

Running Head: EMPLOYEES

All About Employees

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Subject

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In order for an organization or company to succeed, meet its goals and be dynamic, there are many factors that have to be considered. It is not just about making the employees satisfied and happy with their jobs, not just about having that competitive edge against other companies, not just knowing what to do or how to do things in order to be called ‘successful.’ A company that is bound to be successful would consider employees as one of its priorities. A company must take care of its employees the same way employees contribute to the organization they are working for.

Quest Diagnostics is a company that was known all over the world. It offers clinical laboratory services and is the leading provider of diagnostic testing, information and services (questdiagnostics.com, 2000-2007). Quest Diagnostics is a big company, employing more than 38,500 (AARP.org, 1995-2007). Usually, such big companies face a lot of problems when it comes to dealing with their employees. Due to the diverse population in the company and the diversity of work, it is hard to maintain a working environment that suits everyone.

The following passages delve into the factors that organizations or companies like Quest Diagnostics must consider.

Compensation and Benefits

What should be included in an organization’s plan for compensation and benefits?

What are the major alternatives and factors an organization should examine? Include factors related to attraction as well as retention of employees. Arthur (2001) says that an organization “should embrace a compensation philosophy that identifies its desired market position.” This is important because giving the right compensation and benefits package to the employee means the company recognizes and rewards his or her performance. This is also a way of motivating the employee to improve his or her job performance.

Arthur (2001) adds that the compensation program that the company adopts should consider employee performance in alignment with business performance. As in the case of Ted and his son, Mark, the latter must also consider what his father expects of him, why he expects it and the rewards Mark can gain when he meets his father's expectations.

This is true in real life. For every employee, a company has expectations, and that is for the employee to excel in his job and contribute to the overall success of the company. Employees must bear in mind that if they do what they are expected to do for the company, they will share in the success of the company.

On the other hand, the company must also consider the expectations employees have. Of course, employees would want to be compensated fairly for their contributions to the company. And they would want to gain benefits that come along with working for their company. An employee who knows that none of his efforts is wasted will be motivated to do beyond what the company expects from him.

Every company must consider in what form the employees must receive the compensations and benefits. As Arthur reported (2001), the base pay has escalated and reached \$48,000 (for computer engineering). This shows that the company must develop a well-rounded compensation system to determine if the employee deserves the amount of base pay he receives. This is also a way of attracting the best talent to work for the company.

An article by McLaughlin and Kurlinski (2007) showed that inadequacy in compensation and benefit packages is one of the factors which make Chinese employees dissatisfied. The Mercer Human Resource Consulting's *Human Capital Forecast* for October 2006 reported that better pay is the main reason why employees would leave their company (cited in McLaughlin & Kurlinski, 2007). Another study by Healthfield (2007) showed that 53% of employees would seek better compensation and benefits as one of the reasons for looking for a new job.

This is not just evident in China. Anywhere in the world, you'd see employees wanting to transfer to another company which offers higher pay and better compensation and benefits package. This is why every company must determine its compensation policy to attract and keep the best talents. Additionally, a company must make sure that they offer competitive compensation and benefits. These must be included in its compensation plans or employment policies.

Furthermore, McLaughlin and Kurlinski (2007) say that fringe benefits may further attract and retain employees. These, too, must be included in the company's employment policies or agreements. Benefits usually range from medical and dental coverage, well-being benefits, health insurance, discounts in various establishments to department outings and free training. Other companies also offer innovative perks and plans.

At some point, attracting and retaining the best employees seem to be a challenging task for a company. This is because the company must consider ways in order to keep its employees as part of its workforce. However, this is a challenge that is not entirely impossible. As was in the case of Quest Diagnostics, its thousand-strong workforce must be enjoying compensation and benefits that match their expectations.

Employee Rewards, Recognition and Opportunities

What should be included in an organization's plan for rewards, recognition, and employee opportunities? What are the major alternatives and factors an organization should examine? Include the relationship to employee retention and motivation. I have watched the movie *What Women Want* wherein a small portion of the movie was about this lady who was not given much attention just because she was the messenger. The lead male character was given the ability to hear what women think, and from the thoughts of the lady, he learned that she was hungry for recognition and other opportunities that other employees received. Moreover, the lady had been dreaming to be promoted as a copy writer but nobody seemed to

recognize her credibility. But at the end, the male character offered her the job, which showed that he trusted in her ability to do the job well.

A company that serves its employees well must consider the ways in which to further develop them. It must provide opportunities and rewards that will be for the benefit of all. In Quest Diagnostics, it has values that it observes for the employees and for the whole organization as well. The company prioritizes collective goals for the achievement of excellence. There are countless opportunities for growth such as open communication, meaningful cooperation among colleagues, teamwork, and respect for each other. Moreover, the company also provides and encourages personal leadership to meet expectations. Additionally, it prioritizes growth opportunities for its employees (questdiagnostics.com, 2000-2007).

Quest Diagnostics has a corporate integrity program which promotes compliance to the laws and regulations about the company's business. It has an environment wherein the employees adhere to the legal and ethical standards. The company also promotes a working environment where they can be proud of themselves and of their company. It also considered the health and safety of its employees.

The issue of employee rewards, recognition and opportunities lead to the retention of employees. The factors that the company must consider include innovative compensation and benefits packages, effective rewards and recognition, performance management, strategies for increasing employee satisfaction, measures of employee satisfaction, career planning, work/life strategy, building new-hire commitment, competency-based strategies, employee needs, monitoring programs, career development, employee strategy to support growth and loyalty and merger and acquisition retention strategy.

The AARP (1995-2007) listed the following as factors that companies must consider: benefits for full-time workers, employee discounts, flexible work schedules, benefits for part-

time workers, flexible training opportunities, temporary work, retiree benefits, 401 K, job sharing opportunities, internships/apprenticeships and seasonal work.

On the other hand, employees must be recognized for their hard work. An article by Heathfield (2007) showed that recognition is hard to come by these days in most companies. In fact, employees are complaining about not being recognized and rewarded for their efforts.

Managers must be aware that recognition is a powerful communication tool which rewards the efforts that employees exert for the business. Additionally, recognizing employees is communicating to them that you want to see their actions and behaviors repeated. The result would be for employees to feel appreciated and cared about. This would lead to more productive work done.

There have been surveys conducted by the human resource departments about what most employee want from work. Fifty-five percent of the respondents would want praise and recognition from their supervisor. Money, benefits and events that involve employees were also listed. However, recognition seemed to be the number one choice.

A company that considers recognition as a way to motivate and retain employees must consider the following alternatives. First, a supervisor can write a personal note to the employee recognizing him. The verbal recognition can go with a gift, such as plaques or certificates. It will support the employee recognition. The company can also recognize the employee publicly so that he becomes a model. If a company does these and other strategies, for sure every employee would not think of leaving the company.

Recruitment

What factors should determine the proper mix of recruitment methods for an organization? Include such factors as organizational goals, diversity, and creative solutions.

Many companies and recruitment agencies consider hiring the right employee as a very

important task. These companies would not want to regret later if they have accepted someone who does not fit the job.

A company's recruitment methods must, in all ways, match its organizational goals, diversity and creative solutions. Since goals are a collective decision, the human resource managers must bear in mind that those they will hire will have a part in establishing organizational goals. Thus, good decision making must be one of the qualities that managers must look for in prospective candidates. In the same way, hiring the right employee must be according to the goals of the company.

Diversity is another factor that would determine the recruitment methods of the company. As in the case of Quest Diagnostics, it employs persons of mixed backgrounds. How was the company able to recruit them? Of course, the company recognized the importance of valuing differences. Although people are different, they must be dedicated to the goals and objectives that the company wants to achieve (Genzyme Corporation, 2002-2007).

Arthur (2001) mentioned the following as factors that a company must consider: cost, immediacy, audience and level. Money is needed to advertise for the vacant position. However, it can limit the options of the company. Immediacy, on the other hand, is about filling the vacant position as soon as possible. Recruitment can be done through advertising or conducting job fairs. The third factor is about determining whether a wider range of audience must be reached, thereby maximizing the chance for more candidates to choose from. And lastly, the company must consider the exemption level for the position.

Usually, companies use different sources in hiring and recruiting. The traditional sources include employee referrals and newspaper ads. Aside from these, recruitment can be done through recruitment agencies or job fairs.

In order to maximize these resources, the manager must determine the best resource to use in order to generate prospective candidates for the vacant position. He must also think of using creative recruitment solutions (Arthur, 2001).

McLaughlin and Kurlinski (2007) also suggested that the manager must consider the recruiting needs for each position. Aside from this, he must evaluate the job positions and the company's future needs. In turn, this should be compared to the candidate's long-term goals and making sure that such goals will be consistent with the company's offer.

Meyer (2007) has some suggestions on recruiting and hiring the candidate that will be a helpful addition to the company's workforce. First is hiring for today's need and tomorrow's vision. This means that the candidates to be hired must provide the right skills needed in the future. Second is to understand the job. The manager must determine the characteristics that make the candidates effective for the job. Third, the hiring process should be legal. Also, the manager must build a standardized hiring process and then use it. This means that the manager must set criteria for choosing the right candidate and do background checks. Next, hiring top talent means more profit. The right candidate will contribute to the company. Next, a bad hire is worse. It can cost the company plenty. Next tip is interviewing doesn't work. Traditional interview alone will not generate the best talent. It tends to be subjective. The manager must also consider the most neglected aspect of hiring, which is the job analysis. It should be considered because it produces the personal attributed needed for effective work. Lastly, the people must match the jobs. The manager must employ multiple selection methods.

Work/Life Balance

How should an organization address the issue of work-life balance? What are the major alternatives and factors an organization should examine? According to Bird (2003), work/life balance is not about equal balance. But one thing is sure. It changes over time. Your balance might be different today from when you were looking for work. It might be different

today from yesterday. Bird added that the right work/life balance is different for everyone because of differing priorities and lives.

A company must consider work/life balance since everyone has his own personal life other than his work life. Some have families to attend to, other businesses to manage, and projects to finish. In short, our personal life should not get in the way of our work life and vice versa.

The company must consider the work/life balance as a tool for improving the employees' productivity. The work/life balance program must communicate the following highlights to the participants: techniques for timely project completion, tool to maximize time in relationships, a method for staying in balance every single day, accepting responsibility for own work and life outcomes, strategies that would improve team communication, adjusting work/life balance accordingly, and staying in focus.

According to Arthur (2001), the use of a company's work/life balance programs must be supported by the management. The company must consider the fact that employees are not robots. They need these programs in order to make sense of their lives and to not feel stressed. This must be the reason why companies provide services for the welfare of the employees such as swimming pools, gyms, and other areas for relaxation. These serve as diversion for the employees so that they can free their minds from things that would stress them out.

The right work/life balance presents many benefits to both the individual and the organization. In the individual level, the right work/life balance promotes value and balance in life. The individual can also have the chance to determine the best work/life balance that works for him. Moreover, this would reduce stress and would improve relationships on and off the job. Additionally, work/life balance promotes productivity.

In the organizational level, the right work/life balance can improve morale among the many employees. Organizational stress is reduced and there is enhanced communication and teamwork.

Since not all companies would easily support work/life balance programs, the management must be encouraged to support it through training. The program must make sure that the employees understand the value of the work/life program so that they can maximize it.

Arthur (2001) mentioned that the Phoenix Home Life Mutual Insurance Company has a work/life balance program for its employees. In the training, the program makes use of role-playing wherein the participants can use the skills they have learned. The participants then understood the importance of work/life balance program in improving their productivity.

Bird (2003) emphasized the importance of achievement and enjoyment as part of “defining a positive work/life balance.” He added that achievement and enjoyment are important in determining the answers to the question “Why?”

For a big company like Quest Diagnostics where performing work is important, a work/life balance program would be helpful in making the employees productive. In the present time, the company provides testing for more than half a million patients in a day, and serves approximately half of the physicians, hospitals and health care systems in the United States. This work is stressing. A work/life balance program would definitely refresh the employees and provide them with energy to continue serving the company’s customers.

However, a work/life balance program is not just the only thing that would further bring the company to its ultimate success. Concern for the factors mentioned above would further improve the company. All of these show that retention of employees is important for the success and growth of business in any industry.

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