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Admission Number: AIPMS/310/2019

Course: Certificate in Human Resource Management

Institution: Africa Institute for Project Management Studies (AIPMS)

Assignment Number: Second Assignment – Module Two

Date of Submission: January 31, 2020

Second Assignment – Study Questions:

1. Explain the role of human resource manager in human resource planning.
2. With an aid of a diagram of the human resource planning model, explain the process of human resource planning?
3. Discuss briefly the levels of human resource planning
4. Managers in both public and private organizations in African countries may not be interested in HRP. Discuss.
5. Effective employee recruitment and selection is necessary for the competitiveness of organizations. However, failure to prepare for smooth recruitment processes is the most common pitfall in public service in Africa and more so in developing countries. Discuss.
6. Recruitment and selection in public service in African countries depends more on who you know than what you know. Use cases to justify this statement.
7. Discuss the components of an effective assessment with an aid of a diagram

Answers:

1. Explain the role of human resource manager in human resource planning.

DeCenzo et al (2010, p. 112) defines as the “process of determining an organization’s human resource needs”, being one of the most important elements in the success of HRM system, because it secures the right number and type of people, hired at the right time and place in the right job, which have the required abilities to efficient and effective reach the organizational goals. Armstrong (as cited in Study manual, Module two, p. 2) defines human resource planning as “both quantitative and qualitative process of ensuring that the organization has the right people at the right time doing the right job”. So, human resource planning is an important part of human resource management.

The goals and the mission of the organization, it’s objectives, strategies and policies shall guide human resource planning. The emphasis of human resource planning shall be on the following:

- Having the right skills and jobs at the right time,
- Forecasting the needed types of human resources,
- Ensuring timely replacement for vacant positions,
- Preparing recruitment policies to meet present and future number of jobs and abilities,
- Ensuring the effective utilization of human resources,
- Having adequate personnel procedures for present and future jobs, for recruitment, training, career planning, etc. (Study manual, Module two, p. 2).

The HR manager has a vital role in developing the resource capability of the organization by making plans to ensure that the adequate employees are available to meet the objectives of the organization. The HR manager shall focus on hiring and developing the employees required by the organization. In order to conduct an effective human resource planning, the HR manager shall:

- Be aware of the strategic plans of the organization and provide advice on human resource issues in order to reach those objectives.
- Know the strengths and weaknesses of human resource department, as well as challenges and opportunities and to present them to the management, in order to be taken into consideration by developing the business plan of the organization.
- Have an overview of the scenario planning, so the eventual challenges regarding hiring, retention and employment of staff can be identified, and advise on addressing those challenges.
- Understand the quantitative assessments of future demand for people, know if they are useful and understand the methods that can be used to prepare for such predictions.
- Be flexible and innovative in introducing new techniques in order to address future human resource requirements.
- Understand the internal and external environment of the organization and be able to prepare adequate and practical resourcing plans and strategies for retaining people and know the effects of possible labor turnover. (Armstrong, 2006, p. 388).

2. With an aid of a diagram of the human resource planning model, explain the process of human resource planning?

There are several models of human resource planning having the same objective to ensure that the organization has effective methods to hire, reward, develop and retain employees. The processes of human resource planning model are summarized as follows:

- The first step begins with reviewing the *business strategic plan* of the organization, in order to understand the future of the organization in terms of vertical or horizontal growth in business or services as projected in the objectives and goals of the organization. Here future activity levels which require new skills will be defined.
- The next step in the human resource planning is to identify the best *resourcing strategy*. We may talk about three types of resourcing strategies: reallocation of tasks among employees, promotions and transfers and recruitment. The first strategy depends on the organization, if the organization has enough staff with multiple attributes capable of doing different tasks. The second strategy, common in many organizations, aims to reallocate staff to positions where they best fit, ensuring vertical and horizontal movement within the organization. Recruitment from outside and inside of the organization is used to fill in the human resource gaps. So, the strategy of human resource includes several steps in decision making, depending of demand and supply.

If there is more need of employees as available, decisions need to be made regarding resourcing strategies, but if there is a surplus of employees, the strategy will be to reduce the staff available through layoffs, part time employees or early retirement. The resourcing strategy includes planning to achieve competitive advantage by employing more capable employees than the competitors which may develop organization specific knowledge and skills.

- The next process is *scenario planning* which include a number of activities including the assessment of present and future environment of the organization in terms of human resource implications, but also the economic, political and social factors such as population, labour market, legislation, investments, etc.
- *Labour demand/supply forecasting*: labour demand forecasting examines the present and future needs for people (number and skills), evaluating the people available within and outside the organization. Depending on the organization's goals, human resource managers will examine the activities and budgets, current inventory staff, known waste, etc., and will use the findings to plan how such demand will be met. Labour supply forecasting aims to identify the existing people, the effect of changing working conditions if necessary, and sources of internal and external staff supply. The information from labour demand/supply forecasting is compared and decision will be taken in the process of human resources planning.
- A next step in human resources planning will be the *labour turnover analysis*, which will help to determine the strengths and the ability of the organization to retain staff. High turnover rates demotivate staff, it is costly in term of recruitment and the organization is left with poor staff. But a certain level of turnover is healthy because the organization is able to attract new ideas from outside. Labour turnover is measured through different methods: labour turnover index (percentage of leavers compared with the average number of employees); survival rate (percentage of original staff group who have survived for several years); half-life index (number of years of cohort to survive by half); and stability index (tendency for older job group to remain in the organization).
- Human resource planning depends on *work environment analysis*. This is the analysis of the environment in which people work, to see if the staff is proud of their jobs in the organization, if the staff is able to use and develop their skills and if they achieve job satisfaction, and if the organizational environment is encouraging for attracting skilled job seekers.
- Another process of human resource planning is the *operational effectiveness analysis*, which analyses the productivity of the employees, the utilization of staff with the scope to increase flexibility in order to be able to respond to new and changing future demands. (Armstrong, 2006, pp. 368-382).

3. Discuss briefly the levels of human resource planning

Human resource planning can be at national, ministerial, sectoral, organizational and departmental levels. It is important to know the pool of human resources available at national level, also the human resources that will be required in the close future, in order to have the required amount of people with the right skills available. The same will apply to ministries, sectors and organizations. Human resource planning aims to meet demand and supply of the labour force at all these levels.

The following methods are beneficial at the national level:

- Take into consideration the annual economic sectors growth (for 5 years for ex.),
- Review the stock of labour in the base year (colleges, universities, professionals, etc.),
- Convert the annual economic growths in terms of labour requirements,
- Take into consideration the attrition rate due to deaths, retirement, etc.,
- Take into consideration the number of people which leave colleges, universities, etc. (in terms of enrollment, transition to other learning institutions, training in other institutions, years of graduation, etc.)
- Check the unemployment rate
- Propose to take action at certain times in the planning process to fill the gap between demand and supply in terms of human resources. Planning initiatives may include training in certain disciplines, controlling attrition rate, adjusting the retirement age, etc.

Human resource planning for ministries and sectors can use the above methods but under the influence of internal and external factors as well, that impact the ministry or sector. If for example the planning is for the manufactural sector, knowing the big picture of the macro and micro economic environment is important, but the focus will be more on manufacture and other relevant sectors. (Study manual, Module two, p. 5).

4. Managers in both public and private organizations in African countries may not be interested in HRP. Discuss.

The literature often states that human resource planning is becoming more important to organizations. As Greer (2003, p. 303) states, there is “some empirical evidence that strategic planning is positively related to financial performance” and concludes that “it also has been hypothesized that human resource planning is related to profitability”. Nevertheless, many organizations are not interested in human resource planning and do not see its advantages, especially in Africa and many other developing countries. As Anibaba (2014) states, very few organizations in Africa focuses on human resource management in spite of its hypothesized importance to the competitiveness of companies. It has been recognized that sub-Saharan African countries have a low ranking in terms of economic competitiveness worldwide, and the practice shows that very few organizations implement strategic human resource planning despite the fact that several studies have shown that there is a clear linkage between

organization's competitiveness and the use of strategic human resource management procedures (Guest et al, 2003).

Many countries in Africa are factor-driven economies (e.g. Nigeria, Kenya), that means that they rely on income from natural resources and low skilled labor. Such economies are generally ranked the least for competitiveness, while innovation driven economies, such as in western countries (e.g. UK, US) rely on increased levels of innovation and intellectual capital. Such countries tend to focus on human resources and leadership issues more than developing countries whose growth engines are based in natural resources, or low-cost labor (e.g. China, Bangladesh). Innovation-driven economies invest more and adopt more strategic practices for managing the human resources, recognizing that the productivity and competitiveness of the organizations depend on the individuals and their knowledge resources. (Anibaba et al, 2014).

Unfortunately, many African countries are resource dependent countries, relying little on intellectual capital. Many organizations cannot depend on their talent in a corrupt and chaotic economy, but rather rely on their political connections. That's why they do not invest in human resource planning, since this is not enough to compete on the market. There is a need for values change, where performance, innovation, efficiency and inclusion based on capabilities will be rewarded.

5. Effective employee recruitment and selection is necessary for the competitiveness of organizations. However, failure to prepare for smooth recruitment processes is the most common pitfall in public service in Africa and more so in developing countries. Discuss.

The main purpose of human resource planning in organizations is to ensure that the organization have the right people doing the right jobs at the right time. Human resource planning help develop plans for matching demand with supply. Such plans include recruitment and selection. If the strategies for recruiting and selecting staff are not carefully chosen, it is likely that the organization will fail to perform because the available jobs are being done by wrong people and whose removal would be costly. Recruiting is a major human resource activity. Depending on the size of the organization, the human resource departments "spend between 50 percent to 70 percent of their time on recruiting new employees each year". (DeCenzo, 2010, p. 134).

According to Rothwell et al (2003, pp. 333-334) "*recruitment* consists of activities intended to identify sources of talent to meet organizational needs, and then to attract the right numbers and types of people for the right jobs at the right time and in the right places. *Selection* is the process of searching for and then identifying an appropriate match between the individual, the job, the work group, and organization. Recruitment and Selection are thus separate but related efforts."

So, the overall goal of recruitment and selection process should be to “obtain at minimum cost the number and quality of employees required to satisfy the human resource needs of the company.” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 409).

Shangali (2009) has described very detailed the process of recruitment and selection in the Tanzanian public sector. Some ministries, departments and agencies in the public service do not manage to fill vacant posts due to the difficult and ineffective recruitment and selection practices. Some of the challenges in this process are:

- Job vacancies are not proper advertised, due to high costs, which leads to few candidates applying for the posts. This will compromise the open competition for the jobs.
- It is hard to find candidates for periphery regions.
- Lack of professional employees. It is hard to create strong competition between public and private sector, since in the private sector the salaries and benefits are higher than in public sector. So, it is hard to become qualified candidates.
- According to the public service act, the senior positions in the public sector must be filled through internal source, which is difficult sometimes especially when the experienced senior officer in the public service is very low.
- The recruitment and selection process is long and expensive. The responsible officers lose a lot of time in this process, and their other duties are affected.
- Lack of information technology skills – in many cases the shortlisting is done manual, which is time consuming and almost impossible to process each applicant fairly. By doing the shortlisting manual, the process can be manipulated by the panel members which have special interest in some job candidates.
- Due to ineffective recruitment and selection process, it is difficult to adhere to the prescribed rules and procedures. Regardless of inspections, many regulations are not fulfilled, like proper record keeping of lists of applicants, shortlisted candidates, interview scores; failure to properly define the required qualifications and skills; sometimes the candidates do not have the minimum requirements; etc. (Study manual, Module two, pp. 22-26)

The challenges listed above describe on one side the limitations in knowledge and skills to conduct effective recruitment and selection processes in the public service in African countries, but on the other side, the corruption, recruitment based on personal relationships and nepotism are other negative factors that affect the hiring process in these countries and many other developing countries as well.

6. Recruitment and selection in public service in African countries depends more on who you know than what you know. Use cases to justify this statement.

Although there are rules and regulations regarding the recruitment and selection in public services in African countries, and the public service commissions are in charge to inspect the appointing authorities, there are many non-compliance procedures in this process. As described above in the example of Shangali (2009) in Tanzania, the public institutions do not adhere to the prescribed rules and procedures set for merit-based recruitment and selection. Due to lack of technology skills in the hiring process and poor record keeping, the information can be easily manipulated by the officials. Many countries face the same challenges due to corruption and favoritism. Although the staff recruitment and selection is expected to be rational, many positions are filled based on friendship and relations arranged through bribery and nepotism. It happens that jobs are created by targeting specific individuals, and such vacancies are filled even without advertisement. Internal recruitment method is often applied through transfer or promotion, outside candidates having no chance even to apply for those positions.

The recruitment system is affected by lack of ethics during the process, huge budgets spent by the government, lack of important recruitment information when needed, the increase of favoritism, lack of qualified candidates in peripheral regions and corruption in public service. The whole process is done very complicated, and many candidates do not have a fair chance to compete with other applicants since the selection is often done based on personal preferences rather than on job requirements and candidate abilities. (Study Manual, Module two, pp. 22-26)

7. Discuss the components of an effective assessment with an aid of a diagram

Competitive organizations use often the assessment centers in order to take a decision on the best candidate for the job. The assessment centers are intensive selection procedures that may last one to two days, run by professionals which observe the abilities of the applicants. This method consists of multiple assessment techniques and simulation exercises for 10-12 candidates. These procedures can be useful especially for development or for promotions to supervisory-level positions where there is no prior experience to evaluate. The centers combine several traditional selection procedures and virtual experience of the job, such as tests, interviews, short internal reports, etc. (Greer, 2003, p. 414)

The Study Manual (module two, pp. 19-22) illustrates a diagram with ten principles of effective assessment centers as taken and adapted from Swatson and Foster (2005). The effectiveness of this method depends on the extent to which these principles are applied on the entire recruitment and selection process. From the diagram we can conclude that in order to obtain the most qualified and competent candidate, we must closely follow the ten key areas of assessment centers.

The *job analysis* will establish the nature of the job (activities, responsibilities, tasks, etc.) and will determine the needed competencies defining *behavioral attributes* for the best performance. Each candidate will be assessed through several *assessment techniques*, like simulation exercises, tests, interviews, questionnaires, etc. Some techniques might be more important than the other, depending on the position applied for. For example, a case law is more important for the secretary position of a company than a written test, since the case will require to have the ability to use the knowledge in practice. *Each competence* needed for the job must be assessed. *Multiple assessment techniques* are important since each method will compliment and confirm the other in order to reach an accurate estimation for each candidate. *Multiple assessors* are important in order to reduce personal prejudice. Usually five assessors are enough. The quality of the assessment depends also if the assessors are experiences, that's why it is important to *train the assessors* for them to be familiar with assessment centers. *Recording* the competences observed is important for an accurate evaluation of the candidates. The tapes used can be replayed later for more clarifications if needed. A *validate decision* regarding each job candidate shall be done based on the sum of the results from each assessor. If there are differences in opinion among assessors, an agreement shall be met using the criteria that will be accepted by all. Recommendation in form of a *report* will be submitted to the management for the final decision. (Study Manual, Module two, pp. 22-26)

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