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OBJECTIVES

HYPOTHESES

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

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HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING (HRP): INSIGHTS FROM THE COMMERCIAL BANK OF CEYLON (CBC)

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ABSTRACT

This paper has been prepared on the human resource planning of Commercial Bank of Ceylon (CBC). Human resource planning being a critical part of human resource management carries huge significance to run an organization smoothly. As the name implies management does not have to face obstacles regarding employees if the planning is done appropriately. This process of human resource planning or manpower planning has been presented here the way it is followed by CBC. The objective of the paper has also been to present the human resource planning of this bank. After discussion there is findings on the planning process which shows that although this bank is not following such planning meticulously it is not having any problem also. But to avoid any sudden setback in future, well defined step has been recommended at the end of this paper.

KEYWORDS

Human resource planning, Marcov analysis, Recruitment, Selection, Succession planning.

INTRODUCTION

Different scholars define Human Resource Planning in different ways; but the definition of Decenzo and Robbins (2007) focus on the subject matters as well as the objectives of HRP. According to them, "HRP is the process by which an organization ensures that it has the right number and kind of people, at the right places, at the right time, capable of effectively and efficiently completing those tasks that will help the organization achieve its overall objectives". HR Planning involves gathering of information, making objectives, and making decisions to enable the organization achieve its objectives.

By Harpreet (n.d) "the success of every industrial or commercial organization heavily depends upon the contribution made by employees as they perform various tasks to which they are assigned. Human resource planning strives to use human resources in an effective manner so as to transform them for realizing the objectives of the organization. Thus, it aims at relating the people at work with the activities necessary to achieve the organizational goals". The necessity for human resource or manpower planning is way more crucial in service-driven institutions like banks. A well-organized, successful and disciplined banking system promotes the route of economic development as per national guidelines. It works as an agent for bringing on economical, industrial, and agriculture development and affluence of the country.

To be able to overcome the emerging challenges due to globalization, liberalization and the transnational incursion banks have to constantly strive to confer new force and direction to enable its employees. That is the reason an organized human resource strategy with focus on people is critical. Only those firms with the clearest HRP, recruitment, retention, employee engagement and development strategies will have the vital competitive edge in what will be a much tighter market over the next few years.

The aim of this paper is to examine the human resource planning of Commercial Bank of Ceylon. The examination will ascertain the procedure, problems and some probable suggestions of human resource planning of the company. This paper is divided into four parts: the first part contains a literature review on HRP, the second part presents the research methodology used in this work, the third part comprises of the discussion and analysis of HRP on Commercial Bank of Ceylon. The final part consists of findings and recommendations of the research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Decenzo and Robbins (2007) there are four functions of HRM- staffing, training and development, motivating and maintenance of the employees. In the function of staffing HR planning is the most important task concerned with hiring and firing of human resources. In general, HRP is defined as deciding in advance how the organization predicts its future HR needs both in number and skill. The implementation of HR planning is two sided; one is recruitment in case of undersupply of employees and another is layoffs, retrenchment or early retirement in case of oversupply of them. HRP is one of the fundamental issues in strategic human resource management. Boyd (2008) considered HRP as a future business strategy.

Werther and Davis, (2004), Dessler, (2003), Mathis and Jackson, (2006) and Decenzo and Robbins, (2007) showed various steps for the organizations who want to undertake HR planning. According to Nankervis, Compton, and Baird (2002) three steps are common in all HRP; these are labor demand forecasting, labor supply forecasting and balancing supply and demand or implementation of the planning. Though, HR planning is certainly difficult, and though there is no excuse for not doing it most of the organizations avoid it. This aspect of HR is one of the most neglected in the HR field (Vareta, n.d). By Hasan (2009) resistance by employers and employees and trade unions, future uncertainties, inadequacies of information system, inability to identify crisis, lack of coordination with other management functions and failure to integrate with organization plans are some of the reasons for which organizations avoid HR planning. Durai (2010) said that many employers resist the introduction of HR planning in their organizations because of the increased labor cost associated with labor forecasting and plan implementation. Increased training requirement as part of the HR plan can also push up the labor costs. He also added that using outdated HR practices can be one of the barriers to implement an effective HRP.

As business profits are squeezed by inflation and a weakened economy, management is also concerned with personnel costs and is seeking to achieve increased output with the same or fewer staff—HRP is becoming more and more in business circles (Boyd, 2008). According to him as we move to the 21st century where a globalized workforce is the basis of competition we find that the principles of HR planning are unchanged. Research also stressed the need for manpower

planning basically for large organizations than in smaller ones. As HR can't force the business to do HR planning, but HR can nudge things in the right direction by having some clear expectations of what the business units should be doing when it comes to planning HR.

OBJECTIVES

From the literature review we have already noted that how important HR planning is both from organizational and strategic perspective. According to Burton (n.d), "an HR department that is well-versed and experienced in planning can make a company much more productive and cost-efficient". Organizations need planning for human resources to determine staffing level needs, to predict turnover, to create requirements and job descriptions for hiring. HR departments are often responsible for firing and layoffs. This also involves planning. There should be a consistent process for terminating people, since inconsistencies can trigger lawsuits. However, with a great importance of HR planning most business entities in Bangladesh as well as the whole world avoid planning. As it is a case based study through this we can find out whether the organization uses HR planning or not; or if they use what is the process of it.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The article is a case study based qualitative research. Both primary and secondary data are used for data collection. Various academic contexts, books, journals, investigative reports and HR departmental manuals are used as secondary data of the research. Personal discussion and interview with employees are the sources of primary data collection. Though, it is not a quantitative research a structured questionnaire was used to keep the research in an assembly. Interview the respondents are also taken based on HR or manpower planning policies and practices of the organization. Most of respondents are HR managers and other line managers as the topic is deeply related and sensitive to organizational strategy and sensitive to its competition. Questionnaire was developed focusing on some important issues like; importance of planning, person responsible for planning, need assessment and demand forecasting method used in planning etc. Through the questionnaire we also try to collect employees' expectations and suggestions regarding the manpower planning. Chart and diagrams are also used based on the responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

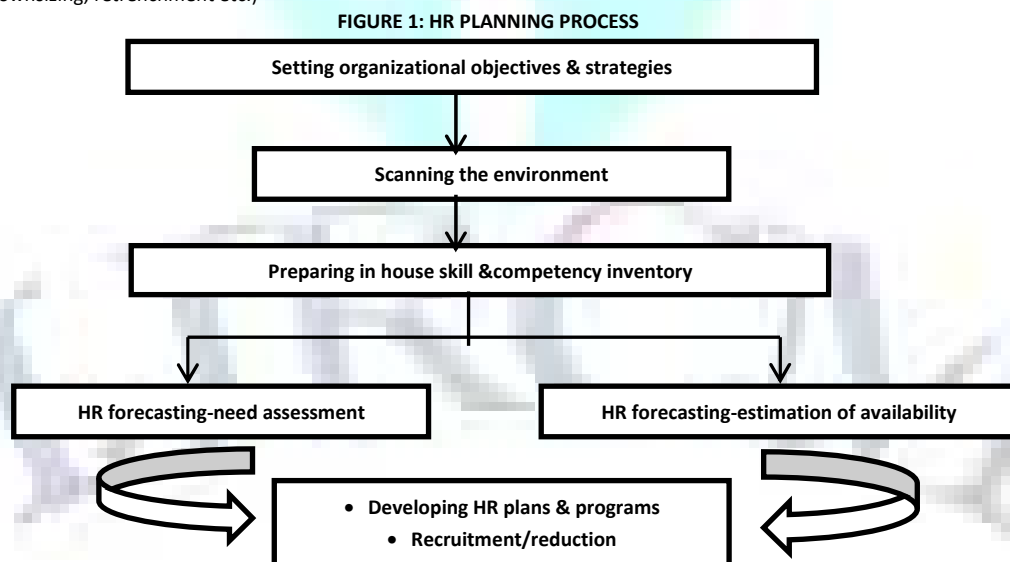
SOME WORDS ABOUT COMMERCIAL BANK OF CEYLON (CBC)

In 1969 Commercial Bank of Ceylon (CBC) had started its journey and now it is one of the leading commercial banks in Sri Lanka with 213 branches and more than 500 ATMs. It has been rated as the Best Bank in Sri Lanka by "Global Finance" for the 13th consecutive year and also as the Bank of the Year by "The Banker" Magazine on seven occasions. It entered the banking business in Bangladesh as a subsidiary in 2003. Over the period of last 9 years of operation in Bangladesh, CBC has expanded its branch network to 7 branches, 2 booths, 2 specialized OBU (Offshore Banking Unit) sections and 6 SME centers. As a multinational company total management is controlled from Colombo and most of top level posts (i.e.; chairman, deputy chairman, managing director and director) are occupied by the Colombians.

HR PLANNING OR MANPOWER PLANNING

Generally, after completing job analysis employee recruitment and selection starts; but from HR practitioners' point of view HRP is the first step or precondition without which recruitment and selection can't be held. Planning means deciding in advance; human resource planning means any kind of planning regarding human resources within the organization. According to Dessler (2003) "personnel planning is the process of deciding what positions the firm will have to fill, and how to fill them". Bulla and Scott's, 1994 as cited in Durai (2010) defined HRP as a process for ensuring that the human resource requirements of an organization are identified and plans are made for satisfying those requirements. Without developing an effective HRP it is difficult for an organization to match its current HR requirements with that of the future. Durai (2010) described the purpose of HRP from two perspectives: from the broad organizational perspective, HRP intends to achieve better customer satisfaction, quality enhancement, and improved employee motivation. From functional perspective, it aims at enhancing the employees' motivation and commitment, team spirit, mutual trust and creativity.

Whether it is large or small or medium, according to Durai (2010) an organization has to pass six steps for a successful HRP. Figure-1 shows that at the first step of the process organization must set what it wants to achieve or goal; in second step for the purpose of data collection scanning of external environment (i.e., economic situation, legislative measures, labor market scenario, technological advancement etc.) is undertaken. In the next step, organization makes an internal scan and identifies available skills within the organization. In need assessment stage organization identifies the number and quality requirements of employees in future and their prospected sources to get such employees. The last stage of HRP is implementation stage—where the organization makes 'recruitment' or 'decreruitment' (layoffs, downsizing, retrenchment etc.)

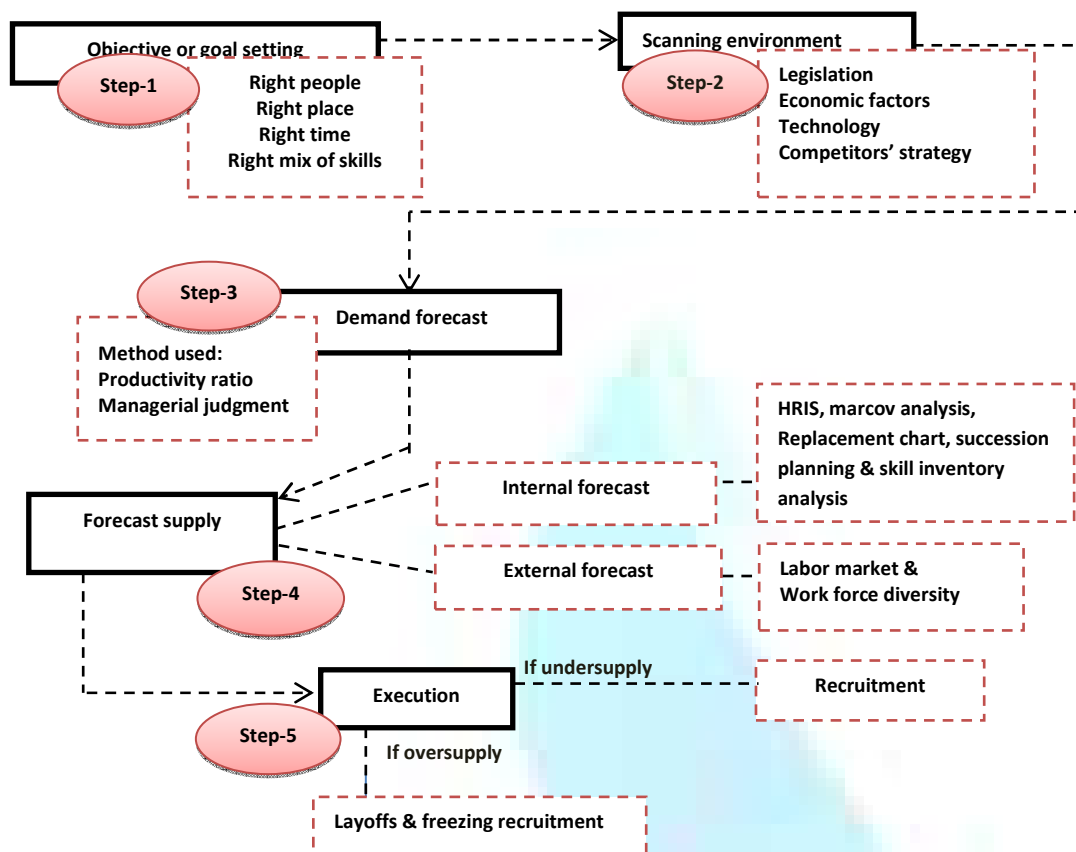


Source: Durai (2010, p-114)

HR PLANNING OF CBC

Organizations can develop HRP for all types of employees working in the organization, whether lower level, mid-level or top level. According to Dessler (2003), personnel planning cover all the firms' future positions, from maintenance clerks to CEO. Another research by (Fisher, Schoenfeldt & Shaw, 2004) says, manpower planning can be different types; one is aggregated planning and another is planning for individual incumbents. Aggregate planning is required for multiple incumbents working for a job or job category below the mid-management level, rather than a specific position. On the other hand, manpower planning for individual employee is undertaken to occupy a certain position. In the CBC, both type of HR plans are undertaken; i.e., aggregate planning is undertaken for clerks, messengers and others and individual planning is undertaken for both mid and upper level managerial positions. Figure 2 shows a hypothetical framework of HR planning of CBC; every parts of the figure is discussed later with the respected topics.

FIGURE 2: A HYPOTHETICAL FRAMEWORK OF HRP IN CBC



Source: Interview & Field work

SCANNING THE ENVIRONMENT BY CBC

Environmental scanning means collecting information about different factors of external environment in a business area which can influence its activities. This information is then closely scrutinized to figure out any possibility of changes in the environment. As CBC is a foreign organization it has to focus on government rules and regulations, economic condition and technical advancement of the country which can easily change their pattern of activities. Among various rules and regulations of the government business law, compensation policy set by the country, tax rate and rules regarding employee selection can change their decision regarding HRP. On the other hand, boom and recession are the two most important economic factors to guide their plan regarding "men". Any sudden change of the technology can results in an adjustment in manpower planning. In 2003 when CBC started their business in Bangladesh with ICBS (Integrated Comprehensive Banking System), one of the banking software, a good number of employees are sent to Colombo for training on this. Competitors' strategy is another factor that may influence human resource planning of the CBC. Strategy of HSBC other foreign banks, or private banks regarding quality and quantity of employees also influence plans of CBC. Beside this, central banks' rules and regulation regarding compensation and placement, age limit for employee selection etc. also influence in developing HR planning. 'No employee can work at the same department or branch more than three years'-- this placement decision developed by Bangladesh Bank is adaptable both for foreign and public banks within the country.

FORECAST DEMANDS FOR HRs IN CBC

After collecting all of the internal and external information about business environment it is planners' duty to forecast demand for human resources. Forecasting HR demand ensures how many and what type of employees are required for future date to achieve the organizational goal and effectiveness of HR demand depends upon rightly projecting the future. Trend analysis, ratio analysis, scatter plot, using computers to forecast personnel requirements, managerial judgments etc. are several methods to predict employment needs (Dessler, 2003). Durai (2010) said that need assessment of HR depends upon future demand for its goods and services, management philosophy, absenteeism, labor turnover rate, organizational growth pattern, planned technological improvements, the proposed change in product lines and the financial capabilities for forecasting HR requirements. Whatever the options, demand forecasting methods can be divided into two categories: judgmental and mathematical (Fisher, Schoenfeldt & Shaw, 2004).

As a mathematical method CBC uses productivity ratio analysis. They analyze productivity ratio from 3 different levels (figure 3): top level, mid-level and lower level.

FIGURE 3: PRODUCTIVITY RATIO OF EMPLOYEES

Level	Way to productivity measurement	
Top	Step 1	Employees have to bring deposits for banks from customers.
	Step 2	Branch maintaining capability of the employees is measured.
	Step 3	Employees' leadership quality is analyzed in various occasion.
Mid	Errorless work or ratio of error in the works is considered as their productivity.	
Lower	Customer satisfaction with those employees is measured as their productivity.	

Though, ratio analysis is an effective tool for prediction it must be noted that the weakness of the method is it ignores other important factors like the increase in employee efficiency and the improvement in technology in measuring employee productivity (Durai, 2010).

Another method for forecasting HR demand is "managerial judgment"; some HR practitioners considered it as "unaided" managerial judgment because it is not possible by the experts to make decisions without consulting other departments and for this reason line manager of different departments work together with experts to develop their HR requirements. It is also called "bottom-up approach". It is noted that, in small organizations experts would be the directors of operators or HR manager (if any) and in large organization, experts are those managers who are responsible for future staffing needs of their departments (Davis, 2004). CBC considers it as a good method when possibility of future changes is very small, experts can utilize their past experiences, when there is an availability of privileged information and when experts receive accurate and well-summarized feedback about their forecasts.

In determining HR demand, each organizational sub-unit has to submit its net personnel requirement to the corporate forecasting unit, based on future needs for labor required to meet the agreed on corporate and sub-unit objectives (Belcourt & McBey, 2004). To determine net personnel requirements the following equations can be used:

HR demand = external supply + internal supply

External supply requirements = replacement + change supply components

Replacement supply = hiring to replace all normal losses

(Normal losses are those resulted from retirements, terminations, voluntary turnover, promotions, transfers and leaves and those losses must be replaced to keep the workforce size at the current level.)

Change supply components = hiring to increase or decrease the overall staffing level (desired future growth rate)

This equation can also be used by the following way:

External supply = current workforce size × replacement % per year + change % per year)

Source: Belcourt & McBey, 2004)

Using an example from CBC of the position of Deputy Manager (DM) on the year 2011 we find out the required external supply of the position.

External supply of DM = $14 \times 7\% + 7\% = 14 (.07 + .07) = 1 + 1 = 2$

(In the equation above note that the figure 1 was rounded up from 0.98). of the new hires, 1 DM is allocated strictly to replace the departing DM and the other constitute the change requirement for new growth.

FORECAST SUPPLY

Both internal and external forecasting is used to forecast HR demand of the organization. CBC uses various methods in forecasting HR supply, i.e., marcov analysis, succession planning, replacement chart, human resource information system etc.

MARCOV ANALYSIS, REPLACEMENT CHART AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

To forecast future HR supply one of the important tool is marcov analysis which projects the number of employees that will retain in the organization for a specific period, generally within one or two years. Marcov analysis can estimate this number by using a statistical tool called a transitional metrics. Moreover, we can calculate the chain of movement from an entry-level job to all the way to CEO appointment, along with forecast times of arrival, stay, and departure, in conjunction with breaks in career progression along the way (Belcourt & McBey, 2004). Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (2006) said, "Metrics such as these are extremely useful for charting historical trends in the company's supply of labor. More important if conditions remain somewhat constant, they can also be used to plan for the future". By Stone & Fiorito (1986) cited in Belcourt & McBey (2004) the length of an average chain is approximately three. Marcov analysis is also important in determining training and development courses, job rotation required by the employees as it depicts the chain of movement. Figure 4a shows future supply of employees of CBC by using transitional metrics. The figure shows in 2011, in officer level the number of initial employees are 55. From them 14 employees are promoted as senior officer and 2 employees are promoted as senior executive officer, the percentage is respectively 25% and 4%. In the same year 4 employees are exited from the same position. Four positions (officer, senior officer, senior executive officer, assistant manager) are chose to make the analysis and based on the analysis we made a projection of the supply of employees in 2012 (figure 4b).

FIGURE 4: TRANSITION PROBABILITY MATRIX APPLIED ON CBC HR PRACTICES

FIGURE 4a: TRANSITION PROBABILITY MATRIX APPLIED TO INCUMBENTS OF THE YEAR 2011

Transition Probability Matrix of CBC, 2011											
Designation	Initial staffing level	Officer		Senior officer		Senior Executive Officer		Assistant Manager		Exit	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Officer	55	39	71	14	25	2	4	--	--	4	7
Senior officer	41	--	--	33	80	7	17	1	2	1	2
Senior Executive Officer	22	--	--	--	--	20	91	2	9	0	0
Assistant Manager	16	--	--	--	--	--	--	11	69	0	0
Predicted end-of-year, 2011 staffing level	--	39		47		29		4		5	

FIGURE 4b: TRANSITIONAL PROBABILITY MATRIX PROJECTED FOR THE YEAR, 2012 BASED ON YEAR, 2011

Transitional Probability Matrix, projected for 2012*						
Designation	Initial staffing level	officer	Senior officer	Senior Executive Officer	Assistant manager	Exit
Officer	39	28	10	2	0	2
Senior officer	47	--	38	8	1	1
Senior Executive Officer	29	--	--	26	3	0
Assistant Manager	4	--	--	--	10	0
Predicted end-of-year, 2012 staffing level	--	28	48	36	14	3

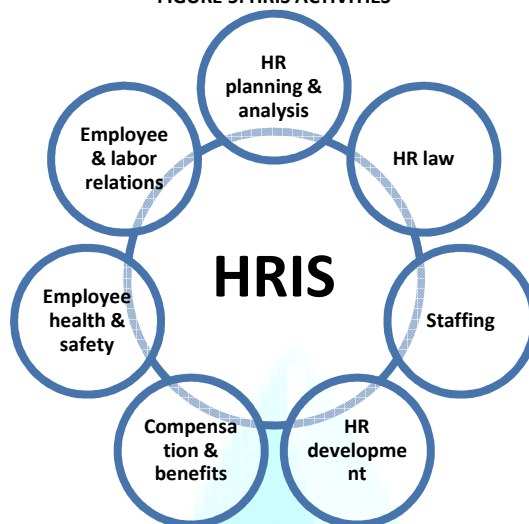
*Numbers have been rounded to whole digits because fractions of employees are not meaningful

Succession planning is a chart or organizational structure which shows how vacant positions of managers and professionals are filled by the internal or existing labor force. Most of the time, marcov analysis is used to develop a replacement chart or succession planning. As CBC is a foreign organizations they prefer to fill up their top positions by own nationals and for this reason they have no formal succession planning. But if they approach such a brilliant and caliber employee to fill up the top vacancy they will try their best to keep the employee with his best expected respect, sometimes CBC creates new position for the candidates but such activity is limited to 1%-2%. Accelerated promotion is another option to adjust the situation besides regular promotion.

HUMAN RESOURCE INFORMATION SYSTEM (HRIS)

Not only production sector is embracing new technology, but also HR departments are also using technology to get efficiency. Organizations are now using software application for recruitment, selection, payroll of candidates etc. (figure 5) all are HRIS activities. More specifically HRIS is a data entry, data tracking, and data information process where organization can get all types of required information about the employees. Ease to use, automation and sheer information motivate any organizations to undertake HRIS. According to Denisi and Griffin (2005) "the system is much more than just computer hardware and software." They also added that although many organizations develop their own systems, there are also packages that can handle most HRIS needs; such type of package used by CBC is ICBS (Integrated Computerized Banking System). Skill inventory analysis is also done by the help of HRIS. Figure 5 shows different types of activities that are undertaken by the use of HRIS.

FIGURE 5: HRIS ACTIVITIES



EXECUTION OF HR PROGRAMS

After going through all the steps if organization face HR deficit (HR demand > HR internal supply) they make recruitment. Conversely, if they face HR surplus (HR demand < HR internal supply) they may use different strategies like, employee termination, layoffs, hiring freeze etc. In the study of CBC we find that generally they do not face any employee surplus; moreover they have employee deficit. To adjust this deficit they prefer online as a source of recruitment. For middle and top level vacancies sometimes they use employee references. Execution of HR planning of CBC is divided into 3 areas based on employee levels shown in figure 6:

FIGURE 6: EXECUTION OF HR PLANNING

Level	Recruitment source	KSA required
Top	Succession planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical skill Ability to bring business for the bank The leadership power and branch maintaining capability.
Middle	Printing and electronic media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Productivity of employees Rate of error done by employees
Lower	Outsourcing farm & internship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voucher and other level skills on the basis of daily performance.

Source: Interview and Field work

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

There is no doubt about the importance of HR planning in both general level and strategic level of an organization. Nowadays organizations need to plan for their own survival as they grapple to deal with: intensified competition from home and abroad; labor market factors, recruitment and retention; the speed of information acquisition and dissemination; the globalization of economic activities; consumerism and the drive for quality at an acceptable price (Reilly, 1996 cited in Sinclair, 2004). CBC believes that as people are the main chauffeur dealing with them effectively by developing a good planning helps the organization to adjust with upturns and downturns of the organizational environment. An investigation suggested that CBC use 60% (approx.) of its budget on employee salary and compensation, 5% (approx.) as administrative expenses, 30% (approx.) for training purposes and the rest of 18% (approx.) for recruitment, selection, placement and promotion purposes. From this data we can easily say that there is no budget for HR planning precisely. The reason behind this can be two folded; one is management still cannot realize the importance of HR planning and another is glut of prospected employees in labor market. A developing country like Bangladesh where unemployment rate is high most of the graduates and post-graduates eagerly wait for any kind of vacancy announcement—this situation may lead many organizations using “no planning” or “planning with others like recruitment and selection”. Since we cannot hope to predict the future needs with any certainty many firms including CBC avoid investing money behind HR planning. To avoid the situation Bechet (2000, cited in Sinclair, 2004) proposes that it is better to think of workforce planning as providing a longer-term context within which more effective near-term staffing decisions can be made. It makes sense that the best ‘near-term’ solutions, such as how to organize a succession plan, can only be determined once we understand what the future workforce will look like. Workforce planning should be seen a decision filter through which other plans need to pass (Sullivan, 2002d cited in Sinclair, 2004).

SCOPE OF FURTHER RESEARCH

HR planning is one of the most important subject matters from strategic human resource management perspective. But there is a limited research and discussion in this arena. Even there is very little research on marcov analysis and succession planning which are very important tools in predicting future employee requirements. We hope that this study will create an opportunity of further research on these issues. Furthermore, the research avoids an in depth study on the importance and barriers of HR planning; future academics and scholars can also work on this aspect.

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