Integration and Formation of the New Member of RNL Administration

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Learnings Report

Abstract—In this activity, we went through the process of selecting a candidate for a new opening, followed by integrating the chosen candidate into the team and environment. We used various advertising techniques to spread awareness of the new opening, made a rigorous selection using tests and interviews, and helped the selected candidate integrate by providing him with documentation, tutorials, and personal formation. In this learnings report, I talk about the skills I developed while working on this activity.

Index Terms—(interview process, candidate selection, curriculum, formation, effective communication, ability to listen, marketing, analytics).

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1 INTRODUCTION

THIS learning report talks about skills I have developed while working on the advertisement, selection process, integration and formation for a new member of Departamento de Engenharia Informática (DEI)'s laboratory administration team.

I participated in the development and deployment of communication materials used to advertise the opening of the new grant, prepared the candidates' interviews to obtain as much relevant data as possible about each candidate and contributed to the development of the candidates' test by providing questions regarding my areas of expertise - Linux and networking - to test them accurately and rigorously.

I then helped carefully selecting the candidate who seemed most suited for the position, based on the previous gathered data, and, finally, had to provide the new member with as much useful information as possible to ensure he could start being productive as earlier as possible.

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2 SPREADING AWARENESS

In order to spread awareness about the opening of the new grant, I had to learn about analytics tracking tools such as Facebook Analytics in order to track the progress of our campaign, obtain information on any relevant Facebook student groups where I could post the announcements and carefully analyze possible spots in the building for placing of the posters.

Throughout the campaign, we decided to try to activate word-of-mouth by casually inserting the research grant as a topic in conversation with other colleagues - by learning about the virality associated with human-to-human interaction and adapting our discourse with colleagues and leveraging our team members connections, we managed to get three candidates using this method. By developing soft skills such as effective communication, assertiveness, listening and networking, we managed to increase our market penetration.

In order to enhance our visibility even more, we took advantage of the login screens of the computer labs, a screen every Informatics student has to look at before using a laboratory Personal Computer (PC), to increase the number of eyes looking at our announcement.

(1.0) Excellent	LEARNINGS						DOCUMENT						
(0.8) Very Good	Context×2	Skills×1	Reflect×4	Summ×.5	Concl×.5	SCORE	Struct ×.25	Ortog×.25	Exec×4	Form ×.25	Titles ×.5	File ×.5	SCORE
(0.6) Good													
(0.4) Fair	0.4	0.8	0.6	0.6	1.0		1.0	1.0	1.0	0.6	1.0	1.0	
(0.2) Weak													

3   CANDIDATE EVALUATION

With the above described advertising, we managed to peek the interest of five candidates within the two weeks we had to spread the word about the available grant. To decide who to add to our team, we used two methods of testing, already used in our standard selection process: we developed a test and an interview to obtain relevant data on each candidate and be able to grade them in a 1-5 scale. Before this activity, I had never participated in an employee selection process and learned about developing effective evaluation materials and objectively grading other people in a otherwise relatively subjective process.

3.1   Tests

By helping to develop the tests that were applied to all candidates' in our selection process, I had to carefully think about the core questions I would have to place in the test and that would, eventually, help select a person for the job. Even though our goal was to recruit someone to mainly do system administration on Windows systems, it was important to have a new polyvalent team member that could take care of tasks outside of his/her main area of expertise.

Thinking about 3 or 4 questions that will eventually define someone who could, in the future, replace you in your current position makes you think about what exactly your technical skills boil down to and, even if the candidate does not yet possess the same knowledge you already have, what good signs of ability to learn how to perform a given task in your position would be. Also, this questions had to be answerable by all candidates and provide insight on the way they thinking about and solve problems.

These contributions helped me learn how to define myself as a professional and my role within the team.

3.2   Interview

The interviews' purpose was to gather more information about the candidates' knowledge, by asking about previous activities, curriculum and hobbies relevant for the position. We decided to ask an open-ended question, focused on evaluating candidates' problem solving skills.

As I had never participated in the development of interviews before, I was given the opportunity to provide suggestions for questions asked during the interview which made me think about ways to gather as much technical and personal information as possible about a person in a short period of time.

I had to act professionally, even while interviewing my friends, and keep a straight and detached face through the interviews. This helped me learn how to abstract and detach myself from my own personal relationships and perform a role as an objective evaluator in an interview process.

3.3   Selection Process

Having to grade all candidates according to their expertise in several skills - Linux, Windows, Networking, Hardware, and Soft Skills - I learned how to establish objective criteria for evaluating a person's skills in a fair and balanced way. Having to grade a few personal friends, I had to, again, detach myself from the personal relationships I had with any of them and previous work relationships we had established through out our academic paths and grade them according only to the performance they had throughout the selection process.

4   INTEGRATION

Gonçalo, the new-found member of our team, had to be integrated in the team's dynamics and his new position. His integration was done in phases: firstly, we introduced him into the team, then we showed him our communication channels and internal tools we use to organize ourselves, and the way our infrastructure worked, its rationale and its implementation details. We started giving him small and simple tasks right away for him to build momentum and rapidly extend his knowledge domain in systems administration, carefully answering to his questions and resolving any issues or doubts he encountered.

4.1 Introduction to the Team and Team Communication

Having to introduce Gonçalo to the rest of the team, we prepared and scheduled a small meeting with all members of the team. In this meeting, we introduced each other, and explained what role each of us have within the team, as well as what role he would be performing in the future. We taught new member how we communicate, the tools we use and their tasks, giving Gonçalo a small walk-through if he did not yet know of the tool.

I learned how to carefully prepare a group dynamic to make our introductions in the meeting so the new member would be comfortable with the team from the get-go and how to plan an effective and time-constrained session on communication channels and tools.

4.2 Infrastructure

Having Gonçalo know how to get in touch with us, it was time to show him our infrastructure, its rationale and implementation. We scheduled a session to describe everything in our control by performing a physical visit to our technical room, our storage rooms, finishing in the Administration's office.

By showing him our network topology, the rationale behind its modelling and the actual physical cables, servers and switches in place allowed him to better grasp the full extent of our intervention areas.

I learned how to plan an effective and extensive session on our infrastructure, taking care to focus on the key activities he would be performing in his position.

4.3 Tasks

Finally, we started assigning the new member with simple tasks, and scheduling time with him to accomplish them together with one of the existing members.

As the new member executed the task, the existing member would guide the new member on how to do it, explain what was important and what was not, and give him an idea of some good practices to have in mind when executing the task.

Me and José were mainly the ones in charge for Gonçalo's integration and took measures to ensure he always had someone to talk to in case he needed any help within his first weeks. We also scheduled a few lunches and teas to talk to Gonçalo about various aspects of his new role, including organizational behaviours, DEI's hierarchy and key people in DEI's office.

5 CONCLUSION

As a result of my work in this activity, I have developed skills in communication management, coaching and session planning and soft skills such as effective communication, assertiveness, listening and networking. This activity was a key moment of my professional life as I learned to evaluate others, integrate others and provide coaching in new job roles. I believe I was effective in all accomplished tasks and met all my predefined goals in this activity.

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