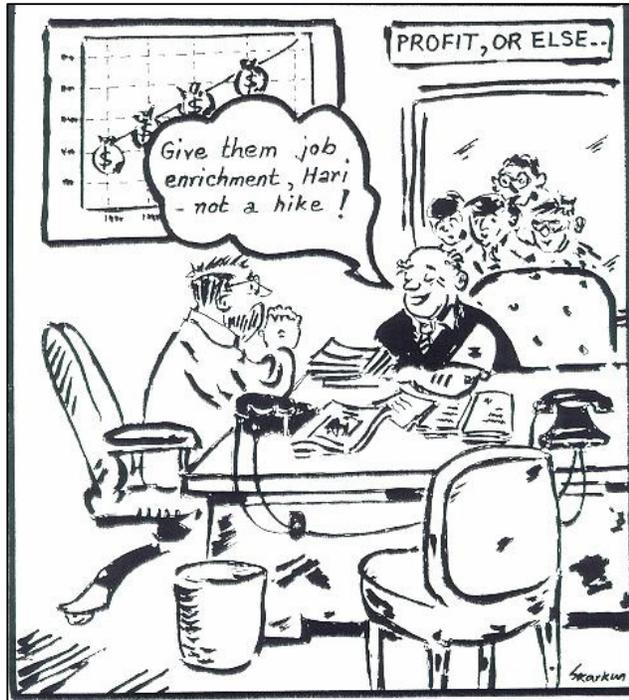




Of Maslow and Herzberg!

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Give me one HR professional who has not heard of Maslow and Herzberg; of lower order needs and higher order needs; of hygiene factors and motivational factors. Surely, it would be an onerous task to locate even one! But then, Maslow and Herzberg propounded these theories for an individual in an organization. The question they sought to answer was, "What makes an individual tick?"

Now give me one HR professional who has tried to apply these theories, not to the constituents of the organization, but to the organization itself. Or, to simplify things a bit, to the organization's owners! I would truly be surprised, if anyone has made this effort even once. The basic dread of "belling the cat" is possibly not the primary reason. Let's admit it guys - we just haven't thought about it!

In the big, unrelenting world of capitalistic business, which has remained in fashion since Marx lost, profit, more than anything else, is the declared organizational need. Director-owners spout it out in

Board Rooms, managers rush to implement it!

If one were to classify profit in terms of Maslow's need hierarchy or Herzberg's factor definitions, no prizes for guessing where would it fall? Lower Order, vide Maslow and Hygiene Factor, vide Herzberg, I'm positive. Profits are monetary, liquid profits (which are even more desirable), even more. And money, my friends, as all HR pundits would agree, is unequivocally lower order – hygiene!

Now while it is undeniable that an organization's culture is a weighted (the higher you are, the more is your gravitational force) culmination of the values of the people constituting it, the converse, possibly, is even more true. Numerous are the examples in research, where it is clearly established that organizational values have significant rub-offs on its members. Thus, if the organization's professed need is lower order – hygiene, is it not natural to assume that its members too would crave the same?

Why then does management, ably supported by the views of behavioral scientists, continue their "till the cow's come home" crusade of convincing us that it's wrong to ask for enhanced monetary rewards – that what really works is self actualization, responsibility, job enrichment and what have you.

Statistics confirm that turnover rates (base reason: higher emoluments in the next job as revealed during exit interviews – with friends!) are highest in organizations which have ostensibly declared their primary corporate mission as profit enhancement. Surely, the correlation is not so difficult to establish now – that is, if you have been following my drift.

Give me employment in a company which ostensibly professes non-profit motives, which focuses more on less monetary – connoting missions, and I shall at the time of the next performance appraisal, keep silent about a rise in the paycheck!

A message therefore to owners and corporate managers – if you want your employees to be bashful about money, don't keep yelling about profit from every organizational portal. Maybe, you could try playing it coy!