

HR System Proposal for CPA

Sandy You

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

PSYC 475

Section 1: Identification of Critical KSAO's

The job title I researched is Certified Public Accountant, under the company Estar Firm, which is a small company located in Sunnyvale, California. The O*NET occupational category that closely resembles this job is Accountant. In this job, CPAs must analyze the financial information of their clients and prepare financial reports to determine or maintain record of financial activities such as assets, liabilities, profit and loss, and/or tax liability.

In order to be successful as a CPA, there are five critical KSAO's needed to perform the job at a high-level. The first is knowledge of business, specifically accounting, economics and administrative services, is necessary to understand the environment and day-to-day needs of the job. It is also important because it creates an understanding of the government climate, bringing awareness to what needs to be met and what consumers want in terms of taxes. Taxes also vary from state to state, so CPAs must be well versed in circumstances relating to that. Critical thinking and active listening skills are also needed for interacting with clients and being a consultant to their business needs. Fourth, written and reading comprehension is needed to understand the governmental forms regarding taxes and the economy. Lastly, attention to detail is needed to review client files and accounts for discrepancies before finalizing reports.

Section 2: Recruitment strategy

Since accountants require specific schooling, it is less likely to find a good match for the company through internal recruitment. I would still be open for recommendations from current employees about new hires, but that would not be my only form of recruitment. My main recruitment strategy would be through career fairs and campus recruitment. There is a mutual benefit from hiring at career fairs—students will need jobs once they graduate and companies

need new hires. We would only go to a few universities in the Bay Area, where we are located, since as a small company we lack the resources to be able to network to many large universities to compete with well-established companies. The message conveyed would stick to a realistic job preview, meaning that it gives potential applicants a realistic sense of the nature of the job, the climate of the organization, etc. Compared to traditional messages conveyed to candidates, realistic job previews lead to somewhat higher job satisfaction and somewhat lower turnover.

Online recruiting would also be a good option, but only specific websites such as handshake.illinois.edu. We would create a website that is easy to navigate and explains how the application process works very clearly. Furthermore, we will state that we are an equal opportunity employer to encourage more people to apply. We want to appeal to Accounting, Economics, or even Political Science majors, as they would have the greatest likelihood of attaining the desired KSAOs for a CPA.

Key issues to keep in mind while recruiting are recruiter effects and diversity. We want to make sure that the applicants have a good impression of the recruiting process since it affects their opinion of the company as a whole. Not only should recruiters treat all applicants with respect and appear competent and informative, they should also develop a personal relationship to increase the likelihood of potentially accepting job offers and decrease turnover.

Section 3. Initial screening procedure

After we compile all the applicants that applied before the deadline, we want to screen the ones that would definitely not fit in terms of task performance. For example, if an applicant does not have an undergraduate degree and has no experience, it is unlikely that they would know how to use softwares and paperwork required of accountants. The initial screening

procedure is to screen out applicants who may have applied just for fun, or applicants that would not fit the job description due to lack of experience in desired KSAO's.

The expected size of the total applicant pool would be about 250, since many undergraduate students would like to apply to work in the Bay Area. We would screen the year of graduation to be 2019, since this would be a full time job and we do not want new hires to be in school, and at least a 3.0 GPA with an undergraduate degree in Business or Economics. The applicants leftover would be the "shortlist," which would ideally be less than 25 as Estar is a small company. As such, the resume to "serious candidate" ratio would be about 10:1.

Section 4. Selection of top candidate(s) from shortlist

Using interviews and by interpreting biodata, I will arrive at the top candidates who will receive an offer. First, we will look at biodata, specifically application blanks. To deter applicants from submitting fake responses, we will ask for response elaboration and a warning of potential response verification. Some example questions would be, "Why are you interested in this position?" "What skills or qualifications do you have?" and "Have you worked a full-time job before?" We will evaluate the responses by using the five critical KSAO's—knowledge of business, critical thinking, active listening, written/reading comprehension, and attention to detail. Then, we will use a scale from 0-15, and use dichotomous items (0-3, 4-7, 8-11, 12-15) to assess responses to application blanks. Before setting the cutting scores for selection, we will use cross-validation by applying the weights in another sample and correlating the total score with the same criteria. Finally, cutting scores will be set and applicants who did not meet those scores will not be invited to the final stage of the hiring process.

The last stage of the hiring process, we will offer interviews to applicants from the shortlist. There will be about a 4:1 “serious candidate” to interview ratio. This means that about 6 candidates will accept their interviews from the 25 that passed the first screening and second procedure. We are using interviews as the last step of the selection process because this will be the most costly in terms of cost and training. Cutting out all of the applicants that we do not think are a good fit before starting the interviewing process will ensure that we do not waste any money. We will perform a structured interview with the 6 candidates, with completely prespecified questions and each response rated on a customized scale with benchmarks. The questions will be experience-based, situational, and knowledge-based. Because the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior, experience-based questions will be heavily analyzed. These questions ask about applicants’ past behaviors relevant to the job. However, because most applicants will be recent graduates, they will probably not have much experience. This is why we will also like to assess personality and applied social skills through these interviews. These concepts cannot be measured or seen through resumes.

Section 5. Evaluation of recruitment and selection system

Utilizing the new hires, I would ask them to give feedback about the hiring process. The questions would measure whether applicants thought the process was fair. For example, job relatedness, opportunity to perform, communication, and consistency. The drawbacks to this would be that it takes a while to create because we would need a lot of new hires to produce meaningful data from their feedback. Furthermore, the data might be skewed since they have already been hired by the company; the applicants who were not hired/declined their job offer may think differently about the hiring process.

The information I would need to collect to determine if my recruitment and selection system were effective would be employee evaluations as well as turnover/retention rates. These can be administered through a questionnaire given a year after the employee has been hired. A job performance questionnaire can measure job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which are key to employee retention/turnover. By using these methods, Estar Firm would be able to successfully evaluate the outcome of the proposed recruitment and selection system.