

## Chapter Eight: Human Resource Management

### Model answers

#### Mini case 8(i): Recruitment at Canadian Forces

##### Discussion point

**Is it possible to achieve a full understanding of a candidate's qualities by using solely online recruitment methods?**

There are some jobs that only require a minimal amount of skill and experience, such as in fast food restaurants or factories where the tasks are largely repetitive. These types of jobs tend to have a high labour turnover and this places pressures on the human resource management department to ensure that each vacancy is filled. Online recruitment is a solution to the cost and effort of recruitment when it is likely that a large number of applicants fit the criteria for employment. In such circumstances, the sole use of online recruitment is possible, but unlikely - there is likely to be a brief interview before a final decision is made. The majority of recruitment processes involve some form of face-to-face communication with the candidates.

##### Questions and task

**Identify five advantages of online recruitment applications.**

Speed of processing applications, widening access to potential candidates, efficiency in the process of filtering out those who fit the criteria, cost savings, and flexibility in assessment of candidates. For example, candidates can undertake online tests, the scores of which are recorded in order to filter down appropriate candidates, or feed forward information that allows potential candidates to self-assess their suitability or qualifications for the post.

### **What are the core functions of the CFRC?**

The core functions of the CFRC are similar to most HRM departments - that is to attract, recruit, and retain staff. They are also responsible for overseeing personnel issues such as access to training and development, employee relations, administration, governance and policy.

### **Why does the CFRC adopt a traditional form of recruitment process?**

In the armed forces it is essential that recruits possess the necessary physical, intellectual and emotional qualities to undertake the tasks expected of them. This may include combat where the stresses, both physical and mental, are extreme. A traditional form of recruitment involves physical and medical examination and interviews. In the case of the CFRC, the purpose is to make a thorough assessment of all the qualities that are required before a recruit is offered a position. This may involve psychometric testing, aptitude tests, attitude tests, background reports, and references. Most employers undertake some or all of these methods, but in the armed forces it is especially important that the HR managers ensure that the candidates possess all the necessary qualities for the job.

### **Mini case 8(ii) Managing diversity at Qantas**

#### **Discussion point**

#### **Is it possible to achieve equality and fairness in the workplace?**

It is not possible to achieve full equality and fairness in the workplace because so much of it is driven by perceptions as much as processes. What is

perceived as fair and equal to one employee may be deemed discriminatory or unfair by another. However, there is much that HRM can contribute to ensuring that equality and fairness provisions laid down in law and company policy are adhered to. HRM contributes to the processes that underpin equality and fairness and will take their lead from existing legislation, accredited expert industry bodies specializing in equality and fairness (such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development in the UK), and feedback from employees. The aim of HR managers is to ensure that the organization is proactive in implementing equality and fairness principles.

### **Questions and tasks**

#### **Describe three methods that Qantas implement to develop an inclusive and integrated workforce?**

Qantas has been proactive in implementing policies designed to develop an inclusive and integrated workforce. These include training programmes in cultural awareness, flexible working arrangements, and access to training and development for specific groups such as the Women@Qantas Development programme.

#### **Highlight some tensions that may arise at Qantas when managing equality and diversity policies.**

The main tensions that arise when implementing equality and diversity policies is that one individual or group may perceive the policies as discriminatory or placing them at some disadvantage. In some instances diversity policies may give some groups preferential treatment (prayer time for some whilst others continue to work, for example), or the recruitment drive may target an underrepresented ethnic or gender group. The concept of

positive discrimination is fraught with tension as it is specifically aimed at targeting a particular group with distinct characteristics. Diversity entails absorbing a wide range of values, beliefs, attitudes, and working methods into the working environment. Even the most intense diversity awareness training may be unable to fully deal with inherent human flaws such as bias, prejudice or mistrust.

### **Why is diversity management an important issue for the organization?**

Diversity is an important issue for organisations because it reflects the changes that many societies have undergone in the last half century or so. In countries such as the UK, the demographic population has become multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. Since organisations recruit from society, they have to reflect the characteristics of that society in all its forms. Diversity also brings distinct advantages for organisations that can help create a competitive advantage if managed effectively. Diverse workers bring a range of new ideas and innovations that can transform the way of doing business or help produce new products and services. Diversity has thus become an important strategic issue for organisations.

### **Mini case 8(iii) NHS Forth Valley**

#### **Discussion point**

**Should the desire of elderly patients be paramount in deciding whether to discharge from hospital?**

In some instances, the desire of the patient may conflict with the clinical assessment outcome. Here, the team face a difficult decision as clearly there

is an emotional as well as clinical aspect to the process. Where possible, patients are discharged with varying levels of on-going care provided. In cases where it is not possible to discharge, on-going treatment and care is provided in hospital with a view to reassign the case at some future point. Under current guidance from policy, every effort is made to allow patients to return home if that is their wish. In many cases the principal (non-clinical) carer is also involved in the discussions, most usually a spouse or close family member.

## **Questions**

**Identify three key issues that HR managers have to consider when recruiting personnel to work in the treatment and care of the elderly in hospital.**

HR managers have to recruit personnel with the correct mix of attributes, skills and experience. The treatment and care of the elderly is a specialised sector of the NHS provision and requires managers to identify staff with the correct qualifications, experience, intellectual and emotional awareness, and motivation to deliver high quality service. Three key considerations will include clinical competence (supported by qualifications), high levels of emotional intelligence (the ability to understand and support the emotional needs of patients as well as those of other staff and stakeholders), and motivation (evidence of career-oriented and cultural engagement with the processes and provision of treatment and care for the elderly).

**What skills and competencies do HR managers look for in professionals in the treatment and care of the elderly?**

Key skills and competencies will be distinct to the type of specialisation such as physiotherapists, social workers, nurses etc. Each will have their own set of

competencies that they have been trained for, achieved a certain standard and applied in a clinical setting. Beyond that, there are certain generic skills and competencies that are required for work with the treatment and care of the elderly. These tend to be the 'soft skills' that offer comfort and ease from distress for people who are vulnerable. Psychological attributes underpin these skills and may include high levels of empathy, good communications skills, patience and understanding, and so on. These are very important complementary skills that work in tandem with clinical skills such as testing for mobility, psychological tests, comprehension and awareness tests, etc.

**What wider social, political or economic factors do HR managers have to consider in the treatment and care of the elderly?**

HR managers have to consider wider issues when managing care provision for the elderly. These include a wide range of social, political and economic factors. For example, the government has created policies that practitioners have to implement when delivering services to elderly patients. This has changed the ethos of assessment towards a neo-liberal approach which includes greater emphasis on what the patient wants. Managers also have to make decisions regarding recruitment matched against the level of need in the region they serve. Thus, there is an economic aspect to the work of HR managers. This links into the changes in the social environment, and in particular the ageing population that characterises the demographic trends in recent years - and which will become ever more acute in future.

**Case study: Managing training and development at MI5**

## **Discussion point**

### **Is HRM at MI5 any different from any other organisation?**

Many aspects of the work carried out by HR managers at MI5 mirrors that of other public or private sector organisations. The core activities remain attraction, recruitment and retention of staff. The context of the work is what makes MI5 unique (alongside the other security services GCHQ and MI6). The imperative for secrecy characterises much of the way the organisation handles business and HR managers have to ensure that relationships are underpinned by rules, regulations, and procedures that safeguard secrets. This necessarily means that the recruitment process is more rigorous and intense compared to commercial or other public sector organisations. The vetting process is more intrusive and broad ranging, and monitoring of activities is also an integral part of life for employees in the service. Nevertheless, there are opportunities for a wide range of people with skills ranging from carpentry to IT, and in this regard the attraction of recruits is similar to other organisations. Despite some strict eligibility rules (a recruit has to be a UK citizen for example), recruitment covers a broad demographic. In the first instance, interested candidates can access the organisation's website to find out more about what opportunities exist, self-assess their basic eligibility test and download an application form. In this regard, the attraction process closely mirrors that of other organisations. Thereafter, the process becomes much more tailored to assessing the suitability of the candidate for the position applied for and necessarily become more intrusive and rigorous.

## **Questions and task**

**Identify the key skills and attributes that HR managers at MI5 are looking for in their recruits.**

Some of the skills and attributes required by MI5 are of a practical nature such as electronics, IT, or carpentry skills. However, much of the work carried out requires intellectual attributes such as analytical skills, languages, problem-solving, judgement, communications, intuitive and other soft skills that support the investigations. Leadership skills are also sought after and much of the work of HRM is concerned with identifying and nurturing those recruits with leadership potential.

### **What main roles do HR managers at the organisation undertake?**

The main roles of HR managers at MI5 are to attract, recruit and retain staff. Beyond that, HRM includes ensuring the governance of managing personnel is in line with legal requirements, supporting training and development of staff, advising and guiding the evaluation of performance, contributing to human resource strategic aims; advising government on human resource issues relevant to the service they provide; and dealing with disputes or conflicts.

### **Research and highlight the eligibility criteria for employment with MI5.**

The main eligibility criteria for employment with MI5 are set out below:

- You must be a British citizen. One of your parents should also be British or have substantial ties to the UK. In the latter instance, substantial ties means that your parent is a citizen of a British Overseas Territory, a Commonwealth citizen, US citizen, EEA citizen, British national or citizen overseas, and they would need to have demonstrable connections with the UK by way of family history or have been resident in the UK for a substantial period of time.



- Usually you should have been resident in the UK for 9 out of the last 10 years immediately prior to your application, unless you have served overseas with HM Forces or in some other official capacity as a representative of Her Majesty's Government, studied abroad or lived overseas with your parents.
- You will be required to provide suitable references spanning the last 10 years. Those referees need to be easily contactable in the UK. You must be aged 18 or over.