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Corporate strategy in manpower planning: a way out of economic meltdown

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ABSTRACT

This paper is focused on corporate strategy in man-power planning as a way out of economic melt-down. The aftermath of the global financial meltdown was devastating to the developed economies like Europe, America and Asia, Africa a developing economy was not an exception as corporate organizations struggle to get back on their feet or stabilize the quagmire. In order to achieve this, corporate organizations need effective corporate strategy in their manpower planning as to maximize optimum personnel utility in order to achieve the organizational set goals by overcoming the strains of the global economic meltdown. This paper strategically encapsulated corporate strategy in manpower planning as a panacea to the present economic challenge.

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Introduction

Recently, due to the global economic meltdown, growth in several sectors was hampered. The global economic meltdown has emerged as not only one of the most universally discussed Economic crisis that this century has experienced, but it is also one crisis that has shaken the whole world to its roots and that has affected every facet of human life. The meltdown has been baptized variously as "Global Economic Crisis", "Global economic debacle", "Global Economic Downturn", "Global Economic Go-slow", and global economic recession all reflecting how the meltdown has made regressive, retrogressive and negative impact on the world economy. The economic catastrophe moved over the whole world from its inception, as a rampaging inferno, a ravenous plague or an unstoppable hurricane which left in its wake destabilizing consequences. Like in the familiar traffic jam in our cities, which reduces or immobilizes vehicular movement with inevitable manpower losses, unproductive fuel consumption, physical and emotional stress, the economic meltdown has imposed on the world economy a decline or reduction in the upward movement which implies a slowdown of the economy to specifically less than 3% global economic growth over a short period with attendant losses, distresses, strains and distortions on the economy and human life in general.

This scenario, necessitated corporate organization to strategize their manpower through effective planning to achieve optimal productivity in order to cushion the effect of the global economic meltdown.

Manpower and manpower planning

Geisler (1967) defined manpower as the process (including forecasting, developing and controlling) by which a firm ensures that it has the right number of people and the right kind of people at the right place at the right time, doing work for which they are economically most useful.

Manpower is total supply of personnel available or engaged for a specific job or task.

Manpower planning which is also called human resource planning consist of putting right number of people, right kind of people at the right place, right time, doing the right things for

which they are suited for the achievement of goals of the organization.

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As Onwe (2008) puts it, "manpower planning is estimating the requirements for manpower for the future and linking the present manpower requirements with the future needs.

Manpower planning seeks to maintain and improve an organizations ability to achieve corporate objectives by developing strategies which are designed to increase the present and future contributions of manpower (Ohadimma, 2005)

However, irrespective of the various and divergent definitions of manpower planning from various scholars, the summarizing fact about what manpower means is that it is aimed at maximizing efficiency their by guarantying maximum productivity by making sure that appropriate job is given to a man and the man is adequately prepared for the job.

Manpower planning is necessary in all organizations. This is because, it will be difficult to know the number of personnel required for recruitment, reassignment or retirement without strategic effective manpower planning. Thus, it is imperative for all organizations making use of human resources as it is guaranteed to reduce excessive recruitment, training and transfer, thereby saving management time, effort and cost. Manpower planning translates the organizations objectives and plans into the number of works needed to meet those objectives, thus no organization can grow effectively unless the functions of manpower planning are strategically carried out effectively.

Reasons for strategic corporate manpower planning

In an era of economic retrogression or stagnation, organization more than ever before needs to plan and or reshape their manpower plan to meet the present challenge and at the long run boost productivity and profit.

As a preliminary to a detailed manpower planning, the objective of the organization for duration of the plan period have to be clearly specified.

The reason for taking up the manpower planning may vary from organizational problems, bad relations between the employer and the employees, high employee turn over etc. The objectives may be expressed in terms of the goods and services to be produced. If manpower planning is not to be misdirected, it should be ensured that the targets and priorities are based on reliable demand forecast taking into consideration the impact of any changes in the internal and external environment of the organization during the plan period.

According to Ohadimma (2005), various organization go for manpower planning for various purposes, although the basic objective is to formulate strategies for mobilizing right manpower with the end view of achieving organizational goals. The need for manpower plan in the organizational enterprise, therefore include the followings:

- a) To determine the manpower requirements according to the four dimensions, which are quantitative, qualitative, locational and job positioning.
- b) To get a specific idea of the magnitude of the training requirements for the immediate future according to hierarchical levels of the prospective trainees and the type of training to be imparted to them.
- c) To enable the organization to visualize it's position quite in future broadly in terms of the category, size and quality of it's employees.
- d) To investigate the possibility of detecting personnel within the organization structure possessing requisite skills who can be suitably moved either laterally or vertically in order to assume those job positions which in any case must be held by existing suitable experienced personnel.

The overall of manpower planning can not be done in a haphazard manner. Manpower planning must be systematic and procedural for it to achieve it's objectives.

Strategic manpower planning procedure

The main purpose of manpower planning is matching employee's ability with the requirements of the organization. It is necessary that the objectives of the organization are spelt out in details. The objectives should be short or long term objectives. As organization's enterprises are expanding their activities, there is a growing need for trained men and women to be absorbed into the workforce. "This calls for the need for efficient human resource planning". (Okafor et al 2011).

The procedure in manpower planning includes:

1. Analysing the current manpower inventory.
2. Making future manpower forecast.
3. Developing employment programmes.
4. Designing training programmes.

Analyzing the current manpower inventory

Before a manager makes forecast of future manpower, the current manpower status has to be analyzed. For this reason, the following factors have to be noted.

- Type of organization.
- Number of departments.
- Number and quantity of such departments
- Employees in these work units, once these factors are registered by a manager, he goes for the future forecasting.

Marketing future manpower forecast: once these factors, affecting the future manpower forecast are known, planning can be done for the future manpower requirements in several work

units. The manpower forecasting techniques commonly employed by organization are as follows:

Expert forecast: this includes informed decisions; formal expert surveys and Delhi technique.

Trend Analysis: man power needs can be projected through extrapolation i.e.(projecting past trends) , indexation i.e. (using base year as basic), and statistical analysis(central tendency measures)

a. Work load Analysis: it is dependent upon the nature of work load in a department ,in a branch or in a division

b. Work force Analysis: wherever production and time period has to be analysed, due allowances have to be made for getting net man power requirement.

c. Other methods: several mathematical models, with the aid of computer are used to forecast manpower needs. Like budget and planning analysis, regression, new ventures analysis etc.

Developing Employment programs: Once the current inventory is compared with future forecast, the employment programs should be framed and developed accordingly: which will include recruitment, selection procedures and placement plans.

a. Recruitment:

According to Okafor et al (2011), staff recruitment is defined as "the process of creating large pool of prospective applicants who may be interested in working for a particular organization". This means, advertising job opportunities to the public in such a way that a good number of suitable people will apply for them. The amount of recruitment that must be done by an organization should be directly proportional to the forecast personnel needs, Forecasted by the skill inventory.

Recruitment needs fall into three broad categories: planned, anticipated and unexpected. The planned needs arise from changes in organizational decision and retirement policies. Unexpected needs arise from individual's decisions to leave the company and for ill health, accident or deaths. The anticipated category comprise those jobs which the organization, by studying the trends within and outside the company can predict.

Sources of recruitment

Recruitment may be internal or external.

Each of these has its advantages and disadvantages.

Internal Recruitment means when an organization is considering current employment for promotion and transfer.

It is important to note that the source to explore automatically depends on the category of labour required.

There are two sources of labour. Include:

1. Internal source
2. External source

Internal sources: when recruitment is internally, manager's turn to existing employees to fill open positions. Employees recruited internally are either seeking lateral moves i.e. jobs change that entail no major changes in responsibility or authority level or promotions.

Basically this source utilizes the serving staff through transfers, promotion, recalls from lay off or retirement.

External source on the other hand, refers to the recruitment from outside an organization. This source includes recruitment from educational institutions, employment agencies, professional associations, unemployed job seekers, underemployed and dissatisfied workers etc. this source makes

possible the recruitment of most capable and competent hands as the scope is both wide and far.

The Recruitment Process

The basic steps in the recruitment process it to analyse job(s) and sketch up the job description and specification of the vacant post(s).

Job analysis means discovering the details of each position such as location of the job, its duties and responsibility, equipment, tools and machines used, working condition required, the pay, opportunities for growth and advancement and whether job training is required. This is majorly only an information gathering process.

Job description outlines the facts compiled from job analysis concisely, identifying and describing a job precisely, it is the summary of the main tasks and responsibilities of a job in a written form.

Job specification, this is the next step in recruitment process. This is also output of job analysis, outlines the personal qualification and special aptitude required of the prospective employee such as personal skills, experience, educational qualification, and the job conditions relating to health safety, comfort general welfare of the employee(s).

Staff Selection:-

This is the process where by managers determine the relative qualification of job applicants and their potential for performing well in a particular job. It is a process of weeding out the unsuitable candidates and finally arriving at most suitable ones, the short listed candidates are invited for interview interviewing can be through written test and or, oral examination (i.e. written and oral interviews).

The primary aim of the selection process is to choose those persons who are most likely to perform their jobs with maximum effectiveness.

The following stages are considered in the selection procedure:

- Internal Screening
- The application forms
- The initial interview, or the shortlist
- Selection test(psychological and physical exams)
- Main interview with prospective supervisors or managers.
- Reference checks
- Medical examination
- Offer of appointment and placement
- Induction or orientation

Staff Placement

Once an employee is hired, he should be placed in a suitable job. Staff placement has been defined as the determination of the job which an accepted candidate is to be assigned and his assignment to that job.

Placement and follow-up aim at ensuring that the individual selected is placed appropriately on the job and does the job well.

Induction:

This is the process of properly introducing a newly hired applicant to the details of the job and to fellow employees. This is targeted at encouraging the best abilities and frame of mind of the new staff right from onset.

Job orientation is the process of acquainting the new employees with the company's policies, rules and other matters concerning the company and their jobs in order to make them fit into the organization quickly and effectively.

Designing training development programmes

According to Nwachukwu (1998) "training as organizational effort is aimed at helping an employee to acquire basic skills required for the efficient execution of the functions for which he was hired.

Manpower development is therefore perceived as the process of exposing an employee to acquire basic additional skills and knowledge involved in efficient job performance in an organization.

From the foregoing, both training and development can rightly be said to involve a person cultivating skills whose application will help improve the efficiency and effectiveness with which the anticipated result of a particular organization segment are achieved.

Training and developing techniques

Staff and development can be subcategorized into two types: which include

On-the-job or off Training and development programmes:

a. Induction/ orientation Courses: New entrants that are absorbed into the organization should be taken through a well designed induction/ orientation program to familiarize them with organization policies and philosophies, background, structures, rules and regulation as well as personnel policies. This exercise, equips the recipients with some insight into their duties and responsibilities and also educate them on rights and privileges in the organization.

b. Apprenticeship: the organization should provide an opportunity especially for the unskilled. by allowing him to work with an experienced employee who inculcates and direct him on the operation and antics of the job

c. Coaching: this is a process whereby opportunities are provided by the organization for superiors to work with their subordinates (trainees). The aim is to teach the subordinates the identified skill by monitoring and supervising him while he (trainee) practice the work. The coach should be vigilant to dictate mistakes and give adequate corrections.

d. Job Rotation: this is a process where by new employees are allowed to work with older ones in a horizontal job rotation design. It is believed that as new entrants move from this horizontal job shift to another, they would acquire a wide range of knowledge of the activities in their work place.

Off-the- job training and development.

Unlike on-the-job training and development Programmes that place within the organization, off the job training and development takes place in a separate environment different from the exact place of work. These include:

a) Seminars, Workshops and Lectures: This type of training and development are mainly for those at top management level. An organization can send it's managers to acquire knowledge and develop their managerial abilities through organizing seminars, workshops and lectures with help of appropriate resources persons that will impact the trainees with up-to-date skills and technical know how for effective management in the organization for the achievement of organizational goals in line with the global best management practices.

b) Professional Readings: managers and other specialist staff such as Engineers and scientist should be encourage to enroll with professional bodies related to their specialized disciplines which will be sending them journals, magazines etc that will help them update their skills and knowledge on the latest

development in their fields as well as keep them abreast with their professional ethnics.

c) In basket Training: This involves the trainer narrating the story of an enterprise and the trainee by asking questions, discovers the enterprises problems and thus prefer Solutions to them.

Importance of training and development

The importance of training and development in an organization can never be over emphasized. This is because it plays an important role of determining the effectiveness and efficiency with which an organization accomplishes results. Some of these are:

a) Improved Performance on present job: Training and development is not only applicable to new employees but also to experienced ones. Skills and knowledge acquired during training and development can help in increasing the employee's level of performance on his present job.

b) Improved productivity: Due to this improved performance, there is a correspondent increase in quantity and quality of output per employee.

c) Reduced Accidents: A great deal of industrial accidents are blamed on poor handling of machines and tools by the employee. With adequate training and development on both job skills and attitude, the accident rates can be drastically reduced.

d) Reduced Supervision: Adequate training minimizes the need for close supervision by the superior as trained employees can effectively perform their job assignment successfully with no or little supervision.

Importance of Manpower Planning

- Key to managerial functions: The four managerial functions i.e. planning, organizing, directing and controlling are all based upon the manpower. Human resources help in the implementation of all these managerial activities. Therefore, staffing becomes a key to all managerial functions.

- Efficient Utilization: efficient management of personnel becomes an important function in the industrialized world of today. Setting of large scale enterprises require management of large scale manpower. it can be effectively done through staffing function.

- Motivation-staffing function not only includes putting right men on the job, but it also comprises of motivational programmes i.e., incentive plans to be formed for further participation and employment of employees in a concern. Therefore, all types of incentives plans becomes an integral part of staffing function.

- Better human relations: A concern can stabilize itself if human relations develop and are strong. Human relations becomes strong through effective control, clear communication, effective supervision and leadership in a concern. Staffing function also looks after training and development of the workforce which leads to co-operation and better human relations.

- Higher productivity-productivity level increases when resources are utilized in best possible manner. Higher productivity is as a result of minimum wastage of time, money, efforts and energies. This is possible through the staffing and it's related activities (performance appraised, training and development, remuneration).

Conclusion

To overcome the effect and challenges posed by the economic meltdown every organization should adopt appropriate corporate strategy in manpower planning as this will ensure.

- That shortages and surpluses can be identified so that quick action can be taken wherever required.

- That all the recruitment and selection programmes are based on manpower planning.

- It also helps to reduce the labour cost as excess staff can be identified and thereby overstaffing can be avoided.

- It also helps to identify the available talents in a concern and accordingly training programmes can be chalked out to develop those talents.

- It helps in growth and diversification of business through manpower planning, human resources can be readily available and they can be utilized in best manner.

- It helps the organization to realize the importance of manpower management which ultimately helps in a stability of a concern.

Finally, for an organization to overcome this present economic challenge, it must have to adopt effective corporate strategy in manpower planning as encapsulated in this paper.

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