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Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory in Project Management

4-5 minutes

Herzberg's two-factor theory explains why the best and highly paid members leave your project. And like with [Maslow's theory of needs](#), I will explain Herzberg's dual factor theory from the perspective of the practical application.

You don't have to be a physiologist to see and act on the motivation of your team. Also, I will show you an example below.

There is one thing you need to accept before we proceed. Job dissatisfaction is not opposite to job satisfaction.

To make it fully clear:

- Opposite to job dissatisfaction is the absence of job dissatisfaction.
- Opposite to job satisfaction is the absence of job satisfaction (not job dissatisfaction).

That was the hardest part in the Herzberg's two-factor theory.

So, now there are factors that contribute to growing job dissatisfaction. These are hygiene factors.

Likewise, there is another set of factors that contribute to job satisfaction. These are motivators.

If you remove factors that build up dissatisfaction, people will stop

complaining about their work. However, it doesn't mean that they will become motivated.

If you build up factors that motivate people, it will not stop them from complaining and leaving your organization eventually.

So, what's the takeaway here?

You must attend both types of factors if you want to keep your project team motivated. Moreover, it is important to fix hygiene factors before creating up motivators.

Now the exciting part.

What factors are hygiene? And what factors are motivators?

Hygiene Factors

Here is the list of hygiene factors:

1. Company policy
2. Supervision
3. Employee's relationship with their boss
4. Work conditions
5. Salary
6. Relationships with peers

So, what does that mean?

- When organization issues policies to control the work relations – it is demotivating.
- You ask for daily reports from your team. Why do you need them?
Administrative supervision and micromanagement are demotivating.

- You are the direct manager for your project team. Your [relations with each team member](#) is not arbitrary need. It is a hygiene factor. Again, you have heard that saying “People Leave Managers, Not Companies,” don’t you?
- Pretty office, air conditioning, water, coffee, and cookies is not a bonus it is a necessity of a modern work environment. You can add up high-performance laptops, useful software and adequate safety measures here.
- Do you still believe that rising salary motivates people? Well, for a day or two. Salary is not a motivator. It is hygiene factor that changes over time. So, you must ensure that you pay adequate compensations.
- Your colleagues and peers is the factor you interact on a daily basis. However, have a great team spirit doesn’t guarantee that everyone’s motivated and loyal.

Motivators

Now, here are the motivators:

1. Challenging work
2. Recognition for one’s achievement
3. Responsibility
4. Opportunity to do something meaningful
5. Involvement in decision making
6. Sense of importance to an organization

Here is a side note to think about. Take a look at Scrum. Why does it work? It has all these motivators build into the framework.

What can you do about them?

And here is a PRO tip.

You don't work on projects that save the world every day. So, you can't always imitate these factor. However, it should not stop you from trying.

Why?

Because the majority of the motivators are perceived entities. They are related to the need of a particular person. Quite often challenges and responsibility can be limited and local.

Here are some practical pieces of advice:

- Say "thank you" every day.
- Start working with your team on a higher level. Set goals, directions and explain the desired outcome. Let them work as autonomously as possible. You can correct the work. However, do not tell exactly how to do it.
- Involve project team in planning activities. Ask for their feedback and suggestions. Let them make decisions.
- Creating [Work Breakdown Structure](#) together is one of the ways to develop ownership and responsibility for the project.
- Create a clear path for professional development. I'm not a big fan of levels, titles, and grade of a job position. However, it works. People need clear career milestones to push harder.

So, how does it all work together?

Herzberg Two-Factor Theory of Motivation Example