APPLE HRM

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1   Introduction

Many years ago, success or failure of any given company was mainly determined by the products

or services that the company was offering in the respective market that a given company was

serving in. However, as time has gone by since in the 21sty Century, there are many factors that

plays a major role in determining whether an organization will be effective or not. Indeed, it can

be noted that nowadays, effectiveness of an organization is not only a result of impressive

manufacturing capability and a prime location. To be precise, human resource management can

be explained as one of the reasons why companies in the 21st Century are able to stand strong

and take market leadership position (Cowham, 2008). Human resource as referred in this paper

entails the employees, staff, or workforce that is working for a given organization. The purpose

of this paper is to critically review the human resource management practices applied by Apple

Inc.

2   History of Apple

Prior to delving on the human resource management strategies that are used by Apple, it is ideal

to first provide an overview of Apple Inc. Apple Inc. is an international organization that designs

and produces various consumer electronics that among others comprises of personal computers,

phones and tablets. In addition, the company also develops computer software as well as

commercial servers. Moreover Apple also sells digital media content through the iTunes

platform as well as the Apple TV box. Apple Inc. was established in the year 1976 by the

legendary Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak and was by then referred to as Apple Computers. For

about thirty years after its inception, Apple mainly concentrated on production of personal

computers that at the time comprised of models such as Apple II, Macintosh and Power Mac.

However, the company faced stiff competition from other computer manufacturers and was at

one time staring at bankruptcy. Indeed, due to the decline in the fortunes of the company, in the year 1985, Steve Jobs was sacked by Apple even though he returned to the company 10 years later as he was hired as the CEO and charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the fortunes of the company changed. After returning to Apple, Steve Jobs implanted a novel corporate perspective of what can be explained as identifiable products and modest design which saw an organization that was making losses making profits. Some of the innovative products that helped change the fortunes of Apple Inc. comprised of iMac as well as the iPod. A few years later, Steve Jobs took a risk and introduced iPhone and the iPad into the market despite constant criticism from critics that the market was not ready for such products. The introduction of these two products in the market has been argued to be what propelled the company to unprecedented success since the products became popular and highly demanded throughout the world. Currently, Apple is considered to be among the biggest publicly traded companies in the world in terms of market capitalization and has a reported value of more than 600 Billion dollars (Apple, 2016).

3   Extent to which Apple's HRM is linked to organizational objectives

Bratton and Gold (1999) have explained that Human Resource Management comprises of a function in any given organizations that is intended at boosting the performance of the employees so that the overall objectives of the organization can be achieved. Therefore, an effective organization has to have HRM strategies that are closely linked to the organizational objectives.

On the other hand Cheng et al. (2010) have expounded that human resources play a vital role in the competitiveness of a given organization hence the need HRM is strongly linked to the

organizational objectives. From a review of Apple's HRM strategies and practices, it can be explained that there is sufficient proof to show that there is a very strong link between the company's organizational objectives and the HRM strategies. Indeed, it can be pointed out that human resource management policy at Apple is systematized around creating a strong and reassuring environment which is crucial in nurturing innovation. According to Illiev et al. (2004), that element has been validated by the fact that the company is a multi-national and is an equal opportunity employer. In addition to that, it can also be explained that the company has put in place various programs that enable the participation of its management and employees in the development of the organization. The approach is intended at ensuing that the employees take ownership and development of the company.

As explained by Prowse and Prowse (2010), in order for Apple to encourage the dynamic contribution of its employees to the achievement of the organizational objectives, the company directly involves its employees. For instance, Apple prompts its employee's ideals in addressing the issues that the company faces in the market. To be precise, the company ensures that feedback of the employee pertaining to what can be done in order to maximize their productivity is collected and acted upon.

On the other hand, when it comes to hiring of employees to fill vacant positions, it can be explained that Apple ensures that the individuals who are eventually hired by the company have various skills and expertise that are needed in attainment of the organizational objectives. Thus, it can be explained that the human resource management at Apple is strongly linked to the organizational objectives hence the reason the company has been able to achieve its objectives

over the years. Indeed, if the HRM in place at Apple was not linked to organizational objectives, then there is a high chance that the organization would not have been effective as it has been in the last few decades.

4   Apple Inc. approach to recruitment and selection

Corbridge and Pilbeam (1998) have discussed recruitment to comprise of the process that recognizes that there is a need to employ a person or persons at some given time so that a position that is vacant can be filled. The scholars have also expounded that selection entails choosing or selecting a specific applicant from a pool of applicants so that he/she can feel the vacant position. As noted by Bratton and Gold (1999), it is important that companies have effective recruitment and selection plans in place since failure to do so will result to the companies hiring people who are not suitable for the vacancies that they fill and that can have major negative impacts to the operations of the organization in the long term.

As explained by Hein (2015), Apple understands the need of recruiting the ideal employees hence the reason the company has a grueling recruitment process as it wants to ensure that the employees that it ends up hiring are the employees who competent and have the desired skills to execute the responsibilities that will be assigned.

4.1   Phase 1: Recognize the vacancy and acknowledge the need for hiring

As is the case with any other organisation, the first phase in Apple's recruitment and hiring process entails recognizing that there is a vacancy that needs to be filled and then acknowledging that the vacancy can only be filled through hiring. At this phase, the company specifies the roles that the person who will be filling the vacancy will be assigned and the skills and requirements

that the person might have in order to ensure that he/she is capable of carrying out the assigned responsibilities effectively. In addition, it can also be explained that during this phase, Apple also decides whether it is going to recruit from inside or from the outside. Recruiting from inside involves the company hiring an employees who is already working for the company while on the other hand, recruiting from outside involves the company hiring from external applicants who are applicants that are not currently working with the organization

4.2   Phase 2: Advertising the post

The next phase entails advertising of the post since in order for the company to ensure that it receives applications from applicants who have the required skills and competencies, it is vital that the post is advertised. The channels or mediums of advertisement that will be used by the organization will be mainly determined by whether the company is recruiting internally or externally. Indeed, in situations where the company is recruiting from within, the employees whom the company believes have the required skills and experiences are sent an internal email that has detailed information about the vacancy. In addition, the vacancy is also posted on the company's notice board. On the other hand, in situation where Apple is recruiting from the outside, the vacancy is initially posted on the company's web pages. Thereafter, the number of applications received will determine whether the company needs to advertise the post in other platforms or not. For example, if the company received few applications, the vacancy is advertised on newspapers as well as various online platforms in order to create awareness resulting to many applicants applying for the job. Nevertheless, it can be noted that applications have to still be submitted through the company's website mainly due to the fact that the online platform can be able to shortlist some candidates by using elimination criteria.

4.3   Phase 3: Reviewing applications

Once the applications have been received, Apple's HR department reviews the applications so that it can shortlist the candidates who will then be invited for the interview. Indeed, once the company has shortlisted the candidates, it then conducts three screening interviews with the candidates who get through the three screening interview been invited to attend interview at Apple offices.

4.4   Phase 4: Conducting the interviews

This phase involves the applicants who have been shortlisted to attend the interviews taking part in the interview. The nature of the interviews that are used depends on the nature of the task. For instance, applicants attending interviews for senior posts can expect to take part in five different interviews with some of the interviews been carried out by interview committees while other interviews would be carried out by HR officials. The face interview are expected to last an average of half an hour each implying that if an applicant takes part in five face interviews, the applicant will spend about two and a half hours been interviewed.

4.5   Phase 5: Selection

Phase five involves selecting the ideal candidate to fill the vacant post. Again, just as was the case with the interviews, the nature of the task determines the selection technique to be used. For instance, the applicant to be selected to fill a senior management post will have to be selected by a selection panel that would comprise of Apple employees from different departments. On the other hand, in case the post to be filled is a junior post, the HR officials or a manager can do the selection.

4.6   Phase 6: Hiring

Once the company has selected the employee that it is going to hire to fill the vacant post, the

company then informs the individual that he/she has been selected. The individual is then invited

to Apple offices so that an employment contract can be signed between the company and the

individual. During this phase, the individual gets the chance to negotiate the employment terms

before the employment contract is signed. In the unlikely situation that HR officials and Apple

cannot agree on employment terms the company might have to hire another applicant or even

start the recruitment process again.

4.7   Legal aspects to consider during the recruitment process

When undertaking the recruitment process, it is important that Apple considers various legal

aspects since if legal aspects are not considered, the company could find itself been sued. In

particular, it can be explained that there are two legal aspects that Apple needs to consider.

4.7.1   Equality

It is important that Apple ensures that during the entire recruitment process, no applicant is

discriminated upon. The reason why that is the case is due to the fact that discrimination is illegal

and Apple could be punished if it can be proved that the recruitment and hiring process that was

used was discriminatory in nature.

4.8   Fair compensation

The other legal aspect that Apple needs to consider and has always considered during the hiring

and recruitment process entails the aspect of compensation on offer. The reason why that is the

case is due to the fact that it is paramount that the compensation on offer is fair and complies

with the polices regarding compensation of the employees.

From the review of the recruitment and hiring process used by Apple, it can be noted that the process adequately ensures that the company ends up recruiting the applicant who is most qualified to fill the vacant position.

5   Techniques applied by Google to manage and measure the employee performance and how strong performance is measure

Corbridge and Pilbeam (1998) have explained that performance management involves methodical approach to enhancing both individual and team performance so that the goals and objectives of the organization can be used. To measure performance of the employees and at the same time manage it, different techniques can be used. Some of the techniques used comprises of; outputs and inputs, financial measures, impact and contribution, productivity levels, quality of the services provided and benchmarking approach.

5.1   How Apple manages and measure the employee performance

5.1.1   Productivity levels

Apple uses productivity levels of the employees to measure their performance. For example, the productivity of the Apple employees working at Apple official retail stores is mainly measured by the sales volume of each employee. On the other hand, the company's Research and Development team performance is measured by the innovations or the researches carried out by the team.

5.1.2   Performance reviews

Employees working at Apple have their performance reviewed by their managers after a certain period of time. During the reviews, the employees get to know whether they performed

according to the expectations of the company or whether they need to put more effort in order to improve their performance.

5.2   Reward of strong performance at Apple

Apple understands the need to reward strong performance by the employees as the company is aware of the fact that rewarding of strong performance can act as a motivator for the employees. To reward top performance, the company uses various approaches. For example, strong performance by senior employees working for Apple is rewarded by offering the employee some shares of the company which makes the employees own certain percentage of the company. On the other hand, other employees are rewarded by salary increase, bonuses and holiday vouchers.

6   Extent to which Apple offers flexible working practices and the extent to which these practices contributes to success or failure of the company

As is the case with majority of technology companies as well as other organizations that have realized the benefits of flexible working, Apple has also embraced the flexible working concept. Nevertheless, from the review of the working practices, it can be explained that flexible working is not fully incorporated in the operation of the company since only a small percentage of the employees who are permitted to take part in the flexible working policy.

Nevertheless, considering the nature of the operations of the company as well as the position that the company wants to achieve in the market, it is easy to understand the reason why Apple is not keen on embracing flexible working concept fully. In that view, flexible working at Apple cannot be explained to have contributed to the unprecedented success that the company has enjoyed over the years.

7   How Apple enhances the well-being of its employees

Muller-Camen, Croucher, and Leigh (2008) discussed that there is a need for organizations to ensure that the well-being of their employees is catered for as employees are likely to be highly productive when their well-being is catered for. Apple seems to concur with that view as the company has put in place various measures in order to ensure that the well-being of the employees working for Apple is catered for. Some of the measures adopted by Apple in order to enhance the well-being of the employees are:

a) Dental policies

b) Medical insurance

c) Kindergartens

d) Children medical cover

Thus, it can be explained that by Apple taking care of the well-being of the employees, the company ensures that the employees are able to give their best for the company.

8   Conclusions

The human resource management practices in place at Apple can be explained to be ideal as they have played a crucial role in ensuring that the company is effective. Thus, there is no need for the company to change the strategies.

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