

Following the theory and research work I did I investigated motivational theories in a practical environment by studying a large business in New Zealand. The business I chose to study was Barfoot and Thompson xxxx branch. B&T is New Zealand's largest privately owned real estate company and has been in business for 90 years. B&T xxxx is one of the company's leading branches with over 25 staff members.

I interviewed staff members from the branch and asked questions about how they are motivated and their views on how the business supports their staff. I also interviewed the manager and conducted further research on the business (for example, I looked on their website and at an internal newsletter I was given.) From the information I gathered I was able to see the relationship between the motivation practice and motivation theory in a business context.

1

In order for B&T xxxx to be successful they must have motivated staff to ensure that they are working to their highest potential in order to bring more profit into the business. The company uses aspects of different motivational theories to motivate their staff.

B&T xxxx has applied aspects and ideas of Elton Mayo's Hawthorne effect as a motivational strategy. One of Mayo's conclusions was that working in teams and developing a team spirit can improve productivity. When I interviewed the staff members they stated they have many opportunities to socialise with their co-workers. Mr E, the accounts manager stated, "We have organised work functions such as team drinks and nibbles approximately three times a year, and team-building activities such as bowls. We also have a major Christmas end-of-year function for our branch which our partners are also invited to. All of these activities allow us to interact on a social level not just a work level, making us stronger as a team". This would suggest that the staff would work more efficiently as they are more aware of their co-workers. The manager, Ms V, says that she has seen this theory having a direct positive impact upon her staff members as she believes they feel more comfortable and happy about coming to work every day. As they have a good attitude when they arrive in the morning they are more productive and enthusiastic to do their best work and take pride in representing the company.

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B&T xxxx use extrinsic factors of motivation by having a ranking system within the business. The top sellers are recognised in the business which is mainly extrinsic in nature but does have intrinsic repercussions. Ms V states that the staff members receive a sense of accomplishment from improving their previous position/ranking which encourages them to continue working at a higher level, enabling the business to be more successful. This works well in B&T xxxx because the staff members mostly work individually and the success of the business relies heavily on the performance of individual staff members. Because they are not theoretically working as a team this strategy works as it allows them to gauge how well they are doing and gives each member of staff a goal they can work toward.

3

Another way in which the manager at B&T xxxx motivates her staff is through giving rewards for good performance. For example, this month the person who was the top seller in the branch will receive an iPad mini, and the top seller in the entire company receives a gift from head office. There are also other rewards given out such as free Property Press ads valued at \$500 each. This form of motivation is extrinsic and collective. This practice has traits that can be linked to F.W. Taylor's concept that stated workers are *mainly* motivated by monetary factors but rewards do not have to be solely financial. Rewards need to provide staff with a greater incentive to succeed and need to be suited to staff who are may not be motivated by intrinsic means. Ms V says that rewards allow staff

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members to feel valued and they show that 'with success comes rewards'. An advantage of this extrinsic reward system is the flow-on effects to other staff members who might be motivated to improve their sales to be in line for the rewards.

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Giving rewards also has direct correlations to Victor Vroom's expectancy theory which shows that staff members are motivated by rewards which they value. Ms V's experience of motivation within her team shows there is validity in the theories of both Taylor and Vroom, and they have parallel ideas.

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The final main motivational technique which B&T xxx uses is the creation of a comfortable work environment. The employees I interviewed rated their work conditions on a 1-5 continuum (with 1 being the best and 5 the worst) as 1. They mentioned aspects such as the fruit bowl, the open door policy and each staff member having their own work space and being provided with all the resources necessary to do their jobs. They felt their desires are being respected, they are being treated well and their basic needs are being met. This links in well with Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory where if staff are assisted to achieve their personal needs they feel more motivated and get closer to reaching self-actualisation. The open door policy allows the staff to feel comfortable to talk about any concerns they have or to ask for help. This helps the work environment stay positive and allows the employees to stay focused on their work and be productive. As well as being connected to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, these practices can be linked to Frederic Herzberg's two factor theory and Vroom's expectancy theory. Good work conditions are one of the hygiene factors in Herzberg's theory. The workers I interviewed confirmed that they feel more motivated by being provided with good working conditions.

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The Maori concept of kaitiakitanga is demonstrated in the business. B&T xxx uses large amounts of paper so to help reduce their impact on the environment they have recycling systems in place such as specific bins for paper that can be recycled. Another example is the use of energy-saving lights. Signs request that staff respect their working space and the environment. Two of the people I interviewed said that they appreciate the efforts the team make to reduce wastage; one person said that this added to their motivation.

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EVALUATION

When I began this investigation I set out to discover whether or not there was a link between motivation theories and motivational practices in a functioning business. Overall from my research I can conclude that aspects of the five main theories can be applied in a practical context. From the research into Barfoot and Thompson xxx branch I was able to observe aspects of the work published by the five theorists we have studied – Maslow, Taylor, Mayo, Herzberg and Vroom.

From my investigation I believe that to achieve a higher level of motivation aspects of *multiple* theories need to be implemented as this has a stronger impact. We could see this in B&T xxx where they use elements of from each of the theorists' work and have seen positive results, such as being ranked as being in the Top 5 branches within the whole company. I believe that strictly following only one theory will not have a positive effect on the company and could even have a negative effect as some staff members may be demotivated.