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Hiring the Right People for your Organization

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Abstract - Organizations may have had the experience of hiring a person who seemed just right during the interview process and then wondered why problems arose or the person just "didn't work out." What starts as a rational process may be finalized by a hiring decision based on a "hunch." This is not to suggest that the proper hiring decision is devoid of subjective aspects, since it is important that the new person be able to work well with you. However, you will end up with fewer problems if the hiring process is carefully thought out and followed. This writing suggests a hiring process and its elements. The recommended guidelines should enable you and others involved in the process to improve your hiring average and build a more successful company.

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Hiring the Right People for your Organization

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I. Deciding whom you need

In hiring the right person, the most important information needed is the nature of the position being filled, as this becomes the basis for determining whom you need. If the position has already been established and occupied, the task of defining the requirements is somewhat easier than if it is a new position. A non managerial or first-line supervisor's position is less complex to define than is a middle manager's, where the tasks are more unstructured. Rodger and Hunter (2010).

In the case of the middle manager or executive, the job requirements may be even more difficult to establish. Yet, the proper selection is more crucial to your success. An organized approach to define managerial requirements is known as a management analysis. The information defined in a management analysis includes:

a) Functional Responsibilities

The operational functions are primary. In addition, it is necessary to specify the planning, control, coordination, and public relations functions that the new manager is expected to carry out. Be as explicit as possible in defining the role and responsibilities and how this manager will be held accountable for performance in each of these activities.

b) Supervisory Responsibilities

Identify all the positions (people) reporting to this manager and the characteristics of the people who hold these positions, so that a certain technological background or orientation can be specified as part of the position requirements if necessary. Define which of the subordinate positions are line and which are staff. Islam (2008).

c) Leadership Style

Although each manage is ultimately accountable for the performance of subordinates, certain leadership styles are more appropriate than others in certain situations. A highly directive manager of research will cause a decline in the morale and performance of the highly skilled professionals with advanced degrees, whereas the same manager in a highly structured task environment, such as manufacturing, will generally succeed much better than a more participatory manager. Mannan (2009).

d) Management Relationships

Each manager will be dependent upon other managers in your company for success, as it is impossible to carry out their responsibilities in a vacuum. Identify as clearly as possible each of the interrelationships and the specific nature of that relationship. A position that has many interdependencies, such as hospital administrator, requires a manager that communicates clearly and gets along with people extremely well. In addition to defining some of the personal characteristics needed by the manager, the nature of the duties and responsibilities will be better defined. Flamholtz, Bullen and Hua (2010).

e) Public Contact

Identify each of the spheres of public activity in which the manager will be expected to represent the firm. These may include key account development, public service organization membership, press relations, or government liaison responsibilities. Where ever possible, identify the role of the manager, the purpose or intent of such activities, and any specific objectives.

Although defining management requirements such as those described above may be difficult, it will be extremely helpful to you in identifying the type of person that is needed for key positions. Specifying the activities and responsibilities also give you an opportunity to responsibilities also gives you an opportunity to reassess the importance or necessity of those functions or activities. Any overlapping responsibilities can be identified and organizational modifications instituted as necessary before the individual is hired and problems arise. By specifying your performance expectations for each of these activities, accountability can be clearly understood by all the candidates. Weihrich (2007).

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In deciding whom you need, the requirement of the position and capabilities of the employee must both be defined carefully for best results.

The more structured positions of first-line supervisors support staff and other non-managerial workers are somewhat less complex to define. They may be defined by using a job analysis, which clarifies: Whitmore (2009).

- Work activities
- Tools and equipment
- Work performance
- Job context
- Personnel requirements

A job analysis is useful in that it generates

- Information for the preparation of job descriptions and specifications
- Employee training materials
- Job evaluation for pay purposes

Job descriptions can be developed from the information obtained in the job analysis. In undertaking a job analysis, you may find it helpful to interview the person(s) who presently hold that position in your organization (if such a position currently exists), or those who hold comparable positions. From this interview, it may be learned, for example, what problems exist, if any, in the current position, the kinds of decisions expected from the person holding the position, and the general work environment. Also, talking with the people who will interact with a new person in the position in question may provide some additional perspectives that may prove useful in the hiring process.

Besides developing specific job descriptions, you can obtain a much better sense of what kind of person you really need for that position. Any problems uncovered in job analysis need to be classified objectively as to:

- Problems with the particular person who was the previous job holder, or
- Problems associated with the particular job.

These should be addressed and resolved, if possible, before someone is hired for that position. Problems associated with the personal characteristics or experience of the previous incumbents can aid you in better specifying the kind of person you need to hire. Armstrong, Michael and Angela (2009)

II. Job Descriptions

A job description is an organized, standardized statement of the duties, responsibilities, and requirements of a specific job. Writing a job description will enable you to organize the information about a particular position and construct a hiring specification. Whitmore (2009). Before proceeding, however, it is necessary to be aware that job descriptions can never adequately summarize all the information you obtained in the course of your job analysis, so do not discard your working notes. See the Job Description Form for a sample format. This format may be useful, but do not allow any one format to constrain or limit your job description information. You may also see the need for separate formats for management, clerical, and manufacturing positions, since the job requirements are quite different.

In developing any job description, the following general categories of information should be included:

a) Job Identification

Includes information such as job title, alternate titles, department, division, and code, so that the position can be located on your organization chart and in the Directory of Occupational Titles, which is published by the Department of Labor. A brief summary description of the position, working conditions, and compensation are usually included in this section. Flamholtz (2009).

b) Duties Performed

Contains a listing of the major duties with a description of the characteristics of each. In sequencing the duties, it is useful to indicate the approximate percentage of time spent and/or priority by importance.

c) Skill Requirements

Describes the educational background, training certifications, and specific job experience requirements. The requirement levels should be stated as realistically as possible, as opposed to what you would ideally like to have. Also note that an overqualified person is as potentially troublesome as is the under qualified. Griffin (2008).

d) Supervision given and Received

Identifies the position (person) to which this job reports. If the position is a supervisory one, the number of subordinates and position titles should be indicated. Fay, Howard and Charles (2007).

e) Relation to other Jobs

As specifically as possible, describes how this position relates to other positions and the position responsibilities to any other department. Describes how, if relevant, the position is dependent on other positions for job performance.

f) Working Conditions and Resources

Identifies the aspects of the job environment that will affect the position or have a bearing on how the job is carried out. This section is particularly useful in describing machines, tools, and materials that would be

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utilized in a manufacturing position or office equipment and automated equipment used in clerical or secretarial positions.

g) Performance Evaluation

In most traditional job descriptions, this category does not appear. However, you will find it very helpful to define specifically the performance benchmarks that will be used in evaluating performance. This expectation should flow from your identification of job duties and skill requirements. Brumet, Flamholtz and Pyle (2011).

When writing job descriptions, be as clear and specific as possible. Vagueness or generalities will impede hiring the right person and managing his or her performance. Clarity is preferred over style.

> Job descriptions serve as summaries of duties, responsibilities, skill requirements, supervision, relations to other jobs, working conditions, and performance expectations.

Pope (2009)

III. Hiring Profiles

Through the management analysis, job analysis, and the summary provided by the job description, you have been attempting to define the specific needs of a particular position. Although this analysis can provide an operational audit of your organization, the primary purpose is to describe or profile the ideal candidate for this position and the compromises you might be willing to make in the specifications. There are several differences between a job description and a hiring profile. Thompson and James (2007). The hiring profile not only includes the specifications listed in the job description, but also includes personality characteristics or style identified in the management analysis, such as communication or interpersonal skills that might be necessary for success in this position.

You may have indicated in your job description the duties in order of time spent or importance. If so, it should be easy to decide for which of those functions you will be willing to accept less than the stated education and work experience requirements, it is necessary then to specify the absolute minimum that would be acceptable and what, if anything, the candidate would need to do during a probationary period to meet expected requirements. You will incur costs if you specify training courses, tuition refunds, workshops, on-the-job training, or the like. If requirements are not flexible, it means that a candidate who fails to meet them will automatically be excluded from consideration. This exercise, besides reassessing the appropriateness of the stated requirements, will provide a larger pool of candidates for consideration and greater flexibility in the hiring process.

Job Description Form

Form 1 **IDENTIFICATION FACTS**

Job Title _____ Location _____

Other titles used _____ Number employed: M_____ F_____

Brief summary of nature or function of job* _____

_____

Code number**_____

Salary range: Minimum _____ Maximum _____

Average bonus or incentive payment _____

Working hours:_____ Shift: _____ From _____ To _____

Overtime: _____ never _____ Seldom _____ frequent; average hours per week: _____

Misc. _____

* A 1-sentence description, to give a general idea of job.

** Job definition (from the Dictionary of Occupational Titles; your local State Employment Service Office can be helpful.)

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Form 2 **SKILL REQUIREMENTS**

Educational Requirements: (general education- -grade or years)

Grammar School _____ High School _____ Business School _____ College _____

Specific education for job

_____

Job Experience:

Previous experience required: None _____

Acceptable type and length _____

Average length of time with organization

_____

Previous jobs normally held

_____

Next job in line of promotion

_____

Relation to Other Jobs: Contacts regularly as part of job:

Within the Company _____ Outside the Company _____

Exercises Supervision Over:

Position of individual : _____

Subject of supervision: _____

Is Supervised by: Position of individual Subject of supervision

Immediate supervisor _____ _____

Others _____ _____

Job Duties:

Regular:

Before open for business _____

During business hours _____

After business hours _____

Periodic (weekly or monthly):

Performed on regular time _____

Performed after hours _____

Occasional: Performed on regular time _____

Performed after hours _____

Job Knowledge: Policies and Regulations

General Special and Departmental

_____ _____

_____ _____

Procedures and Methods

_____ _____

_____ _____

Technical Information Related Information

_____ _____

Use of Equipment: Types of equipment:: _____

Special operations _____

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Form 3 **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Direction & Group Leadership:

None _____ Occasional _____ Frequent _____ Continual _____

Nature of responsibility _____

Business Operations:

None _____ Occasional _____ Frequent _____ Continual _____

Nature of responsibility _____

Care of Equipment:

None _____ Occasional _____ Frequent _____ Continual _____

Nature of responsibility _____

Safety and Health of Others:

None _____ Occasional _____ Frequent _____ Continual _____

Nature of responsibility _____

Contact with Public: None _____ Occasional _____ Frequent _____ Continual _____

Form 4 **EFFORT DEMAND**

Physical Activities

_____ Standing	_____ Turning	_____ Reaching	_____ Pushing	_____ Smelling
_____ Walking	_____ Running	_____ Throwing	_____ Pulling	_____ Testing
_____ Balancing	_____ Stooping	_____ Lifting	_____ Fingering	_____ Hearing
_____ Climbing	_____ Sitting	_____ Carrying	_____ Feeling	_____ Seeing

Worker Characteristics

_____ Planning	_____ Talking	_____ Making decisions
_____ Directing others	_____ Showing initiative	_____ Working rapidly
_____ Writing	_____ Getting alone with people	
_____ Showing enthusiasm	_____ Working at various tempos	
_____ Being well groomed	_____ Concentrating amid distractions	
_____ Controlling emotions	_____ Remembering names and faces	
_____ Using arithmetic	_____ Remembering details	
_____ Working accurately	_____ Examining and observing details	
_____ Discriminating colors	_____ Attending to many items	

Form 5 **WORKING CONDITIONS**

_____ Inside	_____ Hot	_____ Dirty	_____ Inadequate light
_____ Outside	_____ Cold	_____ Dusty	_____ Inadequate ventilation
_____ Humid	_____ Dry	_____ Odors	_____ Working with others
_____ Hazards	_____ Wet	_____ Noisy	_____ Working around others
_____ High places			_____ Working alone
_____ Change of temperature			_____ Working under pressure

Detail of Working Conditions (summary based on working conditions) _____

Details of Hazards _____

Permissible Handicaps: Limb _____ hearing _____ Sight _____

Source: "How to Write a Job Description," Management Aids for Small Manufacturers No.171 (Washington, D.C.: Small Business Administration, 2010), pp. 3 – 4

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IV. Recruitment

Many companies actively pursue a policy of promoting from within by widely publicizing all openings, providing training for promotion, and maintaining personnel skills inventories. There are many positive motivational factors associated with such a policy, and it should be seriously considered. However, lip service adherence to this policy by only posting openings on some secluded bulletin board will adversely affect morale.

Having internal and external candidates may cause problems if an outsider is picked. Communicating clearly to your employees that a particular position is open, the job and candidate expectations, and that you are looking outside as well as inside will preclude some of these problems. Assuming you are unable or unwilling to promote from within, the next phase is to seek out actively as many potential candidates as possible. Note that all other phases of the hiring process will be used for internal as well as external candidates. Some of the possible recruiting sources include: Bourne, Franco and Wilkes (2008).

a) Recommendations of Present Employees

This approach has the best overall retention rate of all the sources. An employee probably is not going to recommend personally someone who will be a problem and will tend to provide the candidate with accurate information about the company. Managers tend to prefer hiring people they know and like or have been recommended to them by someone they trust or respect.

b) Unsolicited Applicants

This is the next best source of successful candidates. Your public relations, advertising, and other recruiting activities will attract candidates.

c) Advertising

As with your product advertising, the media selected must be targeted on the desired audience of potential candidates or the returns will be few in number and not of the desired quality.

d) Employment Agencies

Private agencies develop specialties that may provide some concentrated attention to your requirements. These organizations charge a fee for placing an individual with your company. They will bury you with resumes unless you are explicit in your specifications and are serious in holding to them. State unemployment offices are generally not very useful; the staff tends to be overworked and under qualified.

e) Schools and Colleges

You may find it valuable to develop relationships with neighboring colleges and technical schools. Student performance in summer jobs or co-oppositions can be observed closely before a hiring commitment is made, which is an advantage you do not have with other external candidates.

These are the most common sources of candidates and should be evaluated periodically for retention rate and cost by job categories. Within your budget constraint, use as many sources as possible to obtain a sufficient pool of candidates.

> In recruitment, use all sources that will generate the largest pool of qualified candidates.

V. Interview and Selection

Standard personnel practice is to have candidates complete an applicant blank and have a brief preliminary interview. The application form will be most useful to you in checking references ad initiating personnel file if the person is hired. Preliminary interviews only serve to screen out the obviously unqualified. Employment testing is highly controversial. The most successful tests are usually skill related, such as typing tests, whereas personality or aptitude tests are of questionable value.

The employment interview is a crucial part of the hiring process and needs to be carefully planned. Your key objective is to match the candidate's skills and capabilities to the requirements that were incorporated in the hiring profile and determine how well the person meets those requirements. The interview should proceed from the most important to the least important. Have the candidate give as many illustrations as possible as to how well he or she meets a major requirement. Resumes ad applications forms are usually inadequate for this assessment and may mask the needed information. Only through careful probing during the interview can the necessary information be obtained. Winggrove (2009)

> The job interview should be carefully planned and directed toward obtaining objective information on how well the candidate matches the hiring specifications.

The actual conduct of the interview should take place where interruptions can be avoided and the setting is businesslike, yet conducive to a relaxed conversation. Remember – it is an interview, not an interrogation, and the candidate should do most of the talking. Your demeanor and style will portray the

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company to the candidate and in no small way affect whether the candidate is interested in your company. It is highly recommended that you accurately portray the company and the position to the candidate. The better the information the candidate has, the less chance there will be that a good employee will quit because he or she discovers that you have given misinformation about the job or company, and a greater probability that the "right" person will be hired.

Before concluding the interview, review your notes to make sure that the information obtained from the candidate is accurate. Check with the candidate any questionable points of information. Indicate the decision time frame and that you will check references. Try to be responsive to a candidate's need for a prompt answer, but do not be railroaded. Allow sufficient time to answer all the candidate's questions and leave open the opportunity for the candidate to ask further questions in the next day or two. Don (2008).

Once you have narrowed your list to about five candidates, references should be checked. The references provided almost always respond positively about the candidate. References from the last two previous jobs will be more informative than personal references. Contact the previous employers by phone rather than letter. In this way you can prove questionable areas. Concentrate your questioning on the skills and capabilities you require that might have been demonstrated on a previous job. Once all the references have been checked, the final selection is made by comparing each of the remaining candidates against the hiring specifications and selecting the one that best fits them.

> Talking with the candidate's past employers is the most important reference check. Verify job accomplishments that demonstrate the capabilities you need for the position to be filled.

The best candidate selected is contracted and offered the job. There is usually some flexibility in the salary negotiations, particularly at the managerial level. However, be careful that the salary negotiated is not out of line with similar positions. If the salary is tool high, your other employees will be dissatisfied, and if it is too low, the new employee will become discontent. Weihrich and Buhler (2009) Salary information usually becomes known, even with the best security. Upon acceptance of the offer, it is a good public relations policy to notify the other candidates as courteously and promptly as possible.

VI. Employee Orientations

An activity that is often ignored or quietly dispensed within a small company is orientation. The purpose of orientation is to integrate the new employee into your organization as quickly and effectively as possible. Some of he data common to orientation include:

a) Company Information

such things as history, current activities, organization chart, and where the new employee fits into the total scheme of things.

b) Personnel Policies and Practices

Attendance, lateness, illness, personal time practices, benefit plans with dates of eligibility for enrollment and any special services. In addition to presenting this information to the new employee, an employee handbook containing such data can be distributed after the presentation. (See the sample Employee Handbook: Table of Contents below).

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Employee Handbook:
SAMPLE TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 – WELCOME MESSAGE
2 – HISTORY OF THE COMPANY
3 – THIS IS OUR BUSINESS
4 – YOU AND YOUR FUTURE
5 – WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO KNOW

Working hours
Reporting to Work
"Time Clock"
Rest Periods
Absence From Work
Reporting Absences
Employment Record
Pay Period
Shift Premiums
Safety and Accident Prevention
Use of Telephones
How To Air Complaints

6 – THESE ARE YOUR BENEFITS
- Vacations
- Holidays
- Group Insurance
- Hospitalization & Surgical Benefits
- Free Parking
- Training Program
- Christmas Bonus
- Savings Plan
- Profit-Sharing Plan
- Suggestion Awards
- Jury Duty
- Military Leave
- U.S. Old Age Benefits
- Unemployment Compensation
- Equal Employment Opportunity

7 – THESE SPECIAL SERVICES ARE FOR YOU
- Credit Union
- Education Plans
- Medical Dispensary
- Employee Purchases
- Company Cafeteria
- Monthly Magazine
- Annual Outing
- Bowling League
- Baseball Team

8 – INDEX or TABLE of CONTENTS

Source : "Pointers on Preparing an Employee handbook," Management Aids No. 197, (Washington, D.C.: Small Business Administration, 2011), p. 3-4.

VII. Temporary Help

Temporary help may be effective in certain instances, such as in taking physical inventories, performing special projects, or covering during an illness or vacation. The advantages of using temporary help include: they are skilled and bonded, your staff does not become accustomed to collecting overtime,

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and although the temporary hourly rate is higher, the total costs (benefits, personnel services, and so on) are lower. Disadvantages include the need for closer supervision and direction, and some resentment on the part of your own employees over losing overtime pay. Friedmann (2005). Temporary help should be just that – temporary. If it becomes a standard part of your operation, job assignments and staffing patterns need to be reviewed.

Another approach to handling short-term activity bulges or less than full-time work loads is to hire part-time employees. A number of computer firms, for example, have had good success with hiring skilled housewives as programmers. They work at home or come to work after the children go to school and leave before the children come home. These employees are paid by the job or by the hour and are not entitled to the benefits given full-time employees. Some companies compensate for the lack of benefits by increasing the hourly rate or providing limited benefits. Dulewicz (2009).

Temporary help services may be an effective way of meeting short-term staff overload activities, provided the temporary aid is carefully planned and supervised.

VIII. Motivation and Pay

The issue of money and motivation is highly controversial; money takes on aspects of status, prestige, and achievement, which are recognition motivators. Research indicates that paying someone more than the job is worth will cause the person to work proportionately less. Experiences with piecework incentives and straight commission pay plans have not been overly successful, and for the most part they have been replaced with group incentives.

Motivation is not something you do to someone else; motivation is self-initiated. You can encourage the potentially highly motivated individual in the following ways: Bannister and Balkin (2008).

- Pay appropriately for the job and provide benefits comparable to similar firms in your area.
- Reward individuals in proportion to their contributions to their unit and/or company if an incentive plan is used.
- Be clear about expectations. In the following chapter we discuss Management by Objectives. This is a good approach to defining in advance what is expected and when. It also provides objective information for performance evaluation.
- Define jobs in a manner that encourages the assumption of responsibilities and involvement is successfully carrying them through to completion. The "division of labor" approach to job responsibilities can be carried too far. If it is, the result will be menial pieces of a job that are stultifying to the employee.
- Encourage advancement by providing on-the-job training, tuition refunds, or the like. Some thought might be given to career paths so that promotions are planned and organized not only to reward the employee, but to meet the future staff needs of your company.
- Train your supervisors and managers to be more sensitive to the needs of their employees and to those things that will motivate or "turn off" employees.

Performance is the sum of ability plus motivation. The work must be done. It will be done faster and better if the employees are motivated.

IX. Conclusion and Recommendations

One of he best tactics for reducing the number of problem employees is to follow the guidelines suggested earlier on recruitment, interview and selection. However, you will still be confronted with the employee having difficulties or causing problems. You will need to balance firmness with fairness and compassion with performance. Each problem" is not an isolated event, affecting only that individual, but a troublesome chain of events that can severely affect morale and performance of an entire unit if not handled properly. If your employees are unionized, they are probably covered by a negotiated grievance procedure, which will restrict your actions. It is appropriate periodically to review the effectiveness of the process and negotiate improvements.

Grievance procedures and disciplinary actions are needed to resolve legitimate employee complaints and to gain adherence to a reasonable code of conduct.

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Even if your company is unionized, there is need to develop a disciplinary process and policy. Disciplinary actions may or may not precipitate grievances, which would be covered under the contract. The following guidelines will be useful in developing such a disciplinary process:

a) Establish a minimum number of rules. For example, don't establish a dress code if it is not important to safety. Excessive rules invite disobedience and lack of respect for all rules. Good supervisory practices will discount the need to formalize all desired behaviors into rules.
b) Communicate the rules clearly and the intent to enforce them.
c) Institute fair but appropriate penalties for rule violations and for repeated violations of the same rules. Some of the common penalties used, in order of increasing severity, are:
   i. Oral reprimands.
   ii. Written reprimands.
   iii. Loss of privileges.
   iv. Fines.
   v. Suspensions.
   vi. Discharges.

Remember that intention or attitude is not punishable. Rule enforcement is based on observable behaviors.

d) Do not take action when you are angry, as your judgment will be affected. Take time to find out what really happened and why.
e) When meeting with the employee, try to stress his or her positive contributions, at the same time not condoning the rule violation. Endeavor to have the employee work out a plan of action for avoiding future violations.
f) Make sure that your supervisors consistently enforce rules and regulations; repeated forgiveness will undermine the perceived importance of the rules and they may well become unenforceable if taken to court.

Punishment is not a motivator and of questionable value as a deterrent. Your relationship with the employee will make the biggest difference.

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