

# Navigating the Modern Workplace: A Case Study of Motivation-Hygiene Theory for a Gen Z Workforce

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this case is to facilitate the learning, analysis, and discussion of Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory and to analyze an organization's successes in providing an environment of motivation and growth for its employees. Students also learn about and analyze the workplace needs and expectations of Generation Z employees. The case begins with a detailed description of Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory, followed by a detailed description of Generation Z employee characteristics. After being presented with an analysis of motivation-hygiene factors at a major corporation, Garmin Ltd., students are then asked to discuss how well the company fosters an environment that is not only satisfactory, but motivational. Students will also consider areas in which Garmin can improve. Using this example, the reader can learn, discuss, and analyze the Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory in the context of a specific organization to better understand how these factors can contribute to job satisfaction and enhance employee motivation and growth.

**Keywords:** Employee Growth, Employee Motivation, Generation Z, Job Dissatisfaction, Job Growth, Motivation-Hygiene Theory.

## 1. Introduction

Most working professionals will be employed by multiple organizations over a career, each with various approaches to motivating employees to succeed in their individual roles. The motivation and success of employees in their individual roles drives the organization's engine and is relied on heavily by the organization for its own success. Employee motivation can be achieved by organizations in many ways, with some being more effective than others. Influenced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) proposed two sets of factors that organizations can use to motivate employees and promote job satisfaction. In motivation-hygiene theory, the hygiene factors (such as pay and working conditions) are necessary but less important to job satisfaction than the motivating factors (such as responsibility and opportunities for growth).

The following section introduces Garmin Ltd., a major multinational corporation that delivers innovative global positioning systems (GPS) technology

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across diverse markets and has been recognized as a “Best Place to Work”. The subsequent sections discuss Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory, including a detailed description of the hygiene and motivation factors, along with issues related to the unique workforce expectations of Gen Z, the most diverse generation in history who will shape the workplace of the future. The case then provides an analysis of Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory in the context of Garmin.

Following this analysis, students will be asked to consider how the company culture at Garmin and other organizations reflects the motivation and hygiene factors of Herzberg’s theory, what the company does particularly well from both a hygiene and motivation factor perspective, and what recommended strategies would help the company more effectively retain and recruit Gen Z employees.

## 2. Garmin Overview

In 2023 Garmin Ltd. was ranked in the top 100 (55<sup>th</sup>) of Glassdoor’s Best Places to Work in 2023, with a lead quote of, “AMAZING benefits, opportunities for growth, and good work-home life balance.” The companies who made this list are touted by employees for providing not only strong pay and benefits, but flexibility and a positive culture. In February 2024, Garmin was ranked No. 2 on the Forbes Best Large Employers List, which gathered compensation, corporate culture, career advancement, professional development opportunities, work-life balance, health benefits, mental health support and management team diversity (Peachman 2024).

Garmin is a global market leader in the creation of navigation, communication, and information products for automotive, aviation, marine, outdoor and fitness needs. Garmin is a highly vertically integrated company engaged in the design, manufacture, and marketing of a wide array of global positioning and activity tracking products, including handheld, portable and fixed-mount watches, personal navigation, flight control systems, golf devices, dog tracking, fish finders, sonar and radar, as well as web and mobile applications (Gale Cengage Learning, 2024).

Formed in 1989 in Taiwan and named for its founding partners, Gary Burrell and Min Kao, Garmin began with its GPS 100AVD product designed for small boats and planes that sold for approximately \$1,000.00. With sales of \$102 million by 1995, the company grew quickly and by the year 2000 the holding company Garmin Ltd. (based in the Caymen Islands) become one of the most successful IPOs following the dotcom burst with an increase (42%) from \$14 to \$20 per share the first day of trading (Business Insights 2024). As of April 2024, the stock price was \$142 (*Wall Street Journal* 2024).

With its corporate headquarters and manufacturing centered in Olathe, Kansas, Garmin now has more than 16,000 employees in 16 office locations (2 in