

Goal Setting as a Sports Managers Motivational Tool for Enhancing Athletes Performance

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Abstract

The paper focused on goal setting as a sport Managers' Motivational tool for enhancing athletes' performance. Goal setting as a motivational tool is a mental training technique that can be used to increase individual commitment, dedication and perseverance towards achieving a personal goal. The paper sees goal setting as a motivation tool, sport managers should be familiar with in order to assist athletes in developing personal goals which leads to skill development and ultimately peak performance. The paper also sees the sport manager as that individual who is professional in the art of managing sports organization, sets long term missions goals, formulates, implements and evaluates motivational techniques that can be used on athletes to achieve a better performance. The manner in which sports managers structure the athletic situation, set goal priorities and relate to athletes are primary determinants of the outcome of sports performance, though motivation is the direction of an individual effort. The paper concluded that setting a goal is the act of being focused, having a mission or vision over what one wish to accomplish or achieve within a given time frame. It therefore recommended among other things, that sports manager use motivational techniques such as goal setting to establish their athletes

training regimes as this will promote commitment, perseverance and dedication and thus achieve optimum performance.

Introduction

The phenomenal growth in sporting activities and events throughout the world today placed greater demands on sports managers. Sports managers can be described as that individual who is professional in the art of sports management. He is specifically trained in the act of managing sports and organisation of sports for good accomplishment. According to Butcher and Krotte (2002), sport managers can be regarded as those individuals charged with the responsibility of structuring, planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling and supervising the activities of sports personnel in sports organization.

Fasan (1994) on his part, viewed sport managers as those individuals who formulates sports policies and plans, set sports organisational goals and objectives, which serves as guidelines in the execution of sports programmes; using human, material, financial and physical resources in sports organization for the purpose of accomplishing the objectives of the organisation through collaborative effort. The manner in which sports managers structure the athletic situation, set goal priorities and relate to athletes are primary determinants of the outcome of sports performance (Wankel, 1996). One of the fundamental assumptions in sports is that goal setting can be used to influence behaviour. Locke and Lathan (2006) sees goal setting as one technique, which has been used to promote commitment, perseverance, dedication and effort to create an individual's long term self motivation. Duda (1991) observed that goal setting is a powerful motivational technique which sustains one's interest and effort on a programme. Gill (1988) revealed that specific difficult goals lead to better performance than vague or easy goals. He further opined that such goals affect performance by affecting efforts, attention and persistence. No doubt, when these three variables are activated in athletes, they may sustain and improve in his performance in sports.

Duties of Sports Managers

The duties performed by managers in various organisations are almost the same. But in the field of physical education, the sports manager has the following duties to perform according to Fasan (1994).

1. Defining and setting long term sports missions which serve as basis for establishing the organisation direction.
2. Determining long term sports purpose and goals.
3. Performing environmental appraisal to identify the immediate and future opportunities and threats.
4. Conducting corporate or organisational appraisal to identify the organisation strengths and weaknesses.
5. Formulating, implementing and evaluating techniques on athletes.

Hodge (1990) viewed the duties of sports manager in three perspectives: leadership, task, and process.

Leadership: The action of leading a group of people or an organization or the ability to do this

Task: An activity that needs to be accomplished within a defined period of time or by a deadline.

Process: A series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end.

Hornby (2001) saw leadership as the state or position of being a leader. Railay and Tschayner (1993) termed leadership as the act of guiding or directing others to a course of action through persuasion. Leadership comes from two major areas formal and informal authority. Formal authority is power granted by the organisation because of the position occupied (e.g Director) and informal authority belong to the individual and it usually comes from characteristics that are outstanding in the personality of the individual (e.g. Expert knowledge). In an ideal situation, sports managers should be able to rely on both formal and informal forms of power to arrive at decisions within organization.

Task-Tasks performed by sports managers are universal while some are directed by the geographical environment and organisational level (Frost, 1995). Universally, the following tasks of sports managers have been identified; staffing, budgeting, programming, scheduling, buying and caring for equipment, purchasing, accounting, public relations and consulting.

Process- Process, as defined by Webster dictionary, is series of actions or operation conducted to an end, a continuous operation just as there are many tasks to be performed, there are also many processes to be manipulated. Therefore, as the sports manager is called upon to plan, organize, direct and control, he makes use of three other general management processes such as decision making, communication and motivation (Jensen, 1983).

Motivation- One very important concept of management that is often over looked is motivation. It is an instrument devised by sports managers to induce his athletes or staff for higher performance. Motivation is the psychological process that energized, arouses, directs and maintains behaviours. It is simply defined as what causes us to behave the way we do.

Motivation, for short, can be described as goal directed behaviour according to Huffman (1991). Steers and porters (1993), see motivation according to “how behaviour get started, is energized, and what kind of subjective reaction is present in the organism while this is going on”. Lefton (1999) added that motivation is an inferred condition initiated by drives, needs or desires. An understanding of the dynamics of motivation can bring sports managers closer to answer a variety of questions surrounding sports activities; for example, why do some people persist in an activity, whereas others, fall by the way side? The answer to this question can have important and far-reaching social implications and they could be found in the various theories of motivation.

Types of Motivation

Motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic refers to internally motivated behaviour that is, motivation that arises within the individuals.

According to Ikulayo (1990), motivation originates from within that is why individual is involved in the activity because of the inner compulsion. Extrinsic motivations are externally induced. They arise as a result of a need that is environmentally determined. External motivation is energized and motivated by the activities of others.

Theories of Motivation

1. Drive Theory

This theory assumes that behaviour is push towards goals by driving states within the person. This is also called the homeostasis theory. It states that when an internal driving state is aroused, the individual is pushed to engage in behaviour which will lead to a goal that reduces the intensity of the driving state (Morgan, 1987)

2. Instinctual Theory

Sigmund Freud is the chief proponent of this theory. Freud writing on instinctual drive, believed that behaviour arises from two opposing Group of instincts- the life instincts (Eros) and the death (Thanatos). These instincts enhance the individual life and growth. Freud believed that these two basic drives can be repressed unconsciously when they are not expressed and, they govern and motivate behaviour unconsciously.

3. Incentive Theory

The defects of the drive theory led to the formulation of this theory. This is because motivation is not only to follow the internal arousal but also external influences. Thus, motivation was seen as an interaction between stimuli in the environment and a particular psychological state of the organism. The theory presumes that there is something about the goal perse that motivates behaviour.

4. Social Learning Theory

This theory focuses on the behaviour pattern that we employ to adjust or cope with our environment rather than on the instructional drives. They argue that we are not driven by any internal forces, neither are we passive reactors to environmental factors (external stimulation) but

that the types of behaviour we exhibit is dependable on the reward and punishment that follow such behaviour. These acts of reward and punishment were learned either directly or indirectly through observation and modeling.

5. Opponent Processing Theory

This theory follows the hedonistic view of motivation which says that we are motivated to seek goals which gives us good emotional feelings (pleasure) while we tend to avoid those resulting in displeasure. This is premised on the facts that emotional motivational states follow by opposing or opposite states.

Techniques of Motivation

This concept of motivation in sports came from the Pavlovian theory of learning. Psychologists believe that motivation induces athletes to perform better in sports. Therefore, they advocate that sports managers should adopt different strategies or techniques of motivation in enhancing sports performance in athletes. They suggested the following motivational techniques in sports in order to enhance athlete's performance.

- i. Teaching the game from simple to complex
- ii. Provision of varied apparatus
- iii. Introduction of specification
- iv. Using safe and protective instrument
- v. The use of reward example (intrinsic and extrinsic)

According to Shertzer (1980), the following are various techniques sports managers should use to motivate athletes to enhance their performance in sports. These include:

- Praise
- Threat of punishment
- Diversion from failure
- The use of gimmicks
- Use of voice
- Individual and team discussions
- Pep talks

Sources of Motivation

There are different sources of motivation sports manager should adopt in order to enhance athletes' performance. According to Singer (1978) they include:

Recognition

Every individual right from birth wants to be recognized, the ambition to achieve distinction, receive praise, stand out as an individual, gain prestige and be a worthy person is a lifelong one. Therefore, sports generally provide these opportunities for the participants to be recognized publicly and accorded respects. In Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of motivational needs, gratification or need for recognition is a very important variable in the underlying personality development.

Types of Recognition

Peer Recognition

Peer recognition is a source of motivation in sports. Admiration from peer has a strong influence on athletes' performance. Athlete on campus are always recognized and respected. This prestige is a great incentive that will improve on athletes' performance.

Parental Recognition/Acceptance:

Athletes value parental recognition. Parents too, cherish children's success. This therefore enhances performance.

Public Recognition:

In Nigeria culture Mileu, a lot of importance is attached to how successful one is. Individuals who excel are therefore considered very special in the society. Star elite or superior athletes enjoy privileges recognition and fame than their counterparts in the society. That is why elite athletes like Rasheed Yekini, Sunday Olise, Emmanuel Amunieke, J.J. Okocha, Lionel Messi, John Bolt are household words. This is a result of their exploits in sporting activities.

2. Ego-Reinforcement

High performance in sports can make an athlete to gain status thereby making him to possess a sense of confidence and superiority. Hence, if such qualities are motivated by sports manager in athletes, such as confidence, perseverance, tolerance of pain, a winning attitude will be created thereby enhancing performance of the athletes.

Types of Ego- Reinforcement

- **Self Realization:**

This is a source of motivation. Under ego-reinforcement, successful athletes gain self respect which could lead them to achieve a sense of fulfillment.

- **Sense of Adequacy:**

This represents a feeling of fulfillment in sport when an athlete has perfected his skills to the point of outdoing his opponent.

- **Display of Masculinity**

Many boys want to go into sports to improve their masculinity.

3. Fear of Failure:

Threat of expulsion from the team or the withdrawal of privileges once given could enhance athlete's performance in sports.

4. Material Gain:

Scholarship, trophies, letters of acceptances, cash and gift could be obtained in athletics as motivation.

5. Need for Emotional Outlet

Life pressures normally build up emotional tension, motivation can offer an outlet for such athletes.

6. Skill Development

Participating in sport can improve skill development which could serve as motivation in sport.

7. Physical development

This is another source of motivation in sports. Athletes enjoy a rich and enviable physique which could motivate others to enhance their performance.

Conclusion

Goal setting is not just about identifying what you want to achieve but also how you will achieve it (process goals) and measure that achievement (performance goals) when challenging goals are broken down into realistic steps and then systemically achieved motivation, commitment and self confidence will grow. Goals must be set according to the age, stage of development, confidence, ability and motivation of the individual. Beginners require very short term easily achieved goals to boost their self-confidence whereas experienced individual need more challenging yet realistic goals.

The task of the sport manager is to use motivations as a tool for athletes performance and to enhance productivity. Our poor outing in the just concluded London Olympics 2012 could be attributed to many factors such as lack of motivation by the athletes and the employment of quacks as sports managers (the Nigeria factor).

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made as part of what will make an athlete to be motivated into achieving good results in competitions.

1. Sports Managers should help athletes in the mastering of the basic skills as this will help provide successful performance.
2. It is also imperative that sport managers gain a familiarity with goal setting and athlete's development in order to aid athletes skills development which prepare them to achieve peak performance.
3. Unrealistic goals must not be set as it will not only lose its motivational value overtime if success is not achieved.
4. Sports Managers should be passionate about teaching sports skills that will aid good sports performance.
5. Sports Managers should encourage their athletes to set goals that are specific, measurable and attainable within a specific time frame.

6. Sports Manager need to be aware that athletes should develop a series of short term goals which allow measurable progress toward achieving a long term goal.

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