Chapter 9

Integrated Employee Development

Guidance Note For Students

The activities that follow are designed to be used with *An Introduction to HRM: An Integrated Approach*. Read chapter nine, 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 value of employee development in improving organisational performance.**
2. **Evaluate the application of differing methodologies in employee development.**
3. **Understand and apply the employee development star.**
4. **Recognise the key stages of employee development and apply the employee development star.**
5. **Apply the Competence Confidence Model to employee development.**
6. **Understand the role of HR trained professionals in developing an integrated organisational plan for employee development.**
7. **Appreciate why some organisations under invest in employee development and the case for advocating greater investment.**
8. **Recognise the value of experiential learning.**

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

Think about what kinds of work place activities might interest you. Now consider what it could be like if you found yourself in a workplace where there are no opportunities for engaging in stimulating work projects new activities or participating in decision making teams. Read the case study below and think about the HR implications.

HRM In Action: ***Nothing To Do At 'Information Co.'***

This HRM in action study is based upon qualitative research interviews (for research methods see chapter 11) with a sample group of employees in an organisation I shall refer to as Information Co. The name of the organisation shall remain anonymous as those employees who are still working or

associated with the organisation asked me not to include their names so I have substituted fictitious names to protect their identities.

Robert is a conscientious computer systems designer. When the project he was leading came to a successful completion he hoped to be given a new and interesting project, which would stretch his abilities and offer an interesting challenge. Instead nothing happened. He was asked to attach himself to a management team, but there seemed to be no specific work to be done.

Peter found himself in a similar situation to Robert and decided that the best option was to ‘appear busy’ and become involved in several high profile management action groups, though little action appeared to result from their deliberations. Peter was aware of some dysfunctional team projects as well as problems with both the confidence and even competence of some senior managers and colleagues. He therefore tactfully contacted the HR department and asked for some advice as to how these issues might be addressed. Aware that the situation with the teams and senior managers could be politically difficult for the HR employees Peter also asked if they might consider talking to an external HR professional for an outsider’s view of the situation. This possibility was politely considered and then not acted upon.

Meanwhile, Robert was becoming increasingly disaffected with the organisation. He told me that he had nothing of any significance to do. As a successful person with a distinguished employment track record Robert found the situation very frustrating. However, because the organisation’s performance was falling below the top management’s expectations, Robert had heard, unconfirmed rumours that some employees might be made redundant. Confident that he could find alternative employment when required, he decided to stay with *Information Co* in the hope that they might offer him a generous package to leave. This was a potentially risky strategy, but Robert had high confidence in his employability, though more so from his earlier experiences with the organisation than for the work he had done recently. In fact it took over a year for the organisation to approach Robert

about redundancy, but when the package was offered he accepted and left a few weeks later.

Peter felt that the organisation had made mistakes in its employee development strategies and was vindicated when performance results continued to be poor, bringing the organisation's share price to a new low valuation. Although he was a competent manager Peter lacked the confidence to challenge the status quo. The redundancies tended to encourage Peter towards caution in his relations with the senior management.

Robert was now unemployed, but with a valuable redundancy package, which was sufficient to maintain his family for several months, he decided to take some time off work. However, within a couple of weeks of leaving *Information Co* a old contact telephoned Robert to discuss the possibility of doing some work on an interesting project. This person was now managing a successful consultancy firm and was keen to have Robert's expertise on the team for a new client. While negotiations were in progress Robert had further offers of work and also sought advice on new avenues for career development. Consequently, he tendered in a much higher priced proposal for the work on the consultancy project. Robert was therefore surprised when the over priced tender was accepted without hesitation.

The project had an estimated duration of three years and the client had had to pay well above premium rates to attract the high calibre team the consultancy firm had managed to build for the project. Robert began work on the new development work immediately and occasionally had to visit the client's offices. The client was, his old employer, *Information Co.*

Robert was happy to do the work with his former colleagues in the knowledge that he was now being paid much more, working on an interesting project and free to follow other interests in his spare time. Conversely, Information Co was now paying a premium rate for the knowledge and skills of someone they had previously made redundant.

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think that a lack of interesting work can disaffect employees from their organisation?
- Assess the HR department's response to a request for support in management development by Peter.
- What do you understand by the expression 'politically difficult' for the HR employees to make recommendations to senior managers?
- In what ways might the HR department have been able to save the organisation money by inviting an external HR person to advise them on employee development?
- Peter is described as more competent than confident. How did this influence the decisions he made?
- List and discuss the failures in employee development highlighted in the case study.
- The organisation had indirectly re-employed Robert after they had made him redundant. Comment on the issues this raises for senior management development.

Group Activity: Presenting Employee Development

Design a ten-minute presentation to deliver to your seminar group (individual or group presentation) on:

Why employee development is important to modern organisations.

(presentation skills are discussed in chapter 12).

Guidance Note For Students

You may or may not have personal experiences, positive or negative regarding the induction procedures. What was the 'induction procedure' like when you joined your present study programme?

You can also use the questionnaire as a model to develop your own research with an organisation. (see chapter 11 for research methodology).

Practicing HRM:* *Induction Feedback Questionnaire

To fill in this questionnaire use the following: (1) strongly disagree; (2) moderately disagree; (3) slightly disagree; (4) neither agree nor disagree; (5) slightly agree; (6) moderately agree; (7) strongly agree.

1. The induction programme met the needs of my job role completely.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. My mentor was approachable.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. The induction programme was scheduled over just the right length of time.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. The induction programme has made a significant contribution to giving me a positive impression of this organisation.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. What I have learnt about this organisation during induction is very different from what I was told at interview.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. The induction programme has encouraged me to think I made the right decision in joining this organisation.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. The induction programme needed to be more specifically designed around my job role.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. I was given sufficient time away from my job tasks to follow all the induction units.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. I shall continue to be in regular contact with my mentor.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. My immediate manager has been supportive of my participation in the induction programme.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. The three main benefits of the induction programme have been:

i)

ii)

iii)

12. The three recommendations I would like to offer for the further development of the induction programme are:

i)

ii)

iii)

HRM In Action*: *Interview With a Senior Executive

In this extract from an interview with a company chairperson I was probing how employees are treated if they perform unexpectedly well and promotions. The consultancy has a long and successful record in recruitment and selection and the chairperson was discussing the actions of a client company, which he asked me to keep anonymous.

Question. Please tell me about a case, which you think is relevant to people management [development].

Answer. We placed somebody last year in [company name] and they were not expected to produce any business in the first six months. [Long lead times on the business cycle] In the first three months they produced a quarter of a million pounds worth of sales.

Question. A quarter of a million?

Answer. In the first three months, new business, very, very intelligent person. The manager [of the new employee] left at that time, he was head hunted to go to another company so the directors decided that they would take somebody from one of their competitors. This scenario went on for six months of talking to a specific applicant who wanted the job then didn't come, wanted the job, didn't come, going back and forward.

The person, who we placed, very successful in a short space of time, good management experience, went to the management and asked why aren't you giving me the opportunity to apply for this job? He didn't say: *I want to apply for it*. He said: *Why aren't you giving me the opportunity*? A different attitude. He was very direct, he said: *I've done it before, I could do this job*. The old manager [who recently got head hunted to another company] had been using this guy to help him. The director said: *No we don't want you [for this role] we are going to stick with this other person.* They wouldn't give him a trial so subsequently he left.

Discussion questions

- What are the disadvantages of not considering existing personnel for promotions before seeking someone from outside the organisation?
- Do you think it is possible that the senior management wanted to keep the new person in the role where he had proved to be exceptionally successful?
- Write a list of actions senior managers can take to encourage and help retain successful employees, other than promoting them.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter you have been able to evaluate the place and value of employee development in improving organisational performance. Through the application of management modelling in the 'employee development star' you are now able to identify the key stages of employee development. The self-evaluation exercises and activities should also have provided you with an understanding of your own areas of competence and confidence. The HR trained professionals should therefore be developing integrated organisational plans that invest in people and organisational performance.

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 you Learning Resources Centre and read/ view academic literature and expand your knowledge of HR and Management.

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Personal Notes On Chapter 9

Notes for seminars

Notes for revision/ reminders