

FIRE SERVICES EXAMINATIONS BOARD

STUDY NOTE

EXAMINATION

LEADING FIREFIGHTERS EXAMINATION

PAPER

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

ITEM

LEADERSHIP, MOTIVATION & COMMUNICATION

STUDY NOTE No.

1305

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY NOTE

This study note has been prepared as the basis of study in connection with the qualifying examinations for promotion.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the information contained in the study note and understand how it should be applied:

The 'References' made at the end of the Study Note are included for information only and candidates will not be expected to study these as part of the bibliography.

LEADERSHIP, MOTIVATION & COMMUNICATION

1. Introduction

The role of a Leading firefighter may include the responsibility for a fire crew, the management of the duty watch, the training of personnel at the training school or other duties involving personnel.

Under these circumstances, an understanding of some of the key elements in management is considered to be essential.

This study note is a brief introduction to management with particular emphasis on Leadership, Motivation and Communication.

2. Management

Management' could be described as "The technique of controlling, directing and co-ordinating fire service personnel and resources."

Whilst this in its self this is a simple phrase, in practice, 'management' is a very complex subject and made up of many techniques and theories which are used to control or run the various aspects of an organisation.

In fact, within the same organisation, managers will use different techniques and theories for controlling their particular section of the business, depending on their role and the task to be undertaken.

For example, the manager of a small finance section at headquarters will not use the same managerial techniques for the routine work in this section as a Crew Commander would with crew members at a fire.

The reason for using these different techniques or styles can be explained by an examination of the Roles of a Manager as described below.

3. Roles of a Manager

The three principle roles of the manager can be described as being:

(a) An Interpersonal Role;

This role comprises leadership; motivation; employee supervision and development;

(b) An Informational Role;

This role relates to the obtaining and receiving of information; the passing on of information both up and down the organisation; ie communication; and

(c) A Decisional Role;

Within this role are such matters as taking corrective actions on problems; adapting to changes within the organisation and negotiating and discussing issues with subordinates.

The three roles are interconnected and are shown pictorially in Fig. 1 below:

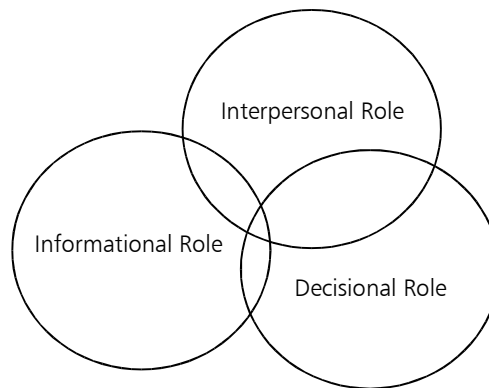


Fig.1 Roles of a Manager

From the above it can be deduced that each manager will apply different emphasis to the three areas depending on the task to be undertaken.

For example, the manager in the Public Relations department will apply more emphasis on the Informational Role than the others because it is core to his or her role, whilst an operational officer would apply more emphasis on the Decisional Role at a fire.

This does not mean that the other roles of the manager are ignored, they just receive more or less emphasis in particular circumstances.

4. Leadership

One of the three principle roles of the manager as described in paragraph 3 above, is the 'Interpersonal Role'.

A key area within this role is leadership.

Leadership can be defined as: 'The practice of leading, guiding and inspiring others to achieve an objective'.

There are many different types, theories or styles of leadership; three of them being:

Authoritarian

Democratic

Functional

(a) Authoritarian

With authoritarian leadership, decisions are made and are carried out without question.

Eg In an operational situation the Crew Commander may have to recognise the emergency nature of the situation and be more urgent and decisive.

There is the need to give quick, clear and concise direction. The requirements are usually urgent and discussion is not possible as compliance with the orders and operational procedures are essential.

(b) Democratic

With this form of leadership, opportunity is given for groups or individuals to participate in the process of decision-making. In these circumstances sounder decisions may often be reached when full use is made of all the knowledge and skill of those concerned.

eg In a non-operational situation such as the watch routines at the fire station, the leadership required from the Crew Commander does not always relate to immediate decision-making and it may therefore be of a consultative nature associated with the democratic style.

It may be prudent to invite discussion and seek ideas from members of the watch. Decisions and plans could then be made on the basis of those ideas. This particular style is relevant to encouraging personnel to play an active role in contributing to the running of the watch.

(c) Functional

Functional leadership is where an analysis of the functions involved in achieving an objective is undertaken dependant upon three areas of need.

The functional approach is widely accepted as being more relevant to the fire service because crew and watch commanders have to constantly alter their style of leadership due to the various emergency and non-emergency situations that they manage.

In this style of leadership it is necessary to recognise and understand the relationship and importance of three areas of need.

These are:

Task Need;

Group Need; and

Individual Need.

Specific needs exist within each of these areas and it is the role of the leader (Crew Commander) to carry out appropriate functions to meet them.

The areas of need are interconnected and are shown pictorially in Fig. 2 below:

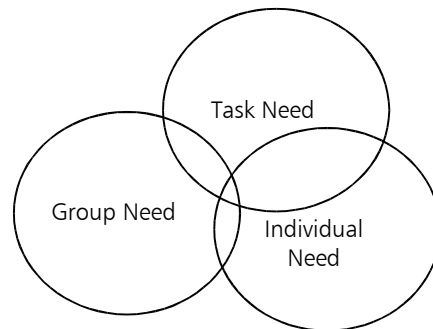


Fig. 2 Areas of Need

(i) Task Need:

Task need involves the leader in the delivery of an objective. This requires the following functions to be analysed and undertaken to achieve it:

- (a) Define the overall task required;
- (b) Make a plan;
- (c) Allocate work and resources;
- (d) Control the quality and tempo of work;
- (e) Check performance against the plan; and
- (f) Adjust the plan as necessary

(ii) Group Need:

Group need involves the leader in the functions of:

- (a) Setting standards;
- (b) Encouraging, motivating and giving a sense of purpose;
- (c) Building team spirit;
- (d) Maintaining discipline;
- (e) Ensuring good communications; and
- (f) The provision of training.

(iii) Individual Need:

Individual need involves the leader in the functions of:

- (a) Attending to personal problems and giving advice where appropriate;
- (b) Providing encouragement;
- (c) Recognising potential abilities and ensuring they are acknowledged and fully utilised;
- (d) Acknowledging members of the group as individuals; and
- (e) Providing training and development.

Conclusion

Functional Leadership is applied when each of the three principle task needs are analysed and appropriate functions to meet them are undertaken.

5. Motivation

A further key area within the 'Interpersonal Role' of a manager in paragraph 3 above, is motivation.

Motivation can be defined as 'The provision of incentive or reason for a course of action'

Issues relating to motivation are linked to functional leadership through the issues already mentioned in:

- 4(c) ii (b) Encouraging and giving a sense of purpose;
- 4(c) ii (c) Building team spirit;
- 4(c) iii (b) Providing encouragement;
- 4(c) iii (c) Recognising potential abilities and ensuring they are acknowledged and fully utilised;
- 4(c) iii (d) Acknowledging members of the group as individuals.

It can be seen therefore that as a supervisor (Crew Commander) with the above responsibilities, a degree of knowledge and understanding on the subject of motivation is important.

This section describes some of the issues involved.

At work people carry out assigned duties to the extent that to do so is rewarding, ie the activity satisfies their personal needs. However, needs are complex, unstable and may even be unrecognised by the individuals themselves. Needs vary between individuals, and change with time in the same individual as priorities alter.

Any theory of motivation to be useful must help one to distinguish different types of needs and must treat them as dynamic rather than static elements of behaviour.

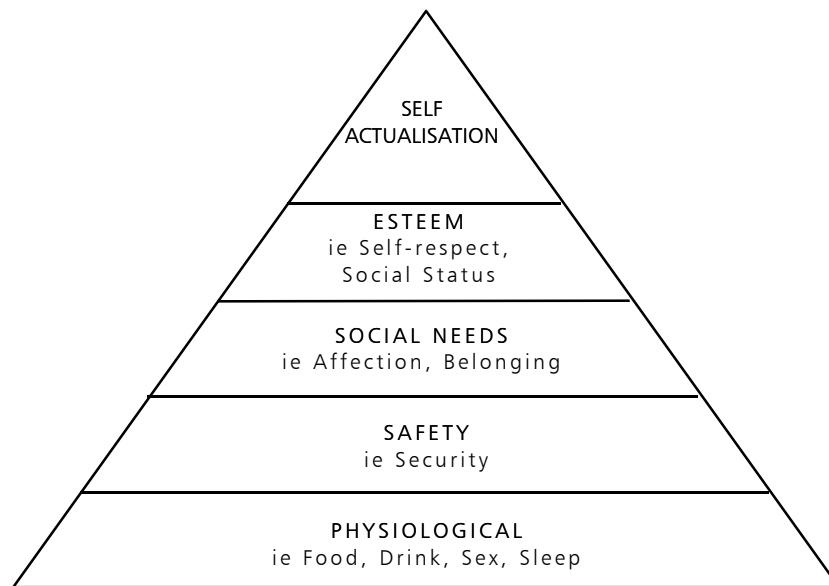
There are many theories about motivation and briefly described below are two, firstly the contribution of Abraham Maslow and secondly that of Douglas McGregor.

5.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow explained human behaviour in terms of a hierarchy of needs. He postulated that there are five levels of need and a person will seek to satisfy one before aspiring to the next higher level and attitudes and ambitions at a point in time will depend upon the persons position on the hierarchical ladder. The five levels, in ascending order, are:

- (a) Physiological - the basic needs necessary for survival, eg food, drink, sex;
- (b) Safety - their own security, the security of their job or the security of their way of life;
- (c) Social needs - the need to belong, to be accepted and to give and receive affection;
- (d) Esteem - the desire for status and respect and to command the admiration of there colleagues;
- (e) Self-actualisation - the summit of human ambition to realise one's full potential.

Maslow's hierarchy is often depicted in the form of a pyramid as shown below.



Maslow recognised that the need to eat, for example, was different from the need for promotion; he also saw that needs depend on what one has, so that a need when satisfied ceases to motivate behaviour, whereas an unfulfilled need will strongly influence it.

This provides some interesting implications that relate to a supervisor's role, these being:

- (a) Organisations generally are far better at satisfying the lower level needs (pay, pensions and 'perks') than the higher level needs; and
- (b) Unsatisfied needs result in tensions and frustrations and the need to realise these may strongly motivate behaviour, either in a positive or negative direction. The type of negative behaviour that might be met is:
 - (i) Withdrawal, eg apathy, poor timekeeping, excessive sickness, day dreaming;
 - (ii) Aggression - apart from the obvious physical aspects of aggression, unsatisfied needs can make people aggressive towards the organisation and 'authority'. Disguised forms of aggression are shouting, derision, swearing, peevishness, carping criticism and sarcasm; and
 - (iii) Substitution - frustrated individuals may 'substitute' by trying to satisfy their needs, say for status, within an informal group whose activities they may influence to resist or otherwise frustrate decisions.

5.2 McGregor: Theory X and Theory Y

The work of Douglas McGregor concerning the influence of the working environment on motivation and job performance is particularly interesting to managers because he was concerned with the effects of supervisors' attitudes and management 'style' on employee behaviour.

McGregor considered that behind every managerial decision or action lay assumptions about human nature and human behaviour.

He grouped these assumptions under two headings, which he called 'Theory X' and 'Theory Y'.

Theory X is particularly associated with a nineteenth century management style when society was very different. It comprises the rather pessimistic, cynical view that many people have of human nature, that:

- (a) People have an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if they can;
- (b) People must be coerced and threatened with punishment to get them to work adequately; and
- (c) People prefer to be directed, shun responsibility, have little ambition and seek security above all.

Theory X explains why many conservative managers stress the importance of authoritarian management (4a).

McGregor maintains that the 'carrot and stick' idea of motivation associated with Theory X applies where management can provide or deny the means of satisfying the lower human needs.

However, the 'carrot and stick' method does not work once a person has reached an adequate subsistence level and is motivated by higher needs.

Then, management must seek to create conditions that will allow a person to satisfy their higher needs.

Theory Y represents a much more optimistic and trusting attitude towards human nature, and is based on the very different assumptions that:

- (a) Work is as natural as play or rest;
- (b) A person will exercise self-direction and self-control to achieve their aims;
- (c) Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with achievement;
- (d) People learn to seek responsibility;
- (e) Creativity and imagination are widely, not narrowly, distributed in the population; and
- (f) Usually, a person's intellectual capabilities are only partially used.

Theories X and Y appear as extremes and McGregor emphasised that he believed this to be so.

He did not imply that there were two kinds of people, those who fit the assumptions of X and those who fit the assumptions of Y.

People tend towards Y, but McGregor believed that if management treats them in accordance with Theory X, then they will tend to become people who fit the X assumptions.

Conversely, treat them as Y people and they will move further towards the assumptions of that theory. Thus McGregor would see a supervisor's task as the creation of opportunities that will allow the potential assumed under Theory Y to be exploited.

5.3 Motivation - Conclusion

The above is a very brief summary of two of the major developments in the analysis of motivation. On no account should it be regarded as a comprehensive review of all the factors involved.

However, the theories outlined are well founded and provide a firm basis from which to initiate action. The action itself will be the result of the individual's own judgement based on what is known from experience, what is known about the people involved and what is known about the environment in which the need for action arises.

6. Communication

One of the three principle roles of the manager described in section 3, above, is an Informational Role, or one of communication.

Communication can be defined as 'the interchange of ideas and information' and relates to the obtaining and receiving of information and the passing on of information both up and down the organisation.

The elements of communication are:

(a) Transmitting information;

(b) A communications medium; and

(c) Receiving information.

(a) In transmitting information you should:

(i) Think, write or speak clearly, briefly and accurately;

(ii) Aim at consistency in style and methods so as to avoid possible confusion;

(iii) Ensure that the objective is fully understood;

(iv) Be selective in content and avoid ambiguity;

(v) Plan the timing - a message given too late or too early may be of no value; and

(vi) Make suitable arrangements for feedback to be assessed.

(b) When selecting a communications medium, choose the method that is the most effective and efficient. The principle communicators being:

(i) Face to face discussion;

(ii) Written correspondence;

(iii) Visual, via signals;

(iv) Speech, via a communicator such as a telephone or a radio;

(v) Audio/visual presentations;

(vi) Information technology, such as email; Internet and Intranet.

It is vitally important to obtain feedback by asking questions that will ascertain whether a communication has been understood, or by carrying out a check of a partly completed task.

- (c) When receiving information you should:
- (i) Be alert;
 - (ii) Be prepared to listen carefully;
 - (iii) Clarify doubtful points; and
 - (iv) Make no assumptions.

References

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