INFORMATION MANAGEMENT: AN OVERVIEW ON HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING


[ This paper focuses on the various elements of Human Resources Planning (HRP) in the context of Library and Information Centres. In this paper the authors discuss about the Human Resources Planning process and quality of products and services in Library and Information Centres. ]

1. INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Planning is the process that helps organisations to provide adequate human resources to achieve their current and future organisational objectives. As we know that planning is an analytical process involving various aspects, so as to produce quality products and to offer best services in libraries and information centres, various plan exercises such as determination of desired goals, assessment of the future in relation to the environmental changes, selection of activities, preparation of written plan document, etc. will have to be done, which will give rise to mobilisation of human resources. The result of HRP is marvelous. This will be reflected in higher turnover, lower absenteeism, fewer breakdowns, lower migration and more than anything else, higher quality of work.
2. NEED AND PURPOSE OF HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING

Large libraries, whether academic, public, special, or national, are becoming increasingly complex to manage. In response to cultural, and technological changes, these libraries need an increasingly broad array of talent to achieve their mission successfully. Not only are professional librarians with varying disciplinary backgrounds required, but other professionals are needed such as archivists, conservators, lawyers, fund-raisers, personnel experts, and computer scientists, to name a few. As new technologies are integrated into the fabric of already complex libraries, new problems will emerge in human resource planning, and previously successful solutions will have to be re-examined. Human Resource Planning is the activity of the management which is aimed at coordinating the requirements for and the availability of different types of employees. This involves ensuring that the firm has enough of the right kind of people at the right time and also adjusting the requirements to the available supply [2].

3. ELEMENTS OF HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING

The various elements of Human Resource Planning are:-

(i) Estimating manpower requirements quantitatively and qualitatively
(ii) Recruitment and selection of personnel.
(iii) Induction and deployment.
(iv) Personnel development.
(v) Ensuring quality to products and services, keeping customer satisfaction as the primary objective.
(vi) Overall assessment of performance and fine-tuning [4].

3.1 Estimating Manpower Requirements.

Library is a growing organization. With the expanding dimensions of the library and information field and its complexities, estimating manpower requirements for library and information centers is very important. Besides basic background in a subject field, every professional person should have a computer and communication background in addition to library and information science qualifications.
The supporting staff of most libraries and information centers consist of workers with a wide range of skills from para-professional to administrative and clerical. The first step in human resource planning is to estimate personnel requirements for the present as well as for the future, taking into account organizational overall objectives and projected developments. Estimating staff requirements for large institutions has to be done systematically using the methods of forecasting techniques. The top management has to assess the need, getting data for the actual requirements in the different units, from the line managers. In smaller organizations, the exercise is done by the top person from his expert knowledge of the organisation and competence in forecasting.

Estimates of staff requirements of a library and information centre has to be based upon the activities, programs, projects and targets to be achieved over a period of time. The quantitative assessment of requirements over a period of three to five years constitute a particular phase of growth. The qualitative nature of persons required has to be simultaneously assessed, through techniques such as job analysis, job description and job evaluation.

The drastic changes occurring now-a-days in libraries and information centres necessitate the introduction and planning of new services such as literature search using CD-ROM, online databases, sales and marketing of library and information centre products, etc. There is a definite link between education and economic growth. Based on the forecasts of educated manpower requirements over a specific period the planners indicate the direction of development of the educational sector over the same specific period.

The planning process may not always give exact forecasts. To be effective it should be a continuous process with provision for control and review. The first step in the manpower planning process is the establishment of a planning horizon. One should know the period for which the manpower plan will apply. Then the specific corporate objectives and strategies should be clear. Based on these estimates or projections for demand and supply, manpower can be made using the approach and methods.

In library and information centres professionals should have an edge over non-professionals. In order to work effectively in modern Information centres, the existing staff should be encouraged to attend seminars of learned societies.
3.2 Recruitment and Selection.

Recruitment is essentially a process to discover sources to obtain manpower and to employ effective measures for contacting these employees, which will be forming an efficient workforce. The recruitment process involves five different elements, which include;

(a) a recruitment policy
(b) a recruiting organisation
(c) a forecast of manpower requirements
(d) the development of manpower sources, and
(e) techniques for utilising these sources.

The process of selection involves placement in effective positions. The selection process depends upon effective job analysis and differential recruitment and placement. The selection process involves usually seven steps [3].

(a) Preliminary screening of applications.
(b) Review of application forms
(c) Physical examination
(d) Checking references
(e) Psychological testing
(f) Interview and
(g) Internal promotion programs.

3.3 Induction and Development

The term "Induction" means installation or initiation. The new recruit is installed into a position or job, and initiated into the team that makes up the work force of the organization. Induction is the process of introducing new recruits to an organization and explaining their role within it. It usually begins with a guided tour of the building etc. Induction is important because impression gained by new employees during this period can influence their perception of the organization for many years to come.
Once the employee gets his orientation to the organisation, posting the person to the right place wherein he/she would be most suitable is referred to as deployment. The skills, responsibility, ability to work in a team and such other qualities of individuals are important considerations in the deployment of staff. If deployment of personnel were not done carefully, serious problems of conflicts would arise in the organisations [1].

3.4 Personnel Development

In India, libraries and information centres are operating as constituent parts of various institutional complexes like R & D Establishments, Universities, Government Departments and others, and therefore are largely conditioned and controlled by personnel policies and plans of the parent organizations. To achieve the organisational objectives, targets of growth and development, the human resource development of an organisation has to make a plan to get the best out of its carefully selected employee's [4].

The various personnel development programs are:-

(a) Performance Appraisal of staff;
(b) Training and Development;
(c) Changing perspectives and attitudes;
(d) Communication.

3.5 Ensuring Quality to Products and Services.

Quality Circles are small groups of employees who normally work together, meeting regularly to agree upon ways of improving quality, productivity, etc. There are international standards available to maintain quality in library and information centres. In India for example using CCF format for creation of database will ensure a standard for data exchange. This in turn help us in providing quality service in networking environment.
3.6 Overall Assessment of Performance and Fine Tuning

Planning is not just a one-time exercise. It is a continuing effort to judge its effectiveness in the actual implementation process. While executing a plan, in course of time, it may undergo changes, due to various problems that had not been anticipated while preparing a plan. In practical implementation of the plan, the plan may require modification. Therefore plan efficacy in terms of result achieved should be assessed at periodical intervals. This type of evaluation would identify the strength and weakness of the plan. The weak portion of the plan has to be revised. This type of assessment would permit returning of the plan to ensure success [4]

4. CONCLUSION

We can see a drastic transformation in the consumer market of product oriented society to a service oriented one. In all walks of life more and more emphasis is given to the quality aspect of the service. If at all a library and Information centre has to be appraised it will be on the strength of its human resources, which impart quality service.

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