

Recruitment, selection and training

Recruitment is the process of identifying that the organisation needs to employ someone up to the point at which application forms for the post have arrived at the organisation. Selection then consists of the processes involved in choosing from applicants a suitable candidate to fill a post. Training consists of a range of processes involved in making sure that job holders have the right skills, knowledge and attitudes required to help the organisation to achieve its objectives. Recruiting individuals to fill particular posts within a business can be done either internally by recruitment within the firm, or externally by recruiting people from outside.

The advantages of internal recruitment are that:

1. Considerable savings can be made. Individuals with inside knowledge of how a business operates will need shorter periods of training and time for 'fitting in'.
2. The organisation is unlikely to be greatly 'disrupted' by someone who is used to working with others in the organisation.
3. Internal promotion acts as an incentive to all staff to work harder within the organisation.
4. From the firm's point of view, the strengths and weaknesses of an insider will have been assessed. There is always a risk attached to employing an outsider who may only be a success 'on paper'.

The disadvantages of recruiting from within are that:

1. You will have to replace the person who has been promoted
2. An insider may be less likely to make the essential criticisms required to get the company working more effectively
3. Promotion of one person in a company may upset someone else.

External recruitment

External recruitment makes it possible to draw upon a wider range of talent, and provides the opportunity to bring new experience and ideas in to the business. Disadvantages are that it is more costly and the company may end up with someone who proves to be less effective in practice than they did on paper and in the interview situation.

There are a number of stages, which can be used to define and set out the nature of particular jobs for recruitment purposes:

Job analysis is the process of examining jobs in order to identify the key requirements of each job. A number of important questions need to be explored:

the title of the job

to whom the employee is responsible

for whom the employee is responsible

a simple description of the role and duties of the employee within the organisation.

Job analysis is used in order to:

1. Choose employees either from the ranks of your existing staff or from the recruitment of new staff.
2. Set out the training requirements of a particular job.
3. Provide information which will help in decision making about the type of equipment and materials to be employed with the job.
4. Identify and profile the experiences of employees in their work tasks (information which can be used as evidence for staff development and promotion).
5. Identify areas of risk and danger at work.
6. Help in setting rates of pay for job tasks.

Job analysis can be carried out by direct observation of employees at work, by finding out information from interviewing job holders, or by referring to documents such as training manuals. Information can be gleaned directly from the person carrying out a task and/or from their supervisory staff. Some large organisations specifically employ 'job analysts'. In most companies, however, job analysis is expected to be part of the general skills of a training or personnel officer.

Job description

A job description will set out how a particular employee will fit into the organisation. It will therefore need to set out:
the title of the job
to whom the employee is responsible
for whom the employee is responsible
a simple description of the role and duties of the employee within the organisation.

A job description could be used as a job indicator for applicants for a job. Alternatively, it could be used as a guideline for an employee and/or his or her line manager as to his or her role and responsibility within the organisation.

Job specification.

A job specification goes beyond a mere description - in addition, it highlights the mental and physical attributes required of the job holder. For example, a job specification for a trainee manager's post in a retail store included the following:

'Managers at all levels would be expected to show responsibility. The company is looking for people who are tough and talented. They should have a flair for business, know how to sell, and to work in a team.'

Job analysis, description, and specification can provide useful information to a business in addition to serving as recruitment instruments. For example, staff appraisal is a means of monitoring staff performance and is a feature of promotion in modern companies. In some companies, for example, employees and their immediate line managers discuss personal goals and targets for the coming time period (e.g. the next six months). The appraisal will then involve a review of performance during the previous six months, and setting new targets. Job details can serve as a useful basis for establishing dialogue and targets. Job descriptions can be used as reference points for arbitrating in disputes as to 'who does what' in a business. Selection involves procedures to identify the most appropriate candidates to fill posts. An effective selection procedure will therefore take into consideration the following:

keeping the costs of selection down
making sure that the skills and qualities being sought have been identified,
developing a process for identifying them in candidates
making sure that the candidates selected, will want the job, and will stay with the company.

Keeping the costs of selection down will involve such factors as holding the interviews in a location, which is accessible to the interviewing panel, and to those being interviewed. The interviewing panel must have available to them all the necessary documentations, such as application forms available to study before the interviews take place. A short list must be made up of suitable candidates, so that the interviews do not have to take place a second time, with new job advertisements being placed.

The skills required should have been identified through the process of job analysis, description and specification. It is important then to identify ways of testing whether candidates meet these requirements. Testing this out may involve:
interviewing candidates
asking them to get involved in simulated work scenarios
asking them to provide samples of previous work
getting them to fill in personality and intelligence tests
giving them real work simulations to test their abilities.

Induction and training

New workers in a firm are usually given an induction programme in which they meet other workers and are shown the skills they must learn. Generally, the first few days at work will simply involve observation, with an experienced worker showing the 'new hand' the ropes. Many large firms will have a detailed training scheme, which is done on an 'in-house' basis. This is particularly true of larger public companies such as banks and insurance companies. In conjunction with this, staff may be encouraged to attend college courses to learn new skills and get new qualifications. Training thus takes place in the following ways:

1. On the job - learning skills through experience at work
2. Off the job - learning through attending courses.

Promotion within a firm depends on acquiring qualifications to do a more advanced job. In accountancy for example, trainee accountants will be expected to pass exams set by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA). At the same time, a candidate for promotion must show a flair for the job. It is the responsibility of the training department within a business to make sure that staff with the right skills are coming up through the firm or being recruited from outside.

The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants has 300,000 members and students throughout the world. It is a professional body setting standards for the accountancy profession. To be properly qualified, accountants must have passed examinations that make them eligible for membership of one or more professional accounting bodies, such as ACCA. Typically accountants will improve their knowledge and experience by taking courses run and organised by ACCA during their professional training enabling them to develop and enhance their careers.

Induction is the process of introducing new employees to an organisation and to their work responsibilities in that organisation.