

EFFECTIVE OCCUPATIONAL COUNSELLING FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

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Abstract: Recruitment is usually a long-term and expensive process that generates substantial risk. A survey showed that, depending on the job position, costs connected with replacing an employee range from one third of annual pension to the level of two-year salary in the case of senior managers. Being aware of these costs, the most of organizations worldwide and in Poland are planning the recruitment process to verify the level of concrete competencies of a potential candidate. Despite this advanced system of recruitment, one of the major concerns that human resource departments are facing when searching for future employee is insufficient competencies. Enterprises today are searching for talents, with talent in the recruitment process being a wide concept which, depending on a job position, might mean quite different things.

Keywords: employment, unemployment, occupational development system.

Labour market in Poland

Employment in Poland represents a major problem for both those who seek employment and the employers. Similar problems can be observed in other European countries, especially in those from the area of former communist bloc (Jenčová et. al., 2013). Unemployment rate in January 2014 in Poland reached 14% while it amounted to 13.4% in December 2013, and 14.2% in January 2013 (STAT GOV). Therefore, some variations can be observed throughout the year, however, without a substantial effect on the trend. A trend of around 14% has been maintained for several years. Being aware of constant high level of unemployment, both employers and employees have to search for innovative activities, both in terms of the recruitment process and the methods of preparation of prospective employees for this process. The prospects for changing this status seem to be promising. The Manpower report shows that, in five regions studied in Poland, an increase in net employment is expected, reaching even 12% depending on the region (ManpowerGroup). Although the prospects are positive, the highest increase in unemployment rate in Poland is reported in the group of people with higher education level (Kot and Szczepanik). Although the absolute number of the unemployed in this group is the lowest, its increase is, however, the highest. One of the most natural methods to prevent this situation is to increase expenditures for education. Expenditures on higher, secondary and primary education are increasing in the most of the European Union countries (Ślusarczyk and Herbuś, 2012). Countries of the European Union have been making a concerted effort to realize the concept of the European school which would be subject to continuous

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betterment (Ślusarczyk and Grondys, 2011). Improvement of knowledge and competencies among prospective candidates do not guarantee successful employment in the organization where a person applied for the job. A substantial problem might be the method of preparation and participation of the candidate in the recruitment process. Even perfectly prepared candidates might fail to be successful during a job interview.

Allocation of employees

Allocation of employees is understood to mean finding employees for individual job positions, quitting jobs or making employees redundant in order to find candidates with specific competencies that helps achieve the organization's goals (Chang, 2012; Ferencová and Jurková, 2012; Król and Ludwicyński, 2006). Selection and recruitment of an employee represents a process which involves a series of activities that lead to filling the vacancies with competent employees whose work should contribute to achievement of the goals and mission of the organization (Zhou; 2009; Pawlak, 2003). Two basic methods of recruitment of employees for the position which is actually filled is recruitment inside the organization and external recruitment. Regarding the external recruitment, there are several basic techniques to find an employee in the market. The methods of finding employee can be also divided into passive and active methods. The passive method or recruitment is cheaper and less demanding for the organization and consists in repeated analysis of the CVs which are already available in the organization from previous recruitment processes. The active method of recruitment is understood to mean taking concrete actions in order to find new candidates in the labour market. The basic active method of finding new employees is advertising in the press and Internet portals, with the advertisements containing expectations towards prospective employees, often termed as a candidate's profile. Another active method of searching for employees is to cooperate with head-hunting enterprises. The organizations usually decide to hire head hunters only to recruit medium-level and higher managers, mainly due to the costs involved. The price for such services usually ranges from two to three salaries of the employee being recruited, unless they do not quit the job within six months from being employed. Obviously, the fee for head hunters is always negotiable. Another method of active recruitment is special events. Prospective employers encourage the prospective candidates to apply for jobs during open door days or through participation in fairs organized by gminas, employment offices and universities. These events offer opportunities to advertise the organizations that search for employees by means of multimedia presentations or dedicated folders. Close cooperation with broadly understood system of education is also a method for searching for future employees. Cooperation with universities helps future employers actively recruit the best students and offer paid apprenticeship or stipends. After several months of cooperation, the prospective employer obtains a full profile of competencies of the candidate (García-Barriocanal et al. 2012, Szalkowski, 2000).

With potential candidates found in the labour market, the organizations are facing challenges that consist in selection and choosing a potential employee during the recruitment process. Regardless of current situation in the labour market, this process should always be carried out reliably and adequately as it is better not to employ a candidate than to experience problems with incompetent employees in the future. The "temptation" to employ the candidates that largely depart from the profile of competencies occurs usually if the labour market is unbalanced i.e. much higher supply of vacancies is present compared to the opportunities for finding appropriate candidates. This situation is clearly indicated by current unemployment rate in a particular country. Proper recruitment process should incorporate stages presented in the diagram below.

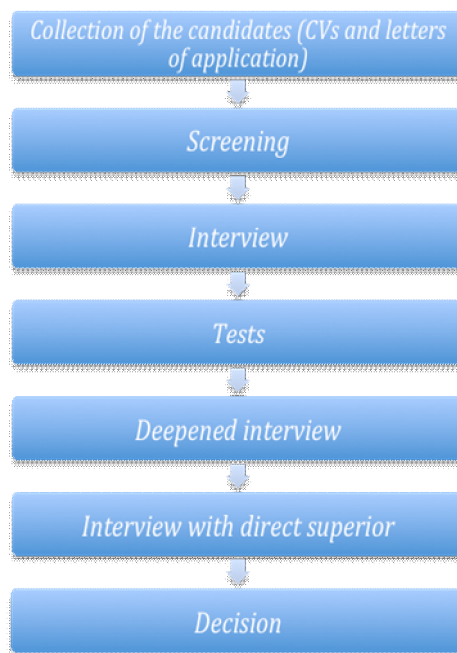


Figure 1. Stages in recruitment process (Szalkowski, 2000)

Nowadays, recruitment process is very important to organizations. Considering the unemployment rate in Poland, it seems that finding the appropriate candidate should not cause any problems. However, practice shows that, with the increase in economic growth, the requirements concerning the competencies of candidates are rising. A survey carried out in Poland showed that more and more organizations were searching for people with specific university degrees and appropriate level of competencies necessary for working at a particular position. The survey also showed that, when searching for expert employees, the employers are improving in specification of the competencies required for individual job positions (Górniak, 2013). With all these facts included, the increasingly important role in the process

of recruitment is played by specific preparation and presentation of the candidate. To part of candidates, the stage of preparation for recruitment was understood by writing a CV and a letter of application, and sometimes familiarizing with a portfolio of products or history of organization they apply for the job in. Based on the data from an international organization, the further part of this study will present a recruitment method from the standpoint of an employer. The paper will also attempt to create a model of preparation for recruitment process from the standpoint of a candidate and methods of working on improving competencies after the process of recruitment.

Description of the organization and results of the study

The survey was carried out in an international corporation which has been present in Poland since 1992. After acquisition of state-owned enterprises, the organizational structure of the corporation started to be formed in Poland. At present, the corporation has its employees in production, sales and marketing divisions. The organization deals with production and sales of medicines and cleansers. The survey concerned recruitment for the divisions of sales, marketing and support for field divisions. At present, the company employs 360 people in sales, 83 people in marketing and 104 people in sales support divisions. The diagram below presents steps in a standard recruitment process in organization.



Figure 2. Stages in the recruitment process in the organization studied

Difficulties with filling the vacancies

In 2013, the organization carried out sixty one recruitment processes in sales, marketing and support divisions. The chart below illustrates the number of recruitment processes completed successfully for the first time, second time and third time and the number of vacancies filled.

The data show that 61% of the vacancies were filled in the recruitment process. In other cases the candidates did not meet the expectations of the prospective employer, which resulted in starting another recruitment processes or returning to the analysis of the documents sent. One of the causes of failure to recruit a person was the level of preparation of the candidate. The data from the documents sent matched the expectations of the organization, whereas the recruitment process showed competency-related deficiencies or, in some cases lack of opportunities for confirming the competencies declared during the recruitment and assessment centre process. The negative implication for the organization is repetition of the recruitment process and, for the candidate, this might cause losing a potentially good job offer.

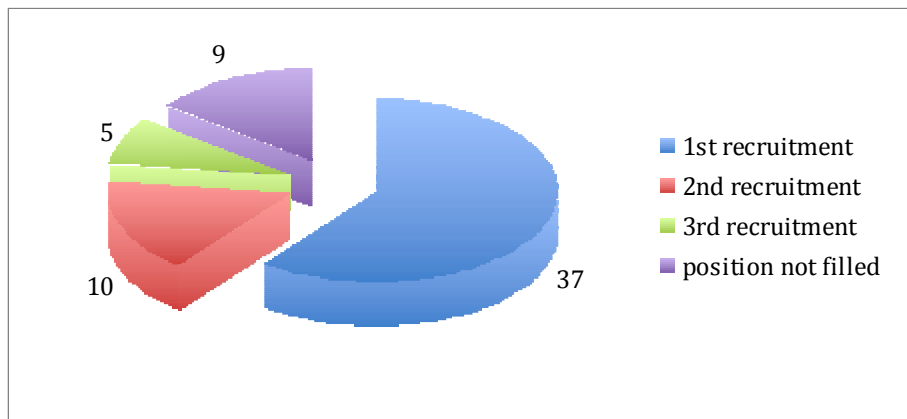


Figure 3. The number of vacancies filled in 2013 in the recruitment process

Competency deficiencies

During the recruitment process, both at the stage of an interview or the tasks performed within the framework of the assessment center process (multi-dimensional process of assessment of competencies carried out by a group of judges) with prospective candidates, it turns out that part of them fail to demonstrate the competencies declared in the documents sent. This is caused, to a certain degree, by the lack of opportunities for full communication at the level of the advertisement published in press or an Internet portal. In the job advertisement, the requirement which says "good command of English required" causes that the self-assessment of the candidate's competencies can be excessively high or low. With detailed definition of the requirements, e.g through specification of the level of language command, however, the people without a certificate specified yet with

suitable level might be rejected. The chart below presents the competency deficiencies among the candidates who participated in the recruitment process for the sales division.

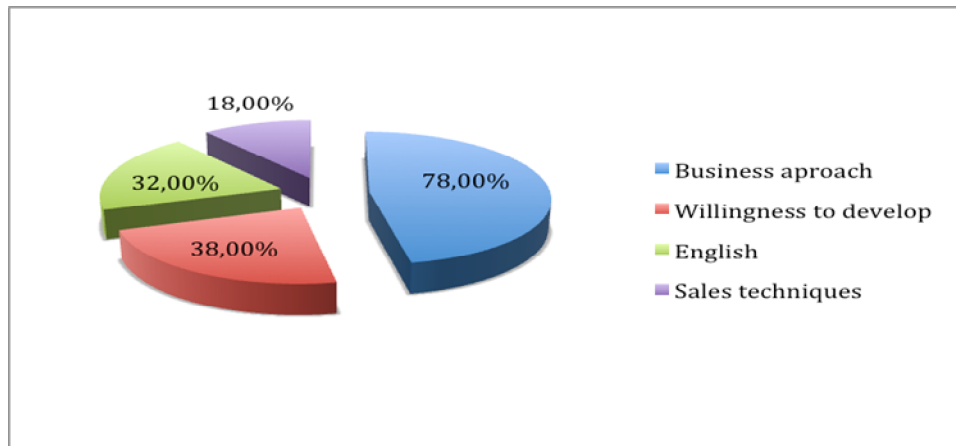


Figure 4. Competency deficiencies in the candidates who participated in the recruitment process

The data above demonstrate that the most of the candidates did not show the competency termed "a business approach". This skill is one of the most important competencies to be met by the candidate for the sales division. The major part of the candidates think that the highest importance in the process of sales is from development of relationships with customers rather than the ability to sell a particular offer or a product. This approach can have a negative effect on the organization because if a sales person cannot develop the relationship with customers, they are unable to sell products at a particular level. But being focused on developing the relationships only, the employee limits the group of potential customers. Similar situation can be observed for knowledge of sales techniques. Insufficient knowledge and skills in this field causes that the activities of the sales person during dealing with customers are intuitive rather than based on analysis and adaptation of a specific method of working with the customer. There are also candidates that take part in the recruitment process who, due to the insufficient preparation, fail to fully present their competencies although these skills are at a high level.

The most frequent mistakes made by candidates

The organization where the above survey was carried out also monitors the mistakes made by the candidates who take part in the recruitment process. The lack of knowledge about the organization, products or competitive environment of the organization continues to be observed for many years among the candidates. Another mistake which is noticeable during recruitment is insufficient knowledge of the job position the candidate applies for. Part of candidates are unable to

answer to the question of what does a sales person actually do in the organization. The candidates cannot talk about their competencies and often use interpretation instead of basic facts. The organization recruits employees using the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) and part of candidates are unable to present what was the major contribution to their own success. During the session of assessment center, part of candidates perceive just being able to talk in the discussion as the highest value rather than actual contribution to the discussion or searching for solutions together in order to achieve the task.

Methods of preparation for the recruitment process

During preparation for the recruitment process, one can use the materials available in the market. They guide how to successfully prepare for the process (Hodgson, 2013; Breaugh and Starke 2000). Another method to prepare for the interview is to employ a professional personal counsellor or take part in the programmes implemented in the universities which help graduates enter into the labour market (Stańczyk, 2013; Li et al, 2008). Therefore, the need for knowledge about the organization is becoming obvious. During preparation process, it is necessary to analyse the websites owned by the organization the candidate applies for. It is also worth analyse the websites of human resource divisions, where one can learn how the recruitment process is carried out from technical point of view and what are the most important points in the recruitment process. Detailed analysis of the advertisement in terms of what competencies are required by a prospective employer is necessary. If the candidate has the competencies, they should think how to demonstrate them during the recruitment process. The prospective candidate can also collect necessary information or opinions about the company they apply for by visiting their customers. The candidate should prepare concrete examples and solutions the candidate used with a customer they were most successful with, a customer they could not meet the goals assumed with, in their own field of activities etc. They should also familiarize, if possible, with the recruitment techniques used in the organization and prepare their answers using them (e.g. STAR technique). The example below shows how to present the accomplishments using the STAR method.

A candidate found a high-potential customer for the organization and sold products to this customer at the level of 110% of the personal sales targets.

S (situation): at this point, the candidate should provide detailed specification of the customer they talked to, the difficulties he had during sales and the resources they had during the conversation.

T (task): at this point, the candidate should specify the objectives assumed to be achieved in the sales process with concrete customers. The customer should also relate it to the objectives the organization has.

A (action): at this stage of presentation, the candidate should present the actions they took during the process of sales at the specific customer and measurable

effects they achieved. The actions that contributed to the success should be indicated.

R (results): the candidate should demonstrate the effect of the task performed on achievement of their own sales target, how it contributed to the development of the organization, and what benefits they derived after performance of this task (credentials, signing another contract etc.).

Conclusion

Recruitment process is evolving. Nowadays, preparation for the recruitment process is becoming more and more important. The most of the employers, with organized and well-trained personal counselling divisions, developed the recruitment process almost to a state of perfection. It is also noticeable that the element of preparation for certain candidates is limited only to collecting the information about the organization and going to the interview. This causes that part of the people with high level of competencies are unable to successfully complete the recruitment process. Lack of preparation causes higher level of stress, which consequently leads to poor performance during the recruitment process. Analysis of the methods of recruitment or preparation of appropriate case studies continues to be the infrequent occurrence among the candidates. The candidates who are properly prepared for the recruitment process improve their chances to get a job. Even if they are not employed, they improve their knowledge and establish good habits in terms of preparation. Nowadays, the requirements concerning the candidates are increasing and this method of preparation is also the most basic method that gives them an advantage over other candidates.

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SKUTEKZNE DORADZTWO PERSONALNE DLA OSÓB POSZUKUJĄCYCH PRACY

Streszczenie: Rekrutacja dla pracodawcy to proces zazwyczaj długotrwały, kosztowny i objęty ryzykiem. Badania pokazują, że w zależności od stanowiska koszty związane z zastąpieniem pracownika wynoszą od 1/3 rocznej pensji nawet do wartości dwuletniego wynagrodzenia w przypadku menedżera wysokiego szczebla. Mając świadomość tych kosztów większość organizacji na świecie i w Polsce, planuje proces rekrutacji w taki sposób, aby zweryfikować poziom konkretnych kompetencji potencjalnego kandydata. Pomimo tak rozwiniętego systemu rekrutacji, jednym z największych problemów z jakimi spotykają się działy personalne podczas poszukiwania przyszłego pracownika jest niedobór kompetencji.

Słowa kluczowe: zatrudnienie, bezrobocie, system rozwoju zawodowego.

有效的职业辅导为失业人士

摘要: 招聘的雇主是一个过程通常漫长，昂贵和受风险。研究表明，根据与替换的雇员范围从年薪高达两年薪水的高级别管理1/3相关的成本的位置。意识到这些成本，大多数企业在波兰和国外，正打算以这样的方式来验证具体的能力的潜在候选人的水平招聘过程。尽管招聘这样的开发体系，寻求未来的雇员时，所面临的HR部门的最大问题之一是能力不足。

关键字: 就业、失业、职业发展系统