished in people who are goal-oriented:

- a) setting an achievable goal that is a challenge at the same time,

- b) defining control criteria for a given goal – if and to what extent it has been achieved,
- c) quick and consistent reaction if an obstacle to the goal implementation appears.

As for feedback, this is providing the environment with knowledge on the perceived behaviour of people, together with one's subjective evaluation. The information is given in a constructive manner that enables formulating conclusions. When providing feedback, one needs to observe the following rules:

- a) transparency,
- b) openness,
- c) specificity,
- d) describing behaviours and not features of character.

The last of the skills discussed here is empathy [2], understood as the capability for an appropriate assessment and understanding of other people. It is the fundament of efficient communication and success in professional life. It is manifested through:

- a) the ability to adopt another person's point of view,
- b) active listening,
- c) drawing proper conclusions.

Motivation is a polysemic term but it is usually understood as one's readiness to take up some action. It depends on the degree of attractiveness of the action's goal. It may be of general (general willingness to act, to achieve goals) or of specific nature (focused on a specific situation, expressed in the degree of engagement with which a person is trying to deal with it). It involves purposeful influencing subordinate employees by the management. The management nomenclature uses various psychological motivation models. The major ones are:

- a) behavioural approach,
- b) humanistic approach,
- c) cognitive approach [4].

In accordance with the behavioural concept, the purposeful influence of management on subordinate employees is an extrinsic motivation which is effected with the use of incentives (material and non-material). Extrinsic incentives can be divided into positive (rewards) and negative (punishments). The rewarded human behaviour becomes strengthened and repeated, while punished behaviour is eliminated. On the other hand, humanists believed that employee motivation may arise from their desire to satisfy their own needs, and this is called self-motivation (an intrinsic motivation [3] that is scarcely influenced by external factors). This approach is used in a number of concepts. One of the best known ones is the Maslow's pyramid [5] according to which people are motivated by five basic needs: physiological needs, safety needs, social belonging, self-esteem and self-actualization.

A. Maslow [6] claimed that of motivational significance are only the needs that are not satisfied and a human being wants to satisfy the higher level needs only after the lower level ones are reasonably fulfilled.

The cognitive concept focuses on the role of information as a motivation factor. Human behaviour is determined by the scope and structure of information a person possesses. A man as an active being does not only receive information but they also search for, select and process it.

In 1968 F. Herzberg developed a concept of work motivation factors the lack of which causes dissatisfaction and vice versa. According to his theory, we can distinguish:

- a) hygiene factors (physical workplace, salary, relations with the boss and co-workers),
- b) motivators (interesting tasks, recognition for one's achievement, sense of authorship with respect to performed work, sense of responsibility).

Trying to combine A. Maslow's theory [5] with that developed by F. Herzberg [6], we may come up with a thesis that the hygiene factors satisfy physiological, safety, social and recognition needs. While fulfilled self-actualization needs act as motivators. Hygiene factors do not give work satisfaction. These are motivators that satisfy employees. However, motivating people is easier when hygiene factors are in place at work [7].

In practice a special attention is paid to motivating with the use of material means, while they are not the only one and always effective way of motivating. In a number of empirical experiments it has been found that one of the stimuli with a positive effect is providing employees with opportunities of promotion.

### **3. THE ESSENCE OF PROMOTION AS A MOTIVATIONAL TOOL**

A promotion, understood as an advancement of employee's position within an organization, evaluated positively by the promoted, constitutes an important motivation factor. It satisfies the need of recognition and increases employee's self-assessment. If correct, a promotion has a beneficial effect on the employee's behaviour and their environment. It increases their eagerness and willingness to act, gives them an opportunity to perform a better and better-paid work, encourages them to improving their competences. While an unjust promotion weakens relations in an employee group and leads to frustration and desire to change the workplace, especially among those employees who feel that they were the ones who should have been promoted. If a promotion is to play a motivational role in an enterprise, it is necessary to carry out an authentic promotion policy, based on reasonable, proven principles that open promotion opportunities, primarily for employees who are creative, gifted and achieving outstanding results in their work [11-15].

The principles may be defined as follows:

- a) strict criteria of promoting to particular positions should be established,
- b) the criteria should be set forth in employee regulations and communicated to all staff members,
- c) they should be applied consistently and in an open manner,
- d) the use of those criteria should be subject to social control,
- e) the criteria should be stable in long periods, a new management of the organization should not change them.

Using those principles requires an appropriate selection of personnel and relatively regular evaluation of all employees. An organization may and should conduct systematic employee evaluations. The need of evaluation is a natural human need and satisfying it has a motivating value. An evaluation given to an employee constitutes a direct stimulus for them to act. When using descriptions of skills and attitudes which form a given competency, it is possible and even desirable to prepare an interview questionnaire which can be used to

measure competencies [8]. A correctly specified scope of competences should be a basis for effective promotion of relevant people in an organization. Only such a procedure seems to be just and evaluated appropriately by human resources in an enterprise. In order for a promotion of a given person to be considered just, a multisource competence assessment can be used. It consists in collecting information about an employee from the people who currently work with them. If the assessed person evaluates themselves using specially prepared scales and next the person is assessed with the use of the same scales by other people, a 360-degree assessment method is applied. This is an employee competence assessment method which involves the participation of superiors, subordinates, co-workers and customers. It should be emphasized that depending on the type of a promotion (to what position the employee is shifted) various variants of that method may be used, i.e. a 180-degree, 270-degree or 540-degree method. Application of the 360 degree method has an array of benefits that may contribute to more effective engagement of the person after promotion, as it:

- a) facilitates improvement of communication within the enterprise and increased possibilities of engagement of not only the person promoted,
- b) improves motivation of employees through the conviction that their opinions matter,
- c) enables obtaining accurate information about the level of employee competences through diagnosing gaps in the shortage or excess of competences.

An assessment based on the 360-degree method brings about benefits not only to the promoted person but also the team with which the person cooperates. However, it should be pointed out that this method, like other competence assessment methods, may be related to limitations arising from, *inter alia*:

- a) a sense of threat in people who are doing the assessment and in the future are to be subordinates of the assessed,
- b) subjective selection of the people doing the assessment (a situation when a person wants to get a promotion very much and is afraid that he/she may fail),
- c) an incorrectly constructed assessment questionnaire,
- d) a difficulty in assessing some of the components of competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes [9]).

When analysing the promotion as a motivational tool it should be underlined that it is most often understood as a shift to a higher position within the organization's hierarchy. However, we should not forget that in the present tendency towards flattening organizational structures, it is not the only and not always practised solution. In modern organizations we have to do more and more often with a horizontal promotion which is movement of a given employee not upwards but along the horizontal level of the organization's structure. Such a promotion is also a motivational tool, although it is still little appreciated in a number of hierarchic organizational cultures. An example of such organization is the *State Forests National Forest Holding* (the State Forests). According to the Act on Forests of 28 September 1991 the State Forests is an organizational unit having no legal personality, representing the State Treasury with respect to the managed property, supervised by the minister competent for the environmental matters. Chapter 6 of the said Act states that the State Forests consist of the following organizational units:

- a) the Directorate-General of the State Forests (DG),
- b) Regional Directorates of the State Forests (RD),

- c) forest inspectorates,
- d) other organizational units having no legal personality, established for the performance of management tasks of the State Forests.

The head of the General-Directorate is the Director-General who is appointed and dismissed by the minister competent for the environmental matters. The Director-General manages the State Forests and performs his/her tasks with the assistance of deputies. The Regional Directorates are managed by the Regional Director who is appointed by the Director-General. The Regional Director performs his/her duties with the assistance of deputies, for whom he/she specifies their rights and obligations, as well as issues decisions and regulations binding within the area of the Regional Directorate. A forest inspectorate is the basic, independent organizational unit of the State Forests. It is managed by the Forest Manager appointed by the Regional Director. Forest Managers report to the Regional Director for their scope of responsibilities and perform their duties with the assistance of their deputies. The Forest Manager issues regulations and decisions that are applicable to the area of the whole forest inspectorate.

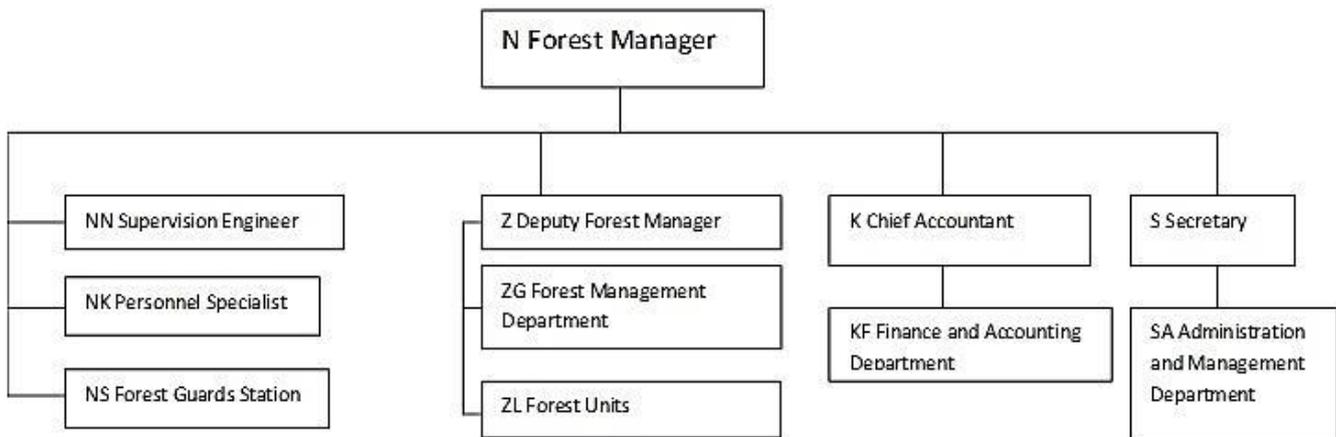
#### **4. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESEARCH PROCEDURE**

Surveys with respect to the basic eight motivation factors have been conducted among all employees of Antonin Forest Inspectorate.

Antonin Forest Inspectorate is located in the south of the Wielkopolska Province/Greater Poland within the area of the Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Poznań. It covers the area of the districts of Ostrów Wielkopolski and Ostrzeszów, and five communes (Mikstat, Odolanów, Ostrzeszów, Przygodzice and Sośnie). The forests of Antonin Forest Inspectorate are located mostly in the picturesque valley of the River Barycz, in the area of Kotlina Odolanowska/Odolanów Basin, and only a small area of the forests spreads along the eastern belt of Wał Trzebnicki /Trzebnica Bank (in the region of Wzgórza Ostrzeszowskie and Wzgórza Twardogórskie /Ostrzeszów and Twardogóra Hills). In accordance with the natural forest regionalization, the majority of the described area is located in the district of Kotlina Żmigrodzko-Grabowska/Żmigród and Grabów Basin (the Greater Poland and Pomerania Land), and only small parts lie in the mesoregion of Wzgórza Trzebnicko-Ostrzeszowskie/Trzebnica and Ostrzeszów Hills (the Silesia Land). The forest inspectorate covers the area of 19832.92 hectares, out of which 18208.72 hectares is a forest land. The latter constitutes a dense unit grouped in three large complexes with the forestation rate of over 50% of the area covered. At present, Antonin Forest Inspectorate includes three forest circles: Antonin (till 1939 the main complex of the circle was owned by prince Michał Radziwiłł; the remaining forests belonged to Wanda Forest Inspectorate in the interwar period – uroczysko Komorów/Komorów Wilderness, to the Helenów estate and to small land owners), Moja Wola (established from the Możdżanów, Konradów and Moja Wola estates as well as peasants' forests. The Możdżanów estate was owned by the Lipski family of Górzno. Kapituła Wrocławska/the Wrocław Chapter governed Konradów, while Moja Wola was under the ruling of baroness Agnes Diergardt) and Świeca (Świeca Forest Inspectorate was established in 1927 from the forests that originally had been a part of 'Dobra Krotoszyńskie'/the Krotoszyn Property owned at the beginning by Marcin Wierzbęta-Krotowski, the owner of the city of Krotoszyn) as well as thirteen forest sub-inspectorates:

Czarnylas, Klady, Komorów, Strugi, Wysoki Grond, Cieszyn, Kałkowskie, Krupa, Mariak, Możdżanów, Huta, Jerzówka and Karłowice. The inspectorate employs fifty people.

The organizational structure is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Organizational structure of Antonin Forest Inspectorate

Source: Organization of Antonin Forest Inspectorate.

The majority of the staff working for Antonin Forest Inspectorate have university education and are mostly 30- to 45-year-olds (10% of the employed are at the pre-retirement age – to retire in the nearest 5 years). The human resources are divided into administration staff (10 people) consisting of an administration and management department, a finance and accounting department, an individual position of a personnel specialist, and forest service staff (40 people). The latter includes: a forest manager, a deputy forest manager, a chief accountant, a supervision engineer, a secretary, forest guards, sub-inspectorate staff (14 foresters and 13 deputy foresters) as well as a forest management department. The head of the inspectorate is the Forest Manager who is the superior of all employees. The Forest Manager is in charge of the entire activity of the inspectorate as the one-man management and bears responsibility for the inspectorate. He/she represents the inspectorate externally, is a representative of the State Treasury in civil law relations within the area of his/her activities, and directly manages the forests, land and other real estate under the management of the State Forests. The Forest Manager performs his/her duties with the assistance of the deputy forest manager and the chief accountant – they act within the scope of their rights, proxies, job specifications and provisions specified in the regulations. The Forest Manager directly supervises:

- a) the management positions for particular departments (a deputy forest manager, a chief accountant, a secretary, the chief officer of the Forest Guards station),
- b) independent positions (a supervision engineer, a specialist for personnel and social affairs, a specialist for non-state forests, a specialist for Occupational Health and Safety).

Other staff members employed at particular departments of the inspectorate report directly to the managers of those departments. Foresters report directly to the deputy forest

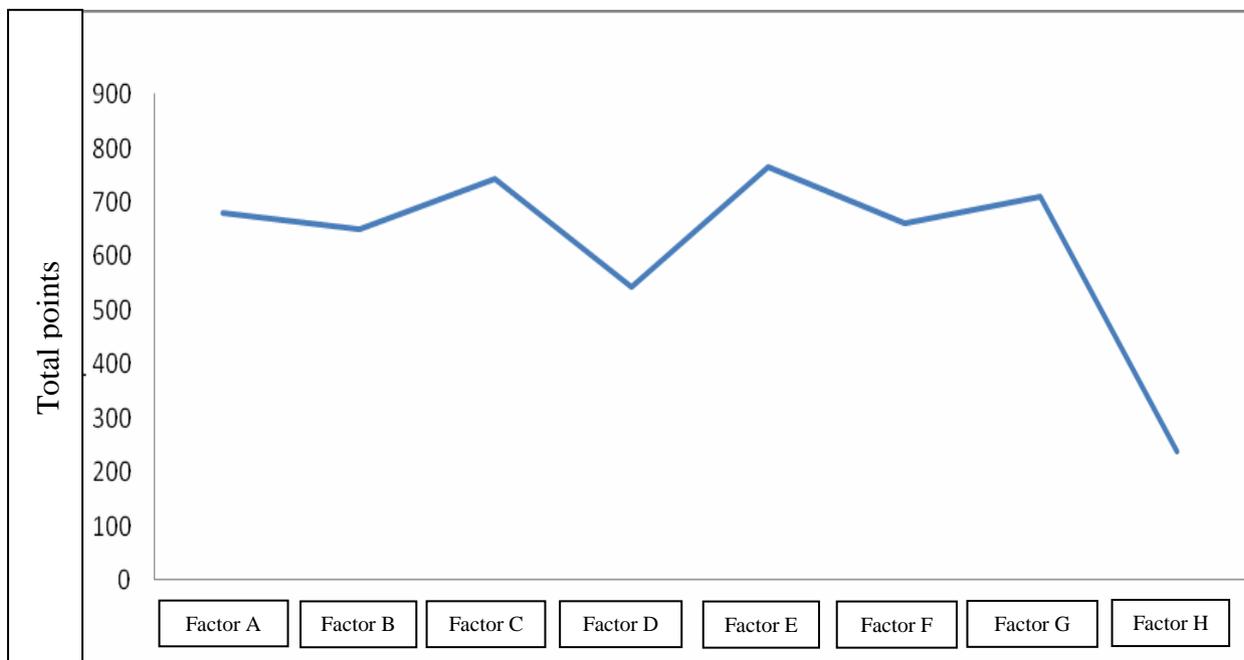
manager; while a deputy forester – to the forester in a given forest unit. Each employee reports to only one superior from which he/she receives job orders and to whom he/she reports their appropriate completion.

All employees of the inspectorate have participated in the survey in which they answered forty questions, solving a test referring to eight basic motivation factors [10]:

- a) good relations with the superior (A),
- b) recognition (B),
- c) pay rise (C),
- d) good cooperation with other employees (D),
- e) promotion (E),
- f) better achievements at work (F),
- g) dealing with tasks that require more responsibility (G),
- h) broader scopes of job responsibilities (H).

The purpose of the questionnaires was to specify how particular motivation factors influence employees. The surveys were completely anonymous, and their results have been used to show a certain tendency within the non-financial area of motivation factors. After receiving completed questionnaires from the respondents, the numbers assigned to the particular questions by the surveyed employees were totalled up (each question referred to one of the eight factors), which is shown in Table 1 below.

The total score for each factor has become the basis for developing a profile of factors that motivate the employees of Antonin Forest Inspectorate to work (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Layout of motivation factors for employees of Antonin Forest Inspectorate

Source: Own work

**Table 1.** Points assigned to particular motivation factors

Motivation factor	Points assigned by respondents					Total
	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	5 points	
	Total assigned points					
A	98	202	143	77	252	682
B	87	123	248	102	90	650
C	157	126	149	169	142	743
D	98	92	123	101	131	545
E	153	131	139	189	154	766
F	157	113	70	132	190	662
G	160	110	85	107	250	712
H	44	56	48	47	45	240
Total						5000

Source: Own work

## 5. CONCUSLIONS

Based on the profile of the obtained results it may be concluded that the promotion is the most motivating factor for the employees of Antonin Forest Inspectorate. 15.32% of the surveyed stated so, giving that answer the total of 766 points. The prospect of a professional promotion conduces to improvement in effectiveness and quality of performed tasks. It is the most important and the most efficient way of motivating employees. A promotion may satisfy the need of recognition, strengthens employee self-assessment when it goes along with the consent to change the position. If a promotion of an employee is evaluated well by other staff members, then it may have a motivating impact on the whole crew, as it shows that in a given unit a shift in the position is a reward for high performance and engagement. In order for a promotion to play a motivating role in a given organization, it is important to carry out an authentic and fair promotion policy. According to M. Kabaj the principles of such promotion should be clearly stated in employee regulations, they should include strictly defined criteria of promotion to specified positions; they should be consistent and clear for everybody. The next elements that contribute to better work are pay rises and taking on more responsibility at one's tasks. Those two factors received 14.86% and 14.24% of answers respectively, which accounts for 743 and 712 points.

Good pay, relevant to the performed tasks, and dealing with tasks that require more responsibility increase the employee social status. Motivation through remuneration should be of positive nature – the employer rewards for effects and not punishes for a lack of them. Another answer that was very popular among the employees of the inspectorate was the one indicating the importance of good relations with the superior – it is declared by 13.64% (682 points) of the surveyed. A lack of conflict with the superior undoubtedly contributes to better results of work. Working under a good superior, employees identify with the organization, want the best for it and act to its benefit. 13.24% (662 points) of the people employed at the inspectorate consider better work achievements and gaining recognition from both the superiors and other employees as motivating elements that improve the quality of their work (13.00% of the surveyed, 650 points). Higher achievements and recognition enhance the employee's status against the whole unit. The chart showing the impact of motivation factors on the staff of Antonin Forest Inspectorate (Figure 2) demonstrates that a significant factor for all the staff members is good cooperation with other employees, both at higher, lower as well as at parallel positions, and irrespective of which department they are in (10.90%, 545 points). The factor having the least motivating influence on the employees of Antonin Forest Inspectorate is increasing the scope of one's duties. A wider job specification has a motivating effect only for 4.80% of the staff (240 points). Extending the scope of responsibilities without a simultaneous change in pay has an even demotivating impact on the crew. In such a situation most employees feel underrated and used at work, which results in worsened motivation and a fall in satisfaction from work.

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