

Chapter 7

Recruitment & Selection:

An Integrated Approach

Guidance Note For Students

The activities that follow are designed to be used with *An Introduction to HRM: An Integrated Approach*. Read chapter seven, which provides both the answers in easy to follow sections and guidance on other areas of the book that can help you with your studies.

Learning Outcomes

After reading and completing the activities in this chapter you should be able to:

- 1. Appreciate the role of HR in developing recruitment and selection strategies.**
- 2. Critically evaluate recruitment and selection methodologies.**
- 3. Reflect upon the recruitment implications of AKS in job analysis and design.**
- 4. Appreciate the use of an integrated HR approach within organisational recruitment strategic policy development.**
- 5. Design a recruitment & selection strategy where HR input is integrated into the organisational performance.**
- 6. Understand how to prepare and interpret CV information.**
- 7. Evaluate and practice a simulated job selection interview.**

Note to Students:**Can You Tell Me All The Answers Please?**

In common with the vast majority of students, you want to do really well in your study programme. There are grades to attain and employers to impress...

You may like to believe that there are perfect answers that can give you perfect grades. Indeed, if this were an elementary mathematics handbook you would be correct. However, with people simple sums do not always produce neat solutions.

So, can I reassure you that I do not have all the answers to everything, and neither does anyone else! What I would encourage you to do is engage in discussions with your fellow students, read different writers ideas and listen to your lecturers. Your lecturers have invested many hours, years in doing what you are setting out to do so they are excellent guides to help you succeed. Learn to think for yourself and integrate ideas across disciplines and subject areas. Think outside the boxes.

Guidance Note For Students

A final year student asked me if it was alright to miss my seminar session if she completed the work in her own time or should she rearrange her job interview with a city management consultancy firm? I smiled and said: 'What your are learning here equips you to be employed by prestigious organisations. Go to the interview and let me know how you get on please.'

The approaches of the exercises for this chapter are designed to both teach you about recruitment and selection and help you become more successful in finding a new job. Before moving into teaching and writing I worked as a senior manager and management consultant. One of the areas I enjoyed most was recruitment consultancy where I advised organisations, large and small and applicants. It is great to see someone get a job that really fits his or her interests.

I recommended you read and then re-read chapter 7. It's background is based on working with numerous people and organisations, so learning about how recruitment works can be a very valuable investment, in yourself.

Getting a job: A key Activity

The undergraduate business programme leader, at the University of Surrey, Roehampton, Bill Rushbrooke (prior to becoming Roehampton University) advised final year students to treat finding a job as an extra module, and invest time each week accordingly. This was and still is excellent advice.

The joy of graduating, celebrating afterwards, diminishes unless you have a job to go to.

Job hunting takes time and commitment. You may be fortunate and receive a job offer from an organisation you want to work for quickly. However, many students I have known have had to make numerous applications before they have found a suitable position. It is important not to give up, even if you feel discouraged. Commit yourself to reaching your full potential by deciding to take steps towards your goals throughout your life. Never quit trying.

Happy job hunting!

HRM In Action: The Recruitment Assignment

This HRM in action study is based on real recruitment and selection situations I completed whilst working in consultancy. For the purposes of this study I have created a short profile for the organisation to protect anonymity.

Organisational profile

- A successful, city based consultancy
- Highly profitable
- Well educated staff

- Accustomed to advising other organisations on staffing matters and performance
- Image conscious management
- Prestigious offices
- High profile client portfolio

Profile for the first set of vacancies

- Maintain business in established markets
- Continue long standing client relationships
- Promote repeat business opportunities
- Interpersonal communication skills
- Presentation skills
- Ability to learn technical details to service client requirements
- Retain portfolio of business within an established market sector

Profile for the second new market vacancy

- Market services in a new business sector
- Make contact and create new client relationships
- Interpersonal communication skills
- Presentation skills
- Promote increase the organisation's profile in a new market sector
- Find new business opportunities
- Ability to learn the technical details of client's market sector
- Build a new and profitable and expanding business portfolio

Read the two job roles above and consider what the differences are in the kinds of attitudes, knowledge and skills a person would require for an existing client base and a developing a new market.

First job profile Existing clients

Attitudes		Knowledge		Skills	
<u>key areas</u>	<u>desirable</u>	<u>key areas</u>	<u>desirable</u>	<u>key areas</u>	<u>desirable</u>
-					
-					
-					
-					
-					

Second job profile new client development

Attitudes		Knowledge		Skills	
<u>key areas</u>	<u>desirable</u>	<u>key areas</u>	<u>desirable</u>	<u>key areas</u>	<u>desirable</u>
-					
-					
-					
-					
-					

Evaluate and justify why you have selected certain AKS as essential and other as desirable.

Discussion areas

1. How much influence do you believe organisational culture has on selection decisions? Discuss your thoughts as a small group/ seminar activity.
2. Consider the relevance to the job roles discussed above and grade following elements. Give each a mark out of 7 where 7 is essential and 0 represents unnecessary. Use only whole numbers. Hence you have to make a clear decision either way.
 - Ability to work with little supervision
 - A driving licence
 - Communication skills
 - Determination to achieve positive results
 - Effective time management Entrepreneurial characteristics
 - Intelligence
 - Interpersonal skills
 - Professional dress style
 - Previous experience
 - Qualifications
 - Score highly in psychometric tests

Guidance Note For Students

How did you get on with this activity? The key to these recruitment assignments is to recognise that the two jobs require different AKS. The kinds of people likely to be successful working with 'an existing client base' are likely to be different to someone working to establish 'a new market'.

Think about your own preferences. Would you prefer to work with an established business client list, or look for new business opportunities?

Practicing HRM: New Graduate AKS

Either: Select an organisation and make up a job vacancy such as, Human Resources Associate, Marketing Assistant or IT Assistant. (Choosing a specific job role will make it easier to compile a profile)

Or: Select a job vacancy from a newspaper or professional magazine.

Then:

Compile a list of the attitudes, knowledge and skills for the vacancy, which a new graduate might apply for. Create two columns for each area. One for whatever is essential and another for the not essential, but desirable items.

Guidance Note For Students

It is a very worthwhile investment in your time to do this activity well, particularly if you are nearing the end of your course of study. A good degree or post-graduate qualification needs to be showcased along with your unique attitudes, knowledge and skills. This is not just a qualification and job list. It is a showcase of what you have to offer a potential employer.

Exercise: Prepare Your Own CV

I really have lost count of the number of senior executives, managers and students who have asked me to help them improve their CV. Whilst fashion regarding layouts do change over time the reality is that you are unlikely to get a second chance to be short listed for a job, so making a positive impression with your application is very important. You may have achieved really interesting things, but a prospective employer will only know about them if you include them in your CV.

Write a new CV for yourself using the guidelines above. (This is particularly useful for students who are required to do a work placement as part of their degree course).

Guidance Note For Students

Your career story begins when you secure your first job. Thereafter, you will probably be looking for advancement, either with an existing employer or elsewhere. In this next case study you will consider some of the problems when a job doesn't turn out the way you had hoped. Remember, that interviewers are as keen to 'sell' you their organisation as you are to get the next step along your chosen career path...

HRM In Action: First Impressions...

The following HRM in action study is based on research with several organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors. The key elements of managerial behaviour and social interaction were formed upon the common themes that emerged from the primary research. The names of individuals and organisations studied have been altered or deleted.

The senior management at xxxxx organisation were delighted to have Mark join them.

Mark had a successful track record in management and was respected by his previous employer, who wrote an affirming reference for him. Mark was also impressed by the senior management at xxxxx organisation and was looking forward to starting work with them. Indeed, he even visited xxxxx offices during his holiday period to make sure everything was in place for when he started the new job role. This was regarded by some of Mark's new colleagues as unusual in so much as it was so enthusiastic. They wondered if Mark was trying too hard to impress them.

The first indication Mark gained that that all was not quite as positive as he had expected was when he met one of the next level down of management. Mark's first impression was that this person was polite but sceptical. This surprised him because he had been so well received by the senior management. However, it later became apparent that several of his new colleagues held a poor opinion of xxxxx organisation's senior management and were consequently critical of anyone they introduced to the organisation. In other words, the fact that the senior management had employed Mark predisposed some of his colleagues to be less than cooperative with him.

Mark had been on a team-building course prior to joining the organisation with a previous employer and knew that if he was to succeed in his new job he needed to win his colleagues' confidence. Unfortunately, it seemed that whenever things went well, his colleagues assumed that it was their efforts that supported the successes. Whenever something went wrong they absolved themselves of any responsibility and attributed the problem to his lack of competence. In fact Mark was the best-qualified and experienced person in his management level, though none of his colleagues would have admitted as much. To counter balance the negativity he was experiencing, Mark made a particular effort to be social and interactive with his colleagues. For example, he would reorganise his schedule to have lunch with colleagues. Also, in an attempt to stimulate a more cooperative atmosphere, Mark would involve colleagues in decision making, though he often felt ill at ease in their company. For example, his colleagues would often boast of how experienced they were as managers. However, he also noticed that contrary to his colleagues' high opinion of themselves, they were actually just average to poor at managing their divisions as evidenced by the organisation's declining market share, which had not been addressed for several years and was now becoming critical.

Despite his best efforts to win his colleagues confidence he felt that they were still being unfriendly and uncooperative. Also, while Mark made an effort to include them in decisions he noticed that they were critical of his decisions and did not reciprocate by asking his opinion on their areas of responsibility.

In fact Mark's colleagues attributed his behaviour as indecisiveness, confirming their original impressions that he was not suitable to do work at their level. Conversely, if Mark did not consult with his colleagues about a decision they would criticise him for not being a 'team player'.

After a few weeks in the job Mark discovered that the previous person in his post had asked for a transfer to another part of xxxxx organisation.

As a result of these negative experiences Mark decided to meet with members of the senior management team and discuss some of the problems he was encountering. The senior management acknowledged that there were long-term problems with the group of managers Mark was working with and that they had hoped he could have changed the culture and management style within the group. Mark explained, not unreasonably, that most of them were on the same level as him and some were actually senior, so he had no authority and little in the way of influence to alter the group's behaviour. Following the meeting a rumour went round the organisation that the senior management were thinking about promoting Mark over his entire management group. As a result the group's behaviour, if anything, deteriorated and became even more resentful of the senior management and Mark. He now felt that he could achieve little on his own and felt pressured by both the aspirations of the senior management and the negativity of his colleagues. Despite the difficulties and discomfort Mark was experiencing, the areas of business for which he was responsible had improved. Even though Mark's market analysis indicated that xxxxx organisation's competitors were becoming predatorily active. He shared this information with his colleagues who dismissed his analysis. He also observed that in his experience the senior management eventually take direct action if divisional managers continually resist change. His comments, though well intentioned, further alienated his colleagues. They were much more concerned with the internal squabbles with the senior management. In fact Mark was now routinely ignored by most of his management colleagues. After all, he did not seem to be as friendly as he had been when he first joined xxxxx organisation. Nevertheless, the organisation's market share was declining, just as Mark's analysis had predicted and xxxxx organisation was beginning to gain a

reputation with external stakeholders as something of a lame duck; an organisation, incapable of responding to new market opportunities and competition. After several months of what Mark described to his friends (all outside xxxxx organisation) as the 'charm offensive' he decided to change tactics by ignoring his colleagues and getting on with doing his job. He rationalised that if they were unwilling to be part of the solution there was little point in investing much more time with them. Mark's colleagues also noticed the change in his behaviour. This confirmed their first impressions that Mark was not a person to be trusted and that he had never fitted in with the 'right way' of doing things. He just isn't 'one of us' was their general consensus. However, the problems they were experiencing in the divisions they managed were becoming more acute. The senior management had also decided that since the introduction of a more positive person had apparently failed to change the culture they would now advertise for a more adversarial director with direct control over all the divisions, with a brief to 'restructure' the under performing parts of the organisation and make redundancies among the management group. Fortunately for Mark, the difficulties he had encountered working for xxxxx organisation had considerably improved his management profile. He also had a much better understanding of the complexity of managerial work and that management research and models could assist, but not provide perfect solutions to work place situations. He recalled reading somewhere that:

'Management is not so much a science as situation specific art form with all the emotional uncertainties and conflicts that art, rather than science exposes.' He also realised that what he had learnt at xxxxx organisation had prepared him to take the next step in management. Given all the problems the organisation was now experiencing Mark began to think it was time to find a new job elsewhere.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Mark's colleagues were predisposed to distrust him?
2. Our first impressions can be formed by preconceived stereotypes. Why are first impressions so important?

3. Do you think people easily change their first impressions when new information becomes available or reinforce their original decision?
4. The last person to hold Mark's management position had asked to be transferred. Should the senior management have discussed this with Mark at his interview?
5. How realistic was the senior management's aspiration that Mark could change the culture and management style of his colleagues?
6. Why do you think Mark's colleagues ignored his market analysis?
7. What are the potential dangers to organisations becoming too introspectively focused?
8. What do you think Mark had learnt about the complexity of management? Why would this help him to get a new management job?
9. What do you think the future business prospects of xxxxx organisation are likely to be?
10. Do you think changing management style and culture is difficult and if so why?
11. When we are interacting with and managing people why is management more like a situation specific art form than a science?

Exercise: Interviewing Skills

Using the AKS and the CV you prepared for the previous activities organise short interview roles plays. At least one member of each team should sit out of the interview observing and making notes to feed back to the group at the end of the role- play.

Guidance Note For Students

This is a really excellent way to improve your interview skills in a supportive safe, learning environment. The alternative is to practice at the interview for the job you really want...not the best place to learn through your mistakes.

Prepare for this activity as if it were for real. Produce the best CV you can and think about what you are going to say about yourself. Dress for the occasion. Your posture and confidence will improve by wearing a suit or other business attire. Remember, if you are unaccustomed and feel 'uncomfortable' dressed formally, then the seminar room, not the job interview is the best place to deal with your nervousness.

Chapter Summary

The recruitment and selection process can be a challenging area for even the most experienced of managers. After reading and completing the activities in this chapter you should now be in a position to understand the recruitment and selection process and be more confident about your own abilities to apply for work placements or a permanent job.

The overall theme of this book is to consider human resources as an integrated part of organisations. The design of recruitment & selection strategy has therefore focused on where HR input can become more a part of the whole and not a function apart. Paradoxically in an environment where the HR team may be quite small this can sometimes mean recognising the need to include expertise from outside the organisation.

One of the key challenges in successful recruitment is to gain the knowledge and skills to conduct interviews. The effective use of interviews is a valuable skill for any manager and as such the role-plays at the end of this chapter should provide a practical forum for personal development and further discussion.

Guidance Note For Students

The references are a useful guide to seek out other sources for background reading and ideas for your course work. Universities and colleges expect you to read more than just the set text. Although HRM An Integrated Approach

provides a complete course for you, it is important to recognise that there are many other opinions, ideas on HR and management in general. In your assignments and activities you will be expected to refer to a range of literature. Go to your Learning Resources Centre and read/ view academic literature and expand your knowledge of HR and Management.

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