

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
FACULTY OF COMMERCE
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
MAIN EXAMINATION: ACADEMIC YEAR 2012/2013
(DECEMBER 2012)

COURSE TITLE - Human Resource Management
COURSE NUMBER - BA 306/408
TIME ALLOWED - 3 Hours

INSTRUCTIONS

1. This paper consists of section (A) and section (B)
2. The case study in section (A) is compulsory
3. Answer any (3) three questions from section (B)

NOTE

You are reminded that in assessing your work, credit will be given to **accuracy of language** the general **quality of expression**, the **layout and presentation** of your final answer.

GOOD LUCK!!

CANDIDATES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO READ THE QUESTIONS UNTIL THEY ARE TOLD
TO DO SO BY THE INVIGILATOR

SECTION A CASE STUDY – COMPULSORY (40 MARKS)

READ THE CASE BELOW AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW

REVITALIZING THE HR DEPARTMENT AT CALCOMP¹

Several years ago, it was apparent that changing the role and activities of the human resources (HR) function at CalComp was essential for the firm's future. CalComp, a worldwide wholly owned subsidiary of Lockheed Corporation, produces and sells computer graphics equipment. The company had 2, 700 employees working in offices located in 14 countries. Consequently, the firm and its HR department faced problems on both the domestic and international fronts.

Employee morale was low and the HR department was viewed simply as "traffic cop" that told employees and managers why they could not do something. It was difficult to recruit workers at corporate headquarters, located in Orange County in the loss Angeles area, which was a highly competitive labour market.

To lead the change, Charles Furniss was hired as Vice-President of Human Resources. Furniss first called the 22-person HR staff together to develop a strategic plan for the HR department. He conducted interviews with the HR department and all top-level managers in the firm to determine what the HR department needed to do to become more "customer focused" internally. Following the interviews, a strategic plan for the HR future for a two-year period was prepared. The plan was titled "World-Class Human Resources." Once the plan was developed and endorsed by top management, the HR staff marketed it by making presentations to employees, managers, and

¹ Adapted from Larry K. Kromling, "CalComp Reshapes HR for the Future," Personnel Journal, January 1990, 57-63

local professional associations in order to communicate that CalComp was going to have a progressive and responsive HR department.

Some of the initial activities taken to implement the plan included redesigning the employee publications and publishing them more frequently. Also, motivation and training services were offered to all employees in the headquarters office. One program was so successful that it was duplicated at the CalComp plant in Scottsdale, Arizona, by closing the plant for a full day so that all 250 employees could participate. Shortly after, the HR department sponsored an open day for employees to show off newly refurbished department offices and to encourage employees to meet with HR staff members. Also, management development training was expanded; over 300 managers and supervisors attended programs over a six-month period of time.

While a more active and responsive image of the HR department was being established, Furniss and his staff members moved to implement some of the other components of the World-Class Human Resources Plan by setting specific strategies, goals, and timetables for various HR activities. For instance, one goal was to reduce turnover by 4% and recruitment costs by 20% in one year, both of which were accomplished. In addition, measures for assessing the performance of the HR department were set, and a regular reporting process was established for five major HR areas: staffing, compensation, benefits, training and development, and employee relations. Key indicators are tracked on a monthly basis.

After five years, the HR department at CalComp is seen as a viable business unit. Today, the HR department at CalComp has a different image with employees and managers. More importantly,

the HR department is playing a vital role for the corporation as it faces the challenges of the future.

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss how Charles Furniss and his HR staff played both strategic and operational roles at CalComp. **(20 Marks)**
2. Which of the six major HR management activities were mentioned in the case as part of changing the HR focus at CalComp? **(10 Marks)**
3. CalComp's HR strategic plan had to be endorsed by top management. Why do HR strategic plans have to flow from the top? **(10 Marks)**

SECTION B (60 MARKS)

INSTRUCTION

Answer any TWO questions from the following questions:

1. (a) What is the difference between the strategic and operational approach to human resource management? **[10 Marks]**

(c) Explain why human resource management has become important to the management of modern organizations.

2. (a) Discuss the following statement: “The same human resources activities must be performed in every organization, but special adaptations may be necessary in the public sector, in small businesses and internationally” **[10 Marks]**

(b) Explain how you would conduct a job analysis on a company that never had job descriptions, and how you would also deal with behavioural reactions to job analysis by employees **[10 Marks]**

3. (a) What is Human Resources planning and what differences exist in the responsibilities of line managers compared with HR Specialists? **[10 Marks]**

(b) Assume that you have to develop a human resource plan for a local bank, what specific external factors would be important for you to consider. Why? **[10 Marks]**

4. (a) What is human resources planning. Why must HR planning be seen as a process flowing from the organization's strategic plan? **[10 Marks]**
- (b) Describe the legal constraints that equal employment opportunity laws impose on recruitment **(10 Marks)**
5. (a) What is workplace diversity, and how would you go about ensuring that diversity is taken seriously in the workplace? **[10 Marks]**
- (b) Based on your understanding of Equal Employment Opportunity laws, what six factors would you consider in determining whether or not discrimination has occurred? **(10 Marks)**