

EASTERN UNIVERSITY, SRI LANKA
FACULTY OF COMMERCE & MANAGEMENT

3rd year /1st semester Examination in Commerce/Business
Administration/Economics 2001 /2002 (April/May 2002)

MGT 3024 Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations

Time: 03hours

Answer Four (04)) questions including question no 01

01) CASE STUDY

BACKWOODS MAIL ORDER COMPANY

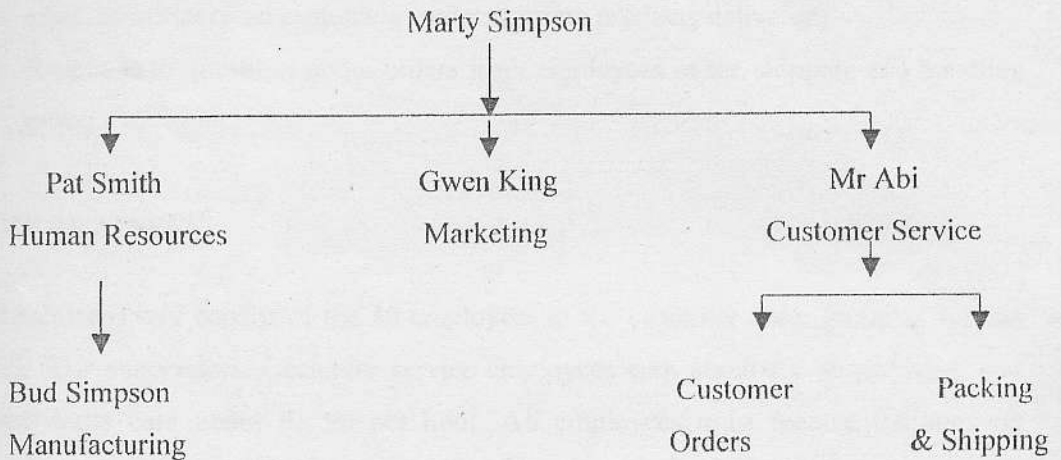
OVERVIEW

HR professionals are often contacted by an organisation to design and deliver a training program to meet a specific problem in the organisation (e. g., declining productivity, increasing customer complaints). In some cases, the organisation has already conducted a needs assessment and has some idea of what the specific problem is. The HR professional may be asked to review the needs assessment findings and design a training program to meet the specified needs or goals.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON BACKWOODS MAIL ORDER COMPANY

Backwoods is a telephone and mail order company that specializes in camping supplies and outdoor clothing. Mr Abi is the operating manager of Backwoods' customer service department. He is interested in training his 40 employees in the customer orders group to be more effective in filling customers' orders, more helpful in answering customer questions, and more polite in dealing with customer problems and complaints. To familiarize you with the company and the job of customer order representative, an organizational chart and job description are provided below.

BACKWOODS ORGANISATIONAL CHART



CUSTOMER SERVICE DIVISION

The customer service department consists of 40 employees and four supervisors in the customer orders group and 32 employees and three supervisors in the packing and shipping group. Employees are evenly divided into two shifts: a day shift (7 A.M. to 3 P.M.) and a night shift (3 P.M. to 11 P.M.). Employees in the customer orders group handle incoming calls from customers and record customers' orders on a central computer system that checks the availability of each item ordered.

Orders are then transmitted to the shipping department where shipping clerks pull the items from inventory and pack them for overnight delivery.

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR CUSTOMER ORDER REPRESENTATIVES

- ❖ Takes customer orders by telephone or direct mail.
- ❖ Answers customer questions about product prices, sizing, colors, features, and availability.
- ❖ Assists customers on the phone in determining equipment or clothing needs based on season, climate, or use requirements.
- ❖ Enters phone and mail orders into on-line order processing computer system.
- ❖ Processes returned merchandise, completes a defective merchandise form for quality assurance, and routes serviceable merchandise for repackaging.

- ❖ Handles customer complaints about problems or defects in merchandise, wrong sizes, or mistakes on customers' orders (wrong products delivered).
- ❖ Responds to questions about orders from employees in the shipping and handling group.

THE TRAINEES

The trainees will consist of the 40 employees in the customer order group as well as their four supervisors. Customer service employees earn about Rs 70 per hour, and supervisors earn about Rs 90 per hour. All employees must receive training, yet service must still be available to customers (i.e., you cannot put everyone through the training at the same time of the day or there will be no one to handle incoming calls from customers).

PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED BY A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- ❖ The majority of merchandise returns (78 percent) are due to problems in size, features, and/or color selection.
- ❖ The majority of these errors (54 percent) result from mistakes in entering the order data correctly into the computer system.
- ❖ Many of the errors in sizing or features could be avoided if customer service representatives were more knowledgeable about the products' sizing and features (e.g., certain items run larger than standard sizing).
- ❖ Incorrect labeling and inventory of products are responsible for fewer than 8 percent of order errors.
- ❖ Customer order representatives have never been formally trained in dealing with customer complaints.
- ❖ The customer order work area is cluttered and noisy.

GOALS FOR THE TRAINING

- ❖ Reduce merchandise returns due to data entry problems.
- ❖ Improve the attitude of customer order representatives.
- ❖ Help customer order representatives to really understand product features and sizing (e.g., suitable climate range for a sleeping bag).

- ❖ Create a positive image of Backwoods Company to customers and employees.
- ❖ Reduce sizing errors by having representatives check customer knowledge of differently sized items (e.g., that jacket runs large).
- ❖ Encourage representatives to check with mail-order customers on difficult handwriting or potential problems with item sizing or features.

Questions:

1. Write specific measurable objectives for the training to be delivered to the employees in the customer order group.

(07 Marks)
 2. Develop a recommendation for the training methodologies that should be used and the length of training.

(11 Marks)
 3. Offer a plan for evaluating the training program. Describe the criteria that will be used and the design you will employ.

(10marks)
02. a) "A Human Resources Manager is more rational than A Personnel manager"
Explain

(06 Marks)
- b) What specific competencies could be expected from a modern business leader?

(04 Marks)
- c) Explain how the recruitment process contributes to other human resources management process?

(05 Marks)
- d) List five differences between a structured and an unstructured interview?

(04 Marks)
- e) What do you mean by " Probationary period" in the job. Is it a necessary condition for all jobs? Explain.

(05 Marks)

03. a) Distinguish between the following terms

- (i) Job analysis and job evaluation, and
- (ii) Job profile and candidate profile

(08 Marks)

b) "Well constructed Human resource policies are essential for the well being and long term survival of the organisation". Do you agree with this statement? Give your reasons?

(06 Marks)

c) Illustrate the ways and means of conducting a disciplinary investigation for a senior executive manager in a financial institution

(05 Marks)

d) Explain the key characteristics of a well-organized wage and salary administration program using examples of your own.

(05 Marks)

04 a) What is meant by The Hot-Stove Rule (THSR)?

(04 Marks)

b) What is the importance of benchmarking human Resource practices in the Banking sector?

(04 Marks)

c) A company has 120 employees at the beginning of 2002, and 300 at the end of the year. Disliking the expansion, 63 of the original experienced labour force resigned.

Work out the turnover index for the company for 2002, and comment on your findings

(06 Marks)

d) Define job design, What are demerits of an inappropriate job design?

(06 Marks)

e) What are the pre-requisites for the implementation of Japanese 5's productivity concept in public sector organisations in Sri Lanka?

(04 Marks)

05. a) What are the effects of job satisfaction on employee's performance?

(04 Marks)

b) What is meant by 'a grievance'? List out some possible causes of a grievance in an organisation.

(04 Marks)

c) Explain the concept of Organisation Development (OD). What are the factors to be considered in the OD concept?

(04 Marks)

d) What are the criticisms of Herzberg's two factor theory of motivation

(04 marks)

e) You have been appointed as Human Resource manager for the Sri Lanka Ceramic Company. The CEO of the company asks you to study the Labour Management Relation (LMR) of the company. How would you proceed in this regard?

(08 Marks)