

CIPD Diploma in Applied Human Resources

Understanding Resourcing and Talent Management

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Signed: *SL Cosker*

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Task 1

Question:

An employee is emigrating and asks you if the labour market trends of their destination country are the same as in the UK. Describe the key contemporary trends in both the UK labour market and in the labour market of any other country (of your choice).

Answer:

Labour market trends across the world have changed dramatically over the last year because of the ongoing global pandemic of coronavirus. This, along with changes as result of Brexit have rocked the UK, but the most recent figures show small but generally positive changes to suggest that things have taken a turn for the better. When comparing the UK And Australia both show similarities to this positive change, as of Feb 2021, employment rates are slowly increasing and unemployed rates decreasing, although in neither country have the rates reached where they were as of March 2020 (Australian Government, 2021), (ONS,2021).

Employees in both the UK and Australia have been supported by some sort of government support such as the furlough scheme (Oliver,2020), in the UK employers were given 80% of their employees pay from the government to support them and enable organisations to keep staff on the payroll, instead of making redundancies. The Australian government provided similar support which saw the provision of a “job keeper payment” provided every fortnight to those effected (Oliver,2020).

In February, the estimated UK unemployment rate was 5.1% (ONS.gov.uk) in comparison to the unemployment rate in Australia which was 5.8% (Australian Government, 2021). As of February 2021, the UK unemployment rate for men was 5.2% (ONS,2021), which was only slightly lower in Australia at 5.1% (Australian Government, 2021). The UK unemployment rate for women was 4.7% (ONS,2021) but the rate was higher in Australia at 5.5% (Australian Government, 2021).

Of the 19 industries which both the Office for National Statistics and the Australian government report on, a clear difference is highlighted , suggesting that Australia is currently on the forefront of recovery from the pandemic. As if Feb 2021, Australia was coming out of its last lockdown, which saw a particular state lockdown for 5 days, whilst the rest of the country was not affected (Guardian.com,2021) the UK as of Feb 2021, was in a nationwide lockdown (Telegraph,2021) which may be why the recovery of Australia is ahead of the UK.

In Australia, Employment increased in 11 industries (Australian Government, 2021), in comparison to the UK who only saw an employment increase in 3 industries (ONS,2021).

As it stands of the most effected vocations within both countries is hospitality, in general the hospitality industry has been closed to the bare minimum, over the past 12 months. In the vacancies in hospitality are currently down 80% from Feb 2020 (ONS,2021).

In Australia, the hospitality industry had seen a decrease by 48% overall, with the largest decrease in occupation as a Chef, with a decrease of 21.7%, and waiters with a decrease of 13.3%, although as of Feb 2021 both occupations have seen an increase (nationalskillscommission.gov.au,2021).

The greatest increase in age group currently unemployed has also been found in the under 25 age brackets. In January 2021, in the UK, 58.5% of those unemployed were aged under 25 years (ONS.gov.uk). The most lower entry level roles can be found within hospitality as they often so not require previous experience or qualifications, so the correlation between the two is understandable. Although, the Australian government (2021) states that as of Feb 2021 *“Encouragingly, employment for youth, who were initially affected the most, is rebounding quite strongly”*. Which is slightly different to the message reviled by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) (2021) of the UK statistics of under 25’s unemployed previously mentioned. Again, in contrast the ONS (2021) states that at present *“recruitment intentions are on the rise while redundancy intentions have dropped sharply”*.

In conclusion, as it stands, even though the UK has a lower unemployment rate (5.1%),(ONS.gov.uk), than Australia (5.8%), this is only slight, and even though Australia is showing overall improvement job availability in more sectors (Australian Government, 2021) than that of the UK (ONS.gov.uk), relatively their current labour market positions are very similar.

Task 2

Question:

A new HR assistant asks you to explain the following aspects of workforce planning:

- *key principles of workforce planning*
- *tools used in workforce planning*
- *how to develop a basic people plan, including succession planning.*

Answer:

Workforce planning can vary dependent on the organisation, its size and needs, it is about having *“the right people, with the right skills, in the right roles, at the right time and the right cost”* (CIPD,2021).

Poor workforce planning can have a detrimental effect on an organisations reputation and have serious financial implications, for example in 2017, the well-known airline Ryanair had to cancel over 2000 flights due to poor workforce planning – this was due to the authorisation of leave granted to too many pilots at the same time and no back up pilots available (Calder,2017).

To develop a suitable workforce plan effective tools such as a PESTLE analysis can be used as a basis to understand key factors that affect an organisation and then enable informed decisions going forward. PESTLE is an acronym for six key factors, political, economic, sociological, technological, legal, and environmental, each element is looked at and issues identified, which may effect the organisation (CIPD,2020).

An analysis of the internal working of the business is needed which will then provide information such as the critical roles going forward and identify things such as a possible aging workforce. This is something that many organisations are facing due to the retiring of the age group of those born between 1946-1964, referred to as the “baby boomers” (CIPD,2018) and not enough persons available to fill the gap left by these.

When completed the internal analysis, focus should be on organisation strategy, aims, goals and future plans, whilst considering four stages as highlighted by Wilkinson & Taylor (2016):

- Establishing future skills demand
- Considering skills the organisation will have in the future
- Highlighting any portential gap between skills and demand
- Devise plans to bridge any gaps identied.

A collaborative approach should be taken when devising a suitable people / workforce pan going forward. Senior management, along with line managers and the finance department should be consulted with. Senior management can not only provide insight into longer term goals and potential new developments, but line managers also have a ground level operational insight on what works or not and times of year they may find busier than others. Finance can clarify budgets going forward which will influence future recruitment and potential promotions from within (Taylor,2014).

Succession planning is a key part of an organisations overall people plan, which involves identifying current talent within the workforce and devising a suitable plan to promote these staff into other roles. This not only helps to encourage and support current staff, promoting commitment to the organisation but can be key to hard to fill roles (Wilkinson & Taylor,2016). Establishing a succession plan can ensure that there is suitable cover at short notice from within the organisation in case there is a short notice need. This puts the organisation at less risk ensuring the organisation can continue to run as smoothly as possible in all circumstance, this is identified as particularly in important in senior management and board level as current employees will be more aware of key organisational culture. Employees for succession planning can be identified through appraisal systems, one-to-ones, and career aspiration discussions (Taylor,2014).

Task 3

Question:

Your Director asks for your thoughts on how the organisation can attract the talented people it requires and ensure that these people stay with the organisation. Explain different approaches an organisation can take to both attracting and retaining talent, and the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

Answer:

Attracting and retaining talented employees can be said to be determined by an organisations *"Employee Value Proposition (EVP)"*, which can be explained as what an employee gives (time, experience, knowledge) to the organisation and what they get in return, (not only in monetary value but in employee rewards such as experience of working in the organisation and the value and importance of the work), (Keller & Meaney,2017).

When looking at attracting and retaining talent an organisation will not only need to consider what it currently offers, what it does not and what it can offer (this can also be considered as "employer branding") (Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016) but also to consider what its competitors offer - *"If your EVP is truly stronger than the competition's, you will attract and retain the best talent"* (Keller & Meaney,2017). After this is considered an organisation can then set out to make itself competitive. This is a useful tool, but unfortunately this may also highlight that an organisation is unable to compete for various reasons, such as financial constraints.

Higgs (2004) highlights that the way an organisation presents itself in the labour market can be split into four different approaches. These include being an employer of :

- Cash - generally pays well but does not treat employees well.
- Values - cannot pay well but awards employees with job security and rewarding work.
- Churn - both pays low and treats employees poorly.
- Choice - this is the best option, both, paying competitively and treating employees well.

(Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016)

To give an organisation the best chance at attracting and retaining talent it should aim to be an *"employer of choice"* (www.coachmentoring.co.uk,2020).

Attracting and Employing the best candidate for the role will provide the best start to retaining talent. For example, the company Xerox replaced its recruitment process to an online test and in turn their attrition rates dropped by 20% (Keller & Meaney,2017), as they hired the right persons for their roles in the beginning. Although this will depend on an organisation recruitment strategy attracting the right persons and the recruiter's ability to make the best choice of candidate, unfortunately this can sometimes end up with the wrong candidate being hired and time needed to be spent in resolving this issue.

To attract talent an organisation should be competitive, drawing attention in positive ways, often achieved through benchmarking which will provide guidelines of what certain jobs should be paid, and how much similar roles are paid across the UK to make a valid comparison. Also providing benefits such as a competitive pension, comparative or better annual leave entitlement, the use of employee assistance programmes, reward / discount schemes, positive work life balance, flexible working (including term time, part time, set hours /days) and options to work from home if required can all add to a benefits package, attracting talent. Some organisations further their advantage in this area, for example, google takes a holistic approach and goes beyond 'quirky' office design with all offices offering 3 free meals onsite a day, free access to onsite gyms, onsite health care professionals and even the option to bring pets to work, along with many financial benefits such as health care and a death in service scheme payment to staff who lose their partners, and many more incentives (www.reed.co.uk). An organisation should ensure to provide clear, and realistic information about the job and the company during recruitment, not promote false promises this will only cause frustration going forward (Allen,2008).

All these things can help, but it should be highlighted that what may attract one person, may not attract another, and no matter what provision is provided an organisation will also lose talent (whether it be due to the organisation or the persons personal situation). Financial budgets will determine what and if any of these benefits can be provided for employees, along with if the senior management teams identify the benefits of providing these services and a willing to take on board the costs to potentially retain but not guarantee keeping talent in the future (Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016).

From the point of starting the new role, employees should be provided with access to key training and development systems to promote and encourage development and skills, along with systems in place for internal promotion of current staff, which will encourage staff retention. It has been highlighted that providing a mentoring system at work can aid staff retention by developing staff learning and then often leading to internal promotion (www.coachmentoring.co.uk,2020) , its success will be on the skill and time mand effort provided by the mentor (which is sometimes scarce in the reality of juggling job demands (Groves,2007).

Line managers play a pivotal role in their team's experience at work, *"75% of workers who voluntarily left their jobs did so because of their bosses not he position itself... people leave managers not companies ... in the end turnover is mostly a manager issue"* (Hyacinth,2017). Considering previous staffs leaving reasons may give substantial analytics as to what may be causing staff to leave, this can be invaluable to addressing issues identified. Although there will always be potential for potentially disgruntled staff within this and maybe issues addressed not reality at all.

To encourage staff to be committed to the organisation Senior Management need to ensure that they build trust and confidence throughout the organisation in its culture. Holbeche (2005) reiterates *"benefits of being seen as a values-based organisation, which commits to principles of fairness, diversity environmental sustainability are more generally making peoples experience of work become more meaningful"*.

To encourage staff retention an appraisal system is said to be a key component in an employee's feeling of worth, purpose and expectations, through this recognition, they will be more likely to stay in an organisation. Appraisals should be fair, thought out, with clear and meaningful expectations discussed, to add-value to the employees work and in turn the outcomes for the organisation (Armitage & Keeble-Ramsay, 2015).

Although, major criticisms of the performance appraisal system conclude that instead of providing motivation they can have a negative effect , this may be as often performance appraisal systems not only look at performance capability but are linked to a financial benefit, therefore employees may not be truthful of any development needs they may have in fear of not receiving financial gain. Therefore, this diminishes the point of the performance appraisal in terms of ongoing development needs (Taylor,2016). Issues could also arise due to line manager and staff differences, a lack of trust to be open and honest and even the lack of the managers time with the employee resulting in the employee not expressing their concerns or future goals. *"one of the biggest causes of demotivation, however, is the relationship between managers and their teams"* (Andriotis,2016).

Task 4

Question:

In preparation for input at a manager meeting, summarise the following:*

- *key aspects of good practice in relation to developing job descriptions, person specifications and competency frameworks*
- *different methods of recruitment and selection, and the strengths and weaknesses of each*
- *good practice in relation to dismissal, redundancy, and retirement.*

Answer:

It is key that job descriptions and person specifications are as accurate as possible to avoid “*unrealistic expectations*” (Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016) of both employers and employees in the future.

Within a job description, it is good practice to provide specifics such as: Job title, salary, location, times/days, and total hours to be worked, along with a summary of the main purpose, role duties and expectations of the job.

A person specification generally provides further detailed information which relate more to the type of person that would be best suited to the role, in areas such as skills, experience, education, qualification and personal qualities and also highlighting if each mentioned is an essential or desirable criterion (Taylor, 2014). For example, someone with a specific IT qualification may be essential to fill the role of a particular IT job.

The use of competency frameworks can help determine if a candidate's values fall in line with the organisation. These values are generally promoted throughout an organisation and based around things such as communication, teamwork, honesty, and customer focus. Promoting these within job adverts can give a good indicator to potential employees of the expectations an organisation will have on the employee to follow. These are often a focus within interviews where questions asked are based around the candidate giving example of times when they showed these competencies and how they dealt with a particular scenario (Taylor, 2014).

There are a vast number of recruitment and selection methods which can be used by organisations, they may consist of a one or two or a range of methods. Which options are used may be dependent on the size of the organisation, time and importantly financial constraints.

A quick and easy way to reach a vast audience when advertising a role would be via social media, such as Facebook, although hard to fill roles which require a professional specific skill set may need the use of more sites such as LinkedIn, or the use of agencies to seek the talent a role may need, this in turn can be costly and potentially unrealistic due to recruitment budget. For trade roles, such as a Plumber, Electrician, Carpenter, adverts could be placed within stores they are likely to visit to purchase their tools. Gaining contacts to send adverts too within local colleges, universities, or job centres will also ensure the advert reaches a wide audience but may not guarantee suitable candidates are reached dependant on the role.

Generally, candidates are asked to provide a CV or complete an application form, or both to apply for a role. From this point selection methods are used to identify the most suitable candidates to take on to the next step of the recruitment process. Recruiters can use tests, exercises, or assessments to test the skill level of a candidate in a particular area, along with using personality tests to support decision making, whilst these are helpful tools, from a candidate perspective they can be an in-personal experience, also in relation to the personality testing - answers may vary slightly from day-to-day and not give a true reflection of a person (CIPD, 2020). To support these tools the use of competency or values-based interviews can be used to establish if a person will fit into the culture of the organisation and its values. Interviews can be face to face, via online video calling, panel, or group interviews, all have both positive and negative points, ultimately the success will be determined by the interviewer and their interview technique and capabilities (Taylor, 2014). Specifically, in relation to online video interviews – positively they may be able to be arranged quicker than a face-to-face interview as no private rooms needed to be set up and during times such as the coronavirus pandemic and its restrictions, they have successfully enabled interviews to take

place. Negatively - there may be a poor internet connection for both or one party resulting in important communications being missed. Both parties may be uncomfortable if they are not used to this scenario and interviewers may find it hard to interpret an interviewee's body language which we often rely on in situations.

Employers are required by law to act fairly and reasonably when dismissing an employee. How this is achieved will be dependent on each individual case but set guidelines of the process are set out within the ACAS code of practice (ACAS,2020), this as a minimum should be followed. Dismissal should be justified, either falling under a capability or conduct reason(Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016).

It is important to note that at tribunal whether the ACAS guidance has been followed will be taken into consideration. Failure to follow this as reasonably practical as possible could result in up to 25% increase or decrease to any compensation made (dependent on who did not comply with the guidance) (Daniels,2019).

Redundancy should only be considered where all other avenues are exhausted and if used should be in the case that the role is no longer required. In these circumstances communications should be transparent throughout an organisation, consultation, as best practice should take place no matter how many employees are involved (Although is a legal requirement for the redundancy of 20 or more staff members) (ACAS,2020). Other options should be looked at such as redeployment, pay cut/freezes or reduced hours/days (Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016) or widely used at current is the furlough scheme due to the ongoing pandemic (Oliver,2020), along with the option of voluntary redundancy or early retirement to cut costs. All staff should be supported at this time, both those facing redundancy and those who will remain and potentially need to pick up extra workloads due to the situation at hand (CIPD,2020),

When an employee is considering retirement, it is best practice that their employer supports them through the process, enabling them to make the decision that is best for them. By law there is no longer a compulsory retirement age, so employers are no longer able to retire persons automatically at the set retirement age (Daniels,2019). Instead of completely retiring some employees may choose to change from full to part time hours, to step down into a role with less responsibilities, or remain on a company's books as a consultant, if possible. These options should be made available to employees considering retirement and talked through. People are deciding to stay in work longer than before for various reasons, for example, these options may continue to provide some social support for employees (which may be a concern) and enable the organisation to retain the knowledge of this person and potential pass on to other colleagues to learn and develop their skills. If an employee is no longer able to meet the demands of their role through age related issues then this should be managed fairly via appropriate avenues through an organisation's capability procedure, they should not be given the only option as retirement in these circumstances (Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016).

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