

Motivation of event staff – A case study of the Davis Cup semi-final in Madrid 2008

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Aim of paper and research questions

The semi-final of the tennis Davis Cup (Spain-USA) staged in 9/2008 in Madrid was a major event visited by 24,000 spectators. The organisers employed approx. 200 persons. In order to ensure that the volunteers and hostesses were working properly, a range of incentives had to be offered which had to exceed the contributions that the staff was expected to deliver (see Inducement-Contribution Utility Balance by March & Simon, 1958). The incentives were not only stimulating the motivation by extrinsic means such as payment but also by intrinsic means. The aim of this paper is to identify which incentives cause satisfaction/dissatisfaction (see Oliver, 1980) for the Davis Cup short term employees. This provides the opportunity to compare paid and non-paid staff of a major sporting event and their work motivation. Furthermore, we examined important information for all organisers of regularly returning events to improve their staff motivation program to successfully recruit the same volunteers/hostesses for the next event (Alsted, 2005; Goldblatt, 1997). However, due to the costs of many extrinsic incentives it is also important to learn how a single incentive contributes to the overall motivation of a volunteer/hostess.

Literature review

There are many studies about volunteering considering motivational aspects, but there has not been much research done related to major events regarding the factors that drive people to become volunteers or short term event employees (see Goldblatt, 1997; Moragas et al., 2000; Stebbins/Graham 2004).

The challenge of motivating volunteers has long been recognised as an integral part of managing sport events. According to Edginton et al. (2001), motivation plays an exceedingly important role in moving an organisation towards excellence. Yet despite the agreement over the significance of work motivation, there's considerable controversy over what factors motivate short term employees and volunteers to work at such events. The complexity of work motivation is evident in the interaction of the forces among an individual, the job and the work environment that account for the level, direction and persistence of effort expended at work (Steers & Porter, 1991). Pinder (1998) has described work motivation as a set of forces, internal (individual needs and motives) and external (environmental forces) that initiate work-related behaviour and determine its form, direction, intensity and duration. Given the relative intricacy of work motivation, it's not surprising that numerous theories have been developed to explain this phenomenon (Herzberg et al., 1959; Krech & Crutchfield, 1985; Bruggemann, 1975).

Research design and data analysis

Different approaches of motivational theory were scanned to construct a questionnaire (25 questions, 138 items) which then have been distributed to 166 short term employees (population 200) directly after the Davis Cup. 140 passed the inter-individual consistence tests. The staff interviewed were both paid hostesses (n=80 from 120 total=66%) and non-paid volunteers (n=60 from 80 total=75%). The research design is based on a socio-economic, theoretical foundation pre-validated at the Olympics in 2004 (n=72), the football World Cup in 2006 (n=264) and the Hahnenkamm Race in 2006 (n=175).

A linear multiple regression analysis, factor analysis and correlation analysis are used to explain the importance of factors describing the work motivation for the hostesses (being paid) and volunteers (not being paid but getting incentives) as two differently motivated groups.

Results

A first result is that the overall work satisfaction of volunteers was significantly lower than that of the hostesses ($T=-2.15$; $p<0.05$) as well as with the Davis Cup itself ($T=-2.4$; $p<0.05$). These differences must be qualified. Therefore, first socio-demographic data was analysed as to whether it had an influence on the motivation (correlation analysis, ANOVA), then a factor analysis and finally a OLS regression were run to identify the factors that had most influence on the overall work satisfaction.

The factor analysis shows six factors for hostesses and five for volunteers. However three of them are very similar. Not surprising is that “earning money” is an important individual factor for the hostesses while it is not for volunteers. The volunteers have one factor different from the hostesses which includes characteristics such as “solving problems”, “learn to organise things” or “fun”. The regression analysis gives further detail on the factors that are important for the different groups in order to feel satisfied with their work. The research will be presented based on the theory and in greater detail.

Discussion and conclusion

The results can give further insight into the different ways event staff (hostesses and volunteers) should be treated in order to be motivated to work short term.

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