Course Learning Outcomes for Unit V

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

5. Determine the function and role of human resources, including key aspects of human resource management.

Reading Assignment

In order to access the following resource(s), click the link(s) below:

Forck, M. (2014). 7 keys to worker engagement. *Professional Safety*, *59*(5), 31-33. Retrieved from
https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direc
t=true&db=bth&AN=95882608&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Lawson, R. S. (1999). Computer-based training: Is it the next wave? *Professional Safety*, *44*(6), 30-33.
Retrieved from
https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direc
t=true&db=bth&AN=1917484&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Galagan, P. (2008). Talent management: What is it, who owns it, and why should you care? *T+D*, *62*(5), 40-
44. Retrieved from
https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direc
t=true&db=a9h&AN=31911995&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Scholarios, D., & Lockyer, C. (1999). Recruiting and selecting professionals: Context, qualities and methods.
International Journal of Selection and Assessment, *7*(3), 142-156. Retrieved from
https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direc
t=true&db=a9h&AN=4519343&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Click here to access an interactive tutorial that covers some fundamentals of human resource management.

Click here to access an interactive tutorial that covers employee recruitment strategies.

Click here to access an interactive tutorial that covers the training and development process.

Click here to access an interactive tutorial that covers some of the HR challenges of international business.

Unit Lesson

Introduction

Imagine the central role of an athletic coach and staff in any university or professional athletic program. The coach and staff are pivotal in attracting, developing, and maintaining talented athletes to maximize performance and sustain a successful athletic program. In fact, many similarities exist between the coach and staff's roles in an athletic program to the centralized roles of a human resource department and the activities of an organization. The human resource management department plays a vital role in the corporate strategy, seeking to maximize employee performance to achieve organizational goals. In essence, all managers function as human resource managers because they are involved in the process of maximizing employee performance by motivating, compensating, appraising, evaluating, and matching goals with employee needs. Yet, human resource professionals also perform the essential functions of recruiting, selecting, developing, and maintaining employees.

Recruiting Employees

Recruiting employees for an organization is similar to a football or basketball coach scouting potential players that can take the team to the next level or win a championship game. Similarly, the recruiting process involves a search for the best talent that can help the organization reach organizational goals. The process can take place internally or externally. External searches are often conducted by recruitment agencies that specialize in recruiting individuals for various positions. Employment agencies (headhunters) are advantageous because they save the organization the time necessary to solicit and pre-screen prospects externally. Other activities for recruiting outside applicants include job fairs, state employment services, online recruiting sites, and employee referrals.

On the other hand, many organizations utilize internal recruiting methods. This method of recruitment has many advantages, including (1) offering opportunities for career advancement, (2) generating high employee commitment and job satisfaction, and (3) providing a greater cost savings compared to external recruiting. When positions arise, many companies will list them in employee bulletins or post job opportunities on company intranet sites. This gives internal employees the opportunity to apply for positions before posting the positions externally. In many instances, human resource management may advertise jobs both internally and externally with preference given to current employees.

Selecting

Once a pool of potential applicants has been established, the next step involves *selecting* the qualified employees from the pool. Seeking applicants and determining qualifications require a certain degree of insight about the positions that need to be filled. Human resource professionals often consult with department managers to determine the skills, education, experience, abilities, and other criteria that are needed to perform a job. This information is later transformed into a job description that is reviewed to determine a good match between a potential candidate and the position to be filled.

Candidates that meet the preliminary criteria on a job application are advanced to the assessment process. Human resource professionals use a myriad of devices to predict a candidate's performance in an organization. In addition to creating the application form, the human resource department schedules interviews and administers aptitude testing and personality inventories.

Training and Development

Consider the previous example of the football coach recruiting the best talent for his football team. Although the selected players arrive on the field with natural skills and abilities, these unique talents must be maintained and continuously enhanced for proficiency. Hence, the players engage in continuous *training* to further develop their talents and improve their overall performance on the team. Similarly, individuals in the workforce also have special skills and abilities that can be strengthened and further *developed* to maximize performance in organizations.

Human resource professionals assist in the facilitation of developing an effective workforce through a variety of training and development techniques. The concept of training entails new hire training, management training, and systems training. New hire training is necessary to teach employees important aspects of a job

or to convey special information related to a specific industry. Managers are also required to complete manager-level training to learn various aspects of hiring, supervising, evaluating, and disciplining employees. Finally, employees at all levels are required to complete periodic systems training to learn how to operate specialized software, equipment and machinery, or other forms of technology relevant to the industry.

The process of training can occur in a variety of different forms. Formal classroom training is the most traditional format, facilitated by experts who provide information that employees should know. On-the-job training is conducted by experienced employees who show newcomers how to perform certain job tasks. *Mentors*, individuals who provide guidance to less experienced employees, are also instrumental in the training process. Effective mentors not only share knowledge and advice, but serve as supportive role models for employees who are new on the job. Both on-the-job trainers and mentors are beneficial because of the one-on-one interaction and relatively low cost of on-site training.

Simulated trainings are gaining increased popularity as they provide an opportunity for employees to learn by performing certain tasks without incurring actual risk. For example, nursing students engage in simulated training with artificial replicas of humans before actually working in a clinical setting. While simulated settings provide a safe environment in which to make mistakes, the work is not authentic because it does not take place in a real-world setting.

In recent years, self-directed learning in the form of web-based classes, written manuals, and videos have become popular for many organizations. Employees who engage in self-directed learning can learn at their own pace and arrange classes around their work schedules. Assessments and quizzes are administered to determine a learner's proficiency of the material. The effectiveness of self-directed learning depends heavily on the quality of the teaching material and ability of the employee to understand the information presented.

Cross-training is another popular training method in which employees are allowed to learn multiple skills, enabling them to perform a variety of different jobs. This form of training is important for providing companies the flexibility to adjust to changes in staffing and other departmental needs.

Employee Development

Human resource specialists engage in a variety of developmental activities. *Employee development* activities are those designed to contribute to the personal and professional growth of employees within an organization. One of the developmental strategies human resource professionals encourage in many organizations is promotion from within. Promotion from within is beneficial for retaining and developing productive employees.

Conducting performance appraisals is also important for developing an effective workforce. Human resource professionals provide adequate training that ensures managers know how to appropriately observe and evaluate employee performance and provide proper feedback to employees. Feedback should include the acceptable elements of an employee's performance and also describe the areas where an employee needs to improve. Managers should indicate specific goals for the employee to achieve within a specified time period. Depending upon the organization, performance appraisals should be conducted frequently to make adjustments to an individual's performance if necessary. While most organizations conduct annual performance reviews, others may determine that bi-annual or quarterly performance reviews are necessary for the continued motivation and development of employees.

Human resource professionals also provide resources for continuing education courses and tuition assistance programs. They encourage management to develop employees by assigning challenging jobs, delegating assignments that develop employees' abilities, and providing cross-training when appropriate.

Maintaining an Effective Workforce

Once employees have been recruited and developed, human resource professionals must remain current on ways to *maintain the workforce* by providing competitive compensation, current wage and salary schedules, and adequate benefits. Human resource specialists are responsible for staying abreast of federal and local rules and regulations as they pertain to employment. They must also have knowledge of competitive compensation structures. An example of a carefully designed compensation structure might include current wages and salary schedules, health insurance plans, paid vacation and sick leave, retirement benefits, employee fitness centers, child-care facilities, and other incentives to attract and retain talented workers. Many human resource professionals work diligently to provide a very attractive organization to maintain

employees. For example, Google was named "Best Company to Work For" in 2014 and has acquired a reputation for attracting and maintaining a huge workforce due to its exemplary strategy to provide a valued and supportive workplace culture.

While many human resource professionals may not have the resources to offer the compensation packages Google does, all human resource specialists are responsible for helping employees feel valued and for providing adequate support when necessary. Many small cost benefits that can be provided to employees include things like employee appreciation days and other recognition programs, flexible scheduling, employee potlucks, free coffee and beverages, occasional lunches and snacks, and other incentives.

Termination

Despite human resource professionals' efforts to maintain an effective workforce, organizations will still voluntarily or involuntarily lose employees. Some will retire, while others may depart for other jobs or be forced out by mergers, downsizing, or inadequate performance. During these times, human resource professionals must facilitate the departure. For employees departing due to merger or organizational downsizing, human resource professionals may facilitate opportunities for training and job hunting assistance if such employees cannot find an intracompany job or choose to leave rather than move to a different unit. Some organizations and human resource departments offer educational assistance programs in which former employees can take courses to increase their chances of finding employment outside of the company. Finally, human resource departments also conduct *exit interviews* with employees who simply decide to leave the organization. Exit interviews provide valuable information that helps organizations determine underlying reasons why employees leave and find opportunities to reduce future turnover.