STAFF MOTIVATION, A POWERFUL RECIPE TO SUCCESS IN GEOTHERMAL OPERATIONS IN KENYA – A Case Study of Geothermal Development Company

Kenani D.,
Geothermal Development Company, P. O. Box 1453 – 20117, Naivasha, Kenya
dkenani@gdc.co.ke

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ABSTRACT
Motivation is an internal process that makes a person move toward a goal. It is the process that initiates, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviours. Motivation is not a program; it is a personal approach to dealing with individuals. It reveals itself through the following two elements; internal and external factors that stimulate desire and energy in people to be continually interested and committed to a job, role or subject, or to make an effort to attain a goal. Each person is likely motivated differently and in varying degrees. For a supervisor, motivation is knowing your people on a personal level and what drives them. Ultimately, motivation must come from within each person. An organization can lay structures which will provide extrinsic motivation, but the employees have a role of translating these structures to provide intrinsic motivation and this normally comes differently from individuals. No leader is ever the single and continuing source of motivation for a person. While the leader's encouragement, support, inspiration, and example will at times motivate followers, the leader's greatest role in motivating is to recognise people for who they are, and to help them find their own way forward by making best use of their own strengths and abilities. In this way, achievement, development, and recognition all come quite naturally to the person, and it is these things which are the true fuels of personal motivation.

1.0 INTRODUCTION
You may have all the resources you need but without a motivated staff to turn the resources into profit, they will be of no value. This knowledge has formed the foundation of motivating staff at various levels in GDC. The Company depends so much on the efforts, skills and capabilities that her human resources contribute to the organization. In order to be successful GDC has developed her physical resources, financial resources and most importantly her human resources. It is important to note that supervisors at all levels in GDC have been guided to take an intentional initiative of motivating their staff members to increase their productivity. It is out of such initiatives that GDC has managed to achieve various successes some of which are discussed below. In describing motivation, Armstrong (2007) observes that success in achieving goals and rewards acts as a positive incentive and reinforces behaviour, which is repeated the next time a similar need emerges.

2.0 STAFF MOTIVATION, A POWERFUL RECIPE TO SUCCESS
In a broader sense, supervisors have focused on Mastery, Membership and Meaning in enhancing motivation. To tap the three Ms, leaders at all levels are continuously reviewing how they define their strategies, jobs, and culture.

2.1 Mastery
Mastery focuses in helping staff members to develop deep skills. This has been provided through the over 1,500 trainings conducted in the last five years, both on-the-job and also off-the-job. GDC supervisors have shown faith that their staff members can shape their own future rather than being victimized by it, and find pride in continuous learning. Supervisors have been able to develop forecasted training plans which run for three years but reviewed yearly to address emerging needs. This is simply an indication that supervisors have taken a genuine interest in the future path of their employees’ career development. The discussions held during the development of the training plans have heightened employees’ attitude to believe that their superiors really care about where their career is headed. Mentoring, coaching, suggesting additional training or coursework have been helpful to employees, and are highly valued. Human Resource (HR) Department has taken an active role in facilitating the trainings, both group sessions and individual ones.
2.2 Membership

Membership creates community where every employee has a sense of belonging. Employees maximized this opportunity during GDC’s end-year 2-day review meeting and sports attended by 449 employees. They were engaged in various sporting activities ranging from football to fun games like egg-race. The staff members interacted with their colleagues from other areas and departments at all levels. The guiding principle here was teamwork. Evening dinners held together and in groups gave employees the feel of ‘fit-in’. Outstanding performance in various areas throughout the calendar year was recognized and rewarded. Every department has a schedule of teambuilding activity every Financial Year. Departments go out of their work-environment and strengthen their relationships and commitment to their employer. Some departments like Direct Use and South Rift hired an external consultant who took them through a fulfilling, reflective and interactive teambuilding. Free employee interactions with managers enabled both parties forget the hustles of life and the pressures of work. It created a GDC ‘family-feeling’.

It is out if such interactions that employees share their frustrations and challenges at work and balancing work and family demands. To employees’ ideas for job improvement or their problems, concerns, frustrations or conflicts, intelligent listening was an integral part of their daily jobs. The employees went back to work refreshed and with renewed energy. Incentive compensation programs that give employees at all levels a chance to benefit have been put in place. These include a robust Medicare Scheme for every staff member covering up to four children up to the age of twenty four, a Car Loan Scheme that has seen more than half of GDC staff members drive their own cars, and soon coming is the Staff Mortgage Scheme which is expected to have as many GDC staff members as possible owning their own homes. Management recognizes the contribution made by various committees. Among the committee retreats that have taken place to motivate members are the Sports Committee’s trip to Mombasa after organizing an exciting event during the end-year sporting activities, Project Implementation Teams’ trips to Mombasa, Kisumu and Nanyuki in preparation for the heavy task of monitoring implementation of various projects in Central, South and North Rifts. These have made employees feel they belong to GDC and this naturally boosts motivation. HR Department has played a big role in making sure that, through the support of management, staff members receive annual salary increments to enable employees adjust accordingly to the rising cost of living. Previously in the calendar year ending 2012, employees received a bonus. This was in recognition of the achievements that GDC had made within its short period of existence. Cooperate Communication Management Department came up with a column in the ‘Energy Today’ called ‘Team Member’. This initiative is expected to capture the individual differences and likings that unite all employees to feel part of the members that are accomplishing the bigger purpose.

2.3 Meaning

This last approach centers on what employees do. It focuses on repeating and reinforcing a larger purpose of contributing towards the achievement of 5,000 MWe. Many supervisors have learnt to emphasize the positive impact of the work employees do and how each member’s roles contribute towards the achievement of this goal. As part of the daily conversation, communicating the mission and purpose of GDC has made even mundane tasks a means to a larger end. GDC’s Service Charter and mission and vision cascaded to departments are continuously communicated to staff in various departmental and organizational forums. As a result, employees have been able to translate organizational objectives into individual objectives aligned with company performance.
The daily posting of an employee in the ‘Energy Today’ under the column, ‘Team Member’ has helped enhance employees understanding of their importance in the Company. They pride in being identified as part of the bigger team which has a role of achieving the 5,000MWe. Employees give a general statement explaining what part they play in contributing to the larger purpose of the Company. It is clear that all those who have appeared in the column understand that their various activities have a great meaning to the overall corporate goal. Employees know that their contribution helps in the achievement of 5,000MWe.

When corporate targets are set, they are cascaded to all departments immediately and a number of employees know what is expected of them because they take part in setting their personal targets drawn from corporate targets. This has helped most employees own their targets and work towards achieving them. However, this process needs to be reviewed so that cascading of the targets is done on time and all employees are involved in it. Also, assessment of the targets bi-annually through performance appraisal needs to be reviewed so that it is done objectively. An analysis of appraisal that was done by our Corporate Performance Department in the 2012-2013 Financial Year revealed that the distribution of marks was not even. More research on this needs to be done.
3.0 RESULTS OF MOTIVATION

The results of motivation in GDC can be seen in the successes experienced, which include among others, completing drilling a well within 60 days instead of the projected 90 days; drilling several wells within a very short period of the Company’s existence; excelling in conference paper presentations like GRC, ARGeo, GAK, Green Power Conference among many others and winning great awards and upholding high safety standards in Rig 3 that were recognized and rewarded by management in 2013. GDC has won various awards in the Agricultural Societies of Kenya and Trade Fare exhibitions including being ‘The 2nd Best Energy Trade Stand in Commercial / Manufacturers Sector’ in the 2011 Nairobi International Trade Fair; ‘The Best Environmental Management Trade Stand’ in Nakuru Show in 2012 and ‘The Best Engineering-based Institution of Higher Learning’ in Nakuru in 2013. A report prepared by the Senate Committee on Energy, Roads and Transportation in 2013 indicates satisfaction by the committee on the progress GDC has so far made and constituted a raft of recommendations in accelerating geothermal development by the Company. GDC has been recognized by the African Development Bank’s (AfDB) regional director for the East Africa Resource Centre as a center of excellence in developing electricity from natural resources. The general performance of 2.387/1 was achieved in 2012-2013 from 2.467/1 in 2010-2011. All these milestones have been achieved through the efforts made by management through staff members.

4.0 CONCLUSION

We can, therefore, confidently conclude that motivation is a powerful recipe to staff performance. The results indicated above are a clear show-case of how the various approaches to motivation encourage employees to strive to achieve a high mark. It is important to note that these approaches are not an end by themselves. What GDC is doing now is to research on how to sustain the three motivational elements that have been created and also innovative ways to spice up these approaches so that it is a continuous process. As GDC continues living on, performance rating is expected to increase and employee satisfaction is set to rise. Employees must continuously be made to feel that their contribution is valued. However, more research is needed to study the whole process of setting performance targets and reviewing them.

5.0 REFERENCES

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