

Motivating and engaging Sales Force: A systems Perspective

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Introduction

Managing a motivated sales force is the most important task for any B2B and B2C company. Leaders like Fred Hassan, (CEO of Schering Plough) and Jack Welch (CEO General Electric) have suggested that Sales is the basic humbug for any organisation. Sales force compensation is one of the largest investments for many companies. Such companies budget higher for sales force incentive as compared to their advertising budget.

Last decade has witnessed either a declining, or stagnant or marginally improving sales. Thus a major motivator which is in terms of sales incentive has no longer remained a motivator. Companies and HR professionals thus, have been trying to create innovative and creative ways to manage the motivational portfolio which has several components and is fool proof.

No surprise therefore, that several perspectives, from individual focussed approaches to organisational context to motivation have been debated by academicians and practitioners.

Selling in present times has become more intuitive, complex and creative than it previously was. Therefore, A more well- rounded theory of

motivation is needed to understand and work with this unique work arrangement. The systems theory shares this standpoint. By integrating components at individual differences, Leaders input and organisation's environment, it suggests a new angle to how to motivate sales force.

The Systems Theory

The systems theory of management is well-accepted management thought. This theory points out that all the elements of the system need to be aligned so as to have a system that functions productively. Going through all the perspectives on motivation that has been discussed to date, one issue that has remained side-lined, is the consideration of "other elements in the environment" and their ability to contribute in motivating employees. Each theory of motivation has potent components- and when these components are put together systematically, the results could be multiplicative and not additive.

A similar thought has been voiced by JJ Haefner in his recent article. He has talked about the motivational theory in the context of manufacturing sector. Our idea is to extend this idea for motivating the sales force of companies,