

Qualification: CIPD Diploma in Applied Human Resources

Module Name: Resourcing and Talent Planning - Understanding

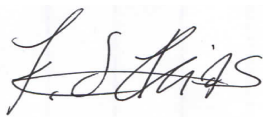
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By signing below, I confirm that the work/evidence presented is my own, unaided work. I understand the regulations pertaining to candidate malpractice and the action that may be taken as a result.

Signed: 

Date: 25 May 2021

1. Talk to your line manager or another relevant person to thoroughly understand how your organisation's approach to succession planning has changed. If possible, be a part of discussions on succession planning.

Discussion with Line Manager, Laura Jones, HR Manager, 29 March 2021.

I met with my line manager on the 29th of March 2021 to discuss E Cigarette Direct's (ECD) approach to succession planning.

We discussed that prior to the Coronavirus pandemic ECD's main focus was the retail arm of the business. Store staff had a clear progression path after the retail restructure in 2018. We had previously developed a retail competency framework and staff have training programmes in place in order to help them develop in their current role but also to prepare them to progress their career. The CIPD (2020a) outlines that competency frameworks can be used for succession planning as they can evaluate an individual's past performance to determine suitability for a more senior role.

As a result of the pandemic the business naturally shifted to online retail when our stores were forced to close, as they were deemed as non essential retail. With certain stores already struggling to make a profit and alongside negative retail projections our directors made the difficult decision to close a number of our retail stores. Although some staff were able to be re-deployed we did have to make a number of redundancies. Redundancy is a form of involuntary turnover which occurs when an employer reduces the number of its employees for economic reasons, (Taylor & Woodhams, 2016) and when the employer ceases or intends to cease business or in a location of business where employees work which was the case at ECD.

With the dramatic shift in April 2020 from retail to web we had to change our recruitment strategy to increase headcount in the affected departments. We were able to source some local retail staff to work in our warehouse as opposed to putting them on the job retention 'furlough' scheme.

Our 'Head Office' roles have never had any clear succession planning strategy however we have started to identify key competencies for our managers/leaders. We tend to advertise externally if we have a vacancy and use specific agencies for specialist roles. We are aware that our head office function needs further consideration. At the moment we are reluctant to further develop any succession strategies due the uncertainty of the economy and our industry. However we are addressing and attempting to fill any gaps. With the current focus being on our web, customer service and warehouse teams we have started to develop Standard operating procedures (SoP's) for the customer service team in order to cross train staff but to bring new starters up to the required standard quicker. Having this functional and numerical flexibility increases team-working, flattens hierarchies and helps us to deploy people when and where they are most needed (Taylor, 2019).

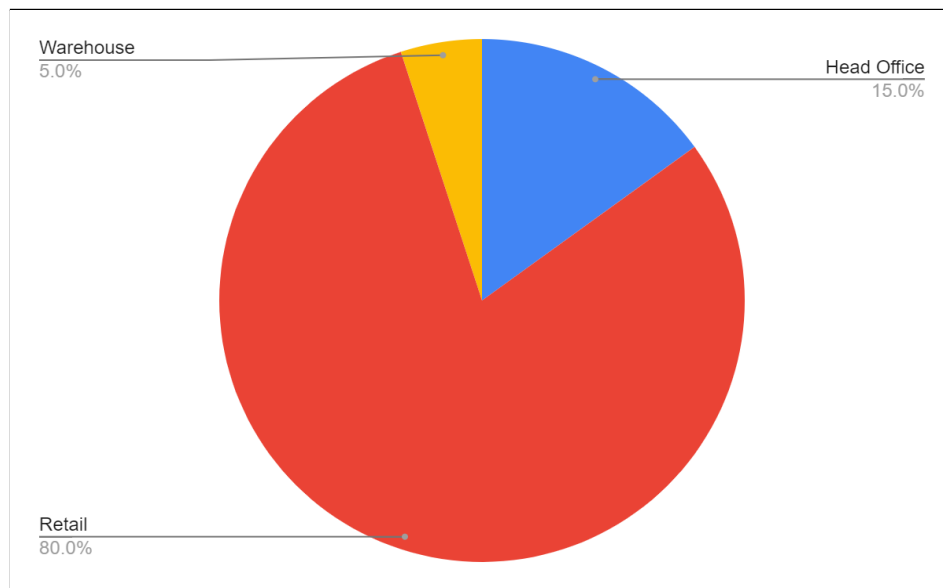
We have identified that we have a skills gap within our customer service team. This department has grown organically since its inception in 2008 and with its development it has become apparent that we require someone with the skills, knowledge and experience to lead the team. As we do not currently have this available in house we intend to recruit externally. We are also working on further developing our learning & development programme via our dedicated platform, Google Classroom. We are keen to embed a learning culture where our employees commit learning through positive discretionary behaviour (Armstrong and Taylor, 2020). General and tailored training will support all employees with their personal and career development.

2. Review the statistics for recent leavers within your organisation to see if there are any trends such as reasons for leaving, business areas, demographic of leavers. Use this information to suggest retention initiatives relevant to your organisation.

On reviewing the data of employees who have left ECD over the past 12 months there were some common but not surprising trends. The most common reason for leaving over the past year has been redundancy. This is no surprise as due to the Coronavirus pandemic adversely affecting the retail sector our senior directors made the difficult decision to close a number of our retail stores in order to reduce costs in already underperforming stores meaning that we had to make a number of redundancies. Redundancy is involuntary turnover which usually occurs when an employer reduces the number of its employees for economic reasons (Taylor & Woodhams, 2016). During this period 80% of leavers were from our retail sector:

Chart 1

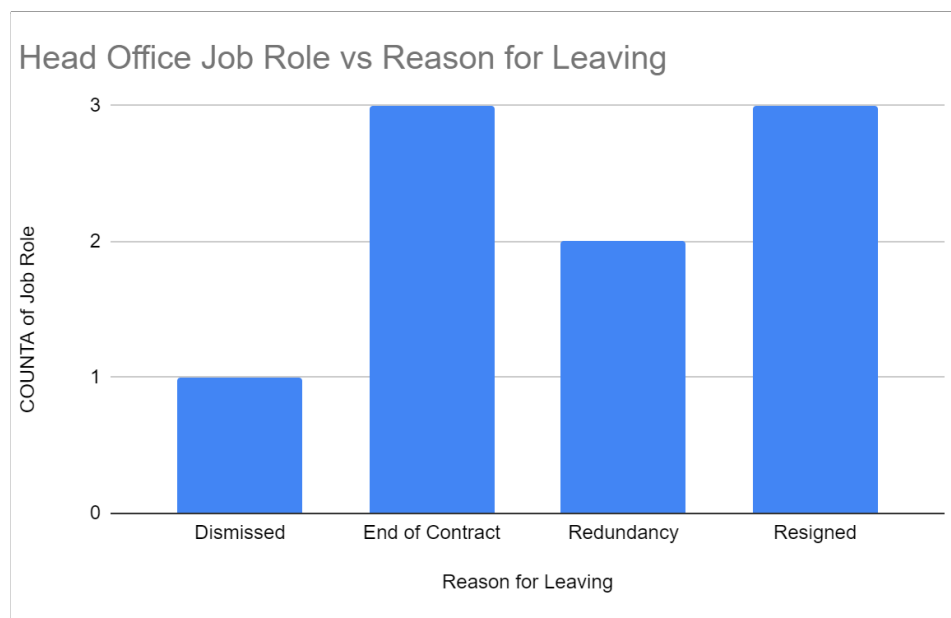
Percentage of leavers by department over the last 12 months



Moving away from the obvious turnover due to redundancies I examined the turnover rate in our Head Office Function over the past 12 months which was 20%. Broken down vs reason for leaving, the two main reasons were resignation and end of contract:

Chart 2

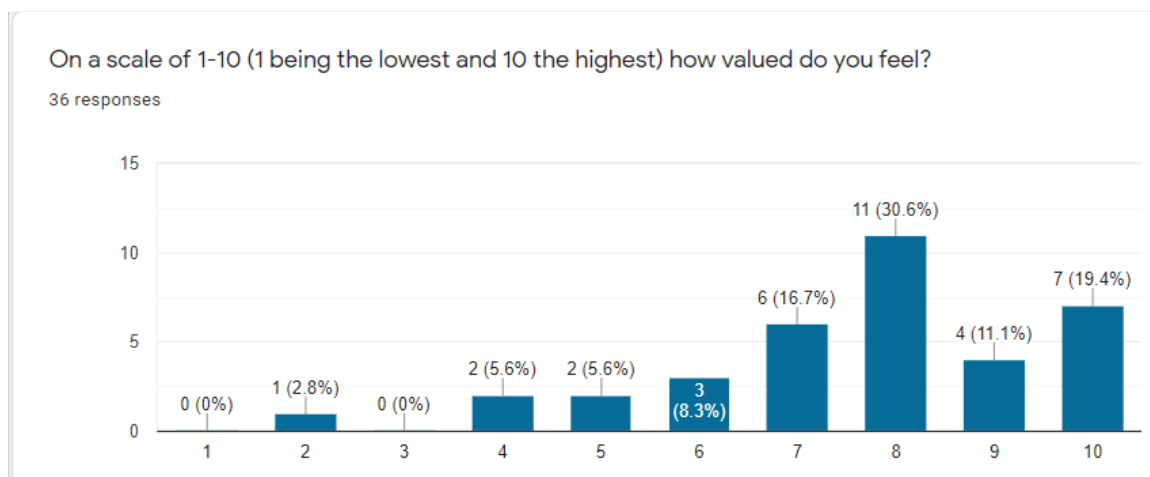
Head Office Job Role vs Reason for Leaving



We offered 3 fixed term contracts, one of these was for maternity cover for 1 year and the other 2 were to complete a short term project (3 weeks) where we hired 2 students who were available over the summer to sort out returned stock which was generated by the store closures. Staff turnover has historically been very low in our head office function. Since 2008 only 26.18% have been from our head office function. We would like to think that our low employee turnover in this area of the organisation is down to our company values, culture and teamwork. Staff attitude surveys can be used to gauge morale and help to highlight areas of concern (Taylor, 2019) Our last survey found that our head office employees overall feel valued:

Chart 3

Head Office Staff Satisfaction Survey- How valued do you feel?



I think that this is a big factor in employee satisfaction which helps us retain staff. Surveying staff in this way can also help to identify potential retention issues before they lead to people leaving in order to minimise subsequent negative outcomes of turnover (CIPD, 2021). We also regularly send out anonymous leaver questionnaires and analyse responses in order to highlight problem areas and tackle them where appropriate.

3. Discuss your development needs with your line manager in relation to resourcing and talent planning, using the CIPD Profession Map as a basis for your discussion. Consider whether or not your skills in this area require improvement.

The new CIPD Profession Map (2020b) has 6 core areas of knowledge, one of which is People Practice. As people professionals, we need to have core knowledge of a range of people practices across the employee lifecycle, one of these areas being workforce planning (CIPD, 2020c). Within the profession maps 9 areas of specialist knowledge lies Talent Management and Resourcing.

The CIPD (2020d) states the importance of being able to select the most effective methods to develop and retain talent through organisational interventions, such as development programmes. Such interventions need to be carefully considered in order to shape bespoke programmes to meet individual needs (CIPD, 2020d). Any learning design and delivery requires a blend of learning approaches, including face-to-face, digital, social collaborative. Resourcing involves “the attraction and selection of candidates into the right role at the right time and cost.” (CIPD, 2020e). In order to effectively resource candidates we need to be able to understand the labour market and our organisations position in the market. Knowledge and understanding of the candidate experience, effective assessment and selection approaches and making effective recruitment decisions are vital (CIPD, 2020f).

Based on the standards presented on the CIPD profession Map I feel that I am currently operating between Associate and Chartered member level. I met with my Line Manager, Laura Jones on the 09 April 2021 to further discuss my current Resourcing and talent planning CIPD module. Laura agreed that I am mainly working at Associate level as I:

- Understand different approaches to defining, developing and retaining talent on an individual and group level.
- Understand Local and regional approaches to talent.
- Know how to gather people data to inform workforce planning approaches.
- Understand different approaches to candidate pipelines, and how to assess the value of different sourcing channels.
- Know how to design and select assessment approaches for all levels in the organisation in a fair and objective manner.

Due to my studies, I now have a good understanding of resourcing and talent planning, however, the CIPD Map also outlines that being able to carry out succession and contingency planning approaches (2020d) is a key aspect at associate level. As ECD currently has only basic and a traditional approach to this I feel this needs further development. I highlighted that this will be something I will develop as part of my Contributing to resourcing and talent planning module.

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