Role of line managers in human resource management (hrm)

Human resource planning (HRP) or workforce planning is one of the classic human resource (HR) administrative tools in the estimation and identification of HR requirements used to meet the organization long-term objectives and economic opportunities. It is therefore defined as the systematic process for analysing the organization needs on how many employees are needed and what kind of knowledge, skills and talents is required in order to satisfy the organization needs (Armstrong, 2009: 486).

Line managers are required to provide information from their respective departments regarding to the strength of their workforce and what skills is required at the present and in the future. Thereafter, it is duty of the HR manager to gather and analyze these data which will help them to actualize the strategic plans of the human resource and by putting in mind to apply the economic theory ' when the demand is high the supply is low and vice versa', which will help the HR manager view the exact scenario in the organization and the labour market (D. Haffner handout I, 2010: 20-21). HRP does not only assess the organization's current climate and its future labour but it does helps in the management planning of any needed recruitment, training and development of the right employee and the evaluating the progress of the organization which in turn helps in providing information to the managers regarding the need to review their forecasts and programs (Susan E. Jackson et al., 1990: 223).

Connecting business plan with HRP

The objectives of any business vary from one organization to another which could be either short-term or long-term. Due to the constant and rapidly

changes in the business, economic and social environments, these factors has played a great impact in many leading organizations to emerge their business plans with HRP so as to adopt a long-term plan. HRP is therefore the key element in every organizational strategic business plan in ensuring that its survival is sustained in the marketplace. Thus this is one of the responsibilities of the human resource in developing the human resource strategies that will be applied into the business plans. This is supported from the quoting of Kathyrn Connors (vice president of Human Resource at Liz Claiborne), who believes that the success of any organization strategies is by implementing the HR plans as shown in appendix 1 (Susan E. Jackson et al. 1990: 223).

The human resource planning model in Appendix 2 shows how the various activities which are interlinked to each other and how they influence each other towards the achievement of the business's SMART objectives, plans and its development (Armstrong, 2009: fig. 29. 1: 490)

In a study case of British Gas, which is the country's leading energy provider has implemented workforce planning model to help them predict the needed engineers who will help in meeting their customers quench for services. The managers are constantly carrying out a forecast programmes that will help them visualize how many more engineers they require in the future so as to meet the needs of their customers. Thus the British Gas success is because of the application of the HRP content in their business plans and putting customer first (Thetimes100. com).

Looking at the PEST and SWOT analysis of Bio Energy in appendix 3 has the potential of growing because of its great and cheap services. Since British Gas is one of its competitors, they could apply the HRP principles and model as the way British Gas have. By doing so, they would be the of the top energy suppliers in the world because of their environmental conscious advantage.

2. Recruitment and selection

Recruiting and selecting appropriate staffs is a great challenge for many HR professionals. In most of the upcoming companies the demand for labour is high but the research conducted by many HR managers is poor and still have difficulty in differentiating between recruiting and selection, therefore appointing the wrong employees. Therefore, this paper defines recruitment as the various steps an organization undertakes to attract applicants to work for an organization and meet its objectives. Selection is part of recruitment process that is involved in pinpointing the successful candidates for the jobs under reasonable and relevant assessment (Armstrong, 2009: 515). A successful organization, be it small or large, always has an organized and a solid workforce that is comprised of well competent and qualified individuals. The human resource manager (HRM) and the line managers participate in different stages of recruiting and selecting the prospective candidates for their company.

Process of recruiting and selecting

Assuming that a human resource plan has been conducted regarding on how many more staff members are required, the HRM is then required to develop

the organization's procedures and policies relating to recruiting new staff and ensure that the selection carried out in unbiased manner. Unsuccessful recruitment is when the company's money is been spent and no outcome is obtained, therefore HRM is also required to strategically plan a recruitment procedure that would be effective to the company.

It is then the duty of a line manager to write up the role profile required to fill in his team. Description of individual's competency to perform/operate for example operating equipment and individual's skills, abilities and experience should be included in the role profile. In any role profile there is always an additional part that informs about the terms and conditions of the employment. One can argue about experience requirement because some of the recruiters don not require experienced applicants because in the long run they provide training at their workplace. The line manager should not over exaggerate the content in the role profile because unreal profile could lead to disappointment and dissatisfaction of the recruiter if the applicants do not meet their role profile standard (Armstrong, 2009: 515-517).

The next step is selecting the best and cost-effective recruitment method to attract prospective candidates. Methods such as internal and external recruitment, recruitment agencies and consultants among others are used by different organizations in recruiting candidates. For example the UK's public sector prefers to advertise their job vacancies both internally and externally which they believe to a good practice. Footnote? Before commencing, it is important for HR manager to initially perform an analysis for their organization before doing a scenario planning especially when the

labour market is tight (recession). This in turn helps them to analyse and use this to develop the value of the employee needed and the brand of the employer (Derek, 2009: 47-48, 57-58). A survey carried out by CIPD (2008) on recruitment found out that a high percentage of candidates relied on recruitment agencies and the lowest percentage used journals for seeking jobs (Armstrong, 2009: 520) hence it is crucial for the any recruiter to recognizing the best source of recruiting candidates.

Choosing the BEST selection tools

Anne and Nancy (2004) have described in their research findings how HR managers have wrong perception on the types of tools used for selecting employees. Poor selection of candidate is due to either poor use of tools or less time spent when selecting, thus it is the duty of line managers to carefully select the appropriate tool ensuring its cost and validity and analyse carefully on the characteristics of the applicants. The use of psychometric tests plays a vital role in measuring individual candidates in their ability, intelligence and personality (Anne and Nancy, 2004: 305-308).

For example in an organization such Enterprise Rent-A-Car, the largest car rental business in UK has a well organized workforce of over 65, 000 employees. Enterprise applies the recruitment and selection model in Appendix 4 to recruit new skilled staffs. They use the online recruiting method which they believe that is the easier way the applicant can apply. After the recruitment process, the HR manager will carefully select the appropriate candidates by using a standard documentation that matches the candidates with the required roles, qualities and skills needed in the

organization. The candidates are then assessed by taking part in practical exercises and finally being interviewed by the senior manager for his final view (Times100).

Howard self drive is a small upcoming company that deals with renting cars like Enterprise do. Looking into its external and internal context in Appendix 5 you can see its success is threatened by limited number of skilled staff. By applying the recruiting and selecting model used by Enterprise then they would have a better chance of being successful because of selecting the appropriate candidate for their organization.

3. Training and development

The most effective way for a company to continue achieving its business plans is by expanding its strategies on training and development activities for their employees in order to allow them to flourish their skills and abilities. The theory ' a valuable employee is one who is well trained and has learnt, hence has shown continuous develop' has been used by HR managers to ensure that effective training is provided to their employees and allowing them to progress continuously (D. Haffner, handout 2, 2010: 26). The HR manager is responsible for establishing learning and development strategies that will be followed to achieve the better skills for their employees. In the other hand, line managers are in charge of planning training sections for their employees and assessing their progress from their learning and ensuring that every one of them has had the opportunity to train and develop continuously.

The provision of learning and training opportunities in an organization provides the employer's assurance for employees' development and commitment to stay in the organization. Therefore money spent on their training would be worthy but this could also mean that training these employees would make them more competent and may decide to seek employment leading to losses (Derek, 2009: 66).

Learning programmes could be conducted either by informal or formal, web-based, self-directed or the blend of either 2 or more of them. Informal learning is normally considered by many managers as a source for knowledge but it is the best way to acquire knowledge from the fellow employees as they go by. On-job learning could be another way for learning where one can be coached, mentored, job shadow etc. This type of learning is cost free and more effective (Armstrong, 2009: 666-673).

For example Tesco, the largest British retail is keen in providing their employees training opportunities and evaluate their skills and abilities at their position at workplace. Employees are provided both on-the-job and off-the-job training. Training techniques used in on-the-job training e. g. shadowing, coaching, and mentoring and job rotation which provides effective learning. Off-the-job training is provided if new skills are needed. Every employee has a self-development chart which shows the learning progress. In Tesco, it is the responsibility of the employees to assess themselves on their development by setting their own SMART objectives. 360-degree appraisal is also been used in Tesco to assess the performance of the employee where the stakeholders are provided this opportunity. The

development progress of any employee is rated from Red to Blue. Therefore, Tesco has applied the systematic training and Boyatzis models in appendix 6 in their training and developing program in their company for effective customer service (thetimes100).

From the Appendix7which shows the analysis of Ganesh supermarket. The manager should apply all the principles Tesco have used for training and assessing the competencies of their employees which will bring success in their organization.

4. Health and safety (HAS)

There are many activities occurring in our workplaces which are today governed by legislation that requires the employers to implement in their organizations so as to protect and manage the Health and Safety of their employees and other people who might be affected. The UK health and Safety work Act 1974 states the duties and responsibilities of employers, employees and including individuals who are self-employed on issues regarding to health and safety (Alan, 1996: 52).

Health and Safety policies

It is the duty of the employer, HAS officers, HR and line managers to bring about the policies and programmes of Health and Safety issues so as to protect their employees. These policies and programmes do not only apply to employees alone but also the consumers, suppliers and nearby communities who will be affected by what the organization does and produces. An employer should always have a signed HAS policy statement

which acknowledges the intended agenda regarding to the safety of the employees. Although the issue is that the employer should implement policies on HAS but this relies on the responsibility of each employee to conduct themselves using their common sense.

Assessing and auditing

It is important to identify and assess any risks that threatens the HAS in an organization and be able to take proper measurements on managing them. A risk could be assessed using a 3-point scale or Holts and Andrews (1993) complex rating scale (Armstrong, 2009: 963) which will determine if these risks are hazardous to the employees. It is important that the involvement of HRM, line managers and employees in the auditing HAS programmes as to ensure safety measurements are applied constantly.

Training in HAS

It is essential for every employee to be trained on ways to handle safety when a hazard has occurred but the issue is that it is not implementing into action. Many organizations only apply training when an accident has happened and at the time when vigilance has risen. This point is supported by the illustration below which was obtain from Herald of Free Enterprise, king's cross and challenges (Mark, 1998: 354):

"……many of the principles of good training are widely known in management circles and organization of highly quality will adopt them as part of their explicit policy. Unfortunately it is also true that organizations may pronounce them publicly and yet at the operational levels treat them

causally. Senior management may fail to realize that this is happening. The true state of affairs only emerges when some disaster occurs.....”

A successful health and safety management system (SMS) is one that comprises of strategic plans and the implementation of policies according to HSE publication and British Standard guide which should be set up in an organization. A SMS model in appendix 8 has been developed to be applied in the management of HAS which shows how different issue influences each other in the achievement of safety at the workplaces (Alan, 1996:

For example FirstGroup, is the leading public transport company have developed safety culture as one of their activities and their first priority is to provide safety to both their employees and customers. The employers of FirstGroup have implemented the Health and Safety Act 1974 in their organization and provide Prevention Handbook to their employees. Each employee is provided and assessed in their safety training programmes ensuring that each one of them is competent in providing first aid when a hazard has occurred. They have also introduced Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in their organization policies in order to consider those applicants that are physically challenged to join their workforce. Safety-themes are also displayed in their intranet and published in the company’s newsletters.

Conclusion

This article describes the important of the roles and responsibilities of HRM and line managers in these activities in an organization and how they support each in various ways. Human resource planning ensures that the

need of the right people at the right time and place are selected who are competent and able to fulfil the business strategies of an organization. Recruiting and selecting the applicants is crucial step for any organisation because of the difficulty in choosing the appropriate method and tools for selecting the candidate of choice. Finally, the need of training employees is an important issue today so that they are well profound with their appointed roles and duties at their workplace and making sure that health and safety in their surrounding is established.