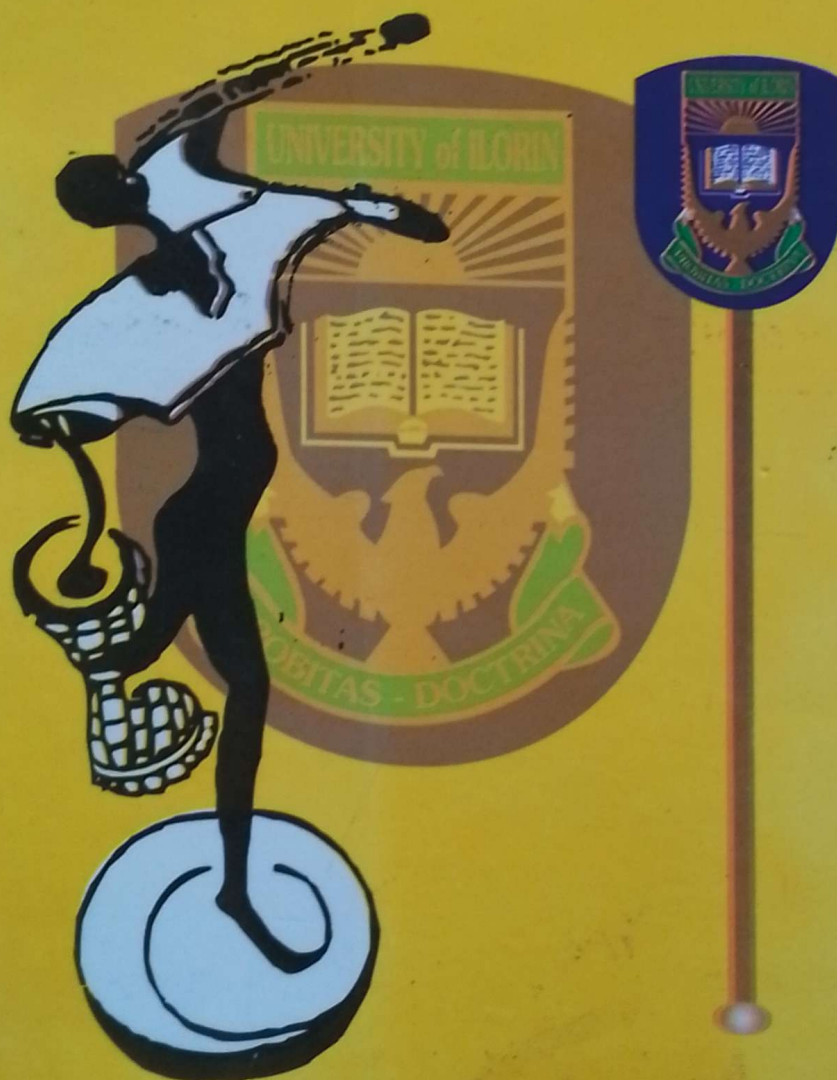


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Staff Motivation Strategies in the Management of Nigerian Film Production Company

By

Kazeem Rufai-Ahmad*

Abstract

Motivation is an essential element for the attainment of goal setting of an organisation. It is a crucial area of management which cannot be underrated and its essence in the management of human capital and organisational efficiency cannot be quantified. This is because employees of an organisation are valuable assets which can make or mar the organisation. In view of the importance attached to motivation as a management strategy, this paper examines staff motivation strategies in the management of Rasol Entertainments, a film production outfit in Ibadan, Oyo State. In this paper, we employ the interview and deductive methods of research to examine motivational strategies in the management of Rasol Entertainments. In addition, the study adopts Fredrick Herzberg's Two Factor Theory to identify factors that serve as satisfiers and dissatisfiers in the management of Rasol Entertainments. This paper, thus, observes among other things that Rasol Entertainments motivates workers through participation in decision making, role switching, financial support, trainee and industrial attachment programme, rewards, compensation and remuneration. However, it was discovered that Rasol Entertainment's pay is not tied to educational qualification of workers/artists but the popularity they have obtained in the film industry. It was also discovered that the company has no retirement, insurance and staff promotion plans. Consequently, this paper concludes that for any home video production company operating within the Nigerian home video industry to survive and withstand the challenges posed by the current economic recession, the in-house staff and artists must be well motivated to develop skills and interest to move the company forward.

Keywords: Staff Motivation, Theatre Management, Entertainment, Film Production, Rasol Entertainments.

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Introduction

Motivation as a management strategy serves as a force to energise, direct and sustain employee's interest in a given task. It is an important tool for managing human resources in an organisation. It is an area of management which cannot be underrated if the organisation wishes to establish a peaceful co-existence and forge ahead in this highly competitive economy. The need to sustain motivation in an organisation is crucial because "every employee is a valuable asset, not merely an expense item" (Kretnier, 2005, p. 239). Therefore, for a company to achieve its set goals and objectives, it is imperative to motivate its staff so as to continue giving their best expected performance result.

Bateman and Snell (1999, p.440) also affirm that company must motivate people to join the organisation, remain in the organisation, come to work regularly. Of course, they also want people to perform- that is, once employees are at work, they should work hard to achieve high output (productivity) and high quality. Finally, managers want employees to exhibit good citizenship.

From Bateman and Snell's point of view, it is imperative that organisation managers create a work environment which attract employee's interest and facilitate good performance. In view of the importance of motivation to the overall success of organisation, this paper examines staff motivation strategies in the management of the Nigerian home video companies using Rasol Entertainments as a paradigm.

Overview of Theories of Management and Motivation

The manner in which organisation managers, executives and management theorists think concerning how companies should be managed is currently undergoing changes. This is because contemporary management practice and techniques have gone beyond employing only a management principle which was rooted in the early scientific management of Fredrick Taylor. Segal (2005, p. 3) notes that "historically, management was rooted in the scientific management account of Fredrick Taylor. Today, there is increasing dissatisfaction with this approach". The dissatisfaction which occurred along the line brought about changes and modifications in the contemporary management theories. This made Welch in Segal (2005, p. 19) to argue that "we have to undo a 100-year old concept (of scientific management) and convince managers that their role is not to control people and stay 'on top' of things, but rather to guide, energize, and excite". Managers in organisations cannot undo the application of scientific management in their management practice. This is because scientific management of Fredrick Taylor is till applicable in some organisations to date.

Scientific management has "promoted not only systematic time-and-motion study, production control method and incentive pay, but a wider philosophy and methodology of work organisation" (Warner, 1998, p.658). Taylor's perception of management is the transformation from the old rule-of-thumb to scientific management. Thus, his theory is based on four major principles of management. These principles, according to Olum (2004, p.13) involve:

the need to develop a science of work to replace old rule-of-thumb methods: pay and other rewards linked to achievement of optimum goals- measures of work performance and output; failure to achieve these would in contrast result in loss of earnings. Second, workers to be scientifically selected and developed: training each to be first class at some specific task. Three, the science of work to be brought together with scientifically selected and trained people to achieve the best results. Finally, work and responsibility to be divided equally between workers and management cooperating together in close interdependence.

Taylor's Scientific Management theory was a success, according to Olum because his management approach emphasised training of workers to first class level, breaking down of works into smaller units and applying scientific method to quality control. However, Taylor's Scientific Management approach had some shortcomings such as the relegation and dehumanisation of workers. Also, the theory did not allow for workers' discretion in their jobs. This made Segal (2005, p. 44) to further affirm that "science in management has always been based on a separation between the manager and the managed- the worker. The manager was seen as the thinker and the worker as the doer". The subordinate does not have to think about the work assigned to him. The manager does all the thinking. The consequence of this approach is that it deprives the subordinate the opportunity of injecting creativity into his work and at the same time prohibits self-reflection which can bring about new innovation that may promote the worker's job.

Abraham Maslow's management approach differs from Fredrick Taylor's Scientific Management. His approach is based on human motivation 'in an organisation. This, he called Hierarchy of Needs. Abraham Maslow believes that people's stay in an organisation is solely to achieve and satisfy five major needs: Physiological needs, Safety needs, Social/ Love needs, self-esteem needs and Self actualisation/ fulfilment needs. His argument is that an average worker seeks higher needs after certain physiological needs such as hunger, sex and shelter have been satisfied. The worker then moves on by seeking more convenience in his

place of work through safety, social interaction, confidence and respect among peers and the organisation and lifetime achievement from his contributions to the organisation.

Campbell (1998, pp. 430-431) comments that:

Maslow's first crucial insight was that because physiological needs dominated when they were unsatisfied it did not mean that they continued to dominate once they had been satisfied. On the contrary, once satisfied a need continues to exist only potentially, with the emphasis moving ahead to higher need. This led to a shift in the focus of motivation theory, from deprivation to gratification.

There is a belief that Maslow hierarchy of needs cannot be generalised and thus does not apply to everybody in an organisation. This may be as a result of the fact that individual has different wants or needs at a particular point in time.

Witzel (1998, p.162) acknowledges that "on managers, therefore, fall the tasks of harnessing labour and resources to create production and of developing markets into which these products can be sold". Within the organisation, therefore, the manager has certain responsibilities in addition to the task expected of him as a manager. These responsibilities, according to Witzel, are: to achieve economic performance, to make work productive so that performance can be attained easily, and to manage social impacts of the organisation on its immediate environment.

Clayton Alderfer's ERG Theory of Motivation is another important motivation theory which has been a topic of discourse in management circle. ERG theory of motivation postulates that different needs can operate at a time unlike Maslow's claim that different needs are applicable at different time in worker's life. On ERG Theory, Bateman and Snell (1999, p.448) submit that:

ERG Theory postulates three sets of needs: existence, relatedness and growth. Existence needs are all materials and physiological desires. Relatedness needs involve relationships with other people and are satisfied through the process of mutually sharing thoughts and feelings. Growth needs motivate people to be productively or creatively change themselves or their environment.

Clayton Alderfer's ERG Theory is a reaction to Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. This is because existence need, relatedness need and growth need are similar to physiological and safety need, social and esteem needs and self- actualisation needs respectively.

Equity Theory of Motivation which was made known through the work of Stacy Adam emphasises the application of social comparison to

motivation management. According to Gibson et al (2006, p.152), Equity Theory is based "on the assumption that individuals, who work in exchange for rewards from the organisation, are motivated by a desire to be equally treated at work". It is a theory which calls for fairness, equal treatment and justice between the organisation and the workers.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts the theoretical postulation of Fredrick Herzberg's Two Factor Theory of motivation which was propounded in 1959. This theory is anchored on Herzberg's assertion that there are two important factors which motivate or cause dissatisfaction for workers. These factors determine the level of motivation of workers in an organisation. The first factor is termed satisfaction or actualisation factor while the second is hygiene or atmosphere factor. Herzberg contends that workers should be able to achieve a considerable level of growth through their work. He emphasises that actualisation factors are forms of gratification or compensation achieved through work. These factors include; achievement, recognition for achievement, the work itself, responsibility, and possibility of development or growth. In addition, he stresses that there are also atmospheric factors which hinder proper application of motivation and these serve as dissatisfiers to workers such as: management policy in the company, supervision, remuneration, work conditions, relations between people, personal life, relationship with subordinates and peers, status and security.

Thus, within the context of these variables lies job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. This implies that workers can be satisfactorily motivated through actualisation factors and dissatisfied through hygiene factors. The implication of the Two Factor Theory of motivation postulated by Fredrick Herzberg is that what seems to be someone's satisfier may turn out to be another person's dissatisfier. This theory is, therefore, adopted to identify ways adopted by Rasol Entertainments to motivate its workers.

Motivation Strategies in the Nigerian Film Production Companies: The Example of Rasol Entertainments

Brief History of Rasol Entertainments

Rasol Entertainments is a major Nigerian home video productions company which was established in 1996. It was solely established by Rasdaq Olayiwola (a.k.a Ojopagogo) and run by him with the help of some of the in-house staff and cast and crew members selected for productions. Rasdaq Olayiwola's foray into the theatre world started with participation in stage productions until 1996 when he started his own home video production company. Rasol Entertainments has made remarkable contributions in terms of the number of films produced over the years.

Rasol Entertainments has produced notable films especially in Yoruba dialects. The genre of most of these films ranges from satire, comedy and films based on Yoruba history. Some of the films produced by Rasol Entertainments since the establishment of the company include; *Baba no go Die* (1996), *OdodoIgba* (1998), *Ejo Ori Apata* (2000), *Makanje* (2001), *Ayan Agalu* (2002), *Asiri Olongbo* (2003), *Ayepemeji* (2004), *Ishola Kuku* (2005), *Arakenge* (2005), *Ilu Awon Aje* (2006), *Idowu Ogbo* (2006), *Baba 70* (2007), *Ranti Ile* (2007), *Timobaje Olorun* (2007), *Saberedowo* (2008), *Tangiri* (2009), *Panbee* (2011), *Olojojo* (2014) and *Dodo* (2014) among others.

In addition, Ojopagogo has also directed over ten notable films which include; *Afasegbejo*, *Akanji Elegelsana*, *Ife kofaari*, *Owobaye je*, *Orofo*, *Iyawo Aremo*, *Okun Ife yi*, *Okuta Ela*, *Talolebi*, *Konge Ire*, *EjeKanna*, *Alaparutu*, *Ishola Ogo*. Ojopagogo has also produced sound track for films such as; *Olaniyonu*, *Ija Abiku*, *Anike Ogo*, *Ilekun Olorun*, *Dehinbo*, *Afonja*, *Bashorun Gaa*, etc. He featured in films like *Ayanmo* by late chief Hubert Ogunde, *Oju Oro* by elder Moses Omilana, *Edan* by Laja Ogunde, *Eruwura* by Prince Jide Kosoko, *Ori* by Muyiwa Ademola, *Kerengbe to fo* by Akin Olaiya, *Agba Meta* by Waheed Ijaduade, *Amope Olowosi bi* by Opeyemi Fajemileyin, *Eto mi* by late Funmi Martins, *Aago Alaago* by Moji Olaiya, *Aso Funfun* by Ade Adele, *Asake Arogbondara* by Adebayo Salami, and so on.

Motivation Strategies in the Management of Rasol Entertainments

Rasol Entertainments adopted and developed various measures in motivating staff in its quest to achieve optimum performance and be among the leading producers of home video in Nigeria. Rasol Entertainments operated an open style of collective participation in decision making. The company allows individuals working within the company to infuse a sound idea which will lead to better performance. Rasol Olayiwola, the CEO of Rasol Entertainments notes in an interview on 7th July, 2015 that

I gave room for innovations and suggestions from my staff. This is because anybody who will work with me must be knowledgeable, smart and be committed. When we want to produce, we call everyone and they contribute. Because we believe that they will learn from us while we also learn from them.

From Olayiwola's view, it is evident that by allowing staff to partake in certain decision in Rasol Entertainments, they are empowered to assume greater control in the company. This, invariably, leads to their willingness at all times to bring more ideas which will promote high productivity within the company.

Furthermore, it has also been identified with the quality of human capital initiatives through motivation of human resources of its organisation by role switching technique of motivation. By role switching technique of motivation, it implies that the company allows for experimentation of skills in different areas of its operations. "Some applicants apply for an area where they have interest in which they may not be capable. So, we motivate them by assisting them to position where we think they fit in" (Olayiwola, interview, 2015). For instance, a technical assistant can switch to acting role during a production. Likewise, a secretary may be taken to a location to try out his/her talent either in make-up, costume or even acting. The company took time to observe a staff to discover his potential in order to set a challenging and realistic task for such staff to be motivated to contribute his quota towards developing the company.

Taking care of workers is a top most concern of companies and corporations in 21st Century. It is believed in contemporary business world that an employee is a valuable and indispensable asset of an organisation. For this reason, Rasol Entertainments has continued in its tradition of ensuring that personal and family life of its staff are taken care of at least to a certain degree. This made the company to attend to staff needs especially if such needs have impact in the discharge of duties and responsibilities of staff. Therefore, Rasol Entertainments shows kindness towards its staff particularly when they have personal financial problem.

Furthermore, the company organises and accepts would-be artists to undergo training with the company. They become trainee of the company after an agreement has been made to undergo training for certain period of time thereby the company incorporates them into film production as artists. Rasol Entertainments does this to motivate people to develop interest in film/ theatre profession. This act, at the same time, gives the company the opportunity to recruit cast and crew for a production at lower cost. Similar to this development is the acceptance of IT students from higher institutions especially theatre students to undergo industrial attachment programme in the company. More so, there is an opportunity for non-theatre or performing artists to pass through apprenticeship before becoming a full fledged theatre professionals.

For every staff of a particular company to contribute efforts towards a production of goods or services, there is an expectation of a certain form of reward or compensation at the end of a given task. Rasol Entertainments, thus, makes sure that an arrangement is made between the company and the signed artists and crew as regards to what they will take as remuneration for the job at hand. The salaries of the in-house staff- admin secretary, account manager and production manager, are promptly paid to commit them wholeheartedly to their work. Sometimes, staff are paid extra amount of

money as compensation for overtime especially when productions extend beyond scheduled. Film production is a collaborative art. Time and technicalities are involved which may cause working beyond schedule.

Reflections on Rasol Entertainment's Motivation Strategies

Rasol Entertainments staff motivation strategies took a share of existing theory. It can be said that the company worked out its motivation strategy and management styles from the Fredrick Herzberg's Two Factor Theory to achieve collective participation and team building. Raising the morale of the team helps in building quality, best practices and continuous improvement especially from the workers. The style of motivation practised by Rasol Entertainments to some extent falls within this theory. This may be due to the fact that film making and production is a collaborative arts and it involves collective efforts of people to bring it into reality.

Furthermore, Rasol Entertainment's motivation and management styles fall within certain factors enumerated by Herzberg. For instance, the quest for motivation by Rasol Entertainment led to the introduction of role switching technique, trainee and industrial attachment programme. These are to enhance personal growth and development in the area of assigned responsibility. Recognition for achievement brought about devising a technique for compensation as a means of motivating workers. Likewise, financial support being a motivating factor adopted by Rasol Entertainment is basically to attend to personal life of its workers which Herzberg identified as a factor that can lead to dissatisfier if it is not being taken care of.

Therefore, a conclusion which can be drawn from this reflection is that there is no perfect motivation strategy and that the management approach that can be applied to motivate workers depends largely on the situation, the size and the resources of the organisation at a particular point in time. Perhaps, randomisation of motivation strategies and management styles will help the Nigerian home video producers or managers better to adopt a theory of motivation and management which is applicable to the situation, the size and resources of their organisation or the fusion of two or more theories altogether to accomplish better performance.

Conclusion

It was discovered through this study that Rasol Entertainment's pay to its workers is not tied to the qualification of its staff. Even though some artists and crew are contracted, they determine their pay to a large extent. The in-house staff's pay should commensurate with their educational or professional qualification. If this is done, it will motivate them more and create a considerable level of hierarchy. More so, Rasol Entertainments has no retirement or insurance plan for its workers. Without retirement plan in any organisation, it means staff is engaged temporarily as such company

owes no staff any fringe benefits upon retirement. This leads to drift among staff.

Similarly, in Rasol Entertainments, there is no promotion plan set in place to motivate its staff. Promotion is part of motivation strategy because workers do not work for only physiological needs but also to attain in the long run self-esteem and self-actualisation. Workers' expectation is not about immediate gratification alone but for future achievement in term of self-actualisation.

It is, therefore, recommended in this study that Rasol Entertainments should incorporate retirement plan in its motivation strategies. This will enhance staff performance and reduce the movement of staff from the company to another company which provides retirement plan. Secondly, promotion plan is an integral part of motivation which we found in this study not in practice in Rasol Entertainments. Rasol Entertainments should provide enabling environment for workers to operate effectively by providing adequate professional training, support and encouragement. Also, the company should ensure that performance is tailored towards positive outcome such as recognition, performance review, staff pay increment that are commensurate with qualification and the nature of assigned task. Finally, for a company operating in Nigerian home video industry to experience everlasting success and long time existence through profit maximisation, both the in-house and cast and crew must be motivated to continue developing interest and willing to develop skills which will eventually help in moving the company forward.

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Interview

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