

>> INTRODUCTION

This model about motivation was developed from the realisation that people have five broad categories of need:

- Survival or physiological needs. The most primitive of all needs consisting of the basic animal requirements such as food, water, shelter, warmth and sleep.
- Security or safety needs. In earlier times these needs were expressed as a desire to be free of physical danger. This need has been refined so that its implications are now felt in terms of the social and financial, such as job security, rather than purely physical requirements, such as a healthy work environment. It is also reflected in preferences for the familiar and for certainty over uncertainty.
- Social needs. To belong and be accepted by others. Man is essentially a social being and therefore seeks membership of social groups, such as work groups.
- Ego-status needs. To be held in esteem by both oneself and others. This kind of need is satisfied by power, prestige and self-confidence.
- Self-actualisation needs. To maximise one's skills and talents. This embraces self-realisation, self-expression and self-fulfilment.

>> HOW CAN THIS HELP ME?

If a manager can identify where in the hierarchy an employee has reached, he or she can motivate the employee in the most appropriate way. One need does not necessarily have to be fulfilled before the next need emerges. With the growing difficulty in recruiting and retaining employees, Maslow's pyramid can be seen as an important aid in gaining a better understanding of the psychological forces affecting employee motivation, job satisfaction and empowerment.

>> ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Abraham Maslow: the hierarchy of needs (CMI management thinker 009)

Motivation and personality, 3rd ed., Abraham Maslow and others (eds.)
New York NY: Longman, 1987

>> THE MODEL

When one set of needs is satisfied it is no longer a motivator. Motivation is then generated by satisfying the needs higher in the hierarchy. Not everyone will reach the top of the pyramid, hence the form chosen: the higher the level, the fewer people will attain it.

The model is based on American/Western European norms and values, therefore it does not take into account cultural differences. However, the hierarchy remains a valuable tool for understanding what motivates people and may be particularly useful when used in combination with Hofstede's cultural dimensions.

