**INTRODUCTION**

Human Resource Management strategy also underwent a fascinating journey filled with success and failures. The success of the majority of Fortune 100 companies, including Blackberry, can be attributed to the HRM practices as it facilitates an environment that fosters innovation and teamwork, one of the most important factors in tech business (Boxall & Purcell, 2005). However, it is also the same HRM strategies that played a part in its eventual fall. Therefore, learning it offers us a valuable insight into challenges and opportunities faced by companies and they scale and adapt.

**EARLY HRM STRATEGIES**

In the early days of its existence, company founders mainly relied on their personal networks and word-of-mouth to attract engineers who were excited about the potential of the technology. Even though it cultivated a positive work environment, the intense work ethic of company founders could sometimes create pressure and stress, potentially impacting retention. In one occasion, for example, an employee was found asleep in his chair with his eyes open (McNish and Silcoff, 2015, p59).

**HRM CHANGES AS RIM GROWS:**

The rapid growth of the company also changed its HR strategy. This growth necessitated the need to hire a higher skilled pool of engineers as their hardware and software development challenges became more frequent and complicated. Their main recruitment focus was on two main places: attracting talented engineers from top universities and organizing conferences to bring in skilled professionals (McQueen, 2010). Stock options were a key attraction. For example, Jimmy was able to hire top engineers from Google and Facebook for 10 million dollars in stock as portrayed in the movie. Even though it was not within the legal boundaries, this scene in the movie shed a light on how the company’s recruitment and offers worked during its growth. Also the informal approach of hiring based on personal connections was replaced by more structured processes such as interviews, reference checks and skill tests. While this led to higher levels of standardization and objectivity, it took the focus away from cultural fitness and passion of the applicants, an element that was vital to a company's success in initial phases.

As the company expanded, new challenges were about to come. The company started to face issues like internal conflicts in the management, and as a result, overall morale and innovation in the company were impacted. One of the senior RIM executives even posted an anonymous letter to a tech blog saying how he lost confidence and that the future looks bleak for the company (Geller, 2011). Above all, the departure of Douglas, one of the company founders, symbolized the beginning of the collapse of a once mighty phone manufacturer. Even their rewards management system failed to adapt to market shifts as they focused on rewarding employees with good compensation packages and bonuses while ignoring other motivating factors. Now with morale and purpose lacking among the employees, team spirit and collaborative culture were slowly vanishing, and it was reflected in the slow but steady decline in its market share and revenue (Seth, 2017).

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH MODERN PRACTICES:**

RIM’s approach to attracting top talents from universities and conferences are still a common practice today, other aspects such as diversity and inclusivity in modern companies were less prevalent. Stock options were, as mentioned earlier, a key part of recruiting top engineers and still are, but RIM made less use of modern practices such as competitive salaries and bonuses catered to individual needs (Shafique, 2012). More importantly, RIM failed to balance growth and hard-work with well-being and health initiatives which ultimately led to the loss of many talented employees, while it is one of the priorities of many tech companies these days.