

## **Officers – Who Needs Them???**

A person's behaviour is not just a function of the person, and their particular personality! Behaviour is dynamic and it is a function of the individual interacting with the environment, in which the person finds him or herself in any given situation. But back to your implied question; why do officers behave the way they do? The simple answer is that they can! The structure of the defence force enables them to use the hierarchical system to their advantage; ie command and control. Whilst the defence force has changed dramatically in the last fifty years, especially because of the technological transformation, the human system in defence in my opinion is still in a 1950's time warp.

The human system of the 1950's in the private sector has been transformed, especially as greater attention has been directed to maximising the effectiveness of people in the organisation and therefore profitability because of the imperatives of the financial system. Back in the 1960's, a behavioural academic, Frederick Herzberg developed a model from research into what made people feel exceptionally good or exceptionally bad about their jobs? He discovered that the "content factors", or satisfiers, which he called motivators, the things that made people want to get of bed and go to work each day, are as follows:

- **Achievement,**
- **Recognition,**
- **Work itself,**
- **Responsibility,**
- **Advancement, and**
- **Growth.**

The "job context" or environmental factors which cause dissatisfaction at work, and which he called "hygiene factors" are as follows:

- **Company policy and administration,**
- **Quality of management and supervision,**
- **Interpersonal relationships with co-workers,**
- **Salary/wages,**
- **Status,**
- **Job security, and**
- **Personal life.**

He called these factors "hygiene", because as in health matters, addressing hygiene in the household, doesn't necessarily make a person healthy. In the same way, management can address the job context factors above and they do not make for job satisfaction. The best that it may achieve is no dissatisfaction. So often in my own consulting career, I have encountered managers who have invested heavily in painting the lunch room, addressing wages and superannuation and related hygiene matters and cannot understand why they do not have a motivated workforce? Closer inspection reveals that there has been no corresponding attention given to addressing the fact that the job content factors such as

delegation of authority, recognition, advancement, job enlargement etc which motivate have been largely ignored.

Without trying to simplify in any way what is a complex issue, my sense is that for too long, the command and control style of management of the ADF has focused on and emphasised the importance of the job context factors, almost to the exclusion of the job content factors. This requires a particular style of management, which another behaviouralist, Douglas McGregor called Theory X management. Theory X managers believe that people inherently dislike work, and will avoid it if they can. Therefore, people must be controlled, coerced, directed or threatened with punishment to get them to put in the necessary effort to achieve the company's goals. Moreover, the average person prefers to be directed, wants to avoid responsibility and wants security. Therefore, if that is the case, why would management delegate authority to such persons?

The Theory Y style of management has a more optimistic view of people. Theory Y assumptions include the following: The expenditure of physical and mental effort is as natural as play or rest. External control and threats of punishment are not the only means of getting people to work towards the organisation's goals. People will exercise self-direction and self-control to achieve the objectives to which they are committed. This commitment is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement, which may be related purely to the work itself. People learn under appropriate direction and guidance, not only to accept, but also to seek responsibility. Moreover, most people are capable of a relatively high degree of imagination and creativity in solving problems given the necessary encouragement and receptive conditions in the workplace.

In the last fifty years, in the competitive private sectors of business, finance and commerce, organisations which have tapped into the need to address those factors which motivate the creativity, imagination and intelligence of their workforce are those which have a competitive edge in the marketplace. Whilst it could be argued that the ADF is not a business, it has to be business-like. From feedback I receive from some serving veterans, I sense that new inductees into the commissioned ranks of the ADF are still imbued with the Theory X, command and control style of management. With an emphasis on the job context factors from this style of management, this does not give much scope for creativity and innovation from the non-commissioned ranks of the service. We are now living in a world environment where the younger cohort want to have a greater sense of control over their lifestyle, and working under Theory X management and supervision will not be an attractive proposition to this demographic. To attract members of this cohort into the ADF will require a paradigm shift from the top and a radical change of management philosophy to have outcomes of a motivated workforce at all levels of the ADF.