

# Human Resource Management

## RECRUITMENT

### General Overview

Recruitment is a fundamental function of HRM especially in large organizations. Once an organization has established through human resource planning the number and quality of staff required in an organization either immediately or in the near future, the recruitment and selection process follows.

Recruitment is not tantamount to employment. It is the search for qualified people to sufficiently create their interest to see the need to apply for existing job positions or newly created ones.

Recruitment is the first step in filling a vacant position. The other steps that follow are selection and placement. Ideally, recruitment should be preceded by job analysis so that the essential features or; main tasks of the job to be filled are known and reduced into a job description and job specification so that the persons in charge of recruitment and selection know what tasks the prospective employee is expected to perform and what skills, competencies and attributes he/she should possess.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that recruitment refers to a set of activities whose end result is creating a pool of applicants from whom the best is selected. These activities are meant to discriminate or reduce the number of people applying for jobs when they do not have the required qualifications.

Let us now examine a few technical definitions of recruitment.

According to Flippo<sup>1</sup> recruitment is “a process of searching for prospective employees and stimulating and encouraging them to apply for jobs in an organization”.

William B Werther and Keith Davis<sup>2</sup> have defined recruitment as the “process of finding and attracting capable applicants for employment. The process begins when new recruits are sought and ends when their applications are submitted. The result is a pool of applicants from which new employees are selected.”

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<sup>1</sup> Edwin B. Flippo: Personnel Management. 6<sup>th</sup> edition Mc-Graw Hill New York, 1984

<sup>2</sup> William B. Werther and Keith Davis. Human Resources and Personnel Management. McGraw Hill New York, 1993

Therefore in summary we can say that recruitment is the process of locating, identifying and attracting capable applicants for job openings in organizations or business firms.

## **FACTORS AFFECTING RECRUITMENT**

These are broadly classified into two categories, that is:

- Internal factors
- External factors

### **INTERNAL FACTORS**

These are factors within the organization that affect recruitment process. Some of these factors are discussed below:

#### **Size of the Organization**

The size of an organization affects the recruitment process. Large organizations find recruitment less problematic than small firms, i.e. because of their organized structures, possible good image and availability of financial resources needed for recruitment activities. Small organizations grapple with issues related to inadequate financial resources and image.

#### **Recruiting Policies**

Most organizations have recruitment policies, the most significant being three of them namely:

**Policy on either internal or external recruitment.** Internal policy of recruitment is preferred because existing employees know the organization and fit well with organization's culture.

**Lead market pay strategies** – companies as a policy pay higher pay packages than their competitors to attract the best candidates in the labour market to their organization. They employ what is called pay leadership strategy e.g. BAT, Kenya Pipeline, Shell/BP, etc. (whole benefits package not just salary).

#### **Employment at will versus due process.**

Employment at will means there are no restrictions for exit. i.e. either of the parties can terminate employment at will. Due process provides for exit procedures e.g. giving one or three months notice of intention to terminate employment or salary in lieu thereof. This policy targets certain category of people in the labour market.

## **Image of organization**

The saying that image is everything holds true not only for men but also for organizations. Good image of an organization earned by a number of overt and covert actions by management helps attract potential and competent candidates. This is why firms invest heavily in public relations and corporate social responsibility (CSR) e.g. Safaricom using the Safaricom Foundation funds many community development projects involved in provision of healthcare, water and environmental activities, Celtel for school projects, KCB for environment related activities and sports.

CSR activities help an organization create positive image and goodwill among its customers or consumers. Good image is what makes blue chip companies attract large numbers of applications.

## **Image of the Job**

Just like image of firm attracts applicants, so does image of the job. Jobs associated with good remuneration and good working conditions influence the number of people attracted to certain jobs. E.g. compare the job of a mortuary attendant and that of a clerical position in a reputable organization located in good office settings or position of a marketing manager and Chief Executive Officer of an organization.

## **External Factors**

These are factors external to the organization for which it has no control over. Demographics e.g. age, gender, literacy levels, etc.

## **Labour market**

This refers to the labour market conditions i.e. Issues of supply and demand of human resources. If the demand for a particular skill is high compared to its supply, recruitment process will need to be more elaborate and involve more effort than if supply of the skill was higher than the demand.

## **Level of unemployment**

When unemployment is high in a given area, the recruitment process tends to be easier and simpler. This is because the number of applicants is expected to be high which makes it easier to attract best qualified applicants. The converse is true when the rate of unemployment is low.

## **Government Policy**

Depending on the state of unemployment, the government may develop policies that direct organizations in the public or formal factors to recruit a certain percentage of people per certain duration to cope with levels of unemployment e.g. the 1978 government directive to organizations to increase their employment levels by 10% and in 1984 directive to employ 100% of all unemployed university graduates. Such government policies have both a HRP and recruitment implications.

## **RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES**

Examination of the vacancy – the studying the job descriptions and personal specifications. Job redesign makes it impossible for job descriptions/specifications to remain constant. Therefore the HR should ensure that the current job description fits current status of job to be filled after successful recruitment.

**Obtaining authorization to hire**-The HR manager must obtain authorization to hire from top management mainly due to the financial implications of recruitment and selection

**Identification of sources of suitable candidates for the job** – to be able to attract the right candidate for the job, you must target the correct labour market. Labour market is wide and you need to know where to direct communication/advertisement for positions vacant e.g. if you are looking for management trainees, then your target is fresh graduates and communication should be directed to university colleges or other educational institutions.

## **Communication**

This must be as attractive as possible in order to attract a large pool of qualified applicants from which the best will be chosen when the selection decision is made. Once responses are received, the recruitment process stops and the selection process begins.

## **SOURCES OF RECRUITMENT**

Sources of recruitment are also classified into two broad categories, namely:

- Internal sources
- External sources.

## **Internal Sources**

If an organization has as its policy recruitment from internal sources, it uses techniques like promotions and transfers of existing employees. Promotion means upgrading of an employee to a higher position carrying higher status, pay and responsibilities. Transfer on the other hand refers to shifting of an employee from one job to another without any change in the position, pay, status or responsibilities – frequent in the public service. The aim of transfers is to provide employees with a broader and varied base which is considered necessary for promotions e.g. job rotations.

### **Use of Former Employees**

Retired or retrenched employees may be interested to come back and work for an organization if there is need for their special skill and capabilities e.g. summoning of retired police officers/GSU during the Mungiki menace mid last year.

### **Employee Referrals**

This is yet another internal source of recruitment and is one of the most effective sources when compared to others. Here the existing employees refer their family members, friends and relatives to the company as potential candidates for vacancies to be filled. The significance of the referrals – why they are effective is because the person making the referral knows the candidate from personal experience and he/she guarantees that the candidate will perform in the job and the candidate once selected works hard to avoid hurting the integrity of his/her proposer. It is a good way of recruiting staff since it creates loyalty with employees. The referral candidates join the pool of candidates recruited from other sources from which the best would be selected.

### **Unsolicited or previous applications**

This is considered an internal source in the sense that applications from interested candidates are already in the custody of the organization. This is mostly relevant for unskilled or semi-skilled jobs.

There are advantages and disadvantages associated with internal recruitment but the most significant among the disadvantages is that it limit its choice to the talent available within the organization. It denies the organization opportunity to tap talent available in the vast labour

market outside the organization. Sometimes organizations benefit from an injection of fresh blood from the external labour market. Internal recruitment serves as a means of “inbreeding” which is never healthy for growth of an organization.

### **External Sources**

Unlike internal sources, external sources of recruitment are those that are outside the organization. They include the following:

#### **Advertisements**

This is perhaps the most widely used method of generating interest to work for organizations. This is because its reach (catchment area) is very high. To be effective, advertisements must be clear and precise in order to ensure that job requirements and the job specification is understood with the aim of encouraging only the qualified candidates to apply. The converse is true for ambiguously worded and broad based advertisements. Advertisements are commonly found in the print media e.g. local dailies, weekly publications e.g. the East African, etc., professional journals e.g. the Economist, etc.

#### **Private and public recruitment agencies.**

This becomes appropriate where the recruitment function is outsourced, Public agencies e.g. Ministry of Labour mainly used for blue colour or menial jobs while Private recruitment agencies are usually used for white colour jobs. Examples of private recruitment agencies are Deloitte & Touche, Manpower Services, KPMG, Preferred Personnel etc.

#### **Educational Institutions**

Mainly used when organization is looking for skilled manpower without experience, e.g. management trainees. Their use is limited to entry level positions.

#### **Head – hunting/Raiding**

When a job position falls vacant especially in top management, the organization itself through its HR or through a recruitment agents start searching in the labour market especially in rival firms for the right candidate to fill the position. These are usually people in the same industry who

have demonstrated expertise and competence in a similar job e.g. Gareth George, headhunted from Barclays Bank to become CEO of KCB, Linus Gitahi from Smithkline Beecham to CEO Nation Media Group (service industry) etc.

### **Electronic Recruitment**

E-recruiting is internet based. Organizations create websites in which they post advertisements for jobs which fall vacant from time to time. Examples of organizations that actively engage in e-recruiting are the UN related organizations and other well established firms e.g. Kenya Airways.

Selection process can also be done electronically through the internet through video conferencing.

Recently entrepreneurs wishing to take advantage of the benefits of ICT have identified E-recruiting as a good business. They have formed links with organizations on whose behalf they advertise vacant positions through their websites and to which jobseekers send their CVs for onward transmission to prospective employers e.g <myjobseye .com> <www.jobskenya.com>, <www.bestjobskenya.com> etc.

### **Conclusion**

When compared to internal sources of recruitment, external sources can be said to be more effective and superior given that they have the propensity to attract a larger number of applicants thus widening options of selection for best candidate. It also creates room for wider talent base and diversity in organization. Its major disadvantage however is that it is time consuming and costly, yet offers no guarantee that the organization will get good and suitable candidates.

However, recruiting from external sources if it culminates in selection may be disadvantageous as it may discourage existing employees who instead of being promoted see jobs being taken up by people from outside the organization. This may result in low morale and lack of motivation within employees which in the long run negatively affects the firms productivity and growth.