Job Satisfaction and Performance in a Changing Environment

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ABSTRACT

Today, research libraries are faced with the challenge of retaining an effective staff who have the skills necessary to respond to new and changing circumstances and increased user demands. Ways must be found not only to reduce stress and prevent burnout but also to sustain a level of interest and job satisfaction among staff sufficient to ensure a high level of performance. The elements of job attitudes and their relationship to performance output are analyzed. Factors which lead to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are explored. Steps which library administrators and managers can take to improve job satisfaction are suggested.

INTRODUCTION

If events of the past two years are any indication of what is to come, the decade of the 1990s will be turbulent for academic libraries. It is hardly a secret that most American research libraries are already in trouble and that long-term prospects are also bleak. College and university administrators, faced with declining income and rising costs, are applying great pressure on all academic departments for more efficient use of increasingly scarce resources. Libraries come under special scrutiny because they are the center of the university, because of the costly labor intensive nature of their operations, and because the library budget, usually one of the largest among all departments on campus, is an easy and obvious target. In a survey, for instance, conducted by the Association of Research Libraries' (1991) Office of Management Services in April 1991, 53
percent of the eighty responding members reported budget reductions in FY 91 and 62 percent faced the same prospect in FY 92.

Adding to the turbulence are the transformations accompanying the increasing creation, storage, and accessing of information in electronic form. The growth of electronic information resources dictates new roles and relationships for libraries and librarians. By the end of the current decade, libraries will have become an even more dynamic force in the integration of information into research and education. Implied in these developments is a change in the way staff and users interact. Since librarians produce many services by means of direct contact with users, pressure will build to find new methods to improve the effectiveness of that interaction. Increasingly, such services will be altered by the introduction of automation; some services will be totally automated, and changed. Internal operations also will be automated, and all staff will use computers in carrying out their responsibilities. New tasks as yet unidentified will replace traditional ones, much in the way online catalogs have greatly reduced the need for catalog card preparation and filing. Changes both in the stock of equipment and in the organization of work will have a direct impact on jobs and staff.

In other words, library administrators are faced with two truths about their operations which will directly affect their success in dealing with these issues in the next decade. First, large influxes of capital will be more difficult to obtain, and the capital that will be available is unlikely to improve efficiency significantly; moreover, such capital will be directed largely toward collection development and the purchase of equipment, particularly for automation. Second, because library services and functions are still highly labor intensive—despite the steady introduction of automation over the last two decades—jobs will be altered or sometimes eliminated altogether as more efficient operations are sought and services are reorganized.

The enormity and seriousness of this challenge should not be underestimated. Administrators will confront such difficult questions as:

- In light of falling budgets, what aspects of the library system must be protected and which should be changed?
- How can the library system develop under conditions of austerity?
- What new relationships must be developed between staff and users?
- In what ways must jobs be changed in order for the library to remain responsive?
- How can the staff's commitment to organizational goals be sustained when the future is so uncertain?

This burden will not fall solely on the upper levels of organizations. While primary responsibility for responding to this challenge rests with administrators and department heads, all levels
of staff will be involved in the process of adaptation. To library administrators—directors and associate directors—will fall the primary task of developing long-term plans, making large-scale decisions, and identifying the direction in which the library is to progress. The major burden of incorporating the changes, however, will fall to department heads and staff. The department heads and middle managers must both help mold long-range plans by contributing their own ideas and then translate the plans into successful operation. These people must link the organization's direction with the department's activities and, more importantly, find ways to get the best performance from staff in the process. The staff member will be expected to contribute the skill necessary to perform new tasks as well as contribute his or her ideas based on experience gained from being on the front line of delivering services or performing other functions.

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Research libraries' changing environment and user demands will pose a major challenge to librarians to carry out the necessary transitions while reducing obstacles presented by potential burnout and stress among staff and also while creating and sustaining high levels of job performance. In commenting about this problem in the business world, William O'Brien (quoted in Senge, 1990), CEO of Hanover Insurance, noted:

People enter business as bright, well-educated, high-energy people, full of energy and desire to make a difference. By the time they are 30, a few are on the "fast track" and the rest "put in their time" to do what matters to them on the weekend. They lose the commitment, the sense of mission and the excitement with which they started their careers. We get damn little of their energy and almost none of their spirit. (p. 7)

The pace of change will require flexibility in assigning staff resources and also innovation in developing and using their skills. Library managers and administrators will be challenged to attract and retain talented staff in order to stay abreast of new technologies and evolving user needs. They will be required to develop strategies and innovative approaches involving staff training, job design, and methods for coping with stress brought on by change.

All of this suggests that librarians will once again be expected to do better what they already do well—i.e., respond to changing demands and a changing work environment. Without the prospect of greatly enhanced resources to assist them in this task, they will have to focus their attention more than ever on improving job performance if the challenge is to be met.
INFLUENCING JOB PERFORMANCE

For many years, organizational behaviorists have debated and analyzed the elements affecting job performance. A review of their results leads to the conclusion that there is a connection between work-related attitudes and performance—i.e., attitudes toward one’s job affect one’s performance. Of these attitudes, one of the most significant is job satisfaction. As crucial as it is for an organization to have visionary administrators, it is important that department heads assign tasks so that staff at all levels feel a high degree of satisfaction with the job they are asked to perform. This includes the feeling that they are having a positive effect on the library and have some level of control over their jobs.

THE NATURE OF JOB SATISFACTION

A review of the literature of organizational behavior reveals numerous definitions of job satisfaction. Edwin Locke (1976) provides one of the best. He defines it as an emotional reaction that “results from the perception that one’s job fulfills or allows the fulfillment of one’s important job values, providing and to the degree that those values are congruent with one’s needs” (p. 1307).

Locke points out that job satisfaction is not the same as “morale.” Job satisfaction involves a retrospective assessment of one’s job; morale is concerned more with a positive desire to continue to work at one’s job and is most often used to describe the attitude of a working group rather than that of a single individual.

Needs and Values

It is also important for job satisfaction to distinguish between needs and values. Needs can be defined as those basic psychological and physiological requirements which humans fulfill by seeking such necessities as food and sleep. In Craig Pinder's (1984) words, needs “are basic forces that initiate and guide behavior for the sake of the preservation and health of the individual.” Values, on the other hand, “are those things that a person believes are conducive to his welfare” (p. 95). In the work setting, needs/goals are translated into such tangible basic requirements as pay, promotion, and recognition. Values in the work setting include subjective elements such as the individual’s perceptions of job content, job significance, and equitable treatment in the distribution of rewards. The point is that the key determinant of job satisfaction, assuming one’s needs are fulfilled, is the extent to which values, as defined by the individual, are being met.

Limitations of Research on Job Satisfaction

Certain problems concerning the relationship of job satisfaction to performance, however, should be acknowledged. The first of these
relates to shortcomings in the research on job satisfaction conducted to date. Among the array of job related attitudinal constructs, job satisfaction has attracted the most attention by far of organizational behaviorists. Because literally thousands of research projects have dealt with the topic over the past twenty-five years, a comprehensive review and assessment of the literature is beyond the scope of this article. As one authority has declared, however, the large number of studies has not resulted in full agreement on what job satisfaction is, how it is actually influenced in work organizations, and what its consequences are for understanding and managing these organizations. The differences of approach in the studies, along with problems of reliability and validity of measurement, have made comparison of data and results difficult (Pinder, 1984, p. 94).

There is sufficient agreement among studies, however, to discuss the ramifications of job satisfaction while recognizing that the lack of total agreement among organizational behaviorists on what most managers know intuitively about job satisfaction is a reflection of the state of research on the topic—i.e., the common problems of reliability and validity of measurement—rather than an indication that job satisfaction is not a valid concept for practical consideration by managers. Because of difficulties in testing theories, certain ones, such as those surrounding job satisfaction, may be more valid than organizational scientists have been able to demonstrate thus far. In other words, the theories of job satisfaction may be more valid and of potentially more applied use than can be proven empirically.

**Relationship of Job Satisfaction to Performance**

Another limitation of job satisfaction studies concerns the relationship between job satisfaction and performance. For almost fifty years, a common assumption among managers has been that staff who are more satisfied in their work tend to be more productive. It makes intuitive sense that a satisfied employee is a productive employee. In contrast to the problems surrounding the definition of job satisfaction, however, research by organizational behaviorists on these two variables in numerous studies has concluded that there is no simple direct relationship between job attitudes, including job satisfaction, and job performance (Pinder, 1984, p. 101). This conclusion follows from the related evidence that shows it is seldom the case that attitudes lead to specific behaviors in a predictable fashion. Despite the common-sense belief that satisfaction leads inexorably to better performance, research has shown that this is not reliably true (Bhagat, 1982). For instance, a highly satisfied individual can become complacent and then coast along on his or her past contributions. Conversely, an individual with a low level
of satisfaction may be very productive if he or she perceives that such a performance will be rewarded by a promotion, a pay increase, or a chance for another job elsewhere.

If it is true that managerial attempts to improve job satisfaction will not necessarily result in improved staff performance or productivity, the question arises as to why managers should be concerned about job satisfaction at all. Several responses can be offered. First, the fact that managers tend to assume there is more of a connection between staff attitudes toward their jobs and staff performance than in fact there is does not mean necessarily that there is never a connection. Research results have shown that, while there is not always a cause and effect relationship, sometimes there can be a direct relationship (Pinder, 1984).

A second reason why managers should be concerned about job satisfaction arises from the negative consequences of the opposite of job satisfaction—dissatisfaction. A staff member who is chronically dissatisfied with his or her job will manifest this by any of several behaviors, including absenteeism, tardiness, and turnover. The first two result inevitably in expensive losses for the organization. The third—turnover—can also be very costly due to the expenses associated with disruptions in the work process and the recruitment and training of new staff. Unlike absenteeism and tardiness, of course, turnover can sometimes actually benefit an organization, as when dollar savings are realized from the replacement of those who leave with new staff who are compensated with lower salaries and benefit costs. Turnover also is occasionally the only viable alternative in cases of disruptive behavior or conflict among staff members.

Another important reason the manager should be concerned about job satisfaction is from a strictly humanitarian concern for the well-being of the individuals who make up the staff. This perspective emphasizes the importance of those elements of the work setting which affect the quality of work life of each member of the staff; that is, making the work setting an enjoyable and pleasant place to come to every day. While many elements external to the work setting may affect the mental and physical condition of an individual, no one could fault the manager who demonstrates a human concern for his or her staff by striving to make their jobs as satisfying and fulfilling as is reasonably possible.

The message, in sum, for perplexed and caring managers is that they should be very concerned about job satisfaction but recognize also that the application of any policies aimed at that goal is difficult and may not obtain the immediate hoped for results of improvements in job performance.
OTHER JOB RELATED ATTITUDES

Job satisfaction is only one among several job related attitudes which may have an impact on staff performance. The extent to which an individual is committed to an organization and the level of job involvement are also important elements to consider. Other factors, including the realities of organizational life, will affect the degree to which enlightened managers are successful in improving job satisfaction and job performance among their staff. Some of these organizational realities are described below.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment has been described as consisting of three attitudes and intentions: (1) a strong belief in, and acceptance of, the organization's values and goals; (2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (3) a definite desire to remain a member of the organization (Porter et al., 1974). People who are committed to their organizations are more likely to make sacrifices for them. In other words, organizational commitment is a form of loyalty to one's organization as opposed to the person's particular job, department, or work group.

Several studies have shown that work related experiences affect the degree of commitment among staff. R. M. Steers (1977) found that the most important influences on commitment levels were: positive group attitudes among one's peers; feelings by the individual staff member that he or she is of some importance to the organization; feelings that the organization meets the individual's prior expectations; and feelings that the organization could be relied upon to carry out its commitment to its staff.

The answer to the question of whether organizational commitment is a good thing may vary, depending upon whether one is looking at it from the organization's perspective or that of the staff member. If turnover is considered to have primarily negative consequences for an organization, then the extent to which staff commitment can reduce that phenomenon would seem highly desirable. On the other hand, sometimes that commitment may not be reciprocated by the organization. While an organization may respond to a staff member's commitment by fostering a positive attitude and feelings of nurturing and mutual trust, economic necessities can also force even the most benevolent of employers to abandon or lay off those whose commitment has helped make the organization effective. In other words, while commitment is important to the organization, it may or may not be best for an individual's long-term interests.
Job Involvement

Job involvement has to do with the connection between the work individuals do and their self-concept. For a person with a high level of job involvement, there is a correlation between how that person feels about his or her performance and how he or she feels about himself or herself. Such an individual's work is a very significant concern, closely affecting his or her self-esteem. It may, in fact, be one of the most important aspects of his or her life if not the most important (Pinder, 1984, p. 107).

With the exception of one topic, research by organizational behaviorists on the relationship between job involvement and staff performance has been minimal and inconclusive thus far. The one topic that has been studied is "workaholism." Workaholism deals with job involvement carried to an extreme. The effect of a workaholic on an organization can be both negative and positive. Whereas they work hard, make up for low commitment of others, and are always on hand to perform tasks others avoid, workaholics can also create a dependency by others around them and fail to delegate work to others, thus spreading themselves too thin to the point of performing poorly. Their work habits also may affect their personal lives, leading to difficulties with spouses, friends, and families (Machlowitz, 1980). In sum, while job involvement may have positive consequences for an individual and his performance, carried to an extreme, it can have a detrimental effect on both the organization and the individual.

Among the job-related attitudes described thus far and the numerous others not addressed, job satisfaction is singled out for emphasis because, although the connections are not absolutely predictable, it is clearly one of the most important and probably the one attitude which can have the greatest impact, either positive or negative, on an individual and an organization. Moreover, there are certain steps a manager can readily take to improve job satisfaction and the work environment. Because of this, the manager needs to understand the implications of job satisfaction, including both its possibilities and its limitations. Enough library managers are familiar with the term, recognize its importance from their own experience, and desire at least sufficient understanding of its concepts to allow it to be included in the repertoire of management knowledge and skills at their disposal.

Organizational Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction

Attention thus far has focused primarily on the job-related attitudes of the individual staff member and their impact on job satisfaction and performance. As mentioned earlier, other factors relating to the realities of the organizational culture can also
significantly affect the degree to which managers will succeed in improving job performance. The impact of work setting on job attitudes and job performance should not be underestimated. Even if managers were able to put into practice the most optimal motivational theories, the myriad constraints found in some organizations may still undermine the effective performance of staff. Before undertaking any program to improve job satisfaction and performance, managers would be well advised to look closely at their organizational culture to see to what extent any of these characteristics may be prevalent. Their presence may indicate a condition which will limit, if not totally preclude, any efforts to make improvements.

*Job Dissatisfaction and the Dysfunctional Organization*

The opposite end of the satisfaction continuum, of course, is dissatisfaction. A manager might assume that if individuals become more satisfied with their jobs, they necessarily become less dissatisfied, and vice versa. The matter, however, is not that simple. Because jobs are multifaceted, individuals can simultaneously find satisfaction and dissatisfaction with different aspects of their jobs.

What are the consequences when staff are not achieving such satisfaction? What are some of the symptoms within the organization? Here are a few telltale signs of such a condition:

- Staff seem to have no sense of, or agreement with, the library's values and goals.
- While staff are competent and well-educated, they do not feel they are working near their potential.
- Although staff do adequate and sometimes above average work, they rarely are seen to achieve excellence.
- Because the performance of regular work is not of high quality, department heads are reluctant to assign more challenging tasks to staff despite the fact that they claim they want more exciting work.
- Staff are concerned that they are not being developed.
- Sometimes staff respond to feedback on their performance from the department head with defensiveness and denial.
- Work done frequently lacks quality or is chronically late; department heads have to prod staff to meet deadlines and perform assignments up to standard.
- Staff tend not to take initiates, don't take on tasks before having to be asked, and react to problems rather than anticipate them.
- Staff tend to resist efforts to integrate their efforts with the work of others.
- Staff also tend to focus on their narrow domains, seldom taking the total department perspective.
Despite calling themselves a "team," a department seldom shows much teamwork.

Meetings frequently are considered a waste of time because staff seldom bring up all the issues, and when they do raise their concerns, they tend to defend their own turf rather than strive for a quality solution.

Generally, there is a significant gap between what each department produces and its potential (Bradford & Cohen, 1984).

These are only some of the indicators of job dissatisfaction among staff. Nor do they necessarily indicate that job dissatisfaction is the only problem. Sometimes dissatisfaction is the result of other factors beyond the ability of managers or staff to control such as budget restrictions, poor administrative leadership, or inadequate equipment. These factors fall under the general heading of organizational culture or work setting. Constraints arising from budgetary limitations or other influential external forces frequently are beyond the power of administrators and managers to control. Administrators can, however, strongly influence the important internal elements of the organizational culture, especially those arising from the system of leadership.

When such influences are destructive, they are difficult to identify and remove. Sometimes an organization can be dysfunctional and still not be aware of it. Anne Schaef and Diane Fassel (1988) describe the dysfunctional organizational culture in terms of the addiction and co-dependency of its members to a negative ineffective system of operation. A system is comprised of ideas, roles, definitions, and processes and frequently has a life of its own. An addictive system is one that is so closed that it allows few alternatives to the individual in terms of roles, behaviors, ways of thinking, or perceptions. Instead, the individual is pressured or required to adopt addictive thinking patterns.

According to Schaef and Fassel (1988), the addictive system is characterized by counterproductive features which parallel in many ways the relationship of co-dependency between an alcoholic and his/her family and friends. The first of these features is denial, which supports a closed dishonest system by not allowing individuals to see what is really happening in it. Confusion exists because everyone is trying to figure out what is going on; indeed, some administrators and organizations thrive on the crises created by confusion. Self-centeredness reflects the focus on the self as the center of the universe, and everything that happens is thus perceived as either "for" or "against" the "self." Dishonesty reflects the need to lie to oneself and others in order to keep out of touch with one's feelings and
to put up a good front to the world at large. Control, or, more accurately, the illusion of control, arises from the desire to control one another or to avoid control. Frozen feelings derive from the need to block feelings, intuition, and other sources of information which individuals cannot handle. Some individuals follow the axiom, "When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping," in order to be distracted from things that are difficult to face. Ethical deterioration inevitably results from all of these afflictions (Schaef & Fassel, 1988, pp. 62-68).

Manfred Kets deVries and Danny Miller (1984) assert that an organization in trouble takes on the personality of the key administrator or executive (dramatic, depressive, paranoid, compulsive, and schizoid). They describe five types of dysfunctional organizations, each of which acquires its character and troubles because the top executive exhibits one or more of these neurotic styles. Such a person draws an inordinate amount of attention, energy, and time away from other staff.

**Job Satisfaction and the Well-Functioning Organization**

In a well-functioning organization, staff working at or near their full potential are likely to be characterized by a sense of commitment. There are collaborative team efforts, integration of purpose, initiative, acceptance of responsibility, concern about the whole of the organization, active problem solving, acceptance of unit and library-wide goals, and a focus on quality service and performance. Staff who are satisfied with their jobs tend not to wait for the department head to notice a problem with service, methods of operation, coordination, or other functions. They assume responsibility themselves for the unit's success and take the initiative to deal with problems and meet objectives, thus avoiding the passive acceptance of things gone wrong because "it's not my job" (Bradford & Cohen, 1984, p. 7).

Quality of service and task accomplishment are important to these staff. The unit strives to be at the forefront of its field. Doing the work well is the central focus, rather than personal or political issues. Careful attention is paid to the quality of the people in the unit; members are recruited for their qualifications and not for similarity of social class, race, sex, or religion. Promotion and merit salary increases are based on performance, with competence given a higher priority than seniority. Feedback on performance is direct and unambiguous, with emphasis on ways to improve performance rather than on rejection or negative criticism. Training and staff development are integral elements of library personnel policy and strategic planning.
A Framework For Job Satisfaction

What positive actions can library administrators and managers implement in order to improve job satisfaction and, possibly, performance? To a certain degree, the answers for any one institution will be shaped by its own particular environmental characteristics or setting. Certain elements common to most institutions can be addressed, however, and solutions molded to fit specific needs. Numerous writers have discussed this topic and offered ideas. None offer absolute guaranteed solutions. The following suggestions are based on personal experience and research.

Hire the Best Staff. As obvious as this recommendation is, it is frequently taken for granted by managers. Despite the fact that the current hiring environment is an "employer's market" in which there tend to be numerous applicants for each position, some managers do not make much effort to find the best candidates. As positions are eliminated by budget cuts, administrators should be even more anxious to fill vacancies with the most talented individuals in order to maintain or improve productivity.

For professional library positions, conducting regional or national searches should yield at least these advantages: (1) increase the possibility of hiring the most talented person for a job, thereby increasing the performance output; (2) help establish a sense among the staff that decisions are based on the best qualifications rather than favoritism or seniority; (3) reassure staff that they will be working with the best person who will not be a burdensome co-worker; and (4) if an in-house candidate is selected, it will confirm that person's standing as the best in the pool.

Enrich Jobs. Job enrichment is a broad term encompassing several possible measures intended to increase and sustain intrinsic motivation among staff. The assumption is that higher levels of motivation will be accompanied by higher levels of job satisfaction and performance. While this may be the result, these measures will at least benefit the organization indirectly through healthier work attitudes.

The likelihood that job enrichment will positively affect the performance of librarians is greatly enhanced by the nature of the profession and the pervading motivation of individuals entering it. Librarians as a group are professionals motivated to serve others. They enjoy their roles as providers of information and as participants in the larger purpose of education or research. They can be spurred on by the sheer excitement of solving a problem, an attitude which suggests that money is not their primary incentive. Measures which give librarians a greater sense of participation in reaching
organizational goals and improve their ability to provide service should be well received. Any improvement in performance will likely be due to job enrichment, not simply to the fact that a change has occurred.

Redesign Work. Studies by organizational behaviorists have shown that work redesign is a consistently effective way to improve performance (Berlinger et al., 1988). In undertaking such an effort, administrators and staff should focus on specific steps, including:

1. Reduce routine and repetitive tasks which tend to be avoided by staff. A reduction in the dysfunctional behavior of avoidance should improve satisfaction and performance.
2. Restructure jobs into meaningful units. This may uncover and reduce unnecessary supervision or coordination imposed when work was broken down into “efficient” units. Higher quality work and output may also result.
3. Rethink work flow and structure. New methods may be discovered for performing the work more efficiently.
4. Let staff participate in the process of redesigning their jobs. Because they will expect their new jobs to be better than the old ones, their performance may improve.
5. Take steps to improve job clarity and reduce role ambiguity. Even highly motivated and able staff will perform less effectively and be less satisfied if they are unclear as to what they are supposed to do exactly. If there is role conflict—where two or more individuals place conflicting expectations on the staff member—the resulting confusion will likely preclude successful job performance.
6. Take care to infuse work and interactions with dignity and a sense of professionalism.

Introduce Training Programs and Professional Development. Closely allied with the desire for enriched jobs is the need for maintaining the skills required to be effective. A job-related training program designed to provide staff with new techniques for doing their job better will benefit the organization both directly—by sustaining a competent staff—and indirectly—by affirming for the individual the organization’s commitment to him or her. It will also provide a degree of security that the staff member will remain employable, even if not employed, should layoffs occur. Employment, especially during times of budget cuts and staff reductions, is dependent upon continuing employability. To help maintain that employability, organizations must rely upon ongoing training programs (Kanter, 1989).

Professional staff must also recognize that, while work may or may not be done more efficiently in the future, it will undeniably be done differently. To accommodate these changes, time and effort
must be spent for learning, creating, and enhancing skills. While the organization will benefit, the primary gain will accrue to the librarian who may be looking for advancement or new challenges. Since access to the next job is directly tied to excellence in the present one, the individual should identify goals, values, and career aspirations.

The library manager can help by serving as a career advisor and assisting the individual in the development of a career plan. The library administrator also can assist by providing a formal career guidance program and making certain a system of career “ladders” exists as an option for staff.

**Empower the Staff.** In her article on empowerment of library staff, Maureen Sullivan (1991) proposes a new paradigm of leadership for library managers in which staff are more directly involved in problem-solving and decision-making activities. Such inclusion would promote “excellence, self-responsibility and development” (p. 75). A premise of this strategy is that the staff actually doing the work have the necessary information and relevant experience for problem solving within their units of operation. The manager assumes more the role of a coach rather than someone who is in charge. This is different from the traditional view of the manager as “hero”—i.e., the person with responsibility who has all the answers and to whom staff turn for decisions and solutions to problems. As staff have become dissatisfied with the inadequacies of this model, pressure has risen to consider staff as partners rather than as subordinates.

Another premise is that, when people participate in problem solving and decision making, they have more of a sense of control and responsibility and consequently are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and the organization. This sense of shared responsibility is also likely to mean that they “buy into” and support what will largely be their decisions. During difficult times when cutbacks or restructurings have to be made, this result can be especially helpful to an organization by encouraging greater ownership of the decisions and acceptance of the consequences.

**Build an Effective Performance Management System.** One of the oldest and most effective prescriptions for promoting job satisfaction is to tie rewards to effort and performance. Reward and performance feedback, if handled properly, can encourage not only the kind of behavior they are intended to promote, but also encourage organizational commitment. To be successful, such a system must be perceived to be equitable, realistic in its expectations, and conforming to a set of clearly understood and accepted standards.

Roland Glaser and Marshall Sashkin (1984) have identified five performance management opportunities which are available to managers in most organizations.
• Defining performance expectations and setting goals: communicating work process and outcome expectations.
• Delegating: making work assignments.
• Training: preparing staff for work assignments.
• Coaching and counseling: monitoring and improving work performance.
• Appraising performance: assessing and evaluating work processes and outcomes (Glaser & Sashkin, 1984).

Performance management should be regarded as an ongoing process, not a single event or series of unrelated events.

Whatever form a performance management system takes, it should be a mechanism for communication in which goals are mutually agreed upon in advance, progress toward those goals is reviewed regularly, and problems and shortcomings are analyzed. If discussions occur in this manner, neither the evaluator nor the staff member should be surprised by any problems in the performance. Such a system will go a long way toward instilling a sense of confidence and job satisfaction.

*Construct a Fair Reward System.* A method for rewarding performance should accompany a performance management system covering promotions, merit increases, and commendations. Some organizations have successfully used a formal system with prescribed requirements and process. Others rely upon an informal year end review. Whatever method is employed, a primary requirement is that it be perceived by its constituents as fair. If promotions are partly determined by outside professional activities, the library should make an effort to provide some level of support even if it is only time off to attend conferences.

*Identify Career Paths.* Career paths within a library system should be clearly identified and made apparent to staff. As staff express interest in moving along these paths, managers should be alert to opportunities to provide assistance and counseling. An organization that offers staff a reasonable hope for advancement and self-improvement will likely benefit from greater staff commitment.

*Correct Organizational Weaknesses.* Library administrators should review the organizational structure itself to make sure that it supports, and does not impair, the mission of the library. Because the structure and the way work is organized are integral to accomplishing the mission, both must facilitate the work of staff. Care should be taken by administrators and managers not to involve staff in wasteful unfocused activities that undermine the real purpose of the organization in the manner of the addictive organization described.
earlier. Job satisfaction will be at a low level for even well trained staff and enlightened managers if they fall under the leadership of disorganized distant administrators.

All activities should add value to the staff's work. An organizational structure should promote synergies: a whole that multiplies the value of the parts. A key concept should be focus—i.e., ensuring that staff are able to concentrate on doing what they do best in an organization focused on maximizing its service effectiveness.

Innovation and creativity should be encouraged and rewarded. When individuals' activities are limited to what is in their job descriptions, it is likely their energy and commitment will also be limited. In order to promote innovation and empower staff to reach for the future, a requirement is respect for the competence of individuals in the organization.

CONCLUSION

It can be said that organizations are complex and that the application of theories to improve job satisfaction, job performance, and the retention of talented staff is not only difficult but likely, sometimes, to have limited success. Nonetheless, managers can, and must, take action if they are to have any hope of maintaining a workforce capable of meeting the challenges of the next decade.

REFERENCES


