
Sony: Background, History And Analysis

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Background And History

Sony is a Japanese multinational company that came into existence since 7 May 1946 co-founded by Masaru Ibuka and Akio Morita. Its vast and diverse business components include the electronics, music, entertainment and financial services industry out of which Sony corporation (electronics unit) is the parent company of the Sony group. The head office of the Sony group is in Minato, Tokyo, Japan and it all began with the capital of just 190000 yen approximately 20 workers (SONY, n.d).

According to Sony the motto of their company is “do what has never been done before” and to achieve that level of innovation the organisation has come up with very effective motivation and learning strategies for its employees.

Sony is currently leaded by Kenichiro Yoshida who is president and the CEO of the company whereas Hiroki Totoki is the CFO of the organisation (SONY, n.d). The net revenue earned by Sony in year ending 31 March 2019 was whooping 8,665,687 million yen and number of shareholders of the company as of 31 March 2019 is 477624 (SONY, n.d). According to the Forbes data (2019), Sony is ranked #60 for the World's Most Valuable brand 2019 and rank #440 for World's Best Employers Diversity 2019.

According to Sony its main objective is “Fill the world with emotion through the power of creativity and technology.” Sony gives a lot of emphasis on social values and integrity as it wants to earn the trust of its customer, employees, and other stakeholders through ethical and responsible conduct and regulated business operations. Because of its innovation, product diversification, quality and reliability Sony has earned firm recognition throughout the world (Anonymous. Dealerscope; Philadelphia Vol. 47, Iss. 13, (Dec 2005)

In this case study we will shed light on the motivation theories and strategies used by the Sony group to boost its employees in achieving the targets and objectives of the company. We will even study the diverse background of the employees and how this has helped in company's growth. The case study even includes relevant analysis and recommendations wherever necessary.

Sony uses variety of plans and strategies for the successful innovation and motivation of its employees. It gives lot of emphasis to not only personal success but also team success and reward its employees with variety of formal and informal reward schemes and recognitions for achieving desired targets.

Sony has even introduced online Human Resource data for all its employees in US with which entire human resource benefits, schemes and data has become easily accessible to its employees (Khirallah,2000). This has helped in eliminating “answer shopping” which means unnecessary calls by the employees to the HR team and above that even employees feel

motivated with that level of clarity and self-efficiency (Khirallah,2000).

Sony offers various motivation schemes like introducing Technology Exchange fairs (1973), extending parenting leaves (1990), Flexible working provisions- Telework policy (2008), establishing of Diverse Committee (2011) and flexible career leave (2018), etc (SONY, n.d). Sony strives to offer working atmosphere that contributes utmost health, safety, freedom and security of its employees.

One major strategy adopted by Sony to motivate its employees is Seniority System Weakening which means the pays, promotions and ranks will now be given according to the ability of the employee and not with the age and experience of the employee (Das, 2013). This has led to employees being more participative, efficient and enthusiastic.

Sony makes every attempt to enhance the personal growth, motivation and learning of employees via various on the job trainings and techniques modified according to the needs of its employees including skills and ability enhancement training at individual and group level. Sony adapts the policy where both organisation and employees are accountable and responsible to each other and collectively work towards fulfilling the needs of the company and its employees.

Analysis

To decide why Sony's motivation techniques and strategies are successful, they must be analysed and compared with the most renowned theories of all time- Maslow's Hierarchy order of Needs, Herzberg's Two-factor Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory.

Maslow proposed that motivation can be successfully achieved only if an employee fulfils its five basic needs- physiological, safety, belongingness and love, esteem and self-actualization needs starting from lower to higher level of hierarchy. He suggested that a person can only reach higher level wants only after satisfying the basic lower level wants. Sony absolutely satisfies the Maslow's Motivation theory as it gives just and fair remuneration to it employees and provides best health, safety and security fulfilling the lower needs of the hierarchy. Higher needs like love and belonging and esteem needs are also successfully implemented by Sony as the organisation and the employees have very cordial and interpersonal relationship with each other because of which they respectfully trust and understand the needs of one another. The employees at Sony are evaluated according to their performance and not their experience which is a major boost to their motivation. They feel sense of achievement, independence, power and reputation with implementation of such strategies.

The most superior need of self-actualization is achieved by Sony who offers customized job trainings, techniques and knowledge to enhance the personal growth and provide self-satisfaction to its employees.

Herzberg's two factor theory simply states that there are two factors- Satisfactory and Dissatisfactory which are completely independent of each other and must be dealt by the organization separately to achieve utmost motivation for its employees. Motivational factors are accomplishment, acknowledgment, rewards and prizes whereas dissatisfiers are basic pay, well-being and security benefits and so forth. The dissatisfiers do not provide motivational benefits to

the workers as satisfiers do. It just helps get rid of discontentment of the employees. Sony company gives attention to both the factors individually as it makes sure clean, safe and healthy working conditions for the employees and present them with rewards, certificate of achievement, status and dignity wherever necessary.

Vroom's Expectancy theory contradicts both the above theories as it put emphasis on an individual's personal needs and the level of effort they put to bring the desired outcomes. It is a very individualistic and singular approach to motivation and Sony gives its best to help employees achieve its goals and aspirations at a personal level through customized trainings and career growth opportunities.