

Personnel selection and choice

Part one

The hiring process is critical to a company's success - the right employee helps the company to reach its objectives but the wrong employee will cost the company a great deal in time, money and energy. Furthermore, Arnold, Cooper and Robertson state 'personnel selection and assessment is probably the area where the biggest and most consistent contribution has been made' in work psychology.

To find the right person for a particular occupation the employers have to formulate a job description of such a job. In most circumstances, especially in the small companies, where there is only one leader who manages the process of personnel selection, this aspect is apparently linked with the manager's personal qualities. In addition, from the job description that the employer gives, we can make a brief description of the company's profile, which consecutively points to the managing body's personal qualities and characteristic.

'An accountant's, secretary's or production manager's job will vary considerably from one organisation to another, perhaps in the ways that are crucial' (Arnold, Cooper and Robertson, 1998)

When considering how the director's personality characteristics influence the organisation's behaviour and accordingly the job analysis or opportunity offered, it should be stressed that in the process of recruiting, employers try to attract individuals with the same qualities as the whole group. However, Arnold, Cooper and Robertson (1998) state: 'Job analysis procedures are generally either worker-orientated or job-orientated' According to this, it is clear that for different job positions the managers have to implement different practices. It emerged our experience of role-playing in the group that we all gave different job descriptions for the same job within the same company, from which we can conclude that different individuals perceive

the same team with slight differences and believe the company to be looking for different individuals to fill their vacancies, according to their needs. In addition, from my point of view, these correlations have a direct and indirect link with the psychological preferences examined more detailed by Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) and with the different styles of the leadership considered by Michael Argyle (1964) – *Democratic* leadership and *Aristocratic* leadership.

Nevertheless, we all need individuals who will fit in with our groups, as ‘effective teamwork is essential when targets are to be achieved’ (Mullins 1999). Moreover, Mears and Voehl (1997) state that ‘Teams and groups are an essential component of life, be that an organisational life or a personal life. An individual cannot possibly perform all tasks that are required of them. Therefore, groups are essential in sharing the workload and in gaining results.’ Accordingly, ‘groups have to work together to become a cohesive unit that combines individual’s strengths and weaknesses to achieve an optimum working level’ (Mears and Voehl 1997). Therefore, if group is not organised well or there is a missing link in the chain of the organisation, indicating that a person does not fit in, the leader of the team and the team as well might not achieve the expected results or even cause the whole system to collapse. Belbin (1926) rightly states - ‘Teamwork does not of course, guarantee in itself good results. As in sport, there can be good teams and poor teams. And as in sport, it all depends on how the players play together.’

In conclusion it is necessary to indicate that team leaders, when trying to recruit staff consider carefully who to employ in that sense that the new personality may bring to the company prosperity, or, conversely, have a destructive influence on the whole organisation depending on how that person ‘fits in’. This all in all, seems to be a fundamental part of the selection process not only for the managing body, but for the whole organisation as well.

Part two

‘The character of social organisations, and of society as a whole, is greatly affected by the way people are selected to fill different positions. If a firm starts to choose a different kind of person to occupy the senior posts, the whole atmosphere and character of the firm will change in a few years’ (Michael Argyle, 1964). Therefore, the entire process of selecting new members for an organisation need to be quite sophisticated, as has been well defined by Arnold, Cooper and Robertson (1998) beginning from the interviews and ending with handwriting analysis. Sometimes a single method is used in the process of personnel selection; at other hand, depending on the company’s needs and on the seniority of the job position available, a variety of methods are used. However, as Arnold, Cooper and Robertson (1998) state, ‘Although a large variety of personnel selection procedures have been developed and used in organisational settings, the relevant research shows rather clearly that not all of the methods are equally useful.’

Moreover, nowadays is increasingly popular the interview within organisations trying to recruit new candidates. It is evident that in most cases the interview process has priority over all other ways of selection (from the small groups to large organisations) for the reason that ‘If a person has to communicate something to another and recognises that his aim in communication is not just to express himself but to give information in a way that the receiver is most likely to understand he is likely to do it more effectively.’ Peter R. Day (1977)

Before the process of the interview, some factors must be considered: Where to interview, when to interview, group or individual interviewing? – These can be quite critical, but different situation require different approaches. From our role playing experience it was clear that, when interviewing out of earshot of an audience, individuals were more likely to discuss freely than in groups. As a result, Confidentiality is an important element in a successful interview and in finding out more about a person.

Turning to the advantages and disadvantages of the interview, I would like to stress some frequently encountered issues. Employment decisions have traditionally been regarded as a privilege exclusive to management. Torrington and Hall, (1991) describe this process in terms of 'hurdles over which prospective employees have to try to leap to avoid rejection'. Clearly, it is evident that in the interviewing procedure, a candidate sometimes tries to adapt himself/herself to the interviewer(s) and may not react honestly. For this reason, there are 'Psychometric tests' (Arnold, Cooper and Robertson, 1998), where the candidate may be low certain which answer is suitable for the employer.

Furthermore, interviews frequently have another element, well described in one sentence by Keenan (1977) - 'interviewers assess candidates more favourably if they hold similar attitudes'. This is good because it helps the interviewer to decide whether that person will fit in the team, on the other hand not all people with the same attitudes can define the requisite competencies (knowledge, skills, aptitudes and personal characteristics). Equally, friendliness and likeability may be pleasant characteristics, but may not be important to success in some jobs. Returning to the experience from the role-play it was obvious that some of us would select the individuals who had the same attitudes and interests despite the fact that these people may have had inappropriate skills. This may possibly affect in a negative way a successful outcome of the interview, which has a key purpose to distinguish the individual who can success the job.

In continuation, perhaps it is necessary to devote some attention to the types of the interviews: *Structured* and *Unstructured*. Both have priorities and deficiencies between them. If to considerate the unstructured type of the interviews, which is wide used in the organization's recruiting practice, moreover was also evident from the role-play experienced, possibly we may state that it has inevitable tendencies to deviate from the planned way of interviewing. In addition, it is also good to affirm that perhaps these tendencies are main advantages of the interview processes, as the interviewed persons may communicate useful information for the

employer, which sometimes, cannot possibly be done so by the structured types of the interviews or by other types of the selection described by Arnold, Cooper and Robertson (1998).

Another point that may be stressed, relating perhaps to one of the disadvantages of the interviews is the *stereotyping* and *discrimination*, which persist to be present in the people's psychology and often could bring to the company ineffective outcome of the interview if these are reflected quite strong in the interviewer, as people have the ability to make an impression of the person from the first sight, which sometimes may be wrong.

Furthermore, quoting Michael Argyle (1964) 'Selection for management and leadership was traditionally done by interview, together with study of previous performance' and subscribing to this opinion, based on our experience of role-play where was obvious that questions formulated by the interviewers were less or more tangible with finding out the previous experience of candidates, it could be stated that the interview processes are a crucial element in the selection of a candidate. Moreover, interviews possibly in comparison to the other ways of selection may have the highest prediction percent in detection which person will 'fit in'.

Bibliography

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