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Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs – Physiological (Level 1) To Self-Actualization: Every Human Seeks Gratification

Posted on February 24, 2014 by


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Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs – Physiological (Level 1) To Self-Actualization: Every Human Seeks Gratification

Dr. Maslow hypothesized that people are motivated by a hierarchy of needs. Each individual’s needs must be satisfied at the lower levels before they progress to higher, more complex levels. Some of us never get past level 3. Where are you?

http://www.managingchange.com/dynamic/maslow.gif

http://moncton.localintheknow.com/Local_Perspective/David-Campbell/maslow.gif

article 6: Maslow’s hierarchy, societal change and the knowledge worker revolution.
This article connects Maslow’s well known explanation of human actions to the changes that are going on in society at present to make an argument for the way that knowledge workers can best be managed in the interests of achieving the best results for the business. The article provides a background of understanding for developing the tools for leading and motivating Knowledge Workers.

Central is the simple argument that to do what you do well you must be enjoying what you do. Competitive businesses need their employees to be doing what they are doing well in order to prosper in the competitive marketplace.

Maslow’s theory describes what people need to be doing to enjoy themselves.

Other material included describes research into knowledge workers attitudes – attitudes that are determined by the developmental status of society. It can be argued that as society has progressed with economic development individuals have climbed Maslow’s hierarchy. The latest change ("The Knowledge Worker Revolution") is simply a further progression that is the inevitable result of economic development.

Maslow and the Knowledge Worker Revolution


Dr. Maslow hypothesized that people are motivated by a hierarchy of needs. The hierarchy he described may be drawn as follows:

Figure Describing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

http://www.pateo.com/images/maslowmaster4ts.gif

Maslow’s theory requires that:

Each individual’s needs must be satisfied at the lower levels before they progress to the higher, more complex levels.

When low-level needs are satisfied, individuals are no longer motivated by them.

As each level of needs is met, individual’s progress to higher-level motivators.

All the needs are always present.

It can be reasonably hypothesized (See Sidebar: “Why Knowledge Workers are Self-Actualizing”) that Knowledge Workers must be looking for motivation from the highest levels of the triangle – Self-Actualization.

Maslow described the characteristics of the Self-Actualized Person as follows:

Are realistically oriented

Accept other people for what they are

Are spontaneous in thinking, emotions, and behavior

Are problem-centered rather than self-centered

Need privacy
Are autonomous, independent, and able to remain true to themselves in the face of rejection or unpopularity

Have a continuous freshness of appreciation

Have mystic or oceanic experiences although not necessarily religious

Identify with mankind

Have deep meaningful relationships with a few people

Have a democratic structure and judge people as individuals

Have highly developed ethics

Resist total conformity to culture

These characteristics, coupled with the motivational needs described by Maslow (outlined in diagram above), provide some tools for understanding how to motivate Knowledge Workers.

Most Knowledge Workers have no need to worry about their physiological, security, and safety needs, so these basic, low-level needs no longer motivate their actions, although the needs are always present. Many people today are motivated primarily by social, esteem, and self-actualizing needs.

Everyone needs to be loved, to be accepted, and to belong. Individuals join social, religious, fraternal, and educational organizations to fulfill this psychological need.

Esteem needs are a step higher in Maslow's hierarchy. In addition to being merely accepted and belonging, people want to be heard, to be appreciated, and to be wanted. People want to feel important and need status.

At the highest level are self-actualizing needs. People seek to achieve their highest potential through professional, philanthropic, political, educational, and artistic channels. These needs, according to Maslow's concept, become important only when all social and ego needs have been satisfied.

In a team, particularly one with a wide age range, it is likely that individuals' needs will be at various levels on the motivational ladder. Those team members at the highest levels – probably a majority – will probably be motivated by a wider variety of needs than those people at lower stages. Additionally the wide ethnic diversity present in the Knowledge Worker population will increase the variability of factors that will motivate team members. These three factors leads to the increasing need for people to be treated highly individually if they are to be well motivated. At the same time a highly functioning team can satisfy many of the lower level needs on the hierarchy, which further strengthens the team by making it a fun, supportive and attractive place to be part.

All these factors can add synergistically so that a top quality team, 'on a roll', becomes almost unbeatable. Teams operating at this high performance level represent the peak in human efficiency, creativity and innovation. Hence the creation of business environments designed to engender and support such teams is increasingly a major objective for businesses that want to remain competitive.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Citation: Huit, W. (2004). Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Educational Psychology
Abraham Maslow (1954) attempted to synthesize a large body of research related to human motivation. Prior to Maslow, researchers generally focused separately on such factors as biology, achievement, or power to explain what energizes, directs, and sustains human behavior. Maslow posited a hierarchy of human needs based on two groupings: deficiency needs and growth needs. Within the deficiency needs, each lower need must be met before moving to the next higher level. Once each of these needs has been satisfied, if at some future time a deficiency is detected, the individual will act to remove the deficiency. The first four levels are:

1) Physiological: hunger, thirst, bodily comforts, etc.;
2) Safety/security: out of danger;
3) Belonginess and Love: affiliate with others, be accepted; and
4) Esteem: to achieve, be competent, gain approval and recognition.

According to Maslow, an individual is ready to act upon the growth needs if and only if the deficiency needs are met. Maslow’s initial conceptualization included only one growth need—self-actualization. Self-actualized people are characterized by:

1) being problem-focused;
2) incorporating an ongoing freshness of appreciation of life;
3) a concern about personal growth; and
4) the ability to have peak experiences.

Maslow later differentiated the growth need of self-actualization, specifically naming two lower-level growth needs prior to general level of self-actualization (Maslow & Lowery, 1998) and one beyond that level (Maslow, 1971). They are:

5) Cognitive: to know, to understand, and explore;
6) Aesthetic: symmetry, order, and beauty;
7) Self-actualization: to find self-fulfillment and realize one’s potential; and

Self-transcendence: to connect to something beyond the ego or to help others find self-fulfillment and realize their potential.

Maslow’s basic position is that as one becomes more self-actualized and self-transcendent, one becomes more wise (develops wisdom) and automatically knows what to do in a wide variety of situations. Daniels (2001) suggests that Maslow’s ultimate conclusion that the highest levels of self-actualization are transcendent in their nature may be one of his most important contributions to the study of human behavior and motivation.

Norwood (1999) proposes that Maslow’s hierarchy can be used to describe the kinds of information that individuals seek at different levels. For example, individuals at the lowest level seek coping information in order to meet their basic needs. Information that is not directly connected to helping a person meet his or her needs in a very short time span is simply left unattended. Individuals at the safety level need helping information. They seek information that individual’s seek at different levels. For example, individuals at the lowest level seek coping information in order to meet their basic needs. Information that is not directly connected to helping a person meet his or her needs in a very short time span is simply left unattended. Individuals at the safety level need helping information. They seek information that is directly connected to helping a person meet his or her needs in a very short time span is simply left unattended.
Maslow published his first conceptualization of his theory over 50 years ago (Maslow, 1943) and it has since become one of the most popular and often cited theories of human motivation. An interesting phenomenon related to Maslow’s work is that in spite of a lack of evidence to support his hierarchy, it enjoys wide acceptance (Wahba & Bridgewater, 1976; Soper, Milford & Rosenthal, 1995).

The few major studies that have been completed on the hierarchy seem to support the proposals of William James (1892/1962) and Mathes (1981) that there are three levels of human needs. James hypothesized the levels of material (physiological, safety), social (belongingness, esteem), and spiritual. Mathes proposed the three levels were physiological, belongingness, and self-actualization; he considered security and self-esteem as unwarranted. Alderfer (1972) developed a comparable hierarchy with his ERG (existence, relatedness, and growth) theory. His approach modified Maslow’s theory based on the work of Gordon Allport (1960, 1961) who incorporated concepts from systems theory into his work on personality.

### Alderfer’s Hierarchy of Motivational Needs

Maslow recognized that not all personalities followed his proposed hierarchy. While a variety of personality dimensions might be considered as related to motivational needs, one of the most often cited is that of introversion and extraversion. Reorganizing Maslow’s hierarchy based on the work of Alderfer and considering the introversion/extraversion dimension of personality results in three levels, each with an introverted and extroverted component. This organization suggests there may be two aspects of each level that differentiate how people relate to each set of needs. Different personalities might relate more to one dimension than the other. For example, an introvert at the level of Other/Relatedness might be more concerned with his or her own perceptions of being included in a group, whereas an extrovert at that same level would pay more attention to how others value that membership.

### A Reorganization of Maslow’s and Alderfer’s Hierarchies

At this point there is little agreement about the identification of basic human needs and how they are ordered. For example, Ryan & Deci (2000) also suggest three needs, although they are not necessarily arranged hierarchically: the need for autonomy, the need for competence, and the need for relatedness. Thompson, Grace and Cohen (2001) state the most important needs for children are connection, recognition, and power. Nohria, Lawrence, and Wilson (2001) provide evidence from a sociobiology theory of motivation that humans have four basic needs:

1. acquire objects and experiences;
2. bond with others in long-term relationships of mutual care and commitment;

...
Learn and make sense of the world and of ourselves; and
to defend ourselves, our loved ones, beliefs and resources from harm.

The Institute for Management Excellence (2001) suggests there are nine basic human needs:

1. security,
2. adventure,
3. freedom,
4. exchange,
5. power,
6. expansion,
7. acceptance,
8. community, and
9. expression.

Notice that bonding and relatedness are a component of every theory. However, there do not seem to be any others that are mentioned by all theorists. Franken (2001) suggests this lack of accord may be a result of different philosophies of researchers rather than differences among human beings. In addition, he reviews research that shows a person’s explanatory or attributional style will modify the list of basic needs. Therefore, it seems appropriate to ask people what they want and how their needs could be met rather than relying on an unsupported theory. For example, Waitley (1996) advises having a person imagine what life would be like if time and money were not an object in a person’s life. That is, what would the person do this week, this month, next month, if he or she had all the money and time needed to engage in the activities and were secure that both would be available again next year. With some follow-up questions to identify what is keeping the person from happening now, this open-ended approach is likely to identify the most important needs of the individual.

There is much work still to be done in this area before we can rely on a theory to be more informative than simply collecting and analyzing data. However, this body of research can be very important to parents, educators, administrators and others concerned with developing and using human potential. It provides an outline of some important issues that must be addressed if human beings are to achieve the levels of character and competencies necessary to be successful in the information age.

References

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Comments

'Tabacco' left this comment on 23 Nov 10

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July 9, 2015 at 11:18 am

In the grand design of things you secure an A just for effort. Where you lost everybody ended up being on the details. You know, it is said, the devil is in the details... And that could not be more accurate at this point. Having said that, permit me inform you exactly what did work. The writing is pretty powerful and that is most likely the reason why I am making an effort to opine. I do not really make it a regular habit of doing that. Secondly, while I can see a leaps in reason that is most likely the reason why I am making an effort to opine. I do not really permit me inform you exactly what did work. The writing is pretty powerful and details… And that could not be more accurate at this point. Having said that, everybody ended up being on the details. You know,

Reply

admin says:
July 9, 2015 at 12:33 pm

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2- I only read this by accident while editing my latest Post. I don’t read Comments here because, like yours, the writers are attempting to use my Blog for FREE ADVERTISING! Consider yourself lucky to get past my IGNORE EVERYTHING GUARDDOG!

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