

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

INSTITUTE OF POST-GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

MAIN EXAMINATION 2017-2018

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TITLE OF PAPER: Human RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

PROGRAMME AND SEMESTER: MBA SEMESTER II

COURSE CODE: BUS602

TIME ALLOWED: THREE (3) HOURS

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. THIS PAPER CONSISTS OF SECTION (A) AND (B)
2. THE CASE STUDY IN SECTION A IS COMPULSORY
3. ANSWER ANY THREE QUESTIONS FROM SECTION B

NOTE: you are reminded that in assessing your work, account will be given of the accuracy of language and the general quality of expression, together with the layout and presentation of your responses.

THIS PAPER MUST NOT BE OPENED UNTIL THE INVIGILATOR HAS GRANTED PERMISSION.

GOOD LUCK!!!

## **SECTION A (compulsory)**

Read the case below and answer the questions that follow.

### **CASE STUDY: BENEFITS OF STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (SHRM) AT NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL**

#### **Background**

North Somerset Council is a unitary authority comprising both rural and urban communities situated in the South West of England. Its role is to provide the full range of quality local government services to just over 190,000 residents, including one per cent from ethnic minority communities. During the past 10 years the population has doubled and it is projected rise by a further 10,000 in the next seven years. Key areas of population growth are in children of school age and the elderly. Tourism also accounts for an additional 4.5 million per day of staying visitors in the area each year.

There has been a decline in traditional industries of agriculture, manufacturing and tourism in recent years. However, financial, business and service activity in the wider West of England has increased. North Somerset has unemployment rates well below the national average but there are pockets of deprivation where low levels of incomes, high unemployment and poor housing exist.

The Audit Commission rated North Somerset as 'Fair' in its latest Comprehensive Performance Assessment. In all aspects of its work the council states that it is keen to listen and is ready to improve the way it provides services.

The strategic aims of the council are:

- promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all
- enhancing health and well-being
- protecting and improving the environment

- building safer communities
- increasing prosperity
- Ensuring continuous improvement.

The Human Resource (HR) Service has a key role in helping the council improve performance through its people. Its HR strategy identifies improvement activity for the following priority areas:

- developing leadership capacity
- developing skills and capacity of the workforce
- developing the organisation
- resourcing, recruitment, retention and diversity
- pay and rewards.

When it joined the consortium, North Somerset had already embarked on its journey of transformation by re-centralising all HR services to make better use of existing resources. Even so, these resources still appeared significantly lower than the local authority average. Following the reorganisation some HR practices and procedures needed to be harmonised and there were differing expectations across the organisation about what HR could provide.

There was a feeling that line managers still needed to be really convinced of the value of taking a greater role in people management. As a result, the HR Service was spending a high percentage of its time concentrating on operational issues rather focusing on strategic activity that was needed to help move the council forward. This called for a concerted effort to break out of the current cycle.

The objectives of the project were to:

- raise the profile of the HR function
- improve the quality of service provided to the council and to managers
- create HR capacity to actively support organisational change.

The main activities undertaken to achieve the project outcomes were:

### **Planning**

- planning meetings
- review key council documents
- define and agree consultation process

A series of meetings were held between the Equal opportunity (EO) consultant, the four HR managers and the Head of HR service and performance improvement to decide on project priorities and agree the methodology. Key documents were reviewed to check linkage of the HR strategy with corporate objectives. Lack of resources in the current HR service was identified as a significant barrier to improvement. So it was agreed that a key aspect of this project would be to gather a range of suitable evidence to put forward a sound business case for further HR resources during 2005 and beyond. The project proposal was then agreed with the head of HR Service and performance improvement and reported to the senior management team (SMT).

A group representing HR and a cross-section of managers from across the council was set up to help steer the work and to act as a sounding board for possible ways forward. This group met four times during the project to discuss issues such as:

- project plan
- proposed research with managers
- Service level agreement that was being developed alongside the project.
- implementation of project outcomes

### **Research and consultation**

- survey line managers
- run focus groups with managers
- one to one interviews with senior managers
- identify best practice in external organisations on strategic HR functions and ratios of employees to HR staff

This project involved considerable research to identify:

- recent experience of the HR service
- future expectations of managers and senior managers
- key HR priorities
- How the HR service was performing against the key priorities.

This was done to help HR service focus on how it could add the most value within the resources available and to gain feedback to help inform implementation. Benchmarking data was also collected to show good HR practice. HR measures and ratios of HR staff to other staff in local government and elsewhere.

### **Review**

- report on findings from consultation
- present and review with steering group

The main findings from the consultation suggested action needed to be taken on a number of issues to help improve service quality and credibility of the HR service. These were discussed with the steering group prior to action planning.

Recruitment was identified as a key priority for managers both now and in the future. Processes needed improving to get the right staff in to post more quickly to avoid compromising service quality and to ensure posts in shortage areas were filled.

The HR service also needed to:

- communicate better about the HR Service and its role
- be more proactive in helping the council solve HR issues
- develop better strategic links with services
- build closer relationships with line managers

### **Action plan**

- clarify role of the HR service
- focus on key HR priorities
- helping to ensure HR strategy is on schedule
- define and manage relationships across the organisation

- promote the IIR service
- resource and develop the IIR service

Actions taken includes the following:

- it was agreed with SMT that the current role of the IIR service is to focus on helping deliver on the key IIR priorities and the HR strategy
- resources *have* been switched and processes adjusted in the IIR service to *give* managers a more efficient recruitment service (this was done during project as a 'quick win')
- the business case for additional funding was made to SMT using evidence from the internal consultation and bench marking data on staff ratios and good practice and was successful
- a communications strategy has been developed to enable the HR Service to interact more positively across the council, to promote the service and generally 'keep in touch e.g regular slot at management networks, set up regular briefing sessions on HR issues for managers
- a system is being set up to regularly review customer satisfaction with IIR service current arrangements for managing relationships with managers, senior managers and staff are being reviewed e.g. The SLA is being used to promote HR, service standards and set out the split of roles between HR and managers
- a range of activities are being held with IIR staff to update them on current HR service issues to work through how these can best be addressed - further development is planned.

Of the key themes mentioned that were deemed fit for the Business' Project improvement in North Somerset were the following:

- technique: ensuring IIR is adding value to the organisation - by identifying key HR priorities, gaining feedback on how the IIR service is performing and taking action to improve services
  - fitness: developing the capability and confidence of the HR function to deliver - by taking action to build long term capability of the IIR service and raise credibility in the organisation
- teamwork: building an effective working relationship with the other organisational

- players by introducing an SLA to define key roles and responsibilities between HR and managers
- results: measuring the impact of HR activities in the organisation by developing measures in its SLA and establishing a baseline of data to track improvement in the HR service.

**ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS**

- a. Which environmental trends forced the council to improve its performance? (10)
- b. Describe the role of the HRM Department in the council. (10)
- c. What were the main advantages that were gained after completing the project? (10)
- d. Which lessons can the Swazi government institutions learn from this case? (10)\_

**Total****40 marks**

**SECTION B**

(Answer three questions from this section)

**QUESTION 2**

Using a graphic illustration, discuss the systems perspective to understanding Human Resource Management (20 marks)

**QUESTION 3**

Often Affirmative Action and Employment Equity are not clearly defined in the Swazi Context. Why is that the case and what programs would you institute to address the gaps . Please give justification for the proposed programmes (20 marks)

**QUESTION 4**

"Training and Development is an imperative for all employees from entry level to exit point". **Required** to plan and evaluate the training for an induction and performance improvement of front line management. (20 marks)

**QUESTION 5**

"The Ministry of Labour and Social Services expect all organisations to have in place Safety and Wellness Programme implemented as per the Occupational Safety and Health ACT (OSHA) , 2001".

- a. What are the health and safety considerations in different organisations in Swaziland?(10 marks)
- b. What would be the key contents of a Safety and Wellness policy in your focal organisation?.(10 marks)

**QUESTION 6**

Compensation should not be arbitrarily developed but should be based on accurate data which aids in the design of effective pay systems. What type of data would you need in designing the pay systems and the factors that will influence the chosen pay system for your organisation. (20 marks)