The Federal Government: Future Technology Predictions and Their Affects

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Abstract Recently, there has been a major shift in how the federal government is conducting its business (Fahnbulleh, 2005). Technology is being highly relied upon by the government to circulate information to the entire public (Fahnbulleh, 2005). E-government is a growing phenomenon, as mostly all of the federal government's services are available, to some degree, online (Fahnbulleh, 2005). This shift has caused triumphs and controversy (Fahnbulleh, 2005; Abeles, 2008). Since business in the federal government is predominantly moving to e-government, this paper offers some predictions on how that and other technological advances will be used in the future and also how the advances will affect productivity, culture, and work satisfaction within the organization.

Index Terms—e-government, federal government, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, hygiene factors, Maslow's Hierarchy of NeedsTheory, motivation, motivator factors, organizational culture, self-actualization.

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1 INTRODUCTION

According to Morgeson & Mithas (2009), the federal government has incorporated e-government, into majority of its interactions with the public. Initially, the purpose was to increase citizen's evaluations and improve citizen's trust of the federal government (Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006). The use of e-government initiatives has decreased the administrative costs and increased the efficiency of how the federal government operates (Fahnbulleh, 2005). Statistics in 2003 indicate 44 percent of state and government websites have fully executable services (Fahnbulleh, 2005). The level of accessibility of government websites on mobile devices is also increasing (Fahnbulleh, 2005). As it relates to privacy, government sites are increasing their privacy controls and also offering on their sites, restricted areas, where only those appointed have access (Fahnbulleh, 2005). Government workers have even increased their responsiveness to email inquiries as this coincides with providing e-services to customers (Fahnbulleh, 2005).

The technological trend demonstrates that more jurisdictions are developing portals allowing access to government services such as electronically filing federal income tax, provided by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) (Fahnbullen, 2005). The e-government technology has also changed the traditional methods of service delivery (Åkesson & Edvardsson, 2008; Fahnbulleh, 2005; Morgeson & Mithas, 2009). Face-to-face interaction is no longer customary; customers of the federal government can access their services of interest without having to speak with service providers, make appointments and encounter waits due to many others requiring the same services

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(Akkeson & Edvardsson, 2008). Customers have a heightened sense of satisfaction, towards their government services.

Whether the employees of the federal government also have a heightened sense of satisfaction, due to the e-government initiative is examined next.

2 FUTURE TECHNOLOGY EFFECTS

It is predicted, that by the year 2015, about 95 percent of the services provided by the federal government will be fully available electronically (Fahnbullen, 2005). This prediction involves a substantial amount of cost savings to the federal government; but also involves shrinking the federal government workforce (Fahnbullen, 2005). Productivity will no doubt increase, with the use of e-government (Fahnbullen, 2005); however employees may have a decreased sense of job satisfaction, as tasks they've previously completed, are being replaced by the electronic systems. Time spent on tasks will be cut down, but the question arises is how the free time will be spent (Åkesson & Edvardsson, 2008). This fear of losing one's job to e-government systems, coupled with completing work tasks in less time than customarily, will have dire consequences to the organization. There are a number of employees who are motivated to work based on fulfilling certain needs, decreasing responsibilities of employees will disallow these needs; per Maslow's needs theory, to be met (Wilson & Madsen, 2008). Employees will also feel less commitment to the job because they will not feel that their work has a personal impact on the organization in fulfilling its mission (Rainey, 2003). Because many of the government systems are predicted to be self-maintained, electronic systems (Åkesson & Edvardsson, 2005), learning will also be stifled; after a while, there will be no new skills for employees to learn, aside from changes to electronic systems. This will certainly alter the organization's culture..

3 EMPLOYEES' NEEDS DISREGARDED

Maslow's theory is based on the notion that everyone is born

with needs including; physiological, safety, belongingness or love, self-esteem and self-actualization; in that order (Rainey, 2003). Maslow believed that an individual's goals are to fulfill that need. Once the need is fulfilled, people are motivated to fulfill their higher level needs. Maslow further believed that self-actualization should be the goal of learning (Wilson & Madsen, 2008); thus, continuous learning through every stage of one's life until the self-actualization need is fulfilled.

Maslow's needs hierarchy theory contributions to motivation as an organizational behavior theory as, employees are motivated to fulfill their basic set of needs. If an employee's goal is to reach self-actualization, while employed with the federal government, it is presumed that they are motivated to work hard to arrive there (Rainey, 2003). According to the hierarchy, first, they are motivated to keep the employment to fulfill their lower level needs; then they are continuously motivated to receive recognition, status, etc., at other levels (Wilson & Madsen, 2008). They work harder and are motivated to receive total job satisfaction by reaching their level of self-actualization. Since this model implies a shifted focus from internal organization processes to an emphasis on customer service (Fu-Lai, 2008), employees needs are not at the forefront of the organizations mission.

Employees reaching their self-actualization will be difficult to obtain under this model, as total job satisfaction will not be met as easily. Reliance grows for systems and IT specialists more than mission-driven government employees. Therefore, the motivation to learn will become internalized, and individuals will have to seek ways in meeting their own individual needs (Wilson & Madsen, 2008).

4 HERZBERG'S THEORY

Although Maslow's Needs Hierarchy posits that to reach a level of self- actualization, an employee must be motivated, work hard and dedicate oneself to a job or mission, that is beyond self-satisfaction and benefits society (Rainey, 2003); Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd 2005) contends that motivation is influenced by hygiene factors and motivators. Herzberg's theory believes that both intrinsic and extrinsic incentives must be present for an employee to be effective. Not only must an employee need to feel satisfied and a sense of achievement, but his or her working conditions must be satisfactory in the federal government. Implying that not only does an employee need positive working conditions, a decent salary or a good relation with one's supervisor, to be effective, but he or she also needs to find enjoyment in the

work and a sense of achievement and growth, thus a fulfillment of higher order needs, like self-actualization which is sought after under Maslow's theory. However, if hygiene and motivator factors are not both present, then one cannot move to meet a higher level need, nor is the employee satisfied or committed to the organization.

Employees under this model must work with leadership of their respective federal government agencies, to address both their hygiene and motivating factors. Of course some employees will enjoy their working conditions; under this system including teleworking or traditional office space is used. However, maintaining equilibrium of those factors and gaining a sense of achievement and fulfilling other needs should be visited.

5 CONCLUSION

With the shift from traditional forms of administering the federal government, to moving to e-government, there are predictions of where this shift will take the nation futuristically. It is contended in this paper, that as the use of e-government increases, the reliance on employees to complete certain tasks will decrease. This has the potential for the organization to have employees who are not committed to their work. Employees should be motivated to carry out the government's mission. It is up to senior leadership to ensure that there is a balance between efficient customer service and employee relations.

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