The phenomenon of motivation within an employment & staffing company

A qualitative study at Proffice

Sammanfattning

Nyckelord: Motivation, lön, bemanningsföretag

Bakgrund: Denna studie berör motivation till arbete och syftar till att öka förståelsen för området. Motivation är dock ett svårbegripligt ämne att förstå sig på. Dess komplexitet kan åskådliggöras i att det än idag inte finns en enskild accepterad definition av motivation. Så länge som det betyder olika saker kommer det att vara ett svårstuderat område Även det faktum att individer har olika behov och därför motiveras av olika faktorer gör området än mer komplext.

Då pengar gör det möjligt att förvärva olika saker och tillfredsställa en del av de mänskliga behoven så anses de också av somliga vara motiverande, varpå vi valde att inkludera även lön i vår studie.

Studien har genomförts i ett bemanningsföretag för att öka förståelsen om motivation i ett sådant företag då arbetsförhållandet skiljer sig något från en traditionell anställning där individer arbetar direkt för sina arbetsgivare.

Problemformulering:
- Vad motiverar individer att arbeta för ett bemanningsföretag?

- Vilken effekt har lönen på anställdas motivation i ett bemanningsföretag?

Syfte: Syftet med arbetet är att få en ökad förståelse om motivation till arbete samt relationen mellan lön och motivation och hur det förhåller sig i ett bemanningsföretag.

Metod: Vi valde att utföra en kvalitativ studie på Proffice där vi intervjuade fyra fastanställda konsulter.

Slutsatser: Då individer har olika behov och är motiverade av olika saker är det svårt att dra generella slutsatser om vad som motiverar. Det som individerna i just detta fall var nöjda med var varierande uppdrag som tillät individerna att utvecklas och lära sig nya saker som i sin tur kan vara motiverande.

Det som individerna var missnöjda med var osäkerheten kring anställningen och de sociala relationerna till kollegor och arbetsgivare, aspekter som i sin tur kan ha en negativ effekt på motivation när de inte är tillfredställda.

Trots att majoriteten av individerna i undersökningen inte var nöjda med sin lön så tycktes den inte ha en negativ effekt på deras prestationer då de inte hade fått vara kvar på uppdraget så länge om de inte hade utfört sina arbetsuppgifter på ett bra sätt. Dock verkade missnöjdheten ha en negativ effekt på motivationen att stanna kvar i företaget

på lång sikt.

Rekommendationer till fortsatta studier: Vidare forskning inom området kan genomföras med andra metoder eftersom resultaten är i hög grad beroende av de metoder som används.

En annan möjlighet är att inkludera respondenter från andra kontor. Då vi endast valde att inkludera fast anställda i vår studie så kan studien vidareutvecklas genom att inkludera även provanställda.

Abstract

Keywords: Motivation, wage, employment & staffing company

Background: This study concerns motivation to work and aims to contribute to a better understanding about the area. Motivation is however complex to understand. The complexity can be illustrated by, still to date there exists no single accepted definition about the meaning of motivation. As long as motivation means different things it will be a difficult area to study. Since individuals have different needs and are motivated by different factors, makes the area even more complex to study.

Since money makes it possible to acquire different things and satisfy some of the human needs, it is also considered by some to be motivating, why we chose to include wage in our study as well.

The study has been applied to an employment & staffing companym, to contribute with a better understanding about motivation in this kind of company in practice since the working conditions differ somewhat from a traditional employment where individuals work directly for their employer.

Problem area:
- What motivates individuals to work for an employment & staffing company?

- What effect does the wage have on employee motivation in an employment & staffing company?

Purpose: The purpose with the study is to gain a better understanding about motivation to work and the relationship between wage and motivation in an employment and staffing company.

Method: We chose to conduct a qualitative study at Proffice where we interviewed four permanently employed consultants.

Conclusions: Individuals have different needs and are motivated by different things which makes it difficult to draw general conclusion about motivation. The individuals in this particular study were pleased with the variation of jobs since it allowed them to develop and learn new things which in turn can be motivating.

The factors that the individuals were unsatisfied with were the lack of security with the employment and the social relations to colleagues and employer, aspects that in turn can have a negative effect on motivation when not satisfied.

Despite that the majority of the individuals in the study were dissatisfied with the wage it did not seem to have a negative effect on their performance since they would not been able to remain for such a long time at their current mission if they had not performed

well at the job. Although the dissatisfaction seemed to have a negative effect on motivation to stay within the employment & staffing company in the long run.

Recommendations for further studies: Further studies on the subject could be performed using other methods to conduct the research since the results are very much dependent on the methods used.

Another approach could be to include respondents from other offices. Since we only included permanently employed respondents the study could also be further developed by involving probationary employed.

Acknowledgements

We would like to take the opportunity to express our gratitude to all involved in the completion of the study. Special thanks are directed to Proffice, consultant managers and all interviewed consultants. Without their help it would not have become the study it is today. We would also like to thank our tutor for his help during the production of the essay.

We consider it to have been an inspirational period of time: We have increased our knowledge within the subject and hopefully it will be considered an inspiration for others. We also wish for the study to contribute to new insights and further studies within the same area.

Content

1. Introduction

In the following chapter we will portray our problem area as well as the background to the interest in this particular area and why we wished to study it further. First we will account for the background that will lead to the problem discussion and finally to our problem area and what we want to achieve with this research.

1.1 Background

There is a pressure on organizations to constantly search for cost and quality improvements and to work effectively if the company is to survive in the long run. The effectiveness of organizations to achieve their established goals is very much dependent on their employees.[1] Hence it is important for companies to take care of the individuals that work for them. In order to do so, companies need to know their employees and identify what these individuals are motivated by. However, motivation is a complex phenomenon and is not easily grasped.

Motivation can be described as the driving force that makes individuals behave in a certain way, as well as the amount of effort they put into the activity.[2] Motivation refers to a set of various internal processes with several consequential behaviours as the outcome.[3] How individuals behave and how much effort they put into their activities within each situation is determined by a combination of physical, emotional and intellectual processes together with external factors such as environmental and social.[4] But individuals differ in terms of needs and motives, abilities and skills, personality and style, which complicates the study of motivation.[5]

Many researchers have studied the phenomenon of motivation in order to contribute with an enhanced and deeper understanding about human nature and what motivates individuals to perform certain tasks. This is however not a simple question to answer since there are many variables to consider. Individuals are not only motivated by different factors in different situations but their preferences change overtime as well. To motivate their employees companies can use different strategies and rewards. What type of rewards a company applies depends on the kind of company and the preferences of its employees. Different rewards affect different needs. One direct way to reward people for the effort they put into the company is through wage. While it is clear that the basic human needs can be satisfied with the help of wage, it might not satisfy deeper human needs such as social, esteem and self-actualisation needs identified as higher-order needs by Maslow.[6]

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[1] Turton, 1991
[2] Karlöf & Lövingsson, 2007
[3] Furnham, 2005
[4] Karlöf & Lövingsson, 2007
[5] Oxford BS, 2008
[6] Furnham, 2005

1.2 Problem discussion

The Swedish employment & staffing industry has expanded ever since 1993 when it was legalized in Sweden.[7] Since then an increasing number of employment & staffing companies have entered the market which ultimately leads to a growing workforce. Since it is a relatively new sector in Sweden not much research has concerned these types of companies which made it an even more interesting area to study. Since the sector is relatively new the knowledge about the working conditions within these types of companies could be developed.

While many studies have been conducted on the subject of motivation, not many have concerned the special circumstances existing within an employment & staffing company. Most theories on motivation are based on research that was conducted within the industrial area in another time, which makes it interesting to research whether the same theories can help us understand motivation within another, relatively new, different type of market that exists today.

The expanding of the sector where the employment & staffing companies are gaining more shares on the labour market also makes it interesting from a public point of view, to learn more about this sector and the working conditions that employees face within these companies.

The differences in working conditions that employees face within an employment & staffing company, compared to the more general and traditional ones where individuals are directly employed, made it interesting for us to focus our study on the phenomenon of motivation within this type of company.

1.3 Problem area

The problem discussion resulted in the following questions and will be the main focus throughout the essay.

- What motivates individuals to work for an employment & staffing company?

- What effect does the wage have on employee motivation in an employment & staffing company?

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[7] Walter, 2005

1.4 Purpose

What we want to achieve with our study is to get a better understanding about individuals within employment & staffing companies and what it is that motivates them with this type of employment. We also want to get a better understanding about factors that affect motivation, with focus on the wage.

2. Methodology

Methodology deals with the different choices that researchers face during their research process. Researchers have to choose between different methods to conduct their work and explain the reasons behind their choices, why they find a certain method better suited for their purpose rather than another method. Which method is best suited depends on the subject being studied.[8] In the following chapter we will account for the different methods used in our research and the reasons behind our choices.

2.1 Scientific quantitative and qualitative methods

To study something means to gather, produce and mediate knowledge about the subject being studied. We can either choose to use quantitative methods, qualitative methods or use both, depending on the subject and the aim of the study.[9]

Quantitative methods are mostly used when the studied area is measurable, and answers to questions are achieved through rational analysis. By rational analysis the method helps to answer the questions studied. Although these methods can be useful tools for studying certain aspect of society there are still aspects that are more difficult to study with these methods.

Qualitative methods are more reflective and descriptive than the quantitative methods. Each phenomenon is believed to consist of a unique combination of qualities or characteristics. Using qualitative methods we can interpret different phenomena and gain a deeper understanding concerning the subject that is being studied. However the methods have been critiqued for being too subjective, meaning that the acquiring of information and analyzing the material is very much dependent on the individuals.[10]

Which methods to choose, depends on the subject, how one perceives the subject and the purpose with the research.

Since we are trying to get a better understanding concerning the motivation of individuals and surrounding aspects we found the qualitative method more relevant to use for our purpose. It allows a more reflective approach and hence a better understanding about the area. Another reason why we found the qualitative method better suited for our problem area is that it is often used initially in a study when the study concerns a wider problem area, the quantitative method is on the other hand often used when specified questions are developed to test different hypothesis.[11]

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[8] Gustavsson, 2003
[9] Svenning, 2000
[10] Andersson, 2000
[11] Carlsson, 1991

2.2 Literature

In the search for relevant literature one of the best advices is to search from generic to specific and newer to older literature of the studied area to get a good cover of information.[12] When we start by reading the more generic literature we achieve a better knowledge about the area which in turn enables us to narrow down the problem area and focus on the more specific literature.

When we decided what area to focus on in our study our next approach was to read more about this particular area to get a better insight. So our first aim in the search for literature was not necessarily to use it in our report but rather to get a better understanding of the area. With a better understanding of the area we could proceed with our study and narrow down the problem area and focus on what we thought was interesting within the motivation area. We did use some of the initial literature in the report but we also complemented with more specific literature when we narrowed down our problem area.

To find relevant literature for our study we consulted our supervisor and the librarians at our school library. We also searched the library catalogue on our own and examined previous exam papers within the same area in order to get a good cover of information and find relevant literature.

2.3 Collecting information

In order to acquire the necessary information there are different methods to conduct a study, either through indirect observations of social phenomena, by directly observing human behaviour, or to ask direct questions to the individuals within the studied area.

Indirect observations do not allow us to directly observe the social context that we are interested in but by studying previous products of certain behaviour, or by studying oral, written or printed statements we can get a better understanding of the social context that we are interested in. The advantages with this method, is that it saves both time and money compared to a direct observation where facts are directly collected by the researcher. A disadvantage with the method is that the material is already given.

Direct observations on the other hand allow us to directly observe the social context that we are interested in. Some of the advantages with this method are that the researcher by direct observation can receive a better context. The researcher can then determine what facts to register. In direct observations the researcher is not dependent on the participant's ability to understand and remember. Some of the disadvantages with this method are that the researcher cannot collect data from past time, it is a costly and time consuming way to collect data, the researcher can only cover the context partially (what the researcher has observed) and the researcher can unintentionally influence the social

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[12] Andersen, 2000

situation that is being studied.

Another method is to ask questions either orally or in writing to individuals within the group that is being studied. The researcher wants to gain knowledge about individual perception of themselves, their attitudes to different problems and experiences. Generally, direct observations are better at answering these questions, however the reason that many researchers choose to ask questions instead is that it has certain advantages over the direct observations. Some of the advantages are that this method is less demanding in both monetary terms and in time, the researcher can receive information of relationships that are not manifested openly, we can acquire information concerning matters prior to the study as well as to acquire information about future plans.[13]

Since we are trying to understand individuals and their perception surrounding work related factors we thought that the best approach would be to interview the individuals in our study. We would not have been able to gain information about their experiences by directly observing them, since their individual experiences go back in time. An observation would only allow us to observe the present situation the individuals are facing whereby we would loose important insight about the work experience. Because of this we decided to conduct an interview and collect information using this method.

2.3.1 The studied company

At the beginning of our study we contacted the employment & staffing company which we wanted to cooperate with in our study. We were familiar with the company prior to our study and had already contacts within the company. So we contacted one of the consultant managers and asked if they were interested to participate in our study. The collaboration started and we had a meeting with two of the consultant managers within the company (a consultant manager from the office in Trollhättan and the consultant manager from the office in Skövde). We explained the purpose of the research and what problem area we were interested in. They were very positive about participating in our study and to help us with the information that we needed.

Since the consultant manager from the office in Trollhättan had a wider base of consultants and a longer experience herself, we decided to cooperate with her. We gave her specific instructions that we only wanted to interview permanently employed consultants within the company. We felt that their longer experience would give us a better understanding of being a consultant rather than someone who has worked for the company for a short time. The other criteria we had was to only include consultants working in the service sector. We wrote an e-mail directed to the consultants where we presented ourselves, the study, our problem area and that we wanted them to be a part of our study. We sent the email to the consultant manager who in turn passed the e-mail forward to eight of her permanently employed consultants. Five of the consultants were

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[13] Andersen, 2000

interested to participate in our study so we contacted those consultants and arranged a time for the interviews. Later on one of the consultants cancelled the meeting so we ended up making four interviews totally, we felt that we had enough information why we decided not to make any more interviews.

2.3.2 Interview

The approach here is to directly ask questions to an individual. The interviewer is the one that directs the conversation into a certain direction. An interview is a communication process between two individuals where both parties will influence each other. It is inevitable for individuals engaging in a communication process not to influence each other, but hopefully the interviewer can with an awareness of this diminish the influence.[14]

To diminish the influence on the respondents, we focused on the questions, to formulate neutral questions that would not lead the individual to answer in a certain way. We asked each of the predetermined questions exactly as we wrote them to each of the individuals. We kept the same thought in mind when we asked follow up questions where we were careful not to use developed and long questions. Instead we asked follow up questions like why, how come, can you elaborate that and so on to make the individuals explain something further using their own words with little influence from us. Our aim was to make the individuals tell us as much as possible by asking them to elaborate their answers.

2.3.3 Developing the questions

Interviews can be conducted in different ways depending on the level of standardization. Interviews can be standardized, semi-standardized or non-standardized. In highly standardized interviews the order and the formulation of the questions is predetermined, and the same questions in the same order are asked to different individuals within the same study. Semi-standardized interviews also have some of the questions predetermined and the same questions are given to all the respondents. The difference here is that the interviewer can follow up some answers to the predetermined questions by asking the respondent to develop the answer further. Some of the follow up questions are not necessarily directed to all the respondents. Finally non-standardized interviews have a more free approach in formulating the questions and in what order to ask these questions. This type of interview is more flexible and easier to adapt to different situations. The main objective for all of these methods is for the answers to give the necessary information for the study.

What level of standardization to choose for an interview depends on what we as researchers want to accomplish with our study. If we want to collect information or

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[14] Andersen, 2000

want quantitative answers then it might be more proper to use a higher level of standardization.[15]

To make sure that we received all the necessary information we needed in our study we decided to determine what questions to ask before the interviews. The theoretical framework was the main source for developing the questions. We predetermined what questions to ask and in which order to ask these questions but we also wanted to be able to follow up some of the answers by asking the respondents to develop the answer further why we ended up making a semi-standardized interview.

2.3.4 Difficulties

Some of the difficulties with interviews are to make the respondent feel relaxed, avoid deviation from the main perspective of the interview, remember what questions to ask and to keep the discussion on a relevant level (within the frame of the topic).

One of the main reasons why an interview does not succeed is because the interviewer might not listen too carefully of what is being said. Even if we listen and register what the respondent is saying but do not reflect over the answer at the time, we will loose the opportunity to ask follow up questions and maybe loose important insight. The risk of not listening carefully enough to what the respondent is saying is also larger for us as fairly inexperienced interviewers.[16]

To approach this problem we decided to make recordings of the interviews to make sure that we did not loose any of the information being said. Even with a recording of the interviews the problem of listening and reflecting to be able to ask follow up questions remains.

To come to terms with this we asked all the respondents for a second interview if necessary and they all agreed to it. After listening to the recordings of the interviews we noticed that some opportunities to ask follow up questions passed us by. However we did not feel the need to do a second interview with none of the respondents since we received a good cover for our research anyway.

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[15] Lundahl & Skärvard 1999
[16] Jacobsen, 2002

3. Theoretical framework

In this chapter we present the theoretical framework that laid the foundation to the empirical research and that we found necessary in order for us to be able to analyze the empirical findings that we collected.

3.1 Motivation

The word motivation is a psychological term that summarizes the processes which lead us to behave in certain ways.[17] This is one definition of the conception of motivation, however scientists, psychologists and philosophers have for centuries pondered, studied, researched and come up with a range of different definitions and theories in order to reveal the truth about motivation and still have not found the ultimate answer. Hence, it might be that the final answer is not achievable due to the fact that motivation as a phenomenon may be too complex and ambiguous. However the fruit of the labour so far has been a variety of theories ranging from a common understanding of what motivation is, to profound ideas offering complex explanations for how and why we behave the way we do in various situations. Neither one of them offering the complete truth, however they have all, in one way or another, contributed to an explanation.

Motivation originates from the Latin word *movere* which essentially means "to move", consequently it could be argued that being motivated means the will to move forward, to make a change and reach a certain goal.[18] This is partly true, although it runs much deeper and is not enough to explain the conception of motivation.

To begin with, the literature we have studied does not make any direct distinction between motivation and work motivation. However, the theories investigated mainly concern motivation related to work, probably due to the fact that many empirical studies often were executed among employees. Our focus is of the same nature, thus we will not make any distinction between motivation and work motivation either.

To understand motivation we need to understand human behaviour. Human behaviour is goal oriented which means that individuals have desires to achieve certain goals. Goals can be described as future rewards towards which motives are directed. For an individual to make an effort to achieve the goal, the goal must be realistic. While some goals are clear to individuals other goals that motivate can very well be subconscious. If we want to understand why people behave in a certain way in certain situations we need to know what motivates them into doing so.

Motives are the needs, wants, drives or impulses within the individual that determine the direction of the behaviour in certain situations and are the reason why individuals engage in certain activities. Individuals however, differ in their will, ability and

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[17] Swedish National Encyclopedia
[18] Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2005

motivation hence the strength of these motives vary between individuals. Individuals have also more than one need, which of these needs an individual attempts to satisfy in a certain situation depends on what need has the greatest strength in that particular moment. When a need has been satisfied another competing need can become more apparent thus making the satisfied needs motivating strength decrease. At any given time individuals will have a variety of needs but it is the need with the highest strength that will determine what they do next.[19]

Traditionally, motivation has been viewed from either trait theory or from environmental theory. Trait theory suggests that motivation is an enduring characteristic meaning that some people have it while some do not. Presumably people are born with a certain level of motivation constant throughout their lives. Thus people highly motivated never loose their motivation while poorly motivated people never acquire it. On the other hand environmental theory suggests that situational or environmental factors determine whether someone is motivated or not. According to this theory all people can become motivated given the right set of circumstances. Meaning that if the right set of factors are presented one will become motivated.

Both of the perspectives contain some truth in them. However, the world is not divided into those who possess motivation and those who do not. Surely some are more motivated than others as the trait theory suggests but it is more realistic to think that some are more motivated than others. The environmental theory on the other hand suggests that motivation varies due to different forces in the environment and can therefore be improved. The most reasonable perspective is a balanced one. Variation in motivation is the consequence of differences in both people and environments.[20]

The complexity of motivation and human needs has perplexed researchers for a long time. The result is a number of theories that are trying to explain the phenomenon.[21]

3.1.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

One of the most known motivational theories is Maslow's hierarchy of needs. According to Maslow there are five basic human needs. These are physiological needs such as food and shelter, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. The needs are arranged in a hierarchy where needs higher in the hierarchy are not considered or affecting the behaviour of individuals until needs lower in the hierarchy are satisfied. When one need has been satisfied it will provide little motivation, instead the motivation turns to the next need in the hierarchy and the effort is put to fulfil the next need. One level of needs does not have to be completely satisfied in order for another need to become apparent. Maslow recognized that in reality individuals are partially satisfied and partially unsatisfied at each level.[22] Maslow also separated the

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[19] Hersey & Blanchard & Johnson, 2001
[20] Muchinsky, 1993
[21] Robbins & Coulter, 2002
[22] Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2002

five needs into two levels, where physiological and safety needs were defined as lower-order needs and social, esteem and self-actualization needs were defined as higher-order needs. Maslow stated that lower-order needs are predominantly satisfied externally while higher-order needs are satisfied internally.[23] The most prominent needs are the ones that have not been satisfied yet according to Maslow.[24] How strong the needs are differs among individuals.

The needs in Maslow's hierarchy are arranged as follows:

- **Physiological**: Such as food, shelter, clothing and so on (at the bottom of the hierarchy)

- **Safety**: Covers both physiological and emotional security. Individuals want safety in the form of protection against such things as accidents, diseases or economic instability. While such benefits can make their employees better off it might not necessarily make them more productive.

- **Social**: The need to interact with others, the feeling of being accepted and to belong. Individuals in organizations have fellow employees to interact with. In a healthy work environment individuals will have a sense of belonging to their organization.

- **Esteem**: The importance of status and prestige for the self-esteem and the recognition from others.

- **Self-Actualization**: How well the individuals use their abilities and fulfilling their goals. There are many ways in which these needs can be satisfied since individuals differ in their perception and feelings about themselves.[25]

Although this theory is one of the best known and used theories Maslow did not provide any empirical support for the theory, and several other studies could not validate the theory.[26] However it provides managers with an awareness of the range of human needs.[27]

Besides individual differences, managers in organizations can make some predictions about what motives are prominent among their employees and thus use the right tools to motivate them.[28]

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[23] Robbins & Coulter, 2002
[24] Hersey & Blanchard & Johnson, 2001
[25] Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2002
[26] Robbins & Coulter, 2002
[27] Turton, 1991
[28] Hersey & Blanchard & Johnson, 2001

3.1.2 Herzberg's Motivator-Hygiene Theory

Frederick Herzberg contributed to the collection of motivational theories with his motivator-hygiene theory also referred to as the two-factor theory. He conducted a research where the respondents were asked to describe situations that led to satisfaction related to work as well as situations that led to dissatisfaction related to work. Herzberg conclusion from the research was that factors related to satisfaction were not the same as factors causing dissatisfaction. According to the research satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not each others opposites, instead the two concepts refer to two independent dimensions. Herzberg therefore separated between factors called motivators and hygienes. Motivators promote job satisfaction when they are received and therefore motivate to obtain them while hygienes, in contrast, contribute to job dissatisfaction when left out. According to Herzberg employee satisfaction is tied to what they are doing while dissatisfaction is tied to working conditions and the way they are treated.[29]

Herzberg identified following factors associated with satisfaction (motivators):

- **Achievement**: the satisfaction in completing something, solving a problem or seeing result in your work.
- **Personal growth**: opportunity to learn new things and acquire new skills
- **Responsibility**: control over your own working situation and possibility to decide how to carry out your work
- **Advancement**: promotion
- **Recognition**: usually in the form of praise for a job well done

Herzberg considered that these factors increase job satisfaction when improved and therefore create motivation. However they do not decrease job dissatisfaction.

Factors associated with dissatisfaction called hygienes by Herzberg are:

- **Supervisor relations**
- **Co-worker relations**
- **Job security**
- **Company policy**
- **Working conditions**
- **Wage**
- **Status**

These factors are considered to create dissatisfaction at work if the individual is unsatisfied with them and therefore affect motivation in a negative way. Improving these factors results in reduced job dissatisfaction.[30]

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[29] Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2005
[30] McShane & Von Glinow, 2000

3.1.3 Adam's Equity Theory

The original Herzberg research acknowledged that feelings of unfairness were the most frequently reported source of job dissatisfaction but the motivation-hygiene theory did not give a great deal of attention to this finding. John Stacy Adams introduced the equity theory to organizational behaviour, specifically focusing on this aspect. In short, it explains how people perceive fairness/unfairness in a social or organizational setting and how it leads to distress which in turn motivates the individual to act in order to resolve the fairness/unfairness within the relationship.[31]

According to Adams employees seek to sustain equity between what they contribute with at work, that is the input, and what they receive in return, that is the outcome, against the perceived inputs and outcomes of others. How much effort a person is willing to put into work is a function of comparison to the effort of others. Motivation is a function of how a person perceives him/herself in relation to other people, meaning that the theory has a perceptual and social basis. He suggested that motivation has a social rather than a biological origin. [32]

The theory contains four main elements: outcome/input ratio, comparison other, equity evaluation and consequence of inequity.

Inputs are perceived as investments in the exchange relationship by the employees, while outcomes are the things employees receive in exchange for their contribution. Included in inputs are skills, efforts, experience, time worked, performance results and other employee contributions to the organization. Outcomes are such things as pay, promotion, recognition, or a better working environment. The individual weights these inputs and outcomes by importance to each other. The importance of inputs and outcomes are perceived differently by different people. Some inputs are valued higher to some people while some are valued lower, accordingly deserving different outcomes. Similarly the theory recognizes that people value outcomes differently due to variation in needs.

According to the theory individuals constantly compare their situation with a comparison other. It may be with another person, group of people, oneself in the past or it might be someone with the same job, another job, or someone within another organization. However, most of the time individuals tend to compare themselves with people in the same surrounding, in similar positions, with similar background.

After identifying the outcome/input ratio and compared it with the comparison other's ratio, a complex equity evaluation is formed by the individual. As a result the individual could find him/herself in an equity condition where inputs and outcomes are perceived to be equal in relation to the comparison other. Another possibility is a situation that produces either under rewarded inequity or over rewarded inequity. This means that the

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[31] Miner, 2005
[32] Muchnsky, 1999

individual in the first case believes to contribute more time, effort, knowledge, resources and other inputs, while receiving less in form of different outcomes, related to the comparison other. In the second case the individual contributes less while receiving higher outcomes in relation to the comparison other. In both cases the ratios differ, equity only occurs when inputs and outcomes are perceived to be proportional.

Finally, the individual will become motivated to try and reduce or even eliminate the feeling of inequity by altering the situation they are in. This can be done by changing the inputs or by changing the outcomes. One might change perception by distorting inputs and outcomes in order to remove the feeling of inequity and restore the feeling of equity. Another possibility is to simply leave the field, to get away from the situation. Or else you could act on the comparison other by changing the inputs or outcomes. If this is seemingly impossible one could change the comparison other by replacing him/her with someone with more compatible input/outcome ratio.[33]

3.2 Rewards

The reason that most people engage in work is because they get something in return. The compensation that work can provide for an individual is a source of income, activity and stimulation, social contacts, a means of structuring time, and a source of self-fulfilment and self-actualization.[34] The different rewards are used to motivate individuals within organizations. Rewards are all of the monetary, non-monetary and psychological payments that an organization provides for its employees in exchange for the work they perform.[35] What rewards to use depends on the type of company and the preference of its employees.

All the things that employees' value and desire are seen as rewards, they can either be financial or non-financial. Financial rewards can be direct or indirect. Direct financial rewards are direct payments in money such as wages, while indirect financial rewards refer to the benefits that employees receive such as life insurance, pension plans and so on. Non-financial rewards are all the other components that employees perceive as valuable e.g. personal development, recognition and so on.[36]

Rewards constitute an economic exchange or relationship between employees and organizations. Employees accept the instructions of others and contribute with their physical and mental effort in exchange for the payment and rewards that they receive from the organization in return. The relation constitutes of more than just the economic exchange, it also involves the social and psychological relations within the organization. If employee expectations concerning the rewards that they receive are not met by the organization, they will perceive a violation of their mutual relation. For employees this violation can result in decreased motivation and a lack on confidence for

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[33] McShane & Von Glinow, 2000
[34] Furnham, 2005
[35] Bratton & Gold, 2007
[36] Cascio, 1998

the employer.

There is not a single reward system that will suit all organizations, so it is important that companies are aware of their employees' preferences and what motivates them in order to use the right rewards within the organization. What effect rewards have on employee performance, commitment and so on is however debated among academics and organizational leaders.[37]

An organization that cannot keep their rewards at the same level that the market pays for a certain job may demand constant recruitment to secure the necessary workers. Once employed if employees perceive unfairness, it might be difficult for the organization to keep them within the organization for long. This can be costly for the organization through constant recruitment and training of individuals.[38]

3.3 Money

Money make it possible to acquire different things. Money is used as means to satisfy different needs. The most important characteristic of money is its power as a symbol that can represent almost any need that an individual wishes it to represent. The value of money comes from the things that can be acquired with it and not the money itself. Although money is often associated with the physiological needs it can be a useful tool in satisfying other needs as well.

Money can be one of the most powerful motivational tools if it is tailored to each employee's values. There are three considerations to take into account if money is to motivate employees. First, employees should have a high "net" preference for money. If for example an individual must work extra hours to get a higher payment, then this money must have a higher positive motivating effect then the negative effect of working overtime. Secondly, employees need to see a clear connection between their performance and the payment received. If their performance increases the payment should increase as well and vice versa. Thirdly, there should be a clear connection between effort and performance; if effort increases so should performance.[39]

3.4 Payment compensation

The monthly monetary payment is most important for many employees since it is their major source of income and therefore the determinant of their purchasing power. Because of rising expectations and inflation employees will seek to constantly increase their financial reward.[40] Individuals will therefore choose organizations that maximize their utility, although money is not the only factor that will affect their choice, other

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[37] Bratton & Gold, 2007
[38] Cascio 1998
[39] Hersey & Blanchard & Johnson, 2001
[40] Bratton & Gold, 2007

factors such as job security, prestige, work environment and so on are considered as well.

Employees evaluate pay in terms of fairness. There are different aspects that indicate payment fairness. The employee should perceive a fair return relative to their contribution to the company. Secondly, internal fairness between employees returns. Employees have a sense of what a fair return should be after comparing their inputs and outputs with their co-workers. If the company does not succeed in creating what is perceived as a fair return it will lead to disappointed employees. If employees perceive themselves to be unfairly treated by the company they will either seek to reduce that unfairness by altering their inputs or outputs, or by simply leaving the company.[41]

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[41] Cascio, 1998

4. Empirical findings

Throughout the next chapter we will introduce some brief information about the company Proffice. When we have presented the company we will continue with a summary of the gathered information from our study that we believe will shed some light on the reason individuals choose to work for an employment & staffing company and what motivates them.

4.1 Employment & staffing industry

In 1935 a law was passed in Sweden that did not allow any private employment agencies to operate within the country. This law remained until 1993 when a new law was passed that legalized the privatization of employment agencies, starting a new era.[42]

4.2 Proffice AB

Proffice is a Nordic employment & staffing company originating from Snabbstenografen which was founded in 1960 by Berit Flodin. From the beginning the company offered typing agency services and soon after started to hire out secretaries in the Stockholm area. Berit Flodin ran the operation together with her husband Hans Hägglund for some years and in time additional professional categories were added such as telephonists and administrative assistants. In 1976 the company started to expand geographically and was established in Malmö, as well as in Uppsala 1986 and Gothenburg 1987.

Eventually the operation expanded bit by bit to include linguistic secretaries, word processors, temporary telephonists, temporary terminal operators and typing agency centres. In 1987 they were all brought together under the name Proffice.

In 1989, Christer Hägglund, the current principle owner acquired Proffice which has been expanding rapidly since then. By 1997 the Norwegian company Personellassistanse had been acquired. The same year Proffice Care was launched. The following year Proffice established operations in Denmark and after taking over the Finnish company Office Team in 1999, Proffice has been operating in Finland as well.

Since 1999 Proffice has been enlisted on the Stockholm Stock Exchange.

Proffice has a strong and local presence and is represented in most of the large and medium-sized places in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland. Their customers range from the public sector to private companies of all sizes.

Their areas of activities are mainly temporary staffing, recruitment services,

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[42] Walter, 2005

outsourcing, and career & development programs and they employ about 10,000 workers within most professional categories.[43]

4.2.1 Wage

Proffice has a wage system where the wage paid to the consultants consists of two parts, one fixed and one flexible part. The first part of the wage is a minimum fixed wage of 133 hours of pay for a probationary employment and 150 hours of pay for a permanent employment (after 18 months employment). In addition to this comes a flexible part that varies with the number of hours worked, where the consultants are paid an hourly wage.

4.2.2 Benefits

Health care benefits: The company subvention costs for health-care up to 1000 Swedish crowns per year and employee. During the probationary period (first six months of the employment) the subvention is 500 Swedish crowns.

Discount benefits: Proffice has an agreement with a couple of gyms around the country where the consultants can receive a discount for membership.

Other benefits: The consultants who work with a job where they have to use the computer for more than one hour a day have the right for paid sight examination. If an optician or eye doctor certifies the need for glasses the company will provide compensation for the glasses. The company has an agreement with one of the leading optician companies in the country (Synsam).

4.3 Consultant Background

Consultant A is a thirty-five year old male with no family. He has been working for Proffice for two years. He has had the same mission during the employment which is supposed to last until last of May 2008, but will most probably be extended.

Consultant B is a twenty-eight year old woman with no family. She has been working for Proffice for three years and has had the same mission during that time.

Consultant C is a forty year old woman with two kids. She has been working for Proffice for seven years and she has been on the current mission for about four years. The current mission is supposed to last until June 2008. However, an extension is possible depending on how the reorganization within the client firm ends.

Consultant D is a thirty-two year old woman with no family. She has been working for Proffice for two years and during that time has had the same mission. The mission is

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[43] Proffice official homepage, 2008

supposed to last another six months.

4.4 Employment

Three of four consultants applied for an employment at Proffice themselves, while one was offered employment by Proffice and chose to accept it. The reason that the consultants chose to apply for an employment at Proffice varies between the individuals. One of the consultants applied for the job through an acquaintance who already worked for the company. The consultant came in contact with the Manager of consultants who subsequently offered the consultant a mission. Another consultant applied to Proffice because of varying forms of assignments since she enjoys trying out new type of jobs, it was something that suited her. The third consultant also applied to Proffice since it was in accordance with her current situation where she is not certain about what she wants to do at the moment or in the future. She states that it is a convenient employment because she can try varying jobs and maybe find out what she wants to work with in the future.

Two consultants have experience from working for other employment & staffing companies other than Proffice. All of the consultants have worked for other companies other than staffing and employment companies.

4.5 Mission

None of the interviewed consultants did actively seek the current mission. The missions were mediated through the employer to the consultants, who in turn had the opportunity to accept or decline. Neither one of the consultants could tell for certain exactly how long the mission would last, however they all believed they would stay until June 2008, although there was a possibility that the missions could be extended further. How the outcome turns out depends on different factors such as reorganization and downsizing among other things within the client companies.

Two of the consultants have had the same mission since they started working for the employment & staffing company. They have therefore no experience from other missions during their time at the employment & staffing company. One consultant has had two missions during her employment. Only one consultant has had the opportunity to work with several different missions, this is also the consultant that has worked the longest time within the employment & staffing company.

When asked whether or not the consultants had any possibility to affect what missions they were given, they all felt that they had some possibilities to affect the outcome by being able to turn down the missions offered. "The way I see it, if I would be offered a mission that I absolutely felt that I could not cope with, I do not believe that the employment company would force me to take it. So in that sense I think that they listen to what I want as well". At the same time, one of the consultants felt that the

opportunities to choose missions were limited since it was not clear on consultant level what missions the employment & staffing company had to offer. The information about available missions is most often only available to the Manager of consultants who then mediates the missions. Another consultant expressed the possibility to affect in the following way "The basic idea of it all is to take what you get".

Even though the consultants are not forced to take a mission that is mediated to them, two of the consultants have accepted missions that they actually did not feel like taking on. The motives behind their choice according to them was to try out something new in order to challenge and develop themselves, "It was a small challenge that enabled me to grow and develop during two years, I would do the same thing over again since it is always interesting to learn new things". Two consultants on the other hand could not imagine themselves to accept a mission which they did not feel like taking, "In that case I would probably put my foot down with the explanation that I did not feel that I possessed the competence required" and the other consultant stated, "In that case I could work somewhere else".

One of the consultants expressed a disappointment on the process in the initial phase of the mission where no information was given to the consultant, "I did not know what I was supposed to work with more than that I would work for a certain client. Nobody knew anything about what was required of me." It was not clear what the consultant task was until the mission started.

4.6 Job satisfaction

All the consultants expressed what they thought was positive and negative within the employment company. The following advantages and disadvantages with the employment & staffing company were mentioned:

Advantages:

- The company cares about their employees
- They show that they appreciate that you work for them
- A large client base meaning possibility of making new contacts
- Many different exiting missions
- Possibility of variation in work
- New experiences, "you learn a lot"
- Possibility of trying out new things
- No need to deal with problems occurring with the client you are working for

Disadvantages:

- No solid ground, "one might as well get a new mission the next week, you never know were you end up or what you will be doing the next month"
- Lack of security

- No monthly fixed wage
- Sometimes feel as outsiders and feel excluded from the group
- Lower wage compared to a direct employment
- Do not have the same benefits as the directly employed

The overall picture is that the consultants at Proffice feel that they are well taken care off, however there are aspects within the company that are missing and could be improved according to them. The consultants would want more contact and follow up meetings with the employment company. One consultant says that this can depend on who you have as a Manager in the employment & staffing company. "You do not have that much contact with the manager unless there is something that needs to be taken care of, so that is a little bit dull". Since the consultants are not working with their fellow consultants they express that they do not feel a strong connection or sense of belonging to the employment company.

One of the consultants used to work for a smaller employment & staffing company and felt that there were both positive and negative differences between the two. The difference according to her is that there are more opportunities at Proffice and that there is a larger network of contacts since it is a larger company. On the contrary she felt that the smaller company often valued the consultants in another way as well as a better contact with the company in comparison to the larger employment & staffing company.

4.7 Working conditions

The consultants are pretty satisfied with their current working situation. They mention several positive aspects with it. However they admit that there are a few downsides as well.

Consultant A feels that the employment & staffing company has exceeded his expectations. He has been given help by the Manager of consultants in his wage negotiation and he is content with the cooperation between the Manager of consultants and the client. What he experience as less positive is the lack of security. Besides that, he feels that he has been well received by the client, "They treated me as one of their own". However it was not until the talk about a reorganisation came up and the client were about to fire people that he truly felt as a consultant. He feared that he was "hanging loose", as he put it, and that the externally employed were the ones that were in danger.

Consultant B is pleased with her mission and the colleagues, she feels as a part of the company where she is currently working. She does not experience that the client makes any distinction between the consultants and the directly employed. At the same time she tells of occasions when the consultants were not involved. She is also delegated with a lot of responsibility which she is pleased with.

Consultant C is content with her working condition but would like to have more to say

at the client company where she is currently working. She feels that she can not influence or change certain things, "It is not my company so I can not go in there and change things the way I would like to since I am only there temporarily".

Consultant D is also content with her working condition since it suits her current situation of living. She is not certain whether she is going to stay in town or what she wants to work with, so the flexibility of working within an employment & staffing company suits her at the moment.

Despite that all the consultants express that they are satisfied with their working conditions, three of the four are actively searching other employments. Consultant A has applied for a job at his current location and if he gets it he will leave Proffice or as he puts it "leave the ship". The job he has applied has a higher position than his current which offers more developing work, more initiative taking and for that reason he is prepared to leave his current employer. However, he is at the same time saying that if it were the same job and position, it would not matter who the employer was.

Consultant B is also applying for other jobs, both within and outside the employment & staffing company. It is the work and not the employer that compel her. However, concerning her current mission she would prefer to be directly employed by the client rather than being hired out to them. The reason for this is the monthly fixed wage.

Consultant C is also looking for another employment within the company where her current mission is at. The reason for this is because her education is in line with what the job requires of her and she can at the same time make use of her experience. It is a job she enjoys, it is challenging, "not monotone and boring" as she puts it. Since she has found a job she is feeling satisfied with she would rather be directly employed by the client company. She also mentions other missions were she did not feel content and therefore did not feel like being directly employed thus preferred to stay within the employment & staffing company instead.

Consultant D is the only one that does not actively search for other employments, although she admits that she is occasionally looking for available jobs from time to time but nothing that she has applied for yet. However she believes she will search for a new employment within the next six months. She is satisfied with the current situation since she is not certain of what she wants to do next, but she says that she believes it is better to be directly employed because it is easier to influence things, because the payment is better and that there is a higher degree of security.

The factors that the consultants considered to be important with an employment are, in no particular order:

- The task, "I would not accept any job even if the pay is good"
- Space for individually thinking
- Responsibility

- Colleagues
- Wage
- Variation in work
- Recognition
- Interesting work
- Possibility to plan for yourself
- That you enjoy and feel content
- Learn new things
- Evolve

4.8 Wage

Three of four consultants, are not satisfied with their current wages. One of the main reasons behind their dissatisfaction with the wage is because they feel it is unfair in relation to what they contribute to the company.

Concerning the waging process all the consultants had a discussion with the Manager of consultants. They were all initially dissatisfied with the process, partly due to the fact that they did not get what they wanted. Their wages were determined on a higher level within the company then they could have any influence over. As mentioned above, three of the consultants were not satisfied with their current wage. Consultant A that is the only consultant that is content with his wage has been able to renegotiate his wage and is now content. Consultant A was previous to the employment at Proffice unemployed, so the most important thing for him was to have something to occupy himself with. At the time he did not give much thought to the wage and therefore while he initially accepted a fairly low wage according to him.

The dissatisfaction concerning the wages stems also from the fact that most consultants do not receive a fixed monthly payment, instead the payment is dependent on hours worked. The only consultant that is satisfied with the wage is also the only one with a monthly fixed wage. The other consultants' pay checks vary from month to month depending on how many hours they work. "The pay is really good the months with many working days. However months with many holidays such as Christmas are less amusing". Since Proffice offers a guarantee wage the consultants are at least assured a minimum wage. Three of the consultants mention that they probably would not work for Proffice without the guaranteed wage, "without the guaranteed wage you would not know how the month would end". One of the consultants explains that the guaranteed wage offers a sort of security, because even if you are not on a mission you still get paid a minimum wage.

Only one of four consultants is aware of what the colleagues earn. Two of the consultants do not have any idea of what they might earn and one is aware of some of the colleagues earnings. Consultant C who is aware of what her colleagues earn also says that there exists a difference in wages between individuals for the same type of work. Consultant A does not know what his colleagues earn but he does not think that

there are differences in wages for the same type of work. However he believes that he possesses a higher wage than some of the others.

All the consultants believe it to be fair to have a difference in payment for the same job. They argue that education, experience, knowledge, how long you have been employed, age as well as the level of responsibility and how well the task is executed should be taken into account.

None of the consultants would leave their employment if they were dissatisfied with their wage only. To quote one of the consultants; "you can always adjust your wage but a job you do not feel happy with is another story. Feeling content at work is far more important". However if the situation would remain for some time, some considered it worth leaving their employment.

4.9 Rewards

The rewards within the company that the consultants are aware off are additional payment due to experience and position, preventive health care as well as different courses that consultants can take.

One consultant expresses that the company could focus more for preventive health care. At the time being the consultants can use their preventive health care on almost anything, such as training, massage or the like, however most of the time it is not being used explains one consultant. The consultant thinks that it would be better if the company offered preventive health care such as a health check-up, to see a chiropractor or a masseuse or the like regularly, "it would be a lot easier if time was set aside since you are always on a mission and it is hard to find the time". The consultant explains that since they spend a lot of time sitting down in front of the computer it would do them good if the preventive health care reward could be more developed.

Another consultant would like rewards that contribute with "a little extra" as she puts it, and it does not necessarily have to be monetary, it could be a trip of some kind where you get to go away to see and learn new things, an exhibition or a seminar or the like, she explains. She also explains that she wants the reward to be useful, that she can learn and benefit from, not necessarily being a monetary reward.

5. Analysis

In this chapter we will present our collected material in relation to the theory presented in earlier chapter.

5.1 Employment

As we mentioned earlier most people engage in work because they receive something in return.[44] A factor that motivated the consultants to join the employment & staffing company was the variation of jobs that the company could offer. This can be linked to Herzberg's motivator factors where employee satisfaction is tied to what they are doing. Since the variation of work is compelling to the consultants it might contribute to increased job satisfaction which in turn affects motivation.[45] When satisfied it is more likely that individuals will be more motivated to work than if unsatisfied. Hence the variation of work is something that contributes to increased job satisfaction in turn affecting motivation.

At the same time that some individuals may be motivated by this, others may not since individuals differ in their preferences and are motivated by different things.[46] However none of the consultants expressed dissatisfaction with the variety of jobs.

Some individuals might be motivated to join an employment & staffing company since it can be perceived as exciting and varying while they at the same time do not have to bother with the job searching process which can be both time consuming and difficult.

The consultants expressed a positive attitude towards the variation of jobs since it allowed them to acquire more experience, learn new things as well as to develop themselves. These are aspects that are related to personal growth which can be linked to factors within both Maslow's and Herzberg's motivation theories. Development and learning can contribute to satisfy the esteem and self-actualization needs that Maslow recognized. Increased experience and knowledge can give individuals a better feeling about themselves leading to a better self-esteem where their own importance is clarified by their own standards as well as recognition from others. Since it allows individuals to use their abilities, knowledge and experience it might get them closer to fulfill their goals and therefore even motivate them.[47] Herzberg also recognized personal growth as a factor affecting motivation in a positive way when contributed.[48]

Although the consultants expressed a positive view on the variation of jobs and saw it as an opportunity to develop themselves, most of them have worked with the same job

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[44] Furnham, 2005
[45] Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2005
[46] Hersey & Blanchard & Johnson, 2001
[47] Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2002
[48] Mc Shane &Von Glinow, 2000

since they joined the employment & staffing company. The employment & staffing company is very much dependent on their clients and may therefore not be able to offer their consultants what they want at all times. If a consultant wishes to try different jobs and the company does not meet this wish, it can in turn affect the relationship between the consultant and the company. If employee expectations are not meet by the company that they work for, they will feel a violation of their mutual relation which in turn can lead to decreased motivation.[49]

Working for an employment & staffing company differs from a direct employment. This makes the relationship between employer and employee as well as the relationship with co-workers special. Since the consultants do not work at the workplace of their employer nor together with their fellow consultants they might experience a weak connection to their employer. The supervisor and co-worker relations are vague, factors that Herzberg associated with dissatisfaction.[50]

It might be so that the consultants feel a stronger connection to the client rather than to the employer since all of the consultants have had their current mission for a longer period of time. However the consultants did not feel quite as a part of the client company either since they were excluded from certain activities. Since the consultants are not included in certain aspect which sends a message to them that they are not a part of the group. The sense of belonging and the social part is according to Maslow one of the higher order level needs that individuals strive to satisfy.[51] If the social part is missing in an employment individuals might feel unmotivated to stay in this situation for long since interaction with others and the sense of belonging is vital to many individuals.

5.2 Mission

All of the consultants expressed a lack of security stemming from an uncertainty regarding their current assignment and the overall employment. The consultants do not know what assignment they might receive next or exactly how long their current will last or if the employment & staffing company will be able to find another assignment for them when one ends. The uncertainty creates a concern for the future and might influence the consultants' motivation in a negative way. The need for safety is one of the basic human needs in Maslow's theory that individuals wish to satisfy. Also Herzberg states that job security is a factor that will contribute to dissatisfaction when left out.[52] Therefore individuals might search themselves to another company that can offer a higher degree of security than the current one within the employment & staffing company. This may be one of the reasons why the majority of the consultants are actively searching for other jobs outside of the employment & staffing company, where they believe they will experience a higher degree of security compared to the

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[49] Bratton & Gold, 2007
[50] Mc Shane & Von Glinow, 2000
[51] Robbins & Coulter, 2002
[52] Mc Shane & Von Glinow, 2000

employment & staffing company.

The level of uncertainty in the company is partly because the employment & staffing company is very much dependent on their clients and their demand for labor. But by knowing approximately how long the assignment will last both the employment & staffing company and the consultants can plan ahead, searching for other jobs in advance and hence diminish the level of uncertainty.

Another aspect that concerns motivation is what abilities the consultants have to control their own working situation. Herzberg saw the ability to influence the working condition as a factor associated with satisfaction, if satisfied it would create motivation.[53] When it concerns the choice of what assignment to accept the consultants have the possibility to decline taking on assignments handed to them. Still there is a common view among the consultants that the company expects the consultants to take the assignments handed to them. There seems to be a pressure on the consultants to take on assignments that they might not necessarily want to work with in order to not affect the relationship to the employer in a negative way. Two of the consultants accepted assignments even if they did not want to work with that particular job. Even if the ability to affect the own work is not officially restricted in practice there seems to be a limit how much the consultants can affect in practice hence it might lead to decreased motivation for the work since it is not voluntarily accepted. There is also a risk connected with not accepting an assignment since the company might not have another assignment to offer the consultant and therefore has to let them go.

The information about the supply of assignments in a given situation is not mediated by the employment & staffing company to the consultants. The consultants do not know the selection of jobs that are available to them. The company mediates an assignment to a consultant which in turn can accept or decline the offer but they do not know if there are other assignments available at that particular time, hence it might be so that they miss out on missions that in their mind would suit them better. The ability to control the own working situation is thus once again limited, a factor that according to Herzberg creates motivation.[54]

5.3 Job satisfaction

The consultants expressed that the company showed appreciation for them and their contribution to the company. According to Maslow recognition from others is one of the basic human needs and therefore they are motivated to strive towards receiving it.[55] Also Herzberg states that recognition is a factor that creates satisfaction if it is apparent and therefore works as a motivator.[56] Since the consultants expressed this as an advantage with their current employment we assume that this need also has been

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[53] Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2005
[54] Mc Shane & Von Glinow, 2000
[55] Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2002
[56] McShane & Von Glinow, 2000

satisfied and therefore is motivating.

The available opportunity to work with different types of jobs that we mentioned earlier has several aspects to it. The different jobs allow the consultants to learn new things and develop themselves, aspects that are perceived as rewards by some individuals.[57] In turn they are motivated to search this kind of employment and to stay within the company.

Since the company has a large client base there is a good opportunity for the consultants to make new contacts. This can be a motivating factor to join the employment and staffing company for the individuals that do not have a large network of connections in the labor market, such as newly examined students. It gives an opportunity to work for different clients and make connections with those companies, which in turn can help the individuals in their further carrier and self-development.

Some of the most important aspects with an employment according to the consultants are, the work itself, space for individual thinking, responsibility, colleagues, wage, variation in the job, recognition, possibility to plan on your own, enjoy the work and feel content, learn new things and evolve themselves. Many of these aspects are believed to be basic human needs by Maslow and therefore also motivating.[58] Some of these aspects can also be applied to Herzberg's motivators and hygienes that affect satisfaction with the work itself and the work environment and thus also motivation.[59]

While we can see from the interviews that some of these aspects have been satisfied within the company, others have not. But as long as the consultants feel that the rewards they receive in return are congruent with their contribution to the company they will not feel a violation of the relationship between themselves and the employer.[60] As we mentioned earlier individuals accept the instruction of others and contribute with their physical and mental effort because they receive something in return.[61] Individuals thus have expectations on what rewards they should receive in relation to their contribution and if the company fails to provide this the consultant might feel a violation of the mutual relation where they contribute with more than they get in return. This violation can result in decreased motivation and dissatisfaction for the employer.

5.4 Working condition

Despite that the consultants felt that the employment & staffing company treated them well they still did not feel a strong connection or sense of belonging to the company. An element that is important to most individuals, to make social bonds with individuals and feel a sense of belonging. In Maslow's theory it is one of the higher level needs that

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[57] Cascio, 1998

[58] Eobbins & Coulter, 2002

[59] Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2005

[60] Bratton & Gold, 2007

[61] Furnham, 2005

individuals strive to achieve. [62] Although it seems rather difficult to establish a relationship with the company since the consultant do not have much contact with the employer, except at some occasions or if there is an issue that needs to be dealt with. The bond to the company is not that strong when the consultants do not work with their actual colleagues as in other companies where social relationships are made with fellow employees.

Yet the consultants might not be able to receive these social bonds within the client company either. Since they do not share the same employer and a part of the common ground is missing, which can lead the consultants to feel excluded from the group. This becomes especially apparent when the consultants are not included in group activities at the client company, where a clear signal is sent to the consultants that they are not a part of that belonging. This became most apparent during times of downsizing and reorganizing within the client company where the consultants felt even more as outsiders since the directly employed were thought of first. Even though the consultants know that the client company will consider their directly employed in the first hand, they seem to think it is unfair and feel discriminated. As Adam's also points out individuals compare themselves to the individuals in their surrounding and if differently treated feel unfairness.[63] This seems to be the case here where the consultants feel an unfairness since other individuals in their surrounding are treated in another way. So despite that the consultants know that the directly employed come in first hand since it is their employer they still tend to compare themselves to those individuals. Adams also stated that if individuals feel unfairness it could lead to distress which would motivate individuals to act in order to resolve the unfairness.[64] Since most of the consultant were seeking other employments outside of the employment & staffing company, this might be their way of acting to resolve the unfairness by searching for employments where this kind of perceived unfairness is not apparent.

Social bonds to other people are important for most individuals, and if individuals can not have this need satisfied within a company they will not be motivated to stay in that situation in the long run.

If the consultants are very pleased with the client company and form very strong bonds with the employees in that company they will feel a sense of belonging to that company rather than to the employment & staffing company which in turn may lead them towards an employment at the client company if such an opportunity would come by. Two of the consultants seeking other employments have actually applied for a position within the client company since the consultants were very pleased with the mission and the colleagues. Co-worker relations are considered by Herzberg to be a hygiene factor, a factor can lead to reduced dissatisfaction when improved.[65]

The ability to be able to control the own working situations and to decide how to carry

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[62] Robbins & Coulter, 2002
[63] Miner, 2005
[64] Miner, 2005
[65] Mc Shane & Von Glinow, 2000

out the work is seen by Herzberg as a factor associated with satisfaction and thus a motivator.[66] Even in our case the consultants that had a lot of influence over their working situations felt pleased with this while the consultants who did not have that much influence in the workplace felt unpleased with this. However it does not necessarily have to mean that the client company does not allow the consultants a high degree of responsibility, sometimes the limits are set by the individuals themselves. The consultants feel that their influence is limited since they are not a part of the client company and are there temporarily therefore they do not feel that they can change or affect that much.

Despite the overall satisfaction of their working condition three of four consultants are actively seeking other employments and the fourth is not actively seeking at the moment but is keeping an eye out for other jobs. The reasons given for seeking other jobs is, a higher position, more initiative taking, a monthly fixed wage, more in line with the education, better influence over work related issues, better payment and higher security. Most of these aspects are needs that most individuals have and are motivated to satisfy according to Maslow.[67] Since the consultants state these aspects as arguments for seeking another employment we assume that the company has not been able to satisfy the consultant needs regarding these aspects completely.

5.5 Wage

When it comes to the payment compensation in the form of the wage most of the consultants are not satisfied with it. Since money can help individuals to satisfy their different needs it is also an important aspect for individuals. Money can also be a powerful motivational tool if it is tailored to each employee's values.[68]

There are several reasons to the dissatisfaction with the wage. Firstly, the employment & staffing company's wage levels lye on the "lowest wage level" meaning that the company offers a smaller payment for the same job than the labor market.[69] This can result in difficulties for the employment & staffing company to keep individuals within the company since the individuals would be better off working for the client company that offers more money for the same job.

Most of the consultants did however not know what the employees at the client company earned. But if they feel that they are receiving less payment for the same job as their co-workers at the client company the consultant may feel a sense of inequity. Since individuals tend to compare themselves to the individuals in their surrounding they might perceive unfairness that someone else receives a higher compensation for the same job.[70] This may in turn encourage the consultants to leave their employer knowing

[66] Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2005
[67] Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2002
[68] Hersey & Blanchard & Johnson, 2001
[69] Consultant Manager, 2008
[70] Mc Shane & Von Glinow, 2000

that they might receive a higher compensation working with the same job for another company.

Secondly, the consultants do not receive a fixed monthly wage; instead they receive a wage based on the amount of hours worked for each month. Since the wage level varies from month to month, depending on hours worked it can create a level of uncertainty that makes it difficult for individuals to plan their economy and future plans. Even here we can link this to Maslow's need for safety and Herzberg's hygiene factor of job security that could affect motivation in a negative way if it is not satisfied.[71] Although a level of uncertainty is diminished by the minimum wage that is guaranteed to the consultants. They can thus never receive a wage below this amount when fully employed. The guaranteed minimum wage is one of the most vital tools within the employment & staffing company since many of the consultants express that they would not work for the employment & staffing company if the guaranteed wage was not offered. The uncertainty level would be too high where the consultants would not know just how much money they would receive at the end of the month. The only consultant that is satisfied with the wage is also the only one receiving a monthly fixed wage.

Thirdly, the consultants express that the payment is unfair in relation to their contribution to the company. If employee expectations on what is a fair compensation for their contribution are not met by the company they will be dissatisfied with this situation. This can lead the consultants to either seek to reduce the perceived unfairness by altering their inputs or by leaving the company if the situation remains for some time.[72]

The consultants felt that education, experience, knowledge, age, level of responsibility etc. justified differences in payment for the same job. Despite their acceptance of differences in payment for the same job they still might perceive it as unfair if someone else receives a higher compensation for the same job since individuals compare themselves to the individuals in their surrounding.[73]

None of the consultants would leave an employment in the short term because of dissatisfaction with the wage. There needed to be other factors involved for them to leave an employment since the job itself was far more important. Although if the situation would not change and the dissatisfaction with the wage sustained for a longer period of time the consultants would consider it worth leaving the employment. Since individuals have a sense of what is a fair return in relation to their contribution and if a company cannot give the individuals a wage that they perceive as fair they will act to alter the relation between return and contribution by reducing their own contribution or by simply leaving the employment.[74]

The reason that the consultants would not accept the dissatisfaction with the wage in the

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[71] Mc Shane & Von Glinow, 2000
[72] Miner, 2005
[73] Mc Shane & Von Glinow, 2000
[74] Bratton & Gold, 2007

long run could mean that other needs were more prominent to satisfy in the beginning of the employment, such as having a job at all. According to Maslow the most prominent needs are the ones that have not yet been satisfied.[75] In the short term the wage level seems to be adequate to satisfy the basic human needs such as food and shelter but when these needs have been satisfied other needs become more apparent in turn demanding more in return to be satisfied.

5.6 Rewards

All the things that individuals value and desire can be seen as rewards since they contribute with something to the individuals and it does not necessarily have to be a monetary reward.[76] The rewards that the employment company has to offer are additional payment; a wage raise due to earned experience or a higher position, preventive health care benefits and educational courses. The consultants feel that the preventive health care benefit is not sufficient and could be developed. Another thing that comes across is a will for more rewards that are useful for the consultants, something that they can learn and benefit from such as attending a seminar, taking an educational course and so on. Rewards are believed to be an important part in motivating individuals since they constitute an economic exchange or relationship between employee and employer. Employees accept the instruction of others and contribute with their physical and mental effort in exchange for the payment and the rewards that they receive in return.[77]

All of the consultants felt that there could be more rewards in the company and that the current rewards could be further developed in order to contribute with more for the consultants. Even here it did not necessarily have to be monetary rewards since learning and other experiences were of a greater importance. Since many of the consultants were disappointed with the wage it could somewhat be compensated with a wider range of rewards offered to the consultants since they would perceive it as valuable.

According to the consultants the benefits within the employment and staffing company are not the same that the client company offers their employees, which often has more and better benefits to offer. Once again the consultants feel an unfairness of not receiving the same benefits as others which in turn can decrease the consultant motivation and affect their contribution to the company.[78]

Something that the company does not offer is the ability to advance. Advancement is seen by Herzberg as a factor of motivation[79]. But it can also be linked to Maslow's need for self-actualization and development that some individuals strive to satisfy and are

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[75] Hersey & Blanchard & Johnson, 2001
[76] Cascio, 1998
[77] Bratton & Gold, 2007
[78] Miner, 2005
[79] Mc Shane & Von Glinow, 2000

thus motivated by.[80] The consultants can work on different missions and gain more experience but this will not affect their position within the company. So an individual that is highly motivated to advance and wishes a further carrier will not be motivated to work as a consultant for long.

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[80] Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2002

6. Conclusion

Here we will account for the conclusion that we could draw from the discussion in the analysis. The conclusion will give the answer to the questions presented in the problem area at the beginning of this essay.

6.1 What motivates individuals to work for an employment & staffing company?

One of the most important factors expressed by the respondents to work for the employment & staffing company was the opportunity to work with different jobs. Since working with different jobs allows the consultants to satisfy the human needs of development and learning we also see it as a factor that contributes to motivation.

The factors that the consultants were unsatisfied with are the lack of security and the feeling of not belonging, neither to the employment & staffing company nor the client company. Since both of these aspects were expressed as important by the consultants we believe that their dissatisfaction will also affect their motivation in a negative way.

The lack of security stems from the reason that the employment & staffing company deals with their clients varying demand for labor which naturally leads to a varying demand of labor even for the company. Therefore the consultants express a worry about the employment since the demand for labor can change rapidly and their employment might come to an end with a relatively short notice. This might also be one of the reasons that most of the consultants are actively seeking other employments, to assure themselves against being unemployed.

The other factor concerned with dissatisfaction is the social part of making relations with other individuals and to belong to a group. Since the consultants do not work with their fellow colleagues at the employment & staffing company and can therefore not establish the necessary relationships to feel a connection to the company. Even the lack of contact with the company is a reason that the bond to the company is not that strong. At the same time the consultants cannot make these connections within the client company since it is not their employer and they are there only temporarily. On the other hand they can establish social relationship to the co-workers at the client company that they work with although even this is difficult since the consultants are excluded from some company activities.

Despite the dissatisfaction about certain aspects with the employment it does not necessarily have to influence their motivation in a negative way to perform their best. But we believe that the above mentioned factors of dissatisfaction can affect the motivation of individuals to stay within the employment & staffing company in a negative way. We believe this to be the case since there are not many permanently employed in the company. We noticed this in the early phase of the study since we made

the choice to only include permanently employed consultants in our study and only had a handful of consultants to choose from.

As in every employment there are factors of satisfaction and dissatisfaction but as long as there are some factors of satisfaction some individuals can feel it is worth staying within that employment since individuals differ in their preferences. We believe that as long as the positive aspects overweight the negatives individuals will be motivated to stay within the company at least in the short term. In the longer run they might seek themselves to an employment more in accordance with their own preferences.

6.2 What effect does the wage have on employee motivation in an employment & staffing company?

Since money can be used to satisfy different human needs it is of a great importance for individuals but other factors concerning the work are expressed as more important than the compensation received.

The wage did not seem to have any affect on the motivation to perform their best since they all performed the tasks they were given as well as they could. However it had an affect on the will to stay within the company for a longer period of time if not satisfied.

The dissatisfactions mentioned concerning the wage were, a lower wage level than the labor market is paying for the same job, that the wage is not a fixed monthly wage and that it was not sufficient in relation to the consultants contribution. These factors all contributed to a disappointment of the wage, but for now the consultant accepted it since other factors are of greater importance for them. But if the situation would sustain and the wage level did not get adjusted the consultants would eventually seek themselves to another employment.

6.3 Reflections

The focus of this study was on motivation, a concept that we experienced was far more complex than we first expected it to be. It is a concept that is difficult to grasp not only because still to date there is no commonly accepted definition of the concept but also the reason that individuals are motivated by different things and perceive motivation in different ways. As long as there is a variety on the meaning of motivation the studied area will be difficult to study and make predictions about. Still we believe that making this study we earned a better understanding about the phenomenon and the complexity of it.

By studying the concept on individuals within an employment & staffing company we earned a better understanding about different factors affect on motivation to work for and stay within this type of company. The collected information made it possible for us to come to some conclusions and gain a better understanding about our problem area.

We hope that this study has contributed to a better understanding for others as well about the phenomenon of motivation in a work context.

Since individuals differ in terms of needs and motives, abilities and skills, personality and style and perceive motivation in different ways makes it difficult to draw general conclusions about individual behavior and motivation. We can only draw a conclusion from the collected information for this specific case. Thus it needs to be mentioned that the same study in a different environment or other respondents could lead to different conclusions. The results will also depend on the method used in the study. So it is important that the reader is aware that the results are specific for this study.

It is worth mentioning, despite that the theories used in the theoretical framework are commonly known and accepted within this field they have been critiqued on several aspects. Still the theories made it possible for us to develop a ground for the study and to interpret the results of the study.

6.4 Recommendations for further studies

Since motivation is a complex phenomenon further studies could contribute to make the phenomenon more understandable to some extent. Further studies on the subject could be performed using other methods to conduct the research since the results are very much dependent on the methods used. The same study could be performed using a quantitative method.

Another approach could be to perform a more elaborate study where the collection of material could be expanded. A possible way to do this is to include respondents from other offices. Since we only included respondents that were permanently employed the study could also be further developed by involving probationary employed as well.

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Consultant manager

Appendix 1: Interview questions for consultants

- Age
- Gender
- Family

- How long have you been working for Proffice?

- Why did you start working for Proffice?

- What is your current mission?

- For how long have you had it?

- How long is it going to continue?

- Did you apply yourself or were you assigned to you current mission?

- Do you have any possibility to influence what missions you are assigned to?

- Could you consider taking on a mission you do not feel like taking?
  - Why/Why not?

- What happens if you turn it down?

- Have you had other missions earlier for Proffice?
  - How many?

- Have you worked for other employment and staffing companies?
  - Which one/s?
  - Did you experience any differences between the companies concerning rewards?

- How do you experience it to be working for an employment and staffing company?
  - Advantages/disadvantages?

- Do you feel that Proffice takes good care of the employees?
  - Why/Why not?

- Are you satisfied with your working condition?
  - Why/Why not?
  - Good/bad?

- Are you currently applying for other employments?

- Do you think that you will apply for other employments in the near future?

- In your current situation, if you could choose between working for the employment company or being directly employed by the client, what would you choose?
    - Why?

- What is the decisive factor for your choice?

- What is it that compels you to apply for a certain employment?

- What is most important for you with an employment?

- What do you want out of your employment?

- Would your choice have been the same if one of the parties would offer a higher wage?

- What does money mean for you?

- How important is the wage for you when choosing employment?

- Are you satisfied with your wage?

- Do you know what your colleagues at Proffice, working within the same area earn?
    - Does it exist any differences for the same type of work?
    - Do you think there should exist differences in wage for the same type of work?
    - Do you think that your wage is fair relative to your colleagues?

- Could you consider leaving an employment if you only were dissatisfied with you wage?

- Do you know how Proffice sets the wage limits?

- Were you able to negotiate your wage?
    - How do you feel about the process?

- Does it exist other types of rewards within Proffice?

- What do you consider as rewards?

- Do you know how guaranteed wage works?
    - What do you think of it?

- Would you have worked for Proffice even if no guaranteed wage was offered?