

British Gas - Brief

Workforce planning at British Gas

Introduction

British Gas is part of the Centrica Group. It is the UK's largest energy supplier. It operates in both the UK and Europe. British Gas not only supplies gas but also deals with the installation and maintenance of domestic central heating and appliances. It provides a maintenance and breakdown service for electrical white goods and home wiring. To provide these services, British Gas needs the right staff, with the right skills.

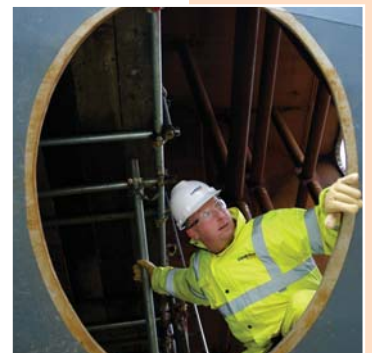
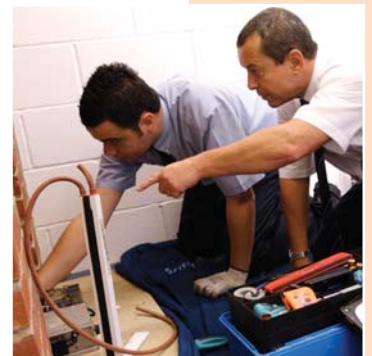
Human Resource (HR)

One of the most important resources a business uses is the people they employ. These are called human resources. Human Resource Management (HRM) is the process that manages people in an organisation. Much of British Gas' work is in direct contact with the public. Customers expect top class service. Therefore its engineers need both technical skills and good people skills. British Gas has a clear plan for acquiring and keeping this workforce. Its process is to recruit, select and train staff. It also works to keep its staff, as this is cheaper than finding new people.

Training

British Gas has set up the British Gas Academy to provide training for its workforce. There are three main routes:

- an apprenticeship - this programme is carried out in training centres
- traineeships - provide a way for new recruits to learn about the gas industry and gain the skills they will need
- technical training - this is for all engineers throughout their careers.



Training focuses not just on technical skills and knowledge. Most staff have direct contact with customers. It is important that they have good people skills like communication and problem-solving.

Workforce planning

Workforce planning helps British Gas to assess its current and future staffing needs. Managers forecast how much the market for gas will grow. This helps them decide how many engineers the business will need in the future. Demand is driven by two key sets of customers:

- those with service contracts
- those who call for assistance with one-off problems.

Demand for both these services has grown, so British Gas has had to recruit more staff. Training is also vital to keep engineers updated on technical changes.

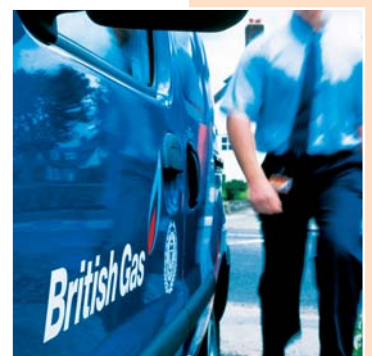
Recruitment

British Gas recruits from a wide variety of backgrounds. This reflects its diverse customer base. In particular, it is keen to recruit more women engineers. It has won awards for these efforts. Candidates need good qualifications and must show that they have people skills. British Gas uses an online application form. This includes a questionnaire about what candidates value at work. The results are colour-coded. A red result suggests that the person may not 'fit' with the company. Applicants with amber and green results are invited to interview.

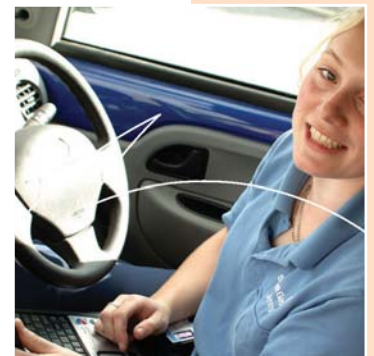
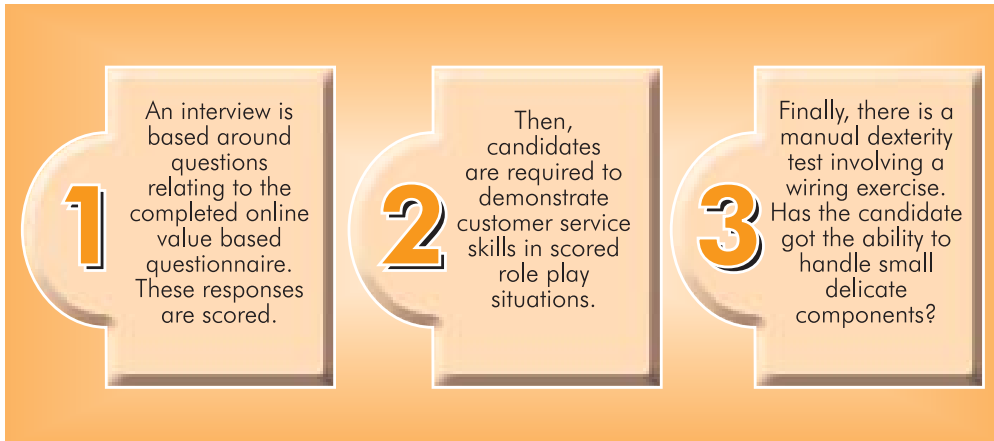
Selection

Selection takes place at the British Gas assessment centre. There are three parts to the process:

- an interview based on the online questionnaire
- role-play of customer service situations
- a manual dexterity test.



The scores from all three are used to decide who is offered a job. By following this robust recruitment and selection process, British Gas makes sure it gets the right staff.



Conclusion

British Gas needs to plan for its future staffing needs to ensure it always has the right number of people with relevant skills. With its focus on training, customers can be sure that its engineers have the right levels of skill to do the job.

