

Qualification: CIPD Diploma in Applied Human Resources

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Student Name: Lucy Moriarty

Student Number: 2014451

CIPD Membership Number: 5749316X

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Signed: Lucy Moriarty

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1.1 Describe the key contemporary labour market trends.

According to (Wilkinson and Taylor, 2016) human resources are responsible for sourcing suitable candidates for the organisation's workforces, ensuring that they have the required skills for the departments that they are employed for, which in effect contributes towards organisational performance. Organisations compete against each other to ensure that they secure the required workforce within continually evolving labour markets. The pool of potential employees who are willing and able to work for an organisation, as well as what they are looking for in a job, is referred to as the labour market.

By comparing the labour trends within the UK against Germany's labour workforce trends it was identified that the employment rate within Germany is higher than that of the UK's and has been since the pandemic. In the three months leading up to December 2021, the UK employment rate was predicted to be 75.5 percent, 0.89 percentage points higher than a year before, however, 0.93 percentage points lower than the preceding quarter. In comparison to the employment rate of Germany which was estimated at 76.6% during the last quarter of 2021. According to data taken from the (OECD, 2022) This compared to that of the UK during the same time period 1.1 percentage points lower than a year earlier and 0.4 percentage points lower than the previous quarter. Labour trends also show that Germany have a higher rate of their population that are employed compared to that of the UK.

1.2 Describe the principles of effective workforce planning and tools used to carry it out.

According to (CIPD, 2021) workforce planning is an important business process that helps businesses to align their people strategy with evolving demands. It is the process of balancing labour supply and demand in an organisation by analysing the current workforce, identifying future workforce, and determining the future requirements. Establishing solutions that support an organisation's mission, goals, and strategic plan is required for workforce planning. Workforce planning, also known as "Talent Planning" or "Human Resource Planning" which refers to the efforts undertaken by organisations to identify specific employees with the appropriate abilities. Turnover figures, employee absenteeism, talent and succession plans are some of the data sources to review while carrying out workforce planning. (Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016) state the stages to workforce planning are:

- **Forecasting Demand** – This is the process of estimating how many employees the company will require in the future. The procedure involves a systematic approach that includes a review of historical trends as well as an evaluation of the organisation's strategic plan to provide insight into future levels of activity and staffing budgets.
- **Forecasting Supply** – Following the identification of the number of new employees and the skills required, a business needs to assess whether it has enough supply available to meet demand. On a quantitative basis, the method assesses talent supply by job role following turnover, retirement, and internal job transfer. Even in fully occupied positions, it is critical to assess performance on a qualitative level. To guarantee an organisation is both competitive and compliant, supply forecasting includes an assessment of the current labour market and employment law.
- **Identifying & Addressing Gaps** – A gap analysis can be used to identify gaps in the workforce. This method compares an organisation's current staffing and the abilities that they possess, to the workforce that the company will need to achieve critical business

objectives. Recognising gaps allows organisations to plan efficiently to ensure they have the right people in the right jobs, this helps the organisation to run more efficiently and achieve its goals. As stated by (Louch, 2014) as part of the gap analysis, an organisation analyses its gaps and determines what steps it may take to fill them, recruiting, development, and transition were once the only options, but with today's predictive technology, a business may also analyse the possible impact of potential HR policies and talent management initiatives.

1.3 Explain how to develop basic people plans and succession plans.

When current employees resign or retire, organisations use succession planning to identify and prepare suitable applicants to fill key roles. Whilst talent planning relates to overall staffing factors; succession planning is a collection of tasks aimed at ensuring that an organisation has enough resources internally with the means, understanding, personal characteristics, and expertise to step into roles at the next level. Fundamentally, it's about finding, developing, and replacing people in order to achieve a potential transfer of responsibilities. As stated by (CIPD, 2021) The first stage in developing a succession plan is to determine which company functions require possible replacements. Senior or key roles can be the focus of succession action plans, or they can take a more generalised approach that focuses on a cluster of roles for which comparable abilities are required or necessary in an emergency. Once key roles have been established, it is essential that responsibilities and skills are defined and the potential candidates for development will need to be recognised. As stated by (Ramkissoon, 2021) it is beneficial to look for prospective candidates rather than “second-in-command” as there may be more suitable employees in the pipeline, who are better suited for the roles and who have a lot of promise and who align with the organisation's values and objectives. Once potential candidates are identified succession plan aims will need to be incorporated into their development plans.

When designing a personal development plan, it is crucial to understand the organisations needs and objectives for the coming year, as well as for the future. Personal development plans are linked with not only the individuals' personal objectives but with the wider organisational aims. A systematic personal development plan can be used by employers to identify any skills gaps that need to be addressed in order for an employee to advance. It also allows employers to identify the training needs of the individual and any coaching and mentoring activities that can be put in place. SMART objectives can then be created from the training and development needs that have been identified. Once objectives have been set opportunities for development need to be determined and methods of how they are going to be met. From this action plans can be created to determine details of what activities need to be undertaken. During the implementation phase, employers must ensure that they provide support through mentoring but not only to provide guidance but to also monitor progress. Finally, according to (Woodhams, Perkins and Wilkinson, 2016) a formal assessment must be conducted by an objective person, such as management or a co-worker. Assessments can be carried out using quantitative measurements based on time and money saved, or by observing performance and behaviour.

2.1 Assess the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to attracting talent to the organisation.

Salary is a big factor when attracting talent to an organisation, however, for many candidates it is not the only element that is considered when accepting a job offer. In recent years, potential applicants have been looking at what the company has to offer in terms of benefits. As stated by (Wilkinson and Taylor, 2016) it is imperative to be aware of what competitors are offering by carrying out a competitor's analysis. Factors like salary, benefits, work environments, and learning and development opportunities need to be taken into consideration. The organisation will be in a better position to provide what they can once they have a better understanding of what their competitors are offering. It's also critical for businesses to show themselves in the best possible light in the labour market in order to attract the best available candidates and ensure that they choose to work for them rather than their competitors. The brand message of an organisation is equally crucial, and it must reflect the reality of what it is like to work there. The information that is advertised must be correct and match the employee's experience, it must be a true representation to ensure the reputation of the organisation remains intact.

Since the Coronavirus pandemic, many employees have resigned due to a lack of work-life balance. The coronavirus pandemic has caused employees to reflect on their working lives, causing many to resign and giving rise to the "Great Resignation". According to (Sahgal, 2022) 41% of worldwide workers considering leaving or changing jobs, has resulted in fierce rivalry between many organisations in attracting talent. Many candidates are now looking to join organisations that provide flexible and hybrid working patterns and they have become the most vital elements of people's job searches. Some organisations within the UK have also recently started to trial 4 day working weeks to promote a healthy work-life balance. As stated by (Jolly, 2022) the four-day work week is being trialled to attract and retain current employees in a highly competitive labour market.

2.2 Assess the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to attracting talent to the organisation.

According to (SHRM, 2017) employee retention is about taking strategic measures to keep employees engaged and focused so that they choose to stay in their employment and contribute fully to the company's success. Research shows that up to 1 in 4 new employees leave their roles within the first 6 months of starting. From the beginning of the onboarding process, it is vital that new employees have a clear understanding of what is expected of them, within their new roles. Employers need to ensure that new employees are aligned with the organisations aims and objectives from the outset. In order to do this, organisation's need to provide a robust induction to guarantee that employees integrate well and understand all aspects of their new role. It is preferable for new employees to go through an individual induction rather than a group of new employees. Group inductions can cover a wide range of topics, which can be confusing for employees from different departments and leave little room for personalisation.

Employee retention is also aided by training and development opportunities. Investing in employees' futures and advancement within the organisation allows employees to feel appreciated and ensures retention. Providing career pathways is critical for keeping talent; the best way to achieve this is to work with employees to establish personal development plans and provide them with the training

they need to get to where they need to go through upskilling. It is critical to invest in employees in order to keep them at the top of their game; this allows them to do their jobs better and helps the company achieve its goals. Learning and development opportunities are highly associated with high employee engagement and increased employee retention. Insufficiently trained employees are more likely to underperform and suffer with higher levels of job stress. It can also influence organisational performance, staff morale, finances, and the ability to recruit and retain top talent.

Flexible working conditions and a good work-life balance not only attract potential applicants to an organisation, but they also enable job satisfaction. It is essential for employers to understand and recognise that employees have lives outside of the workplace, they must be encouraged to balance their work around their other obligations such as childcare and medical appointments. According to (Rush, 2019) Employers should promote work-life balance, and it shouldn't be difficult if the office culture is based on ideals of trust and empowerment. Allowing employees to be themselves and giving them time and opportunity to live satisfying personal lives will allow businesses to reap the benefits of higher employee retention and productivity in the long term.

3.1 Explain key aspects of good practice in relation to the development of job descriptions, person specifications and competency frameworks.

Job Descriptions

A job description defines the basic purpose of a role and lists the responsibilities that must be fulfilled, it also forms part of the employment contract. It has value for both the employee and the organisation throughout the employee lifecycle and should be used to evaluate performance. The job description can be used as a gauge for how well employees have been performing and can be referred to during supervision meetings, appraisals or for promotion negotiations. According to (Wilkinson and Taylor, 2016) job descriptions often follow a standard format that includes the following elements:

- **Job title** – job titles should be specific and include key words that accurately describe the role.
- **Location** – the location of the role should be included so that potential candidates can decide if it is suitable. Along with the location the division, department and branch etc. should be included.
- **Job Purpose** – summarises the essential responsibilities, tasks, requirements and skills for the role.
- **Responsibilities** – main tasks conducted by the post holder with brief descriptions – generally the responsibilities are listed in order of importance.
- **General information** – any other duties that within the scope of the role and are requested by the post holders line manager.
- **Signature** – signatures are a crucial aspect of validating the job description. Signatures from both the employee and line manager ensures that the employee understands the requirements and responsibilities.

Person Specifications

A person specification form identifies the qualifications, abilities, experience, understanding, and other characteristics that an applicant must possess in order to be considered for the position. A person specification has two parts, which are as follows:

- **Essential** – The job cannot be performed without a certain qualification.
- **Desirable** – These elements are not required, but they will improve the candidate's suitability (e.g. not having a specific qualification but are willing to work towards it whilst in employment).

The person specification focuses on skills, experience, qualifications, legal requirements and general attributes that are needed for the role. Rather than being generic, criteria must be specified, this guarantees that the person specification accurately reflects the requirements of the role. It also ensures that applicants are aware of the qualifications, abilities and knowledge that is required. Employers must verify that any criteria stated in a person specification form is justifiable and required, as a result, the person specification will ensure that all applicants are evaluated using the same criteria in a systematic manner. In order to do this, employers must consider how they will evaluate each candidate's performance against the identified selection criteria, this could be through asking a variety of specific questions or requesting examples from their former employer.

Competency Frameworks

Organisations frequently utilise competency frameworks to understand the skills that are required; it is a structure that clearly specifies each competency (i.e., problem solving, strategic awareness etc.). A competency framework outlines what capabilities candidates should possess for the organisation to fulfil its goals. According to (CIPD, 2021) competency assessments were established in the early 1980's in response to changes within organisations and as a motive for improved performance. Competency frameworks have become an extremely important aspect of HR practices over the last few decades.

Competency frameworks are normally devised the same time as the job description and person specification forms, they are linked to the organisations core values and can be assessed through a number of methods such as:

- Interviews
- Ability and personality tests
- Work samples and assessment centres
- References

3.2 Evaluate different methods of recruitment and selection

Recruitment is a process of promoting the organisation and job vacancies to possible applicants in order to encourage them to apply. As stated by (Wilkinson and Taylor, 2016) before any recruitment initiatives begin, it is critical to ensure that a vacancy has occurred and that job tasks cannot be assigned to other employees, as well as to assess what skills and experience are required to fill the position. Internal promotions or transfers can fill vacancies; this sort of recruitment is cost-effective because it eliminates the need for external recruitment. Internal recruiting also raises employee morale by demonstrating that there is room for career advancement. It can also inspire high-performance working, which in effect will reduce employee turnover. However, the disadvantage of limiting the number of prospective applicants within the organisation is that the organisation may miss out on new ideas and views that external applicants may give. Workplace disagreements are also possible as employees who are unsuccessful in their job applications can become bitter.

External recruitment practices allow employers to evaluate a wider pool of qualified individuals for the role that needs to be filled, by advertising outside of the organisation enables the employer to find candidates with the relevant skills and experience required. New employees can bring ideas and strategies from their prior employment that can assist in enhancing their new organisations procedures. External employees may also be able to share information from other businesses or sectors which will enable the organisation to monitor trends in order to stay competitive. However, the disadvantages of recruiting externally are the increased costs of advertising and the onboarding process. External candidates require additional training and development, which can be costly in terms of both time and money.

A thorough selection procedure is necessary for discovering talent and managing performance. According to (CIPD, 2021) Shortlisting and assessments are the two primary stages in the selection process. Employers should make sure that their selection techniques treat candidates equally, without discrimination or bias, and decisions should be made based on the candidate's capability to perform the job, add value to the organisation, and potential for advancement at both levels. Screening is the initial step in the selection process, employers must screen out unsuitable individuals before moving on to shortlisting. Interviews are frequently used by employers as part of the hiring process. Interviews should be conducted in a structured style to help prevent unintended bias. Telephone interviews can be used at any point of the hiring process but are more commonly used at the beginning of the process, in order to eliminate the individuals who aren't right for the job. Assessments can take the form of psychometric testing to aid the selection process by evaluating candidates' abilities, aptitudes, and personalities. Also, work-sample assessments are used to help candidates to demonstrate their competence through carrying out some elements of the job role or by displaying knowledge through presentations. Tests are more objective and dependable than interviews and other screening approaches. They also rely on quantitative data and potentially reduce bias.

3.3 Explain key aspects of good practice in relation to dismissal, redundancy and retirement.

Dismissal occurs when an employee's contract is ended by the employer and is referred to as involuntary employee turnover. The reasons for dismissal can be divided into two groups: conduct and capability. As stated by (ACAS, 2022) When deciding whether to dismiss someone, it's critical that an employer follows a fair and reasonable approach and that there is a valid reason for the dismissal and is in line with the 'ACAS Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures. Following the proper procedures will protect the organisation from accusations of unfair and constructive dismissal claims.

As stated by (CIPD, 2022) For affected employees and the wider workforce, redundancy may be a difficult and painful circumstance. Employers must handle redundancies as sensitively as possible in order to maintain employee morale, motivation, and productivity. Prior to beginning the redundancy process, all options for reducing or avoiding redundancies should be considered. According to (Armstrong, 2009) It is vital to plan ahead of time, identifying and implementing strategies to avoid redundancy as much as possible, arranging for voluntary redundancy, and assisting people in finding alternative roles.

Most employees now have the freedom to choose when they want to retire; most jobs no longer have a set retirement age. However, if an employer can legally justify the need, it can still set a retirement age, albeit this can be challenging. Employers should not force employees to resign because they are approaching retirement age, particularly those who are approaching or have reached the state or business retirement age. Regular workplace conversations should be held to learn about senior employees' career goals, when they might wish to retire, and to assist the organisation in managing resources and budgets. According to (Armstrong, 2009) retirement policies need to specify when people are due to retire, if there are any conditions in which they can work after their customary retirement date and providing pre-retirement training on topics such as finance, insurance, state pensions rights and other benefits.

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