UNIT 11   SELECTION

Objectives

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

l   appreciate the dynamics of various selection tests for different categories of employees;

l   understand the problems inherent in interviewing and workout suitable guidelines to interviewers;

l   realise the importance of exit interview and how to conduct the same;

l   develop a comprehensive executive retention programme for an organisation.

Structure

11.1   Introduction

11.2   Selection Process

11.3   Selection Procedures

11.4   Selection Tests

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11.1   INTRODUCTION

The most valuable asset of any large-scale organisation is the high-calibre personnel. Good morale and motivation bind the employees together and breed enthusiasm and goodwill in them, leading to better output. An important part of personnel selection, therefore, is to make reasonably sure that the person appointed to any position is interested in the work he has to do. The acquisition of new employees is the most important and complex task. To find and employ the best individuals available is every personnel manager's goal.

Finding people and putting them to work is an expensive affair. Therefore, the selection process has to be very sound to build a first-rate staff. One of the important aspects in personnel selection is individual difference. Individuals differ in their ability to perform the different types of activities. They differ in their physical characteristics, intelligence and intellectual aptitudes, in interests, in temperament, and in character. These differences in the individuals are to a large

extent uncorrelated. Because of these large differences in human abilities, the problem of proper selection becomes a very important one for modern industry.

A systematic and accurate occupational information is necessary before the employees can be recruited, selected or placed on the job. Though, in the recent past, the need for a systematic occupational information has been recognised, not much work has been done in this regard by most personnel or employment departments. A careful and thoughtful preparation of a job specification for each important type of work, followed by regular and conscientious use of these specifications, reduce errors in selection process.

After a complete job analysis, the planning of a recruitment programme can be done. In this process, we may also consider the likely needs of the applicants. Recruiting is selling the idea that a particular organisation is a better place to work than the other competing organisation. A recruitment and selection programme can be made more positive and successful if (a) there is a cultivation of the best employment market for the positions involved; (b) use of attractive recruiting literature and of adequate publicity; (c) employment of up-to-date tests of high selectivity and reliability; (d) adequate search for candidates from within the service; (e) a placement programme that puts the right man on the right job; and (f) a follow-up probationary programme as an integral part of the selection process.

11.2 SELECTION PROCESS

Recruitment and selection are the two phases of the personnel practices and procedures complimentary to each other. Recruiting consists of whatever activity is necessary to bring in enough applicants for specific positions so that there is opportunity for real selection. Recruiting is done mainly through three common sources i.e., advertisement, employment exchanges or private employment agencies, and present employees. In addition, educational institutions, labour unions, casual applications and deputations are also utilised. After identifying the potential applicants, the next step taken is to evaluate their experience and qualifications for making a selection. As has been quite often said, selection is essentially a process of picking out the best suited personnel for the organisation's requirements.

The selection of unskilled labour or of semi-skilled labour for particular jobs does not cause much of a problem and therefore, an elaborate selection procedure is not required for it. But for supervisory and higher levels and specialist jobs, particularly in the public undertakings, private companies and industries, the need for a sophisticated selection procedure has been felt and is now being introduced. The selection practices and procedures vary from one organisation to another, depending upon the situation and needs of the organisation, as well as the level on which the selection is made.

Generally the selection activities will begin with an initial screening interview and conclude with the final employment decision. Usually, the selection process consists of seven steps: (1) initial screening interview, (2) completion of the application form, (3) employment tests, (4) comprehensive interview, (5) background investigation, (6) physical examination, (7) final employment decision. Each of these steps represents a decision point requiring some affirmative feedback for the process to continue. Every step in the selection process tries to expand the organisation's knowledge about the applicant's background, abilities and motivation, and it increases the information from which decision makers will make their predictions and final choice.

An important technique in selection is the use of application blanks in which the questions are structured and determined in advance. The main items of information requested on application blanks are the name, address, age, marital status and dependents, education, experience, and references. Other items on the application blanks vary considerably from one organisation to another and from job to job.

These application blanks serve the dual purpose of providing preliminary information about the candidate and aids the interviewer by opening up areas of interest and discussion. An application blank serves the following purpose:

1. They provide the candidate's first formal introduction to the company.

2. They generate data in uniform formats and hence make it easy to make cross comparison of the applicants.

3. The data so generated may serve as a basis to initiate a dialogue in the interview.

4. Data in the application blank can be used for purposes of analysis and research in personnel.

Though the information sought in application blanks may vary according to the level of the position and the organisation, most application blanks seem to contain personal data, marital data, physical data, educational data, employment data, extra-curricular data, and references.

Formal application blanks are of two kinds:

1. Preliminary application blanks which seek only information on the personal and educational qualifications and experience of the applicant, help the company to decide whether a candidate qualifies in the first round. These are used for short-listing the candidates for subsequent selection.

2. The comprehensive application blanks seek very detailed information from applicants who have been short-listed in a preliminary screening. The purpose of this application blank is to develop a comprehensive profile of the applicant and identify areas that would have to be further explored in the interview to assess the suitability of the applicant to the job.

11.3 SELECTION PROCEDURES

While selection procedures must satisfy a number of requirements, according to Roe and Greuter (1989), it is important that they fulfill four main functions:

1. *Information Gathering:* This involves generating information about the organisation, the job, career paths, employment conditions on the one hand; and, on the other, about candidates, including their experience, qualifications and personal characteristics.

2. *Prediction:* Using information on past and present candidate characteristics as a basis for making predictions about candidates' future behaviour.

3. *Decision-Making:* Using the predictions about candidates' future behaviour as a basis for making decisions about whom to accept or reject.

4. *Information Supply:* Providing information on the one hand, about the organisation, the job, and employment conditions to candidates, and, on the other, providing information about the results of the selection process to the various parties involved - line managers, personnel specialists, and others. While many options are available to organisations in designing and developing selection procedures, an important consideration is that all the four functions should be carried out adequately.

11.4   SELECTION TESTS

The basic assumption underlying the use of tests in personnel selection is that individuals are different in their job-related abilities and skills, and that these skills can be adequately and accurately measured. The main advantage of a selection test is that it may uncover qualifications and talent that would not be detected by interviews or by listings of educational and job experience. Some of the commonly used types of tests and the purposes for which they are designed are discussed below:

a) *Performance Tests:* The simplest and perhaps the most obvious type of testing procedure is the performance test in which the applicant is asked to demonstrate his ability to do the job. For example, prospective typists are asked to type some pages and their speed and accuracy are then calculated. However, these tests have certain limitations and cannot be developed for each and every job.

b) *Intelligence Tests:* Many companies use general intelligence tests under the assumption that quick-learning, alert, bright people can learn more quickly any job in comparison with those who are less well-endowed. However, developing of accurate and reliable intelligent tests need professional expertise. The intelligent tests too have their limitations because there is no general agreement amongst the psychologists about the concept of "intelligence" itself.

c) *Aptitude Tests:* An aptitude test measures the potential ability of a candidate to learn a new job. Psychologists have developed a large number of specialised aptitude tests, such as clerical, mechanical, spatial relationship and manual dexterity, abilities and skills which seek to predict the likelihood that an applicant can learn a certain type of job effectively. Aptitude tests do not measure motivation and, therefore, are supplemented by interest and personality tests.

d) *Personality Tests:* These tests seek to assess an individual's motivation, adjustment to the stresses of everyday life, capacity for inter-personal relations and self-image. These are expressed in terms of the relative significance of such traits within the person as self-confidence, ambition, decisiveness, optimism, patience, fear and distrust. The most popular personality tests are of the pencil-and-paper variety. Pencil-and-paper personality tests proceed on the assumption that the persons responding have sufficient self-insight to be able to describe themselves accurately. In many cases, this assumption is probably unjustified. In management jobs, these tests are valued very much because the most important component of many managerial jobs is the ability to deal effectively with people.

e) *Situational Tests:* The aspects of both performance and personality testing are combined in situational tests to observe how job applicants react to stressful but realistic real-life situations.

This technique is applied in leaderless group situations. Several candidates for managerial positions are presented with a problem that requires group collaboration. It is through such techniques men are able to exercise and gain acceptance of their leadership skills.

Beach (1975) offers the following guidelines regarding the use of tests as employee selection devices:

1. tests should be used only as a supplement to other selection devices, not as a substitute for them;

2. tests are more accurate at predicting failures than success;

3. tests are more useful in picking a select group of people from among a much larger group;

4.   tests should be validated in one's own organisation;

5.   tests can make their greatest contribution in situations where it is difficult to use other selection methods;

6.   high test scores are not necessarily better predictors of satisfactory job performance than slightly lower scores.

11.5   TEST CONSTRUCTION

There are certain fundamental principles of test construction such as (a) validity, (b) reliability, (c) standardisation, and (d) evaluation. Tests should have validity, i.e., they should actually measure what they purport to measure. The validity of a test is determined by relationship between the test results and some criterion of efficiency on the job. The coefficient of correlation has become the most widely employed index of validity. (It is a statistical index expressing the degree of relationship between two variables). By the reliability of a test is meant the consistency with which it serves as a measuring instrument. No test is of value in personnel work unless it has a high degree of reliability. The process of standardisation includes the scaling of test items in terms of difficulty and the establishment of norms.

11.6   INTERVIEW

The interview is the heart of the employment process. The personal interview, along with the application blank, continues to be used by almost every employer. Interviewing is considered to be the most useful selection method. The interview is a conversation with a purpose. Its aim is to provide the candidate with information about the job and the company and also to give the candidate a favourable impression of the company. There are three purposes that may be served: obtaining information, giving information, and motivation. The employment interview should serve each of these three purposes. It should provide an appraisal of personality by obtaining relevant information about the prospective employee's background, his training, work history, education and interests. Interview should give information about the company, the specific job, and the personnel policies. The interview should also help to establish a friendly relationship between the employer and the applicant and motivate the applicant to work for the company, whereas, in practice, we find that interviews lack mostly in one aspect or the other and fail to achieve these purposes. For instance, obtaining information is commonly found in many interviews rather than giving information or motivating the prospective employees. It has been criticised because of the scope for bias.

Interview Content : Knowing what to discuss with an applicant is central to effective interviewing. The applicant's previous life history, education, work experience, and personal qualifications form the basic content of the interview.

1.   *Personal Qualities:* This area includes the personal qualifications required in the position: physical appearance, health, dress and grooming, voice quality, diction, vocabulary poise, alertness, and aggressiveness. Most of these qualities are assessed by the interviewer's observations rather than by the applicant's answers to his questions.

2.   *Academic Achievement:* This area covers the type of schooling, quality of grades, class standing, social activities, relationship with teachers, honours and awards, and athletic accomplishments. Questions in this area can provide a good indication of an applicant's initiative, independence, reliability, intellectual competence, and emotional stability.

3. *Occupational Experience*: This area emphasises not merely an applicant's technical competence but also the level of responsibility and skill he has attained in previous jobs, the position level and salary progression achieved, and reasons for leaving former jobs. Questions in this area should focus at obtaining evidence of good judgment, initiative, drive and energy, and ability to assume responsibility.

4. *Interpersonal Competence:* This area includes the applicant's ability to get along with others. It is not enough to evaluate this area on the basis of the applicant's behaviour during the interview. Specific questions must be asked about his family history, leisure-time activities, hobbies, and community interests to ascertain his degree of social adjustment.

5. *Career Orientation:* This area covers the applicant's career aspirations, his immediate and long-range goals, and his potential for advancement. Answers to questions in this area form the heart of a managerial applicant's qualifications.

The interview is the most indispensable tool, not because of its information potential, which is considerable, but also because of its distinctly human aspects. It is a two-way street. No applicant wants to be judged for a position without an opportunity to discuss it face- to-face in a meeting with a company representative. The interview gives the applicant the feeling that he matters,and that he is being considered by a human being rather than by a computer.

Interview Problems: Some of the typical problems are as follows:

l   Interviewers do not seek applicant information dimensions needed for successful job performance. Often, they do not have a complete job description or an accurate appraisal of the critical job requirements. In addition, the interviewer often does not know the conditions under which the job is performed.

    Interviewers may make snap judgements early in the interview. Consequently, they block out further potentially useful information.

l   Interviewers permit one trait or job-related attribute to influence their evaluation of the remaining qualities of an applicant. This process, called the halo effect, occurs when an interviewer judges an applicant's entire potential for job performance on the basis of a single characteristic, such as how well the applicant dresses or talks.

l   Interviewers have a tendency to be swayed by negative information about the applicants.

l   Information from interviews is not integrated or discussed in a systematic manner. If several interviewers share information on an applicant, they may do so in a haphazard manner. They do not identify job-related information or seek to examine any conflicting information. This casual approach may save time and confrontation, but only in the short run. In the long run, everyone in the organisation will pay for poor hiring decisions.

l   Interviewers' judgements are often affected by the pressure to favour a candidate or fill the position, hence they lower the standards.

l   Interviewer's judgement regarding an applicant is often affected by the list of available applicants. For example, a good person looks better in contrast to a group of average or below average applicants.

l   Some interviewers may place more weight on certain attributes than others, or they may combine attributes differently, as they make their overall decisions. For instance, some interviewers may give emphasis to educational experiences while others give weightage to work experiences.

Do's

ı Sex, race and attitudes similar to those of the interviewer may lead to favourable evaluation. Guidelines to Interviewers : Some do's and dont's of interviewing are as under:

ı Use a quiet comfortable place.

ı Put the interviewee at ease.

ı Be interested in the person as well as the job.

ı Outline clearly the requirements of the job.

ı Explain fully the conditions of employment.

ı Tell about benefits, promotions, opportunities, and so on.

ı Avoid certain types of questions.

ı Encourage the applicant to ask questions.

ı Guide the interview.

ı Listen, let him talk freely.

ı Be natural, use a conventional tone.

ı Know when and how to close the interview.

ı Announce your decision or explain your next step.

Dont's

ı Keep the applicant waiting.

ı Build false hopes.

ı Oversell the job.

ı Interrupt the applicant or the interview.

ı Rush through the interview.

ı Repeat questions already answered on the application form.

ı Develop a "canned" interview approach.

ı Give opinions, just answers.

ı Pry into his personal life needlessly.

ı Prejudge and reflect prejudices.

ı Use a phony excuse for turning him down.

ı Send him away with a bad taste in his mouth.

Interview Techniques: The most commonly used interviewing techniques are briefly discussed below:

i) *Preliminary Interview:* It is also called screening interview. The purpose is to decide through mutual information sharing whether a comprehensive interview is desired. In this interview, besides providing information about the job and the organisation, preliminary information is sought on past work experience, education and motivation. Most of those interviews are generally conducted by personnel people who, sometimes, involve people from the areas where the applicant is finally going to be placed. This is usually done for jobs that are technical in nature.

ii) *Patterned Interview:* In this kind of interview what is to be asked is already structured and hence they are called structured interviews. Patterned interviews are a combination of direct and indirect questioning of the applicant in conjunction with the application blank and is considered to be much more accurate than less standardised interviews.

iii) *Non-directive Interview:* In this interviewing technique, there is a minimum use of direct questions. Questions that can yield "yes" or "no" answers are avoided, and instead broad general questions are asked in the interview. Such questions help in revealing the applicant's real personality. It is felt that the more the applicant is allowed the freedom to talk about himself, the more he will reveal his personality as it really is.

iv) *Stress Interview:* It is a deliberate attempt to create tension and pressure to observe how an applicant performs under stress. Stress is induced by not allowing him to complete his answers or too many questions are asked in quick succession. Some may react in a mature way by keeping their cool and yet try to answer the questions, others might lose their cool and react sharply. The most important advantage of this interview is that it helps to demonstrate important personality or characteristics which would be difficult to observe in tension-free situations. Such interviews are useful in jobs where emotional balance is a key requirement.

v) *Depth Interview:* The purpose of depth interview is to get total information on an applicant in order to develop a comprehensive profile based on indepth understanding of his personality. This kind of interview is usually is very time consuming because a lot of time is spent with the applicant to get detailed information on various core areas of knowledge and skills of the job. Its major advantage, of course, is in getting a complete, detailed understanding of the applicant. Its major drawback is the cost in terms of time. In any case it is not a usual method of selection.

vi) *Group Interview:* It is a recently developed technique. It offers some promise for the appraisal of leadership but it lacks proper validity. A topic of discussion is assigned to the group of applicants and their performance is evaluated by the observers. The observers' main focus is to see whether any one of the applicants assumes leadership, how this is done, and how it is accepted by other members of the group.

vii) *Panel Interview:* Interviewing candidates by a single person may not be effective as he cannot judge the candidates in different areas/skills. Hence most organisations invite a panel of experts, specialised in different disciplines, to interview candidates. The great advantage of this interview is that it helps to coordinate the collective judgment and wisdom of members of the panel. This type of interview is done usually for supervisory and managerial positions.

The interviews for selection have advantages as well as limitations. On the positive side, it is possible to determine from an interview whether or not the candidate is impressive and how he reacts in conversation. The personality traits that can be demonstrated in an interview are responsiveness, alertness in conversation, manners, presence of mind and poise. The limitations of interview are that the interviewer cannot judge from a man's face such personality and character traits as honesty. The employment interview can be made satisfactorily accurate if it is carried out with sufficient care. We still have shortage of skilled interviewers. The interviewer must maintain an objective attitude towards the applicant. In brief, an interviewer needs the following qualifications:

1. He should have emotional maturity in order to avoid the errors of bias as well as to provide a base for developing rapport with the applicants.

2. He should be a good listener.

3. He should be as intelligent as the upper quarter of those he will interview.

4. He should show objectivity rather than emotionality or softness in his appraisal of others.

5. He should have a thorough knowledge of the job for which he is interviewing.

We still have shortage of skilled interviewers. Hence every organisation must surely see that administrators, supervisors and personnel managers handling personnel selection get the necessary training to ensure high quality of performance in interviewing.

The success of an interview depends on careful planning. The plan should cover such elements as setting objectives, choosing the persons to be interviewed, evaluating available information about the interviewees, designing questions and arranging the physical setting.

Gathering information about interviewees and their performance is a most important preparatory step. Then the interviewer prepares the questions likely to reveal the required facts. An important step in interview planning is allocating sufficient time for each interview.

Interview success can be enhanced by a suitable physical setting, which should include privacy, comfort and freedom from interruptions and distractions.

The following checklist may help in getting adequate information:

l   Convert job descriptions into questions that would help to assess whether the applicant is really capable of excellent performance.

l   Choose a physical setting which is comfortable and pleasant enough to generate greater interaction and hence more information.

l   Put the applicant at ease by asking certain general questions about his journey, weather, sports, and so on. Such an attempt would help in developing greater rapport.

l   Start by asking simple questions and slowly move to more difficult questions.

l   Ask open-ended questions instead of those that lead to yes-no answers.

l   Avoid asking leading or loaded questions that might lead to debate instead of dialogue.

l   Listen carefully to what the applicant has to say without interruption. Provide positive feedback to encourage him to talk.

l   Ensure that sufficient time is taken by the applicant while replying to questions.

l   Terminate the interview naturally. An abrupt ending might convey the meaning that more could have been achieved.

l   First make independent ratings on the applicant and then discuss them.

l   According to Goodrich and Sherwood, an HRM consulting firm, companies look most often for the following six-pack skills when interviewing applicants for management jobs.

l   Public Speaking: The ability to convey a message to strangers in a less-than-relaxed situation.

l   Financial Management: Experience in operating a budget successfully, with an eye on costs.

l   People Management: An indication of leadership skills, and the abilities to delegate, lead by example, and motivate employees.

l   Interviewing: The ability to handle an interview effectively, as both interviewer and interviewee.

l   Training: The ability to train and develop subordinates, not only to ensure that the work gets done properly, but also to ensure that competent managers are available for succession.

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l   Writing: The ability to communicate clearly through the written word.

The interviewer can ask open-ended questions or close-ended questions. Open-ended questions, such as "tell me about your experience in financial analysis", or "what do you consider your weaknesses as an employee?" Allow the interviewer to structure the response to the question and present information that he or she feels is important. Close-ended questions, such as "tell me the first thing you would say to a potential customer", or "how many employees have you supervised during the past year?" Allow the interviewer to focus a response more precisely. Some combination of the two approaches is most effective. For example, in interviewing supervisory candidates a manager might ask the following questions:

1. Why do you want to be a supervisor?

2. What are the functions and duties of a supervisor as you see them?

3. What personal characteristics and other qualifications do you have that would help you to become a good supervisor?

4. How do you feel about taking on the added responsibilities and demands that come with a supervisory job?

Avoid all questions which can be answered with a "yes" or "no". Use "what", "why", "when", "where" and "how".

List of Interview Questions

Ask

l   What are your long and short-range objectives?

l   What is it about the position that particularly attracted your interest?

l   What kinds of things have you done that we should be particularly interested in?

l   Here is a problem......How would you go about solving it?

l   What kinds of things you don't like to do?

l   Tell me about a product, organisation and person, and so on you admire and why?

l   What has been your most significant accomplishment? Tell me why it was so significant?

l   Which of your personal strengths do you think should be useful to this company?

l   Do you prefer working alone or in a team?

l   How did you get along with your subordinates and superiors?

l   What would be the ideal job for you? Why?

l   Why do you want to leave your current position?

l   What was your most disappointing experience in your current position? What you might have done to improve the situation?

l   What has been your best job so far? Why?

l   Are you willing to travel? (ask this only if it is a job requirement)

l   Have you ever just taken a thing or a situation and improved? Tell me about it?

l   Have you ever been in a situation where you have taken independent charge of a job and provided a leadership?

Don't Ask

l   Any question about caste or religious affiliations;

l   Questions that might be considered overly personal, such as, "Do you intend to have a family?" "Are you a single parent?"

l   Questions that might pry into someone's socio-economic status, such as, "Do you own a car?" "Do you have a telephone/fax?" You would only need to know about such things if the job specifically requires them.

Activity A

Try to recollect your last selection interview you attended either as a candidate or member of interview panel.

See if you can answer the following questions (Yes or No).

l   did you like the physical setting?

l   did the interview commence on time?

l   was there more than one member in the interview panel?

l   were the questions clear and precise?

l   were the questions relevant to your position?

l   did you get sufficient time to respond to questions?

l   was the environment friendly and relaxing?

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Post-Employment Interview Evaluation

The selection committee should ask the following kinds of questions following the employment interview and prior to the job offer to determine whether the applicant will indeed be the right choice.

Work experience and history

1. Does the applicant have the kind and amount of experience needed?

2. Did the applicant remain on past jobs for a reasonable length of time?

3. Does the applicant's record show normal growth in responsibility and earnings?

4. Does the applicant have sound reasons for leaving prior positions?

5. Does the applicant's work history indicate that he or she gets along well with others?

Professional and educational indicators

1. Has the applicant achieved a desirable level of education?

2. Has the applicant assumed positions of leadership in schools, social, or business activities?

3. Does the applicant's history indicate a willingness and ability to assume responsibility?

4. Does the applicant's background indicate resourcefulness, initiative, and ambition?

5. Does the applicant appear to be an emotionally and socially mature person?

6. Does the applicant express himself or herself effectively?

Interpersonal communication skills

1. Does the applicant have the ability to be self-critical and objective?

2. Does the applicant reveal personal security and confidence in manner and attitude?

3. Does the applicant seem sympathetic to the problems of others?

4. Does the applicant have a sound estimation of his/her worth to the organisation?

5. Does the applicant accept people as they are?

6. Is the applicant tolerant or critical?

7. Does the applicant accept others' point of view?

Personal motivation and attitude

1. Are the applicant's ambitions and goals in line with the organisation's goals?

2. Does the applicant have a realistic view of his or her future?

3. Does the applicant seem to be the kind of person who will grow in effectiveness?

4. Does the applicant have sound reasons for wanting the position?

11.7 PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Certain jobs require unusual stamina, strength or tolerance of unpleasant working conditions. A physical examination reveals whether or not a candidate possesses these qualities. A physical examination serves the following purposes:

1. It indicates whether a candidate is physically able to perform the job. Those who are physically unfit are rejected.

2. It discovers existing disabilities and obtains a record of the employee's health at the time of hiring.

3. It prevents the employment of those who suffer from some type of contagious diseases.

11.8 REFERENCE CHECKS

The use of references is common in most selection procedures, for it involves only a little time and money, and minimum of effort. The procedure places reliance on the evaluation of former employers, friends and professional personnel. Reference checks are made by mail or by telephone, and occasionally in person, or by using a reference. It is vitally important that references should indicate how long and in what capacity the referees had the contact with the applicant. Some employers consider references-checking as an integral part of the total over-all selection and assessment programme.

The questions that are normally asked in any reference check are the following:

1. What was the nature of his/her job?

2. Whether the statement of earnings when he or she left the service is correct or incorrect?

3. What did his/her superiors think of him/her?

4. What did his/her subordinates think of him/her?

5. Did he/she have supervisory responsibility?

6. How hard did he/she work?

7. How did he/she get along with others?

8. What were his/her reasons for leaving?

9. Would you reemploy him/her? If no, why?

10. Did he/she have any domestic/financial or personal trouble which interfered with his/her job?

11. What are his/her strong points?

12. What are his/her weak points?

13. Any other relevant information?

Exhibit 1
Employer Speak

* What we look for when selecting a candidate

We look for a set of competencies, which we believe will determine the future success of that candidate. These include:

1. A passion for winning

2. A clear ability to lead

3. Strong analytical skills

4. The ability to think innovatively

5. The ability to identify and work constructively towards opportunities

6. The ability to work collaboratively with others

7. A drive for continuous self-improvement

8. A genuine interest in the development of others

* Our recruitment procedure

The process is made up of the following simple steps:

1. The candidate fills in a company-provided management application form.

2. The company conducts a simple problem-solving test.

3. If the candidate's application is progressed beyond the first two stages, he/she is interviewed anywhere between one to three times by managers.

4. The decision to hire/not hire is communicated to the candidate post interviews.

Source: ASCENT, The Times of India, May 6 2002.

11.9 PLACEMENT PROCESSES

Placement involves deciding which jobs people are to be assigned after they have been hired. It must also be decided which job best matches the person's talents and abilities. It is the determination of the job to which an accepted candidate is to be assigned and his assignment to that job. The organisation usually decides the final placement after the initial training is over on the basis of the candidate's aptitude and performance during the training/probation period. The new employee is usually

put on probation for a specified period during which he is kept on trial. The period of probation may vary from few weeks or months, and sometimes a year or two. If the performance is not up to the mark, the organisation may extend the probation period, terminate the service of the probationer, or ask him to quit the organisation.

The difficulty with placement is that we tend to look at the individual but not the job. Often, the individual does not work independent of others. Whether the employee works independent of others or is dependent depends on the category of jobs.

Placement is a crucial task which needs a clear-cut match between employees' knowledge, skills, aptitude, value systems, and so on. The problems associated with placement (mismatch between the job and the employee) include employee expectations from the job, job expectation from the employee, technological changes, changes in organisational structure, and social and psychological factors at the workplace.

Placement can be made more effective by such measures as job rotation, job enrichment, teamwork, continuous training and development programmes, and empowerment.

Selection and placement form a crucial manpower function. It may be noted that the trends towards automation and computerisation have increased the significance of those processes. The terms "selection" and "placement" are two separate phases in staffing. Frequently, selection means rejection of candidates for a position and it is considered a negative process accordingly. On the other hand, placement is viewed as a positive process involving filling positions with the most suitable candidates. While formulating selection and placement policy, attempts should be made to take preview of organisational requirements as well as technical and professional dimensions of selection procedures. Such policies should be based on effective blending of professional and industrial relations needs, organisational planning, and employee development goals. Effectiveness of selection programme should be constantly reviewed through intensive research.

11.10   PLACEMENT

After an employee has been hired and oriented, he or she must be placed in his/her right job. Placement is understood as the allocation of people to jobs. Assignment of a new employee to a job apparently seems to be a simple task but the task is not as simple as it looks like. The difficulty with placement is that we tend to look at the individual but not the job. Often, the individual does not work independent of others. Jobs in this context may be classified into three categories: independent, sequential, and pooled.

In certain cases jobs are independent, for example, postal service or field sales. Here, non-overlapping routes or territories are alloted to each worker. In such situations, the activities of one worker have little bearing on the activities of other workers. In sequential jobs, activities of one worker are dependent on the activities of a fellow worker. Assembly lines best exemplify sequential jobs. Where jobs are pooled together, there is high interdependence among activities. The final output is the result of contribution of all the workers. Project teams, temporary task forces, and assembly teams represent pooled jobs. It is the teamwork which matters.

11.11   EXIT INTERVIEWS

The exit interview is the final step in the employment procedure. It is conducted by the human resource department during the terminating employee's last day on the job. This interview often discloses departmental or job-related problems. Its purpose is to:

1.   Try to uncover the real reason behind the quitting/ termination.

2.   Locate the probable reasons that contribute to turnover.

3.   Assure the departing employee of his rights and benefits.

4.   Part as friends.

Exhibit 2

Exit Interview - Aide-memoire

Relationships	Is there any indication that there was a poor relationship between the departed employee and supervisor? If so, why?
	Is there any indication that the departed employee did not get on well with his colleagues? Why?
Finance	Is there any indication of dissatisfaction concerning salary, fringe benefits, and so on?
Conditions	Is there any indication of bad working conditions?
Personal	Is there any indication of domestic or personal reasons for leaving? What are they?
Promotion	Is there any indication that promotion or career development prospects have not been realised?
Training	Is there any indication that the departed employee has not received appropriate training?
Others	Are there other reasons for leaving?

An exit interview, like any other interview, is a "conversation with a purpose". During the exit interview, the employee will be permitted to express himself freely about the reasons for leaving. Any misunderstanding that might have resulted in his leaving will be corrected. In most instances, a form is used by the interviewer to record the substance of the interview. This interview often discloses departmental or job-related problems, and serves as a storehouse of information.

Exhibit 3

Some Do's and Don'ts in Exit Interview

Do's	*Don'ts*
∟ Listen 80% of the time instead of talking.	∟ Defend your company against criticism or attacks.
∟ Rely heavily on non-directive techniques like eye-contact.	∟ Justify actions which may have annoyed the employee.
∟ Listen for sensitive topics and feelings to be probed.	∟ Attack the departee's views or choice of new company or job.
∟ Cover all topics on the checklist while being flexible.	∟ Convince the employee to change his mind about leaving the job.
∟ Keep the interview constructive instead of eliciting woes.	∟ Counsel the interviewee about career options or his future.

Activity B

Is there exit interview in your organisation? If yes, who conducts the interview and what feedback is obtained?

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11.12   RETENTION

Employee retention programme is a significant challenge for most companies today. For most employers it is the most compelling problem they face. A key employee retention programme will help the employer to retain key employees and ensure their commitment to the organisation.

An organisation must have a comprehensive approach to attract and retain good employees so that quality customer service can be given. There cannot be loyal customers without loyal employees. There are six keys to comprehensive employee retention plan.

1.   Have a planned approach.

2.   Retain people as individuals, not groups.

3.   Value people through a strong organisational vision.

4.   Invest in employees.

5.   Boost retention with innovative compensation and training programmes.

6.   Approach retention as a long-term and short-term strategy.

There are nine tips to help keep good employees:

1.   Beware of anything that can become an entitlement, because it can become expensive and you may not need it.

2.   Develop processes by which people can increase their employability in the areas of competencies, skills and intellectual growth.

3.   Use special projects as incentives or rewards.

4.   Have a positive corporate environment to foster employee development.

5.   Realise that retention of valued people is a long-term process, not a knee-jerk reaction.

6.   Create a consistent corporate culture in which managers communicate corporate vision and values uniformly to employees.

7.   Build in rewards for supervisors and managers who keep good employees.

8.   Use exit interviews to obtain important data that will provide information about your organisation.

9.   Provide anonymous suggestion programmes to make workers understand the importance of their ideas.

11.13   SUMMARY

The acquisition of new employees is an important and complex task. To find and employ the best individuals available is the goal of every human resource manager. The purpose of the selection process is to choose individuals who are most likely to perform successfully in a job from those available to do the job. A series of steps is normally followed in the selection process. These include the completion and screening of the application form, employee testing, diagnostic interview, reference checking, physical and medical examination, and making the decision on final selection. Each step in the sequence should contribute to extracting new information data. The application blank can elicit more factual information. A reference check can provide the experience of others. Psychological tests can measure such qualities as intelligence and aptitude. Any tests used should relate directly to the jobs for which the individuals have applied. If information cannot be obtained in any other way, it can be done so through the interview.

11.14   SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1.   Outline the steps in the personnel selection process.

2.   What are the common interview problems? How can they be overcome?

3.   Explain in some detail how you would go about analysing and evaluating the effectiveness of an employee selection programme.

4.   "Tests often do not reflect an individual's true ability." What are your views on this statement?

11.15   CASE 1

The Bharat Paint Company recruits sales people to sell its products to retail stores. The company looks for employees who have the energy, ability to work hard, and ability to speak enthusiastically and intelligently about the company's products. In addition to skill, the company expects flexibility, accuracy, and patience from its sales employees.

Nirmala has applied for a sales job. The interviewer who is going to interview her has noted the following entries on her application blank:

Nirmala is 26 years old.

She has completed one year of college education.

She has held two jobs since leaving school - clerk in a school (two years), and senior assistant in a financial organisation.

There is a gap of one year in between. Nirmala indicates on her application that she was sick during that period and was undergoing medical treatment.

Discussion Questions

1.   If you were the interviewer, what objectives would you set for your interview with Nirmala?

2.   How would you phrase your questions?

11.16   CASE 2

As a result of rapid growth in sales, the Simpson company had to double the size of the central secretarial pool. Many of the current secretarial staff, aged about 40 to 50, had been with the company since its inception. None had more than a high school education. Subsequently, 10 new secretaries were recruited with advanced data processing skills. They had college education and all were in their 20s. Unexpectedly, the performance level of the pool fell off drastically even though doubled in size. The manager interviewed a few of the old staff members and they told him that the new secretaries just did not fit in. They were uncooperative, would not listen, and would not take messages. When their mistakes were corrected, they got offended. In interviewing, a few of the new secretaries resented that the older secretaries refused to accept new and more innovative ideas. They complained their inability to use new knowledge and skills and the older secretaries would not socialise with them.

Discussion Questions

1.   What are the reasons for the declining productivity of the group?

2.   What are your recommendations for improving the situation?

11.17   FURTHER READINGS

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