HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING

I. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this course is to provide an understanding of the essential elements of human resource planning (HRP) process in organizations. Students acquire knowledge in analyzing, assessing and programming for human resource requirements of organizational business plans and strategies. Quantitative as well as qualitative concepts, approaches and techniques are emphasized.

II. COURSE OUTLINE

Topic 1. Nature and Scope of HRP:
- Concept & Meaning of HRP
- Linkages with Business Planning & Strategies
- Benefits of HRP
- Elements & Process of HRP

Reading: Belcourt & McBey, Ch. 1 & 2

Topic 2. Preparing for HR
- Job Analysis
- Human Resource Management/Information System
- Environmental Scanning

Reading: Belcourt & McBey, Ch. 3, 4 & 5

Topic 3. Assessing & Forecasting HR Requirements:
- Benefits of HR Forecasting
- Planning Horizon
- Qualitative and Quantitative Forecasting Methods
- Demand & Supply Side Forecasting
- Forecasting Net HR Requirements

Human Resource Planning 2009-2010
Reading: Belcourt & McBey, Ch. 6, 7, & 8

Topic 4. Succession Management:
- Importance of Succession Management
- Evolution of Succession Management
- Succession Management Process
- Employee Competencies, Training & Development
- Career Planning

Reading: Belcourt & McBey, Ch. 9

Topic 5. Selected Strategic Options and Their HRP Implications:
- Organizational Downsizing & Restructuring
- Globalization of Operations
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Outsourcing

Reading: Belcourt & McBey, Ch. 10, 11, 12, & 13

Topic 6. HR Program Evaluation:
- Importance of Evaluation
- Criteria & Techniques of Evaluation
- Cost-Benefit Assessments
- Audits, Utility Analysis & Impact Studies
- Client Satisfaction

Reading: Belcourt & McBey, Ch. 14

III. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Recommended Text


B. Suggested Journals

Human Resources Planning – Sample Questions

Part A: Multiple Choice Questions

1. The business strategy type (according to Porter’s model) used when a company provides a product or service at a lower price than the competition and appeals to a broad range of customers is known as the:
   a) broad differentiation strategy
   b) best service oriented strategy
   c) focused or market niche strategy
   d) low-cost provider strategy
   e) none of the above

2. The business and HR planning approach where employees are seen as a means to an end and where personnel needs are based on corporate needs, is described as:
   a) corporate strategy driving or leading HR strategy
   b) HR competencies leading to business strategy
   c) HR strategy contributing to business-level strategy and vice versa
   d) corporate strategy and business strategy are completely separate
   e) none of the above

3. An expert forecasting technique used in environmental scanning where individual ideas, round robin listing and ranking occurs is known as:
   a) Delphi Technique
   b) Impact Analysis
   c) Trend Analysis
   d) Nominal Group Technique
   e) Priority Ranking Method

4. Which is NOT one of the key elements of the 5C Model of HRM Impact?
   a) cost
   b) contribution
   c) critical incident
   d) compliance
   e) client satisfaction

5. An error of omission when a job description or specification fails to incorporate important aspects of the job required for success is called:
   a) contamination
   b) deficiency
   c) performance gap
   d) generalization
   e) omission
6. If companies wanted to develop candidate lists for future management positions by searching for current staff with appropriate qualifications, it would be necessary to have:
   a) a relational database
   b) a basic HRMS
   c) employee files
   d) a skills inventory
   e) a and d

7. Regression analysis may be used in HR forecasting. Another term for independent variable in such analysis is:
   a) target variable
   b) correlation
   c) causal variable
   d) linear relationship
   e) none of the above

8. The likelihood that an individual in a specific job will exhibit one of the five movement behaviours is known as:
   a) transitional probabilities
   b) chain effect
   c) Markov cell
   d) multiplier effect
   e) all of the above

9. In any downsizing initiative it is important to:
   a) attend to rumours
   b) provide survivors with available information on the downsizing
   c) make expectations clear
   d) allow time for grieving
   e) all of the above

10. Which of the following is NOT a reason why an organization may outsource?
    a) to improve employee morale
    b) to improve service levels
    c) to access specialized expertise
    d) to save money
    e) to control organizational politics

[Answers: 1d, 2a, 3d, 4c, 5b, 6e, 7c, 8a, 9e, 10a.]
Part B: Essay Questions

Question 1: Identify three ways in which HR Process can be linked business strategy.

Suggested Answer:

a) Start with business strategies and then create HR strategy.
   • Corporate strategy drives HR strategy—personnel needs are derived from corporate plans.
   • Resources are made to “fit” the corporate strategy. HR follows the corporate strategy.
   • Employees are considered a means to an end, not part of the strategy formulation process.
   • This is a traditional approach and tends to be used more by larger organizations.
   
   b) Start with HR competencies and then craft corporate strategies based on these competencies.
   • This view argues that organizations cannot implement a strategy if it does not have the necessary human resources.
   • This approach taps into employee capabilities to develop new products/services and/or enter new markets.
   • Small size firms tend to favour this approach. Workforce diversity management also builds on this approach.
   
   c) Do a combination of both in a form of reciprocal relationship.
   • HR strategy contributes to business-level strategy and vice versa.
   • Senior HR executives are asked to provide input into strategic plans based on HR strengths and weaknesses.
   • In this concurrent/reciprocal approach, HR becomes a full partner in the strategy formulation process.

Question 2: What is succession management? Discuss its main benefits to the organization.

Suggested Answer:

Succession management refers to the process of identifying employees who have the potential to assume key positions in the organization and preparing them for these positions. The identification of talent is always paired with ongoing programs to develop that talent. Some of the benefits of succession management include:
• It enables the organization to respond appropriately and stay on track when inevitable changes occur.
• It provides for continuity and future direction in the midst of significant change.
• Employees are positively motivated when succession planning takes into account their performance potential and career aspirations.
• It supports new organizational structures and flexibility by explicitly providing back-ups for various positions, thereby reducing organizational dependency on one employee.
• It saves time and money by having plans in place to enable smooth transition of employees.