

Either before or after you watch the rewrite movie, have a go at writing an introduction for the essay below. Use some/all of the following information and your own knowledge for the general sentences. Then read the body paragraphs on the next page for the thesis statement.

How can organisations motivate staff? Analyse various theories and refer to case studies.

- Possible information to use for general sentences

Historical background

In the 1920s, an American academic, Elton Mayo, researched the effects of the physical environment on the productivity of workers. The result, known as the Hawthorne Studies, named after the electric company where it took place, showed that workers could be motivated to work harder by making small changes to the workplace, such as altering the lighting or the layout of a room. This was the beginning of motivational theory in business.

Definition of 'motivation' from Macmillan Dictionary

- A feeling of enthusiasm or interest that makes you determined to do something
- A reason to do something

Quotation

"The story of the human race is the story of men and women selling themselves short."

(Abraham Maslow, often seen as father of motivational theory)

Statistic

78% of company directors feel motivation of staff is the key element in business success.

(Reid, 2011)

- Body paragraphs to use for thesis statement

Maslow can perhaps be called the founding father of motivational theory, and much work since has built on and developed from his ideas. His theory of a 'hierarchy of needs' suggests that humans have five different levels of needs starting with basic ones such as food and shelter, and ending with 'self actualisation' in which an individual has the need to realise their full potential. Herzberg's theory of 'maintenance-motivation' factors shared this idea of types of needs, lower and higher, and both men seem to have a common view of all individuals having this range, which an employer should meet in order to motivate.

McGregor on the other hand did not believe in a common set of motivational factors. Instead with his 'X' and 'Y' theory, he believed that motivation depended on the type of person involved, type X needing close supervision and control because of an innate dislike of work, and type Y needing responsibility and autonomy because of a view of work almost as a form of play.

All three share an assumption that the key factor in motivation is the individual, either in terms of his level of need, or his type of character. Ouichi departed from this assumption slightly with his theory 'Z' in which the group is the key factor. It is this that needs motivating more than the individual, and to do this, the company takes an almost parental role.

Finally, coming to contemporary ideas, a key one seems to be that of job or work design. In this, the nature of the job itself is the key motivational factor. By strategies such as 'job enlargement' and 'job enrichment', jobs can be expanded and enhanced to make them more interesting and fulfilling for the employee. This would seem to suggest that in many modern jobs, at least in the developed world, the lower needs of Maslow and Herzberg have been met, and that the organisation should address the higher needs of greater fulfillment in order to motivate staff.

Such then, are the theories. The question is, whether these ideas can be seen in practice. Looking at two case studies, in the first, a family owned printing company, Johnson and Son made a concerted effort to motivate its staff by involving them in social activities in particular, such as weekend picnics, and productivity rose by 6% (Jareau, 2011). This reflects both Maslow and Herzberg belief in a need to belong and perhaps Ouichi too, with his idea of group behaviour. Reflexite, a retail firm, took a different approach. In 2008, the employees bought the failing company themselves, and took full responsibility for its performance. The result was a loss of £1.2 million turned into a profit of £900 000 in 2010 (Garcia, 2011). This approach arguably illustrates the higher needs of Maslow and Herzberg, those of self-actualisation and autonomy, but also the lower need for security as well. Both examples demonstrate different aspects of ideas on motivation as discussed above, and suggest that there is indeed a relationship between theory and practice.

Models

- Possible general sentences

Version 1

Motivation is the reason why we do something, or at least why we do it well. In business, it is seen as key to productivity, with 78% of company directors believing it a major element in their company's success (Reid, 2011). Given this, it is not surprising that it is the subject of much study, starting with the famous Hawthorne Studies of the 1920s in the US, where it was found that altering the environment of a workplace made workers more motivated and hence productive. Since then, there have been numerous theories, which this essay will briefly examine. (98 words)

Version 2

"The story of the human race is the story of men and women selling themselves short." So wrote Abraham Maslow, seen by many as the father of motivational theory, and he obviously thought humans could achieve a great deal more, if only they had the determination and enthusiasm to do so. Most businesses recognise this, and believe motivation of staff is the key to success. Hence a great deal of time and money is spent on studying the subject, and it is an issue that this essay will look at. (90 words)

Version 3

In America in the 1920s, an American academic, Elton Mayo, conducted what came to be known as the Hawthorne Studies in an electrics factory, and found that by modifying the physical environment of the workplace, for example changing the lighting, workers became more productive. Motivational theory, meaning how organisations motivate staff, was born, and will be the subject of this essay. (61 words)

- Possible thesis statements

Version 1

I will look at a range of theories, from Maslow's original theory of need, through to modern ideas on work design, and finish with two case studies to see if such theories are actually put into practice in business. (39 words)

Version 2

First I will detail the ideas of the major theorists in this field, namely Maslow, Herzberg, McGregor and Ouichi, then look at more contemporary ideas on work design. I will finish by analysing two industry case studies, those of Johnson and Son then Reflexite, to see if any theories are reflected in practice. (53 words)

Version 3

After analysing the main theories on motivation from the past through to the present day, two case studies will be examined to see if there is any link between theory and practice. (32 words)