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Case Study: Job Analysis at Go-Forward

Group 1

Vo Minh Ky
Nguyen Huu Nghi
Jérémie Silberschmidt
Vo Nguyen Thu Trang
Phan Huynh Hanh Dung
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. THE CASE STUDY REQUIREMENT ................................................................. 3
2. THE STUDENT APPROACH SUMMARY ....................................................... 4
3. THE OVERALL VIEW SUMMARY ................................................................. 5
4. PROBLEM IDENTIFYING ........................................................................... 5
5. PROBLEM SOLVING AND RECOMMENDATION ....................................... 6
6. THE SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN ........................... 10
7. CONCLUSION ............................................................................................ 11
8. REFERENCE ............................................................................................... 11
1. The Case Study Requirement

*Go-Forward* is a large retailer of computer products. With 442 stores in the US and a plan for an additional 70 stores in the next two years, Go-Forward is the fastest growing computer retailer in the US. The company’s most important strategic objective is to meet customer requirements and expand the customer base to include more small-business owners with whom Go-Forward can establish long-term relationships. Yong Kim has been contracted to develop a plan for a “Go-Forward University” (a corporate training program) that will provide the training for all store managers before they take over the management of a store.

In addition, Yong Kim has been asked to evaluate the hiring process for store managers. She is to assess problems and suggest possible solutions. In recent years, Go-Forward, like other retailers, has had difficulty recruiting store managers. The problem appears to have worsened in recent years. Its effects have been exacerbated by an increase in the turnover rate of other store-based staff, which is now higher than the market average for the retail sector, despite the highly competitive remuneration packages that Go-Forward pays. Go-Forward has traditionally recruited store managers from outside the company, with 60% having been recruited this way. District managers, who are each responsible for between 8 and 13 stores in a geographical area, have had considerable discretion in the methods and criteria they used to hire store managers. Recently however, the shortage of store managers has become a more acute problem, especially in areas with an abundance of retail outlets where retail store managers are in great and increasing demand. On some occasions, the company has had to employ a costly recruitment firm to identify managerial candidates, with frequent advertisements in some of America’s more costly daily newspapers.

Jamie Carlyle, the vice president of human resources at Go-Forward, has made three specific requests of Yong Kim:

1. Many district managers have required an MBA or at least three years’ experience as a store manager as essential selection criterion. Carlyle wants Yong Kim to devise a method for evaluating the appropriateness and value of these as job specifications.

2. Carlyle wants Yong Kim to develop training modules for store managers to be included in “Go-Forward University”. Consequently, Yong Kim will need to conduct a job analysis of the store manager positions to determine what knowledge, skills, competencies and abilities are essential or critical for the job.

3. Carlyle is also interested in a more ‘job-oriented’ approach to selecting store managers. Yong Kim needs to make recommendations on how to proceed in order to meet this objective.


Assessment Question

Write a 2000-word formal business report (Executive Summary NOT required) detailing the actions Yong Kim needs to take in order to be able to satisfy Jamie Carlyle’s three requests.
You need to explain your reasoning and support your suggested actions by reference to relevant academic and research literature (correctly formatted using Chicago formatting).

(NB: You are not required to solve Yong Kim’s problems. Your task is to describe what Yong Kim needs to do to solve them!)

2. The Student Approach Summary

For the academic methodology approach (learning approach): Based on the case study requirements in the above, it is questions-based approach; therefore students (Group 1) firstly understand that this report should be aligning with same methodology (question-based). However, based on the assessment questions, there is requirement to write a 2000 word formal business report to detailing the actions Yong Kims need to solves the problem; hence the students choose the methodology of thesis-based report in order to match with the final requirement while still making sure the thesis-based approach till addressing all the questions mentioned above. The ending purpose from the overall point of view in this assignment report is to figure out how the students understand the assignment and apply all the experience and the Human Resource Management knowledge to solve the case study problem while still learning how to address those problems by writing effective, clearing thesis.

For the case study content approach: Based on the “Job Analysis at Go Forward” case study, the students decide to play the role as Human Resource expert in consulting the Go Forward Company to address and indentify its Human Resource Management issue at their working place. From then, students give the tailor made solutions and recommendations together with implementation action plan for Go Forward. The purpose of this report can also play consulting services for Go Forward. The reason students choose this approach is because students want to make it is closest and reflect to “real case in life” so this report can be viewed as more practical and useful tool, not only the theoretical assignment.

The main contain will be in four parts:

1) The overall view summary

2) Problem indentifying

3) Problem solving and recommendation

4) The implementation and action plan

All the details, analysis, information and the group work are mainly in the below sections. All the four parts are the analysis of how to build up the job profile (address to Question 1 and 3) and develop the training and development program (address to Question 2)
3. The overall view summary

Go Forward (computers products retailing) is dealing with difficulties with its Human Resources system and program, particularly in hiring and training and development. On one aspect, the high rate of current staff turnover is above the market average rate. On the other hand, the other challenge is to start the hiring demand of huge amount of staffs in next two years (70 store managers which are equivalent with 20% of the current employee). Go Forward have not finally decided on the job requirement yet for its to-be-70 store manager. The Go Forward’s current store manager requirement is now just based on the current job activities requirement and makes the use of the current District Manager job nature such as MBA degree or 03 years store manager experiences. Moreover the Human Resource system and program such as creating, developing and choosing training courses, etc... are not yet strong and robust processed. There are no continuously training and improving system to retain and develop talent and good performer and/or at least to seed new and average employee for long term goal. At this moment, Go Forward wants to change and create new program for more effective Human Resource Management.

4. Problem indentifying

The first and foremost critical step needed to be done is to identify the root deep causes to understand what makes the status like the existing one Go Forward is facing with. As due to the computer services retailing is growing business and Go Forward is among the fastest rising star, the challenging of high demand for hiring among peak competition period is reasonable and understandable. It appears that Go Forward does not yet build up and focus on hiring and retaining effectively such as Go Forward is currently hiring 60% from external market, pay high cost for recruiting agent and very high turnover rate. The two factors – hiring effectively and training properly plays very important roles in this context which need to have very strong focus and attention from Go Forward if they want to solve the current problems. Within the strong and severe competition, while any competitor also wants the best and talent staff to gain and build up their competitive advantages, hiring is absolutely facing lots of roadblocks. Then, if Go Forward could not keep their employee staying at the company, the whole costly process- beginning from hiring and some initial training- can be considered as the zero achievement. There will be always very high possibilities of “jumping job” in the growing market and growing economy. Therefore how to solve and avoid those high risks is the art of Human Resource Management. Thus, for the Human Resource department, Go Forward should pay lot of attention and seek out suitable solution for hiring, training and retaining. Firstly, whenever hiring is conducted properly at the right time, the rest is easier. Secondly is how to develop and grow them up into the next level also need to be continuous improved. This can sustain the low over rate. Combining all those things, will definitely help to make Go Forward current problems disappear.
5. Problem solving and recommendation

Next after indentifying problems, it is convenient for Go Forward to discuss among Human Resource Management System and Go Forward Organization/Board of Director for its appropriate solutions and recommendation for the issues.

Firstly is to have an effective hiring system and hiring program in place to have the appropriate recruitment and selection criteria which also matching with job oriented strategy. Go Forward chooses the job-oriented approach to select its store manager which is the right decision. Students also recommend some other methodologies and practices to select store manager which will be addressed very soon later. Based on the technique developed by Sidney Fine and colleagues in 1944, there was a consideration of job oriented (job task) that is concerned with what gets done (job content-task). And there is another approach in view of Industrial and organizational psychology which is worker oriented to consider the behavior toward the way employee fulfill the job task (behaviors based). Because Go Forward moves up with high speed and faces with large hiring demand, the basic job requirement is the minimum essential elements need to have to perform the tasks. Choosing job oriented approach can help Go Forward less pressure in recruit enough its new 70 staffs as its basic job task is not so special and particular rare in the labor market. The new hire can start the job right soon after “on board” with some key job essential and critical elements. In order to do so, Go Forward must develop the very firm, large, precision and detailed job specifications database to create the job competency profile (here after called as job profile). The job profile can be viewed as the competency profile, but it is more general and includes the competency profile within it. The competency model seeks to identify abilities needed to perform a job. A CIPD report (2007c) found that 86 per cent of organizations surveyed are now using competency-based interviews in some way. This model is a more meaningful way of underpinning recruitment and selection in the current fast-moving world of work and can accordingly contribute more effectively to secure high performance. The job profile is very important and can be used from creating job vacancy, job relevant selection procedures, performance appraisals to training program, determining compensation levels and job re-design. Building up those profiles can help to address the other matter also (training and developing). The well job profile includes job analysis as job description (Table 1), job specification and job performance standards. …
Table 1: Example of job description:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff management</th>
<th>Recruiting, hiring developing and training local staff and taking care of payroll and scheduling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business operations</td>
<td>Managing profit and loss, safety and security, facility management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manage, create, back-up store business documents on computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be knowledgeable of current product and industry trends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analytical and problem solving skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decision making skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective verbal and listening communications skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective written communications skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Possess cultural awareness and sensitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate sound work ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product management:</td>
<td>Ordering, receiving, handling damage products…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control inventory through point of sale inventory management system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Merchandise product, create displays, create store/product signage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving:</td>
<td>Handling unusual circumstances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Example of Store Manager Job Performance:

- Reach revenue target over 95%
- Customer satisfaction over 90%
- On-time delivery and payment
- Align with approval budget within 10% variance
- Maintain store in good condition and clean
- Low staff turn over less than 5%

In Table 1, Table 2 the requirements cover a large overview observation which needs employees to have big pictures thinking, integration and synthesize skills to observe and make decision toward business demand. The store manager should handle all responsibilities related
to the store itself, including staff, workplace and products, and should report and communicate
closely with the district manager about results and specific issues. Therefore, Go Forward
chooses the MBA or three years experience as a job requirement for store manager selection is
the right decision. However, it should be better if Go Forward can prefer the MBA and
experience of store managing. It will enhance the staff skills to use their experience and
management knowledge to well manage the store effectively.

What makes the difference between a MBA owner and others is his knowledge about Retail
Industry and details of Managing a retail outlet. The owner of a MBA degree has already proven
his/her ability to:

- Understand the job responsibilities related to the management of a store
- Understand the day-to-day business operations, accounting and administration
- Make extremely significant decisions such promotions, staffing, pricing…
- Work under pressure and lead a team
- Understand the key-points of the company and communicate with the superiors
- Handle any situation in the retail scenario

Because there is a need to create the look of a perfectly stocked, clean and well-organized
store, such person should have received correct training to handle such responsibilities.
Besides, we can be totally confident that such person will catch up the “Go-Forward University”
training, as he has the sufficient learning background.

We can also say one more thing that the manager with a MBA and long time experience has the
sufficient credibility to gain the respect and the regard from their employees. He/she is able to
impulse a vision to the “local” business.

From the job oriented approach during recruiting and selecting, Go Forward can use several
common, conventional and creative and proactive methodologies. All the hiring process need to
align with the core job profile at the very initial to final steps such as screening job application
form store manager, primary interview with Human Resource department….Go Forward should
design interview tests around the store management real activities to assets and evaluate how
well and quick the candidate understand the job scope. The company can create its value to
encourage the need of finish the job tasks, the basic job element in time and create the very
tight and short timeline to finish the job requirement. Go Forward can develop the standard
process or procedure for each important and critical element of job and utilize these documents
during the job interview and/or selection tests. Go Forward could make reference for its desire
candidates from other people base on the scale of job accomplishment from his/her previous
jobs. The company should pay attention to the candidate that is very responsible for the job
requirement and he or she should not too much creative and too much flexibility for all the
aspect of his jobs. Because processing too much creative mind, it is good for the job
requirement however this employee can ignore the normal tasks and create other way to do this. In this case, this leads to unmatched with Go Forward job oriented original strategy.

From the other point of view regarding job oriented approach, we recommend to add the value of the behavior of the store manager as the selected factor during recruiting process. As mention earlier, the worker oriented to consider the behavior toward the way employee fulfills the job task (behaviors based). We believe the behavior and attitude are still very high impact and valid until this moment of time. Especially with the railing industry where almost of the job dimension is interacting with internal and external customers. Go Forward should offer some real case work activities test for store manager to assess their customer response is appropriate and/or fit with Go Forward company culture beside only testing the capability to perform the job. Go Forward can do this implicit or explicit to well address the customer oriented attitude from store managers. Go Forward has to take a second consideration towards applicant passion, motivation, the skills of leading change, leading people, leading flexibility and team work collaboration. Retail industry often deals with seasonal demand which require flexibility adaptation and well adjustment. Moreover, the store manager should have the business acumen abilities for this job position. Store manager is the forefront job who dealing with customer extensively thus he/she can well sense which products/services are requested, lacked and in shortage. Store managers can use their business acumen to consult the board of director for the business expansion or growing.

The next important aspect we need to create and improve is the training and development system and program. As mentioned earlier, the job analysis or the job profile is again the very important and useful tool using to understand which training and development might and must be required. The principal responsibility of a store manager is handling and overseeing all the day-to-day processes that are carried out in the store. He/she manages the product inventory, salespersons, goods for display, sales, etc. However, he/she just manages a record of all products and the people who are responsible for managing the products. Apart from product and customer management, he/she also takes care of the interests of members in his sales team as they are the ones who are directly contact with consumers. Overall, the training should cover both functional, technical standards and behavioral components.

The technical often includes company values, systems, procedures and legal requirements. This level of training often consists company specific training on customer service, performance management and commercial effectiveness. Store manager must learn the skills to attract consumers and clients. He/she has to ensure that the products and goods in the store are fully satisfying the needs of customers. He/she also plays an important role in the advertising section. A store manager works with the advertising manager to prepare plans and advertising policies that would create new customers for the business. However, one of their main jobs is also to determine how many goods are actually on display, how many products are in the store inventory, what are the primary demands of customers, etc. The ideal store manager ought to have excellent customer service and interpersonal skill, book-keeping, analytical and problem solving, decision making, effective verbal and written communication, listening, computer including the ability to operate a cash register, computerized accounting, spreadsheet and word processing programs at a highly proficient level, time management
The functional training need to address to develop store manage the skill to manage their staff. Hiring efficient employees is an important responsibility handed over to the store manager. He/she has to supervise and participate in recruiting by taking interviews of eligible candidates. However, in large retail stores, he/she may get help from a Human Resource professional for candidate screening processes and other recruitment activities. He/she also has a very important duty of imparting training and development to employees and salespersons. Training and development is essentially needed for employees to achieve sales targets and deliver best services to consumers in a better manner.

Store manager must enhance employee motivation to contribute to encourage salespersons in performing their jobs efficiently. The store manager is in charge of the salary as well as implement promotional scheme to motivate the staff in the store. He/she carries out workplace scheduling processes. He also has to participate in team development activities which enable employees to bond together and work as a team.

He/she has to coordinate with divisional heads regarding setting of policies and strategies which are likely to be successful in his/her respective area.

Behavioral training contains leadership styles, coaching, delegating, motivating teams, managing difficult people and situations. This training module should encourage the value of honest, trustworthy and fairness. He/she must respect all the stakeholders and demonstrate sound work ethics.

Moreover, Go Forward can create the ideas platform to allow all the store managers from all the retail stores within company can share ideas and learn from each other (The same with Work Out Program from General Electric-developed by Jack Welch ex-CEO). Go Forward should encourage for risk taking and implement good ideas, especially the lean ideas, the ideas to reduce waste,...The ending purpose that those good ideas are continuously heard and implemented and make the store is in perfect places.

6. **The solution implementation and action plan**

The implementation plan needs to focus on measurement and timely control to adjust and improve whenever needed. Go Forward needs to include measurement system to track the hiring program such as whether we spend less effort than before to select store manager after creating and applying the very close and exact job specifications; tracking of how can the job profile is used, what is the frequency it is processed and how is the feedback from all employees about the usefulness of job profile. The implementation plan should consider tight concrete milestones to review and adjust accordingly. Only doing this, the Go Forward Human Resource performance would be improved. Otherwise, the whole Human Resource system cannot be well matched and kept up with the change and upgrade of the company. Go Forward might need to pay more monitoring on the budget planning and granted fund to ensure all new ideas can be implemented successfully. The training university needs to modify to update with some law changes, some new skill emerged that need to add into the current training system. The Go Forward University should have the very robust measuring and evaluating system for all its training activities to assess its efficiency. For instance, every course is given evaluation form.
after conducting training and regularly survey about the course take away from course can be used in its employee daily job.

7. Conclusion

The challenge of hiring and training and development employee is not new roadblocks within any organization. There are many companies facing the strong competition not only on their commercial market but also running up in how to recruit, develop the talent pool and retaining them for long term vision. This human resources war or talent attracting competition is especially high in growing and emerging economy industry. The solutions for those issues are how to develop the robust and sustainable foundation of hiring system and create the lasting working atmosphere for employee to reach their freely own growth. Hiring the right people at the first time always make the rest (process) become less rough. Go Forward can receive its low staff turnover with building up its perfect job profile solutions, thus apply it for all other aspects of its human resources such as create job vacancy, job relevant selection procedures, performance appraisals and training program, determining compensation levels and job redesign. The training and developing tool as part of Go Forward University should cover technical, functional and behavior training. This training aims to improve and develop the “round” employee that can have the overview observation and wise decision making to achieve Go Forward’s strong growth in the near future.

8. Reference
Employee oriented approach: