Performance and Motivation Strategies for Today's Workforce: A Guide to Expectancy Theory Applications

Thad B. Green

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Although considered the best approach to motivation in terms of theoretical soundness for some 25 years, expectancy theory was considered lacking in applications. For the first time this book presents an application model that gives practical value to the expectancy theory of motivation thus enabling managers to use it to improve individual and organizational performance. While other theories of motivation provide a theoretical framework for thinking about and understanding what motivates people in the workplace, the application model presented here for the expectancy theory of motivation goes far beyond this to provide a practical framework for diagnosing and solving individual motivation problems. Emphasis is not on simple motivation problems with straightfoward solutions, but instead the focus is on how to handle difficult motivation problems, and how to deal with them in difficult circumstances, such as when the manager does not have all of the resources or authority needed to solve the problem.

The application model has a bottom-line, problem-solving orientation with a focus on the individuality of employees. The book describes specific things managers can say and do to identify potential and existing motivation problems in the early stages before they get out of hand. Techniques for determining the causes of individual motivation problems are presented. Practical solution approaches are offered along with guidelines for choosing solutions that match problem causes and suggestions for effectively implementing the solutions. The core of the application model is found in a one-on-one format for managers to follow in working with individual employees to jointly identify motivation problems, causes, and solutions. The principal contribution of the application model rests with the special ways presented for dealing with difficult motivation problems when the manager's hands are tied relative to the solutions that can be offered.

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