

# The key influences



Environmental influences determine how human resource specialists within an organisation formulate an approach to recruitment and selection. Both processes determine what kind of people are employed and set the crucial parameters of human capability in the organisation. Martin and Jackson (1997: 47) define the whole procedure as employing 'the right people in the right jobs at the right time'. The need to recruit may emerge 'when an organisation takes place through changes of policy, technology, locations, mergers, acquisitions, demerger...

Storey and Wright (1998: 235) believe '... it provides an opportunity to consider options other than recruitment and selection', such as the potential for restructuring workloads or departments and redeploying existing staff. Ineffective recruitment and selection '... defeat subsequent attempts to build competence and commitment, and to develop potential'. (Harrison, 2002: 56). The negative effect increases turnover and has a disruptive effect on the use of managerial time. 'It is important to know what the person will contribute and what induction training will be required'.

The targeted market depends on staff numbers, skills, competencies and experiences required. Additional considerations are age distribution, commuting distances and unemployment rates. Mullins (1999: 101) acknowledges a systematic approach, which describes tasks and specifies personal attributes. The budget, time-scale and scarcity of the required calibre of individual must be given care and attention. Natwest's recruitment drive was a change in manpower needs. The company has restructured by overhauling its graduate recruitment process. (IDS)

All methods including job centres and chance applications have advantages and disadvantages, which must be considered. Selection methods must 'provide the closest possible correlation between the predictor and criteria... ' (Tyson and York, 2000: 120). Managers must be aware of how to identify the validity and reliability. 'a method that will solve the basic dilemma of accurately forecasting future behaviour in employment has yet to be found'. (2000: 126). The best method is... 'one that produces the most suitable candidate within reasonable cost restraints.

'The Internet is a major force in the recruitment market... ' (Heller, 2002: 91) '... Employers are recognising the value of the internet as a means of communicating with potential applicants'. (Cole, 2000: 182). From an IPD survey, 32 per cent of organisations used the medium in 1999. It can be an alternative or supplementary method with information effectively captured and communicated electronically. The details of an advertisement include tasks and responsibilities, key personal attributes such as education, experience, and special skills.

The number of enquiries judges the effectiveness stimulated, number of applicants submitted and their suitability. A competency approach considers the 'behaviours that the job holder would need to exhibit... ' (Weightman, 1999: 114). Thomson (1993: 9) argues that competences of existing employees must be identified, defined and assessed to determine future competence requirements. 'A good organisational strategy... links the recruitment of staff with their development and retention... ' (Thomson, 1993: 24) Heller explains the advantage of a recruitment consultant to be confidentiality, access to skills and processes to aid the whole process.

Interviews need invested time and effort and can be unreliable, invalid predictors of future performance. However, it is an inexpensive, opportunity to meet candidate. The amount of preparation, conduct and form, kinds of questions and quality of final decision-making process affect the success or failure. 'When external candidates are involved, they may prove a good match for the job but not the organisation'. (Holmes, (2001: 102) In his analysis of the interview, Tyson and York (2000: 124) argue ' ... any value that it can have may be still further reduced because of the lack of skills on the part of the interviewers'.

The interviewer must be alert to the interviewee's strengths and weaknesses, whilst studying the candidate's motivation, achievements and experience. The skill is in 'carrying them out to minimise problems and maximise benefits' (Hackett, 1978). Training courses can overcome problem of insight and sensitivity in unskilled interviewers. 76 per cent of organisations consider interviews to be the most influential method (Storey and Weight, 1997, 245). The organisation has 'no control over applicants' perceptions of their own suitability' (Tyson and York, 2000: 106).

The financial position of the individual department and company should be considered. Problems and proposals should be informed and consulted to encourage ideas and views. The unpredictability of the future external labour market must be considered in relation to altering and updating job description requirements. This impacts on the type of source used to recruit as sources are chosen to reflect the type of appropriate employee.

'As economic conditions... mean that more and more people will be chasing fewer and fewer jobs... the existence of an unmanageably large pool of applicants will become much more common' usually standard organisational-wide form, 'basic info needed for an initial trawl prior to short-listing' (Weightman, 1999: 118) Heller (2002: 92) argues for a skills test or psychometric test to be included where possible. 'Designed to provide an objective measure of certain human characteristics by sampling human behaviour'. (Cole, 2000: 195) Tests must be appropriate and provide relevant information, used in aid to short-listing or element in final selection intelligence, personality, trainability, ability, aptitude and values'.

It increases quality of selection, higher quality work, reduced turnover 'All those who administer tests need to be fully qualified to interpret them (Cole, 2000: 193). Feedback 'is an area in which organisations can enhance their reputation... ' (Cole, 2000: 193). Thomson (1993: 37) notes that research has shown that psychometric testing such as sampling, ability and personality, can be more reliable than interviewing. Haagen Dazs uses them to assess customer service skills. There are, however, relocation expenses, psychological impact on the 'failed' jobholder and morale of others.

Poor design can bring adverse publicity and represent poor value formoney'A lot of so-called ACs in the UK use badly thought-out exercises and inadequately trained assessors... ' (Fletcher, 1993: 46). 'Identifying, attracting and choosing suitable people to meet an organisation's human resource requirements'. (Storey and Wright, 1997: 226). Some organisations have 'replaced traditional, highly specific job descriptions with more generic

and concise job profiles, which consist of... accountability statements... ' (Storey and Wright, 1997: 237).

'None of the techniques... is capable of producing perfect selection decisions.... ' (Marchington and Wilkinson, 1996: 119). Specialist employment agencies are useful for design skills, contemporary knowledge of successful media. The company BA outsource for cabin crew staff. HR strategies and activities should vertically integrate with organisation's position, and horizontally integrated with each other. '... the most widely used methods are not necessarily the most accurate in differentiating between people who can and cannot do the job'.

Brand image, and brand values - the organisation's values - are important' (Tyson and York, 2000: 111) The monitoring exercise should assess recruitment methods chosen, costs incurred, response rates and difficulties encountered. 'A good check... is to consider what it will feel like from the candidates' point of view. ' (Cole, 2000: 185). The choice of method depends on type and level of job, abilities of managers involved, time required, accuracy demanded and cost. The selection process is time-consuming and problematic.

'If a sufficiently strong candidate has not been forthcoming the decision will be 'not to appoint', but to re-advertise or take other steps. ' (Cole, 2000: 193). Marchington and Wilkinson (2002: 296) believe poor selection can have 'enormous, catastrophic implications' for the organisation. They state 'the documentation used... conveys images of the organisation, its products and

its overall philosophy... 'The best source of information to choose will be previous experience' (Torrington and Hall, 1998: 211).

'Applicants choose between organisations by evaluating the developing relationship between themselves and the prospect'. (Torrington and Hall, 1998: 222) Wood and Payne in Armstrong (1999: 353) argue a competence-based approach increases in accuracy of suitability predictions. Shredwick and Ellis (1998: 76-77) argue that agencies offer access on demand, experience and save time and cost. . Martin and Jackson (1997: 61) stress the importance of effective induction, which will retain staff from leaving at an early stage; "induction crisis".

Pettinger (2002: 55) believes that many organisations damage the whole process by paying insufficient attention to the quality of initial and continuing job training. Organisations should look at the ability to retain initially highly motivated staff rather than reviewing the entire process. It is vital that the effectiveness of investment is calculated and evaluated. Responding to all who applied is good management practice and creates a good image. '... Organisations are dynamic: continual movement is dictated by the ever-changing demands of the market and by people's desire to improve their careers'.

Successful candidates must be informed of dates, venue, contractual details and a person to approach. It is likely that the pattern of methods chosen in recruiting and selecting potential employees will change throughout the next few years. Technological developments will enhance interviewing by the use of computer and increase in adoption of online application forms. The

external and internal impacts will continue to have a major effect on recruitment and selection, just as with other HR activities.