Developing Minimum Hiring Standards for your Organisation

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Do you have minimum hiring standards for your organisation? If you have, it means you have a good starting point to bring the best people into your business. If you do not have you need to start the process of developing the standards. Minimum hiring standards are the minimum requirements required for someone to be successful in a role. What I have noticed is that most organisations confuse job descriptions with minimum hiring standards. The two are not the same although they are related.

The starting point in developing the minimum hiring standards is to collect the required information to enable you to prepare the standards. You need to use or develop a properly standardised Job Analysis Questionnaire. Most of the job analysis questionnaires I see in Zimbabwe are nowhere near what you can use to develop minimum hiring standards. A generic job description cannot be used as a minimum hiring standard. Have you noticed that most job descriptions are so generic and majority copied from the internet?

Step one in developing minimum hiring standards is to administer the questionnaires to current employees or their managers so that you get credible information. The overall purpose of the job must be clearly articulated followed by the main duties. These must be ranked according to how frequently they are done and their importance to success in this role. This part is normally not a big challenge although there are still issues in terms of depth and quality of what people put here.

The second part is to come up with the minimum qualifications required for an individual to succeed in this role. Please note that these must be minimum. Most job incumbents put what they have not what is required as a minimum. If they have higher qualifications they tend to put their higher qualifications. If they have a lower qualifications they tend to put the lower qualifications. My experience shows that there are lots of distortions around qualifications put on job descriptions because people put what they have and not what is required. I have also seen people putting added advantage qualifications. Before adding anything as added advantage make sure you have the evidence in support that show that putting that extra qualification gives you extra value as an organisation. My experience shows that most of the things put as added advantage have no advantage to the organisation but advantage to the person. I have seen organisations leaving out very good candidates simply because they do not have a Master degree, when they have no evidence that in that role a masters degree would give extra value.

The same challenges noted above affect how experience is recorded on job profiles. People put what they have and not what is required as a minimum. Here I have also observed that the minimum experience required in a role is an arbitrary number. The number should be based on your own research internally from previous occupants of that role. Most organisations use 5 years for most roles, but this is an arbitrary number. You can use historical data on experience of incumbents and their performance to come up with a cut off minimum years required to deliver good performance.

It important to collect data on what technical competencies are required for the role through the same job analysis questionnaire. This is the technical knowledge related to the domain under study. It has nothing to do with qualifications.

The next stages are the most crucial. You need to collect data on the key driver of performance for the role. What cognitive profile is required? You may find the role requires high numerical reasoning, verbal reasoning, critical thinking etc. Other areas you need cover are psychomotor, physical, and sensory/perceptual abilities. There are standardized instruments available to collect information on these minimum hiring standards.

The last part is the personality traits required for the role. Most organisations just give personal attributes required for the job without the necessary customised research for their organisation. You find attributes such as outgoing, positive attitude, stress tolerance etc. being put on job profiles without a necessary study to establish if these are required and the level of importance.

Once all this information has been put together you can be confident that when you are hiring people everyone who comes into the organisation at least meet these standards. This assist your business to get the best people for the each job.

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