

The usefulness of an interview



If we cast a glance at any company which has gained success in any business area and begin to explore the reasons of this success we can see that there are many factors that cause this success: a successful business strategy, high quality organizational management, and of course, well selected employees who cope with their tasks properly. Choosing the right candidate, evaluating their performance and managing the high quality work are very important factors that play a great role for the successful activity of any company.

The main purpose of this assignment is to answer the questions regarding the selection process of employees, the factors that undermine the usefulness of an interview, the background investigation of employees as part of the job selection process, and the performance appraisal method compare with the Total Quality Management (TQM).

a. THE FACTORS AND PROBLEMS THAT CAN UNDERMINE THE USEFULNESS OF AN INTERVIEW.

To select employees is a very important management process that requires responsibility and professionalism. Although there are many ways of managing this process, the main method is taking job interviews. It is very difficult to find a company that hires employees without interviewing them.

In spite of the fact that there are many types and many ways of taking an interview, the main aim of this assignment is to analysis the problems and the factors that can undermine the usefulness of an interview.

As I noticed above, selecting candidates is a very essential management task, and without knowing how to interview, it is impossible to manage this it.

Several factors can undermine the usefulness of an interview

First impression (Snap judgment)

“ A study has shown that we make favorable or unfavorable judgments about someone we meet within 14 seconds. (CMR international.” How to select best candidate”. October 2004, p. 35)

“ Another research shows that in 85% of the cases interviewers had made up their minds before the interview even began” (Dessler G., Human Resource Management, 11th edition, (2008), p. 262)

We can say that 50% of what an interviewers think about a candidate, 50% of their decision is made in the first 30-60 seconds. 25 percent of what the interviewer thinks about a candidate made in the first 15 minutes. This psychological factor undermines the interview’s usefulness a lot.

First impression becomes more harmful when the information about the candidate is unfavorable. Often the finding of even a small amount of negative information can lead to the rejection of a candidate. Generally, human psychology is affected more by negative information than the positive one. If the interview begins with negative mood, it is usually difficult to change its posture.

For example, “ many try-outs for orchestras are now held with the applicant musicians playing behind a screen. All sexual, racial, and physical

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characteristics are eliminated so selectors can concentrate on listening for the best musician” ([http://humanresources. about. com/od/workrelationships/a/blink_effect. htm](http://humanresources.about.com/od/workrelationships/a/blink_effect.htm) Access date 30 Sep 2009)

Paying attention all these, it can be said that interviewers must not say their opinion about the candidate before an interview. Because in many cases the first impression can be deceptive. And the candidates must always remember that there is nothing like a good first impression. Body language is very important for the first impression. The candidate must “ sell” him/herself through the un verbal communication, through the behavior.

Candidate Order – error

This is one of the factors that can undermine the usefulness of an interview. The physiological incentive plays a great role here. Interviewers are influenced for or against a candidate by the interview of a previous candidate. For example, if a qualified applicant follows an exceptional applicant his or her qualifications tend to pale in comparison. To avoid this mistake it can be useful for the interviewers to take a little break after interviewing several candidates.

Misunderstanding the Job

“ Interviewers without clear understanding of the job sometimes ask irrelevant questions and make incorrect assumption about the qualifications of the successful job candidate.”

([http://ftdconsulting. com/docs/CommonInterviewMistakes](http://ftdconsulting.com/docs/CommonInterviewMistakes) Accessed date 30 Sep 2009)

With incorrect stereotypes or impressions, it is very difficult to choose a right candidate. To avoid this, interviewers must get enough information about the vacant job which they want to fill and they must ask relevant questions to the job.

Nonverbal Behavior

This is a very important factor during an interview both for interviewers and candidates. Nonverbal behavior is as important as verbal behavior.

Psychological studies also affirm that nonverbal behavior can tell us many things about the person's nature and character. " Elements, such as physique, height, weight, skin color, gender, and clothing send nonverbal messages during interaction. For example, a research into height has generally found that taller people are perceived as being more impressive" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication Access date 30 Sep 2009)

Candidates can be affected of interviewer's " body language"- facial expressions, eye contact and psychical reactions. If the candidates start to see negative nonverbal behavior from their interviewers they can not adjust their answers. " The candidate's nonverbal behavior can also have an impact on his or her rating, because interviewers infer the interviewee's personality from the way he or she acts in the interview" (Dessler G., Human Resource Management, 11th edition, (2008), p. 264)

Impression Management

This is a widely spreaded factor that undermines an interview's usefulness. Candidates persuade interviewers to like them by using ingratiation and

praising. “ Applicants attempt to create a favorable impression. Some typical examples of impression management during interviews include verbal self-promotion (“ I am very hard worker”), adjustment of nonverbal behaviors (Smiling, welcoming, body posture), and “ looking the part” (wearing professional clothing)”. (Journal of Management, 33(5), 752-773). Therefore, interviewers must be very careful about not being affected by these impressions

Effects of Personal Characteristics

Sometimes interviewers rely on applicant’s psychical appearance or attractiveness for making judgments about their suitability. For example, interviewers give more attention to people with favorable traits than people with unfavorable traits. The interviewers are affected by candidate’s gender, attractiveness and race.

Besides these factors, which we have noticed above, there are some more factors that can undermine the usefulness of an interview. These factors are poorly worded questions, illegal questions (the legislation prohibits to ask private questions), and similar-to-me factor (interviewers tend to give a higher ratings to a candidate who has similar characteristics as themselves).

Hiring and keeping good workers begins with the job interview. Interviews are one of the most important and extensively used hiring tools available to employers to identify the best candidate for a company. It is a great opportunity to meet several candidates and screen them to find the ones most suitable for the organization. Therefore, the interviewers must get as much benefit as they can from this opportunity.

b. IS IT IMPORTANT TO CONDUCT PRE-EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION?

Forming a successful interview is not enough to choose a right candidate. It is just a part of the job selection process. There are some more methods that employers use to hire people.

The next method of job selection process is to conduct pre-employment background investigation. Many employers use this method before hiring people. A pre-employment background investigation is frequently performed to help companies learn about a potential employee's background. The main aim is to check the information provided by the applicant and to discover the information that can be harmful for the company (criminal records, for example)

Before a background investigation performed the employer must get a written and signed authorization from the employee. This informs the employee what type of background investigation of employment will be done. If the employer wants access to candidate's medical records or wants to talk to his or her friends, co-workers, then two additional consent forms are required.

According to the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, areas of scrutiny consist of:

Criminal records

Sex offender lists

State licensing records

Character references

Education records

Property ownership

Court records

Credit records

Social security number

Past employers

Neighbor interviews

Medical records

Vehicle records

Military records

Incarceration records

Driving records

Bankruptcy

Personal references

Worker's compensation

Drug test records

Source: <http://www.you-can-learn-basic-employee-rights.com/employee-background-check.html> (Accessed 25 Sep 2009)

Sometimes people find themselves in a situation where they wonder if it would be appropriate to do a background investigation about someone. It is not always easy to decide what the appropriate might be to do such a check. More often an emotional process takes place which prevents a person from doing that investigation. But nobody wants to choose the wrong candidate. To avoid this, usually it is necessary to do this investigation.

In the following example we can see the importance of doing pre-employment background investigation

“ Joe Smith hired by ABC Inc. as a cable TV installer assaults and a rapes a female customer while installing cable service in her home. The employee had a criminal record of assault and drug abuse. A court could rule that the cable company was negligent because it should have found out about Joe through a pre-employment background investigation or an employee criminal background check.

The family of the female customer beaten and raped by Joe of ABC Inc. sues his former employer 123 Inc. for only providing ABC Inc. with what’s called a standard reference. This means 123 Inc. only gave basic information to ABC Inc.

No detailed data involving Joe’s physical fights with co-workers while at 123 Inc. and his on the job drug abuse. Why? A lot of businessman and organizations are reluctant to share offensive and sensitive information

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because they are worried about being sued for defamation of character by former employees” (<http://www.you-can-learn-basic-employee-rights.com/pre-employment-background-investigation.html> Accessed date 25 Sep 2009)

From this example we can say that, doing pre-employment background investigation is not causeless. “ Researches has shown that up to 20 percent of job applicants give false or misleading information on their applications for employment” (<http://www.you-can-learn-basic-employee-rights.com/pre-employment-background-investigation.html> Accessed date 25 Sep 2009)

One more example, “ Bell South’s security director estimates that 15% to 20% of applicants conceal a secret in their application forms” (Dessler G., Human Resource Management, 11th edition, (2008), p. 280)

Some of common areas of misleading involve:

False dates of employment

Criminal history

Untrue reasons for leaving previous employment

Domestic violence or abuse

Problems with credit history and etc.

Hiring wrong person by not doing pre-employment background investigation could destroy everything a business owner or manager has built. Background investigation is a very important search tool today’s business climate. Hiring

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without an accurate pre-employment check could result in serious problems. It is the employer's responsibility to know the employee. So every employer should approach this process with a great responsibility to avoid further unpleasant events.

c. TAKING A TQM-BASED APPROACH TO THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Nowadays competitive market requires a high quality from the companies. Therefore, companies always try to raise the quality in all steps of an organizational process. The main aim of the quality movement is to get the best performance and effort from the employees of the organization. There are some ways to realize the quality movement. The most widely used methods are Total Quality Management (TQM) and performance appraisal methods. But there is an opinion difference about the applying of these methods. Some experts suggest that taking a TQM is an approach to the performance appraisal, but some of them have a contrary opinion. In this paragraph of an assignment the contrary among the experts will be discussed. But before this, it needs to be explained what TQM and appraisal methods are.

TQM is a method to raise a quality throughout the organizational process. It is not a programme but a systematic style of work. The main aim is to raise the quality of goods, service and all organizational process. Performance appraisal method is used to evaluate the job performance of an employee. The aim is to facilitate communications between employees and administration and to identify employee's training needs. But both TQM and performance appraisal methods are focused of increasing the productivity of

the organization. They both help the systematic management of all the process in the organization.

Some of the benefits of both the performance appraisal and TQM are:

“ Improvement of the performance of the employees

Brings quality consciousness

Better utilization of resources

Commitment of higher technology”

(<http://appraisals.naukrihub.com/tqm-and-performance-appraisal.html>

Accessed date 26 Sep 2009)

As it is noticed above, there is an argument among the experts about the usefulness of appraisal methods as a part of TQM. Many defenders of TQM criticize performance appraisals. For example, Peter Scholtes say “ there is no data, no research to demonstrate that performance appraisal does any good. There is nothing to indicate that a company which uses performance appraisals does any better than it would if it did not use performance appraisals”. (<http://www.baldrigeplus.com/Exhibits/Exhibit%20-%20Performance%20appraisal.pdf> Accessed date 26 Sep 2009) They insist on performance appraisals undermines teamwork. Some experts refute the compatibility of the TQM and performance appraisals. According to them both TQM and Performance appraisals differ in their fundamental nature, characteristics and requirements making it impossible to combine them.

Some fundamental differences between the two are:

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TQM is team based whereas performance appraisals are designed for individuals. It undermines teamwork

TQM focuses on customer whereas performance appraisal method focuses on individuals.

In TQM the main aim is to reach the standards but in appraisal method standards are sometimes imposed on the employee

Performance appraisals generally results in some awards, like increased pay, promotions and etc. but TQM may or may not yield visible results.

Nevertheless, other TQM experts defend Performance appraisals saying that this is a very important part of management programme including quality movement. They say that performance appraisals are very necessary for every organization and it must be approached in the frames of TQM.

Because, as a result, the performance appraisals method is an important step to raise a work quality.

Although there is a contrariety among the experts about the applying of performance appraisal methods, the benefits of these method is obvious. Of course there are some factors that can undermine the usefulness of performance appraisals (luck of preparation, unclear performance standards, and ect.). But for my opinion if it is applied faultless many problems can be eliminated in an organization. In every company there can be some insufficiencies, employees may need motivation and to eliminate these insufficiencies it is very useful to use performance appraisal methods. I want to give an example about my school. Few days ago we had been given

appraisal papers to identify our needs and insufficiencies, and as a result I saw its benefit. It was a like a communication between the students and the administrators. I don't agree with the experts who say performance appraisals are useless. Maybe in some cases this method is useless but it does not mean that performance appraisals are always useless.

CONCLUSION

As a result, it can be said that the interviews are very important job selection process for the both employers and employees. Interviewers must be very careful and they must avoid the problems that can undermine the usefulness of an interview. It was also shown that the good interview is not enough to choose the right candidate, therefore it is very important to do pre-employment background investigation. By doing this investigation the future unpleasant events can be avoided. In the last part of an assignment we looked through the performance appraisal methods in the frames of TQM and it can be said that although there is no common opinion about the usefulness of the appraisal methods, for my opinion performance appraisal methods are very useful.

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