

## **Motivating public employees; changing the public sector from inside**

It is not possible to link the personal or professional public sector employees motivations with one isolated "factor" or "element".

Likewise, it also depends on the perspective through which observe the situation. It can be seen from the perspective of the employee through the achievement of personal and / or professional reasons.

It can also be approached from the perspective of the heads of the public sector through the appropriation of efficiency in organizational processes they lead to improved results. A last one could be from the perspective of the organization itself, depending on the work area and a specific profile to fulfill its obligations to the public.

What is determinant for people to choose, to start or continue, their careers in the public sector is a question that cannot be answered universally due to the infinite number of possible reasons for some of the persons involved in the development of processes. In turn, it depends on the context in which the question is made.

If the question arises with pretensions to intervene the current processes of an organization to improve the achievement of results, it could be say that the motivations are the continuous negotiations between employees and the organization for the alignment of objectives; i.e., that both the organization and the employee are heading to achieve the same objectives in a look now (present) the organizational ideal (future).

In this context, necessary elements such as a strong economic proposal (compensation) or excellent leadership to align and coordinate the interests of the parties.

Moreover, if the question arises preventively, i.e., not to intervene a current situation but plan a future situation, we could say that the motivations of employees (elected according to specific criteria) rest on solid definition of the values and objectives the organizations to which it is linked (or seek to link a future through a selection process), leaving the other elements as remuneration and leadership in the background.

Among this universe of interpretations, a tentative answer would be that the motivations of public employees are more than a list of items; a series of complex processes (organizational culture) series whose actors to employees (human resources), the heads (results) and the

organization itself (reason for being), which is developed over time by negotiating items such as leadership, remuneration and organizational values to achieve goals.

In this perspective, I would like to emphasize that while there is no single formula to determine the nature of the motivations of public employees (or enlarge them), but we can certainly fragmenting the processes factors in order to analyze not as a reactive process (motivations as a stimulus for action and reaction), but as a reflexive process (the ability to determine the key points for planning with foresight before starting any organizational process).

Thus, it is worth addressing the issue in two stages as proposed by Schott, Kleef and Steen; the identity of the institution (what, how, when and why of their work) and the identity of the worker of the institution (what, why and how).

This concept, since the theory of identity is defined as the "self" as the reflection *"which emerges out of the interaction with these complex social structures and provides the link between the environment and personal behavior"* (Schott, Kleef, & Steen, 2014a, p.693).

Thereby, it could identify a typology of motivations based on the determination of the personality of the organization and the profile of the potential workers to establish processes that enable proactive labors and relationships over negotiations for the development of the daily chores.

Within the logic of the joint work is based on the principle that people are the ones who must adapt to institutions where they have to perform their work. How we refer to a specific sector (public sector), human talent as a minimum requirement should be a primary interest in serving the community (which is the basic idea of working in the sector).

In this regard, the same authors claim that people who work in this sector "can be described as a personal orientation or commitment toward the public interest". (Schott, Kleef, & Steen, 2014c, p.692). In other words, they must have some specific characteristics before start doing any public job. This characteristics must work as a personal and professional motivations in relation to their professional features.

The personal and professional motivations, from the perspective of Weibel, Rost, and Osterloh (2010) can be addressed from two perspectives; that of extrinsic type and those of intrinsic type. Referring to "extrinsic," is defined as the kind of motivations that seeks *"personal needs*

*indirectly, that is, extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to separable outcomes: such as monetary compensation" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.58).*

In turn, referring to the type “intrinsic” motivations are those that are “thought to be intrinsically rewarding if they are perceived to be interesting, That is, to be challenging, enjoyable, or purposeful" (Weibel, A. Rost, K., & Osterloh, M., 2010, p. 389).

Considering the above contributions, it could be argued that the motivation must come or be part of the characteristics of people seeking work in the public sector (qualities and motivations of reflective type) before imposing or trying to influence them from external level (generating qualities attempt reactively).

In brief, the public sector worker has a specific profile with defined characteristics that can get in tune with the characteristics of a public organization; which means that personal, professional and organizational motivations are in complete harmony to the search for a common goal.

## **References**

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