

Motivation in their work reduces stress among IT consultants

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Information Technology (IT) consultants experience less stress when they carry out assignments in a working environment that motivates them. It also helps IT consultants experience less stress if they are able to manage their own work and if the demands placed on them in their work are reasonable. This is revealed in a psychology thesis from Gothenburg University, Sweden.

"Knowledge and understanding of employees' work motivation is decisive for the development and profitability of an organisation", says Lars Göran Wallgren of the Department of Psychology at Gothenburg University, who has carried out a study of the psychosocial work environment of IT consultants in his thesis.

Motivated employees are decisive for the development and profitability of an organisation, which requires managers to have knowledge and understanding of what motivates employees in their work. IT consultants' often work in a complex, stressful environment, perhaps to a greater extent than other hired consultants. Because IT consultants are at the edge of constant change, involving new working methods and new technologies, for example, they require a high degree of flexibility and adaptability.

"If the working environment is not motivating and healthy at the individual level, over time that working environment will also have implications at the organisational level", says Lars Göran Wallgren.

The turnover of IT consultants can lead to high costs for a firm of consultants. Cost are incurred in recruiting a replacement and replacing the potential loss of the skills leaving the company.

The thesis also reveals that in several respects motivation depends on the interplay between consultants and client companies. IT consultants, who often work at clients' premises outside their own companies, develop dual loyalty: loyalty to the client and loyalty to their own firm of consultants. A consultant is often in a subordinate position to clients with a great deal of power, which can lead to an extremely stressful work situation. There are implicit rules whereby a consultant is always expected to do a bit more. According to Lars Göran Wallgren, it is important for managers in a firm of consultants to understand what motivates their employees and what causes them to experience [stress](#) and, above all, they should also understand the [working environment](#) their employees operate in as consultants.

Knowledge-intensive organisations in the service sector are one of the fast-growing areas in the European economy. According to Statistics Sweden, the number of employees in the private service sector, such as IT consultants for example, will rise by around 120,000 in Sweden between 2006 and 2030.

"Knowledge of contemporary IT consultants and their work situation may generate important lessons for managing a major sector of the workforce of tomorrow", says Lars Göran Wallgren.

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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