

Business essays - international recruitment selection



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International Recruitment Selection

Human Resource Management is a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to obtain competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and skilled workforce who is selected from a global pool through complex recruitment and selection practices. (Storey, J. 1995) Globalisation and the effect that it has had on the theory and practice of selection and hiring personnel, has attracted the attention of numerous researchers and practitioners alike.

The environment in which international organisations are operating is evolving radically. Rapid advances in technology, demographic changes, and additional expectations of the emerging workforce are modifying the ways of work. As a result the firms and organisations' HR professionals are/need to practice very different international recruitment, selection and assessment issues. " There are evidences that the gap between the skills required by organisations and the availability of skilled workers is growing, and the ability to attract and retain the best workers is increasingly becoming vital for organisations." (UNFAO, 2001- Online)

International Deployment of Staff:

Skills shortages in the home-grown market mean that certain sectors are looking outside the UK to fill posts. Other international companies are looking to scale up very rapidly overseas, to shift resources and develop talent in unknown markets. as a result in selecting assignees for alternative forms of international assignments, MNCs should be aware of the limitations associated with more traditional forms of international assignments and

should work toward more sophisticated recruitment and selection techniques. An international assignment is a process whereby an employee is sent/ transferred overseas for a certain period of time.

With the increase in globalisation it had become inevitable for organisations to be involved in the international transfer of staff. Due to globalisation, MNS's are in a competition to groom managers to meet the challenges and demands of strategic global human resources management (Schuler et al - 1993) according to Mendenhall and Oddou (1995) expatriation comes as a result of the lack of skilled manpower within organisations.

International transfer of staff or expatriation is a tool to enhance exchange as well as transfer of knowledge thus enhancing organisation learning. Borg and Harzing (1995) perceives expatriation as holding advantages of transferring technical and well as administrative knowledge.

Edstrum A. and Galbraith J. (1997) explain the reasons why organisations engage in International assignments. They believe that the following three reasons are the key factors:

- To fill a position (also to take into consideration that this can be for the purpose to train managers who can gradually take up more advanced posts with the parent organisation or at subsidiary abroad)
- Management development - by giving the managers an international experience and training them for future important tasks in subsidiaries abroad or with the parent organisation. This kind of transfer often takes place when qualified host country national are available.

- Organisational Development (the idea is that managers become less ethnocentric once they come into contact with a variety of culture. It is assumed that the large-scale transfer of managers of different nationalities between the parent organisation and its subsidiaries abroad will create international communication networks)

Recruitment and selection is the foundation of all other HR activity. Get it wrong ... you are always making up for that one bad decision. (CIPD, 2008 Online) The rapid expansion of blurred labour markets means that HR managers need to adapt rapidly to cope with increasingly complex demands. Skills shortages in the home-grown market mean that certain sectors are looking outside the UK to fill posts.

Other international companies are looking to scale up very rapidly overseas, to shift resources and develop talent in unknown markets. as a result in selecting assignees for alternative forms of international assignments, MNCs should be aware of the limitations associated with more traditional forms of international assignments and should work toward more complicated recruitment and selection techniques. (Collins D. G. et al., 2007) Certain international standards in regards to performance, supervisory controls, job specifications, organisational culture, human capital, etc need to be taken into account. There are various issues needed to be considered in the recruitment and selection process in global aspect. Among them are:

- The culture of the home/host country
- Immigration statues (Limited visas provided)
- Security Check- CRB (Criminal records Bureau)

- The validity of the qualifications and skills of the applicant – what the degree really mean? How to assess it?
- Health and safety legislation – safety responsibility in the host country, particularly when deploying to work in areas with militia conflicts.
- Minimum Wage Limit , depending on the age of the worker
(Parliamentary Papers, 1998 – National Minimum Wage, 2008 - online)
- Language skills and abilities (particularly in selection process, if devising psychometric test)
- Validity of applicants former employers (it is easy in the UK)
- Conversion Programmes (if needed)
- Education of the expatriates' children

According to Anderson, the abilities of employees selected for international postings should include good managerial skills as well as excellent technical skills. When targeting candidates that might be willing to go on international assignment, it is important for the HR department to consider those who have previously lived overseas, preferably in the same country (Church A., 1982) but it is not always applicable to adjustments in general. (Black, 1990)

On the other hand, in the selection criteria particular emphasis should be made on the family and their cooperation and mutual understanding in this matter. Tung's contingency approach mentions that the best human resource approach to selection and recruitment will depend upon certain circumstances in different environments.

If the expatriate is happier with the organisation taking care of their dependents at home, then the selection team should take note of that since this can determine the success of an assignment. (Tung R. L. 1987)

Managing across different cultural settings can be a challenge for both the organisation and the expatriate. Culture difficulties and quality of life may cause a decline in the willingness of an officer to be assigned to an international post. (Hill G., 1999)

As a result of considering all the difficulties that can occur as a result of differences in culture, some of the solutions adopted in the developed countries include a strategy where there is a multicultural corporate climate, management team and workforce in their organisation (Maruyama, 1993) delivering a cross-cultural training needs to be given a first priority. (Brewster and Pickard, 1994), but it is also revealed that although in many of organisations expatriation policies are present and cross-cultural training is offered, there is a shortfall in the actual training and is not rigorous. (Tobiorn, 1994)

Important factors in success of the selection process:

Harris and Brewster (1999) (Coffee Machine Approach) identify officers that are considered as high potential as follows:

- The firm's needs, as defined by business lines and strategic goals
- External Market Conditions
- Employee identification with the value system set up by top management.

According to the same research, just a few companies actually inform their employees that they have been identified as high potentials, while it is important to always inform the employees if they are being considered as high potential, so that once the offer becomes finalised then they can be psychologically prepared for the challenges associated with the new assignment.

It is discovered that expatriates who are considered for international postings first and foremost for their technical expertise. (Baliga, C. Et al., 1985) later in 1995 Mendenhall and Oddou suggested that the best approach for the best selection should include relational skills, perceptual skills and efficiency skills.

This could leave the selection criteria of some organisations incomplete. Later in 1996 Foster and Johnsen suggested a more complete model which includes technical skills as well as adaptability, which can be deduced from psychometric tests. (Foster, N. and Johnsen M., 1996)

It is important for every organisation to have transparent selecting and recruiting policies that are fair well as attempting to employ a well-educated workforce. Every Organisation has in place staffing policies for both domestic and international Assignments. Borg and Harzing (1995) suggest the following three options that an organisation can choose from for international assignments.

- Parent Company Nationals (PCN): employees are transferred to subsidiaries in order to fill positions. Although this one can be a good choice, but it encounters extra costs of selection, training and

supporting the expatriates and their families abroad. Another disadvantage of this choice can be the problems with the family adjustment, as well as learning the foreign language, and adopting to the new political, cultural and legal environment

- Host Country Nationals (HCN): are described by Taylor et al (1996) as primarily recruiting from within the country. In this scenario the Parent Company has very little intervention in managerial issues.
- Third Country National (TCN) - this is an exchange of expatriate employees from parent organisation and subsidiary to the parent organisation and vice versa. Pinder (1989) views this as international assignments being carried out for the purposes of the organisations gaining competitive advantages.

Other Factors: Host-Country

While Gronbaug and Nordbaug (1999) agree that there are both Micro and Macro environmental factors that affect International Organisations, Shen(2006) suggests that here are also two factors that influence transferability and terms them as Host Factor and Firm specific factors.

The Micro factors according to Gronbaug and Nordbaug are divided into two which are 1) primary issues (such as a subsidiary's relationship to other parts of the international organisation), and 2) the secondary factors embracing external issues (such as customers, competitors etc.) The Macro factors include 1) socio-economic 2) politico-legal and 3) culture.

Socio-economic Factors - This refers to the standard of living in terms of wages, and which also includes the field of economic compensation,

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differences in national education and training system which according to Beardwell and Claydon (2007) are likely to mean that the skill and competence profile of the workers available on the labour market will differ from country to country.

Politico-Legal Factors: Since the employment of a foreign national involves political formalities, the hiring process should be designed in this broader international framework. For instance, the national policies for immigration control and national security of the host country need to be provided in advance to the prospective employee in order for him/her to take necessary steps in fulfilment of them. And this is inevitably the function of the HR department.

Legal requirements touch on every aspect of relationships between employers and employees according to Morrison (2006) and since what is legally and socially acceptable in a firm's operations in one country may be not acceptable in another (Beardwell & Claydon, 2007) political and legal factors may contribute to structuring recruitment and selection policies and as such host country legal regulations represent a strong environmental pressure on MNC subsidiaries (Schuler et al, 1993 cited in Myloni et al, 2004); and the legal environment in which the MNC subsidiary is embedded can constrain the transfer of HRM practices from its parent (Beechler and Yang, 1994).

Sometimes, depending on the nature of the job and the organisation, applicants should go through criminal check. " This service enables organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to make safer

recruitment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially that involve children or vulnerable adults.” (Criminal Records Bureau, n. d., Online)

Culture: Differences in management cultures may mean that some management styles are more appropriate in some national settings than others (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007)

When recruiting and selecting internationally, it is very important to ensure that the recruitment and selection criteria are free from discrimination in relation to race, gender, disability and age. The selection criteria must be easy to understand and implement for the selection panel and should not be open to interpretation.

It ought to provide information on definition of terms used, which may have different interpretations, and more detailed explanations of concepts. It should be sensitive to the host country needs and the migratory rights, but should also satisfy the candidates' expectation (Commonwealth Secretariat - online)

Politico-legal considerations

A primary concern in this scenario is the ability to measure the literacy and skill levels of the candidates.

Oxfam GB requires two references from all applicants. It obtains permission from all the interview candidates to contact their referees in order to verify their former employment and/or experience backgrounds. They also require

two telephone references from the successful candidates before they make any offers. In lights of the section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996,

Applicants are also required at the interview for the evidences for the right to work in the country concerned. (Oxfam GB Intranet, July 2006) Moreover, informing the candidates of the rights and duties expected of them within the “ politico-legal system” of the host country, such as “ freedom of expression, women’s dress code (applicable to some conservative societies), and mixed-sex associations” should be another crucial component in the hiring procedure (Bjorkman, 2006).

Oxfam GB recruitment policy mandate indicates that “ care should be taken at all stages of recruitment to avoid discrimination and to ensure that equality of opportunity is an integral part of the recruitment process”. (Oxfam GB intranet a Jan. 2008)

Managers should also be mindful of legislation affecting recruitment. This concerns the Health and safety legislation - safety responsibility in the host country, particularly when deploying to work in areas with militia conflicts. These legislations need to be considered and actively implemented as a part of effective security system, aiming at removing or reducing threats and vulnerabilities. It is inevitable that Oxfam’s work will expose staff to greater personal risk they would otherwise face. As a responsible employer, they attempt at all times to minimise and manage such risks, ensuring that staff are not exposed to unacceptable levels of risk and taking all reasonable to ensure staff security and withdraws its staff from insecure or dangerous situations. Oxfam uses three security strategies: Acceptance, Protection and <https://assignbuster.com/business-essays-international-recruitment-selection/>

deterrence. “ The acceptance strategy reduces or removes threats by building positive relationships and promoting understanding of Oxfam by establishing their legitimacy as an independent humanitarian actor.” (Oxfam GB Intranet b, July 2006). Section 8 of the Asylum & Immigration Act 1996 requires all employers in the UK to make basic document checks on every person they intend to employ to avoid employing illegal workers.

Koenraad Van Brabant, the operational Security management in violent environments points to link between the Acceptance Strategy and Recruitment: “ Staff behaviour, composition and even appearance can impact on our ability to develop and maintain positive relationships... negative perceptions may significantly influence overall security.” (Oxfam GB Intranet b, July 2006).

When recruiting internationally, the health and safety of the staff should be considered. There are issues such as safety at the work place and health insurance. Oxfam GB is committed to protecting the health and safety of its staff. They supply their expatriates with medical care. But their new medical scheme seems to be difficult to access. (Oxfam GB Intranet, Nov. 2007 - Online)

Interview

Successful interviews and tests are those, which allow the candidates' skills to be revealed and give you comparable data from which to make a selection. Interviewing is a skill, which needs to be learned. “ When seeking to develop selection criteria for alternative international assignees it should be recognised that selection criteria for international managers need to

change to reflect changes in the purposes of international assignments.”

(Collins D. G. et al., 2007)

The most competencies require for international assignments are listed by Towers Perrin (cited by Reuvid J., 2007) are:

- Cultural sensitivity
- Interpersonal skills
- Listening
- Flexibility/adaptability
- Ability to learn
- Personal ambiguity tolerance
- Emotional stability
- Technical competencies

“ These qualities are perceived as of greater importance for longer-term assignments than technical skills and abilities by employers. In recent years it has been recognised that there is a close correlation, in descending order, of the perceived relative importance of the following characteristics between employers and employees:

a) Family flexibility

b) Personal resilience

c) Personality

d) International experience

e) Employability”

Psychometric assessment)

Selecting the right person for the right job is at the heart of business success. In the interview and selection process, some managers device the psychometric assessment tool for assessing the applicants. With a rise in the use of psychometric testing in the workplace it is more important than ever that those administering the tests are fully trained.

Psychometric testing falls into three main Categories (i) Aptitude testing (ii) Ability testing (iii) Personality profiling (Psychometric Tests and Testing, 2008 Online) these are all assessed conceptually and mathematically. When recruiting internationally, (depending on the nature of the job), the language skills of the applicant should be taken into consideration, in verbal reasoning in the psychometric test.

“ Oxfam have partnered with SHL(Saville & Holdsworth Limited) to provide psychometric assessments tools for use during the selection of candidates.” Oxfam’s commitment to equality and diversity is extremely important to the managers. As part of this, they had thought about ways of overcoming language as a barrier. (Tandem, 2006 - Online) The mandate highlights that this test should NOT be used as the sole decision making tool. Oxfam Code of Practice for the use of psychometric testing is designed in a way to consider the language skills of the candidates. It also ensures the ethical and appropriate use of the test. (Source unknown - copy enclosed)

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Conversion programmes and other trainings:

When recruiting internationally, the new staff might be in need of receiving specific trainings before she/he can start to perform well, meet the goals of the job or to cope with/manage her/himself with the new environment.

Despite of some organisations, Oxfam GB, devising Positive Action, a means for addressing these issues and for leveraging its diversity policies, “ has guidelines which are intended for managers who operate in the regions outside the UK... and those who are involved in recruitment.” “ Positive Action refers to measures that may be taken to ... train or encourage people... its messures can be taken in relation to both potential and existing employees. (Oxfam GB Intranet, Jan 2008 C - Online) (more training issues addressed in the next heading)

Cultural / Family Issues:

Practitioners are looking to source talent from increasingly varied places around the world, so integrating a diverse workforce for maximum organisational and individual performance is crucial. People usually realise how crucial the culture issues are when they leave their home culture or when they interact with others from different culture backgrounds. “ Both scenarios have become increasingly common as global travel and population movements result in frequent cross-cultural interactions.” (Loveland Ch., 1999 - p15) There are cultural normalities which the recruiting panel should consider them.

The value of cross-cultural training in increasing the probability of success of international assignments is relatively well documented in the extant literature... However, “ the requirements for cross-cultural training to

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support alternative forms of international assignments are, less well explored. Recent research highlights the lack of HR support for international assignees and suggests that managers are often expected to assume responsibility for their own training and development” (ScienceDirect, 2007 - online).

“ The increasing significance of dual career couples emerges as a key limit on the ability of MNCs to attract and keep international management talent. Due to increasing female participation rates in the labour force, particularly in developed countries, those targeted for expatriate assignments are no longer necessarily male sole-breadwinners, with spouses who are willing, and able, to follow their partners abroad for the period of the assignment.” (ScienceDirect, 2007- online)

Core values, beliefs, attitudes and ethnicity (religion, language, place of origin and/or way of life) are to be considered when recruiting and selecting internationally. Respecting the religious beliefs of the candidates, Oxfam GB tries to set interview dates so that is not the date of any major religious festival. (Oxfam GB b, Jan 2008, Online)

According to Sian Harrington, an HR journal editor, when some MNCs expatriate to remote areas, the management encourages to interact with the local families and to play with local children, in order to overcome easier the culture difference difficulties and the culture shock management process smoother.

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