

**UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND**

**FACULTY OF COMMERCE**

**SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION – HUMAN RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT**

*BA413(S)*

**BACHELOR OF COMMERCE – YEAR IV**

**SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION 2009**

**LECTURER: STEVE N. ISICHEI**

**DURATION: THREE (3) HOURS**

**CASE STUDY – 40 MARKS**

Read the case study below and answer the questions that follow.

Ken Hartman's firm, Blahna Inc. has finally gotten the message. The company is now using diversity management strategies to head off conflict and reduce turn over among employees it can ill afford to lose.

Several years ago, Blahna formed a 20-member Committee for Workplace Diversity chaired the by Managing Director. The committee was chartered to consider why women and minorities were not better represented at all levels of the organization. Although the company had a good record of hiring women and minorities, the committee discovered that turnover was 2 to 3 times higher for these groups than it was for other white males.

Sample exit interviews revealed that women and minorities left for culture-related reasons – for instance, because they did not feel valued in their day-to-day work, did not have effective working relationships, or did not sense that the work they were being given to do would lead to the fulfillment of their career goals. White males, on the other hand, left for business-related reasons, such as limited opportunities for future advancement.

As a result of this initial investigation, Blahna formed a 25-person Diversity Advisory Committee. The committee determined to take a two-step approach to dealing with diversity issues. The first step was to increase

awareness; the second was to build skills for dealing with diversity-related challenges. Both steps involved training conducted by diversity consultants, Hope and Associates.

To date, 60 percent of Blahna's 11,000 employees have gone through a 2-day diversity seminar. Forty percent have gone through a more extensive 6-day training programme as well. "The premise of the training is that the more different you are, the more barriers there can be to working well together", explains Blahna's diversity development director. Training sessions do not offer advice on how to get along with women, or other specific groups. Rather, the emphasis is on learning skills that will make it easier to relate to and communicate with others.

A key part of the training offered by Hope and Associates is the implementation of a "consulting pairs" process. The consulting pairs approach is designed to help trainees take what they have learned in training and apply it on the job. When a conflict, which may or may not be related to diversity, first arises between two peers or a manager and employee, a consulting pair is called in to facilitate discussions and problem solving. The unique feature of this approach is that the consulting pair is selected to match as closely as possible the backgrounds of the individuals who are involved in the conflict. Of course, all proceedings are strictly confidential.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. Are there business reasons for the company to pay attention to managing work diversity? (10 Marks)
2. What are the five forces accounting for the employment of women in Blahan, Inc? (15 Marks)
3. Identify the six ways in which Blahan Inc. provide women with opportunities not previously available to them? (15 Marks)

## **SECTION B – (60 MARKS) – ANSWER ANY THREE QUESTIONS**

1. (a) Differentiate between job description and job specification and for each of them list the items that must be included (5 Marks)

- (b) Briefly discuss the information to be obtained through a job analysis (5 Marks)
- (c) What are the purposes of job analysis? (10 Marks)
2. Like every other discipline of management, human resource management is influence by environmental variables. Identify and discuss the variables in the environment that affect the success or failure of human resource management practice (20 Marks)
  3. The evaluation phase of training activities determines the extent to which the training activities have met the stated objectives. Kirkpatrick suggests four levels of evaluation. Discuss these levels of evaluation (20 Marks)
  4. Who are the parties involved in labour and industrial relations? Identify the responsibilities of the employer in the employer-employee relationship and the reasons why trade unions exist (20 Marks)