INSURANCE:

1 FACTOR CRITICAL FOR GROWTH………………. "THE PEOPLE"

Most businesses devote too much ink to numbers and too little to the information that matters to potential growth. Doug Conant twittered that, "if we want our organizations to grow and prosper, we must create a culture where people can also learn, grow and prosper".

Most insurers measure growth base on four main factors which consist of being successful in achieving;

- Larger market share,
- Growth in gross written premium,
- Underwriting profit and
- Customer satisfaction.

Most insurance companies are so much interested in growth but are failing to do the very thing that could bring the growth they desire. This factor which is so critical to growth of business is managing the risk of meeting the overall expectations of employees. Mark Zuckerberg said, "The only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risk".

Rapidly growing middle class in emerging markets have opened up opportunities for protection, savings and health. The ageing population, loss of employment or job, decreasing of life expectancy in developing world have spurred demand for retirement, family protection, long-term care and other longevity products. Due to fiscal pressure, governments are not adding to social security obligations which is creating demand for private insurance and wealth solutions in most countries.

Technology is leading to more agile and efficient business models offering greater responsiveness toward emerging customer needs. Big data is fundamentally changing the way insurer's price and interact with customers, opening up opportunity for more tailored approaches.

Improved global growth outlook have revived demand for non-life insurance products. With technology enablement at the center of decision making, cyber insurance is the new dimension which would rapidly expand in developing countries. Climate change would be a key determinant of future risks. Sharing economy will create opportunities for new products and new insurance moments.

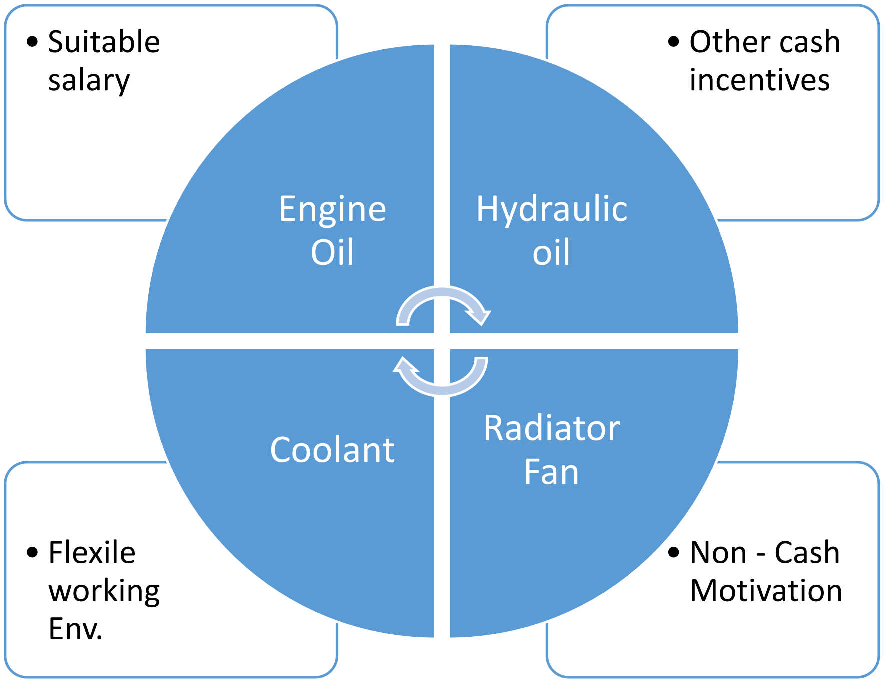
There are exciting times ahead with these opportunities coming our way. But the big question is, are we ready? Do we have the right people or expertise for the job and benefit from these opportunities. The key to help take advantage of these opportunities is having the right and well-motivated people with the right mentality and attitude who are also working under a conducive environment. Three things employers must do to keep employees self-motivated include;

- Recognize great work
- Ensure employee stay fueled (food is important)
- Encourage regular breaks (flexible working hours)

“The People”

All other resources like software, electronic and electrical devices, plant and machinery, building, processes, procedures and others all revolve around employees to help achieve corporate objective. Employees are at the heart of the organization. Employees’ performance is critical to the overall success of the company.

How do you invest in your employees to achieve organisational goal. Employees are like engine in vehicles. If we want a high performing engine, we regularly service our vehicles by putting in the high performing engine oil, good hydraulic oil, best coolant and also make sure the fans are working properly to reduce heat. Employees would give their all when their needs are better met. Most Employees expect these ingredients in the diagram below which is not far from reach of companies. If companies see employees as engines, then they have to be treated as such for high performance or delivery.



These are clear facts that are known to most employers. These should be done in holistic manner but not in isolation. The question is, why do employers fail to implement these to the core. In most cases, it has to do with the limited resources of the companies. But most of the corporate resources are channel to where it is needed most and this would give you better returns. Some insurers' try to implement these but not necessarily to meet and satisfy employees' expectations. What is the point when you implement something which does not meet employees' expectations? The reaction would be far worse than not implementing them at all. Where employees expectations are not met, customers' expectations might also be affected.

Most companies see employment as an opportunity they are granting to people who are in need of job. The people would take these opportunities but would you get the best out of them? Management have been defined as, meeting the needs of employees towards the achievement of organisational goals.

Most companies run away from this even though they are much aware and know its benefit. This reminds me of a play by Uncle Ebo Whyte where a Managing Director answered an Investor to pay so little to other staff and pay him so much in terms of monthly salary and other benefits simply because the other staff purchase second hand products from the market (clothes, shoes, electrical gadgets etc.), would use public transport (trotro) to work, their children do not attend private schools and he the manager needs to drive the latest vehicle to work, lives in the well-developed area, his children will attend the best schools and he needs to buy from boutique and big malls, eat from the big restaurants and wear the best designed and expensive attire. These are the minds of most Executives.

We should always remind ourselves that, successful employees make successful companies. Well motivated employees meet deadlines, make sales and build the brand via positive customer interactions. When employees do not perform effectively, consumers feel that the company is apathetic to their needs, and will seek help elsewhere. Employees who perform effectively get things done properly the first time and this help growth and sustainability.

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