

The Reluctant Receptionist

Udumbara Product Company has recently hired a Personnel Assistant, Nimali Pushpa. Pushpa just received a University degree in Business Administration with second class (lower) honours. Hamid, the Personnel Manager, was extremely pleased to find someone who had some familiarity with basic management concepts and theory of personnel management and industrial relations since he was the entire Personnel Department, except for a clerk-typist.

During the interview Hamid emphasized that he planned to have Pushpa to work as his assistant and that she would do some interviewing and be responsible for maintaining employee records. Because the company has had about 350 employees, Hamid had been too busy to prepare anything a job description except for some scrawled notes on the back of an envelope. Everything went fine for the first week for Pushpa. On Monday of the second week, Hamid called Pushpa into his office room and explained that there was another minor duty that he had not mentioned to her. Hamid said, "In order to get approval to hire you from CEO, I had to agree that whoever was hired would be the relief receptionist from 11.30a.m to 12.30p.m every day. The reception board is usually quite busy and we wanted to be sure someone who is capable would be the backup." Pushpa was not happy about this assignment being sprung on her, but she agreed to try it for a while.

Within two weeks she was beginning to dread having to work the reception board an hour every day. Also, she discovered that she was expected to be the relief if the receptionist was sick or unable to work. On Wednesday and Thursday of the third week the regular receptionist was sick and Pushpa worked for her. On that Friday, Pushpa told Hamid she was quitting in two weeks. When asked why, Pushpa replied, "You misrepresented the job to me. You never said anything about my receptionist duties. If you had, I probably would not have taken the job."

Questions:

1. What is/are the problem/s being faced by the Company?
2. Explain why the company is facing the problem/s.
3. How do you solve the problem/s?

Source: Adapted from Mathis and Jackson, 1979

SLT to introduce a New HR-Management Culture

Sri Lanka Telecom (SLT) is to introduce a new Human Resource Development and Management culture to make the 7,000-strong work force more efficient and to harness maximum productivity from them. SLT's Chief Officer HR and Legal, I.C.L. Bertus in an interview with The Sunday Times FT said that the restructuring of the organization was made with the aim of transforming the SLT to a modern and profit making telecom giant in the island successfully facing the challenges of other competitors.

He added that the new structure comprising of 11 Chief Officers and 57 heads of divisions equivalent to General Managers has been approved to streamline the functions of SLT and competent, efficient and qualified persons have been appointed with the approval of the Board of Directors.

He said that the new organisation structure was devised in December last year following the models of world telecom organizations. It will help to enhance the work of the SLT and fast track the services in accordance with the company's plan to shift its focus from voice service to modern value added services like Internet, Broadband, CDMA and WIFI wireless technology used in home networks, mobile phones, video games and more.

Bertus said that employees should understand the needs of the institution and they need to have the necessary technical training and support in order to reach the next phase technological development planned by the SLT. He noted that work-related skills of all employees should be improved and updated to meet new developments in the telecommunication field. Therefore, he said, a new technology and e-learning initiative has been launched for SLT employees to understand the soft and hard skills that they need to develop in order to climb up the career ladder. Bertus added that promotions of officers will be made on merit, qualifications and experience in a transparent manner. He pointed out that action will be taken to ensure fairness in the promotions process as well as to provide senior management of SLT with wide information about performance of the business at the individual level. A new policy will be introduced to select officers for foreign training as a priority and that both the employee and the company will be benefited as each individual develops work-related skills.

Referring to outsourcing of core services at SLT like drivers, and technical support services, he said that it is purely a business decision and it will not affect the jobs of SLT employees who are technical personnel and their work cannot be outsourced. Over 4,000 technical staff is currently engaged in service at SLT and they are a valuable asset, he said. Bertus revealed that the institution has taken a decision to amicably settle at least 29 human right cases filed against the SLT by its employees as the management is ready to look into this matter in a humanitarian angle.

Questions:

1. What are HRM functions being referred in this article?
2. Why is it not possible to do outsourcing technical personnel?
3. Why are there human right cases filed against the SLT by its employees?
4. What viewpoints of HRM is it possible to notice?

Source: This is an article written by Mr. Bandula Sirimanna published on Financial Times on Sunday, March 30, 2008.

Hard Work

Mr. X heard the alarm ringing but did not move. The thought of facing another day at work was too much. "May be I will call and say that I am sick." He thought, but then he thought otherwise. "I stayed away 2 days last week, and if I am going to be absent anymore I may run the risk of losing my job." Just then his wife walked in and said "Come on, X it's a nice day. Get up and have the breakfast with the children before you leave for work. I hate to see you missing breakfast everyday."

X got annoyed. "What difference does breakfast make? I just hate to go to work. The work is so boring now, you just go in, sit down and then leave at the end of the day. The repetitive work is the thing I cannot stand most."

"Oh come on honey, things can't be that bad. Look at the positive side- the pay is good, and you are quite senior now after 12 years of service in a large company." Said X's wife.

"The work is still hard, but it's the boredom and repetition that annoy me." Responded X, "I feel like I am wasting my time at this stage of my life. I think I will look for another job."

"Well" his wife said, "I will not tell you what to do; that is your decision, but don't forget that the children are getting older now, and we will have to pay extra school fees next month when the next term commences. Why don't you think about another job again next year?"

X thought, "She is probably right. We do need the money and it is a bad time to be short. I guess I will have to think about another job little later."

You are required to identify the problems and suggest suitable solutions to those problems.

Source: Adapted from Professional Part 111 Examination-October 1993, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka
