**Recruitment & Selection**

Support Notes

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The purpose of these support notes is to provide a range of information and basis for discussion/activity. Please select, add to/edit the material as required.

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**Synopsis**

**PART 1: An Essential Guide** (15 mins)

Recruitment should be seen not just as a process of filling vacancies, but as a part of **workforce planning**generally. It’s not just a case of filling current vacancies but looking forward to the future needs of the organisation. How well does the workforce plan fit with the organisation’s overall aims and objectives?

The first stage in filling a vacancy is to *define* the vacancy – the **job description**. Also, the **person specification** will define the kind of person needed, and their skills, experience. After that, the job must be **advertised**.

The **recruitment** procedure varies from simply interviewing people to complex assessment processes involving tests of various kinds. **Psychometric tests** are designed to find candidates with the right personality for a job. Some companies also require **probationary** periods. But why, despite all this, does recruitment so often go wrong?

**PART 2: The Recruitment Challenge** (14 mins)

Insurance brokers Centor says the success of its business depends on the ability and attitude of its people. They need a “Centor person” to fit in with the culture of the firm. We eavesdrop on an interview to find out how they try to find that person.

**PART 3: Writing CVs** (9 mins)

Putting together your curriculum vitae is a vital part of a job application – but why do so many people get it wrong? Neil Taylor presents the dos and don’ts of writing a CV – and the covering letter. You’ve got to grab the reader’s attention. But whatever you do, don’t say you’re a “passionate team player”!

**PART 4: Human Resources Management In Action (The Centor Approach)** (9 mins)

This clip provides more information about the Centor Insurance Company featured in Parts 1 and 2 and is optional viewing to provide more background. Please note: the clip is also part of the film *Human Resources Strategy: Theory And Practice*

Worksheet

*[please edit this to suit your needs; Answers At The End]*

**Play Part 1 *An Essential Guide To Recruitment & Selection*** (stop at Part 2: The Recruitment Challenge) **then answer the following questions.**

1. Why is effective recruitment so important?

2. Is recruitment just about filling vacancies as they arise?

3. In what way is filling a vacancy an *opportunity*?

4. What is the first stage in filling a vacancy?

5. What does the job description consist of?

6. In what ways can a job be advertised?

7. What are the advantages of recruiting internally?

8. What reasons might an organisation have for recruiting externally?

9. What are the key methods of recruitment?

10. At Centor normally the job candidate has a first meeting with a line manager and the……….……. manager; if they feel comfortable with the candidate, they put them through a process of …… …… testing, followed by a…………………test and a…… ………test.

11. What other checks does Centor make of a potential recruit?

12. What is the most important quality of a recruit from Centor’s point of view?

13. Centor put new recruits on a six months…….........programme which is also a……….…. period.

14. What is the purpose of the probation period?

15. Name some factors that can work against successful recruitment

**Play Part 2 *The Recruitment Challenge*** (stop at the section ‘The Verdict’ for possible class discussion: see below) **then answer the following questions.**

1. Why is recruitment at Centor a particular challenge?

2. How does CEO Neil Walton define ‘a Centor person’?

3. What two key attributes must Tony bring to the job?

4. Where did Tony feel he had to change his management style to suit different team members?

5. What is Oriel’s and Carly’s view of the older workers?

6. How would Tony react to a salesperson who was having a negative effect on the team spirit?

7. How does Tony organise his priorities?

8. Why did Tony encounter a lot of high pressure situations in his previous job?

9. What is Tony’s opinion about ‘work life balance’?

Discussion or assignment topics

*It may be useful to stop this part before the last section ‘The Verdict’ to discuss (or set as an assignment) some or all of the following points.*

1. How do you think Tony did in the interview and why? What was your overall impression of him?

2. Tony was honest about some things: he admitted he is not the best organised person, also that he took some responsibility for failure of the start-up he was involved in: did this this work for him or against him (give reasons)?

3. Do you think the experience of the failed start-up he was involved in is a benefit to him or not (give reasons)?

4. There was a ‘gap’ in his CV when he travelled, before starting a family). Is this a benefit or positive point (give reasons)?

5. Were there any other questions you would have asked (and why)?

6. Did you get any hints that Tony might be prejudiced against any particular types of team member?

7. Would you give Tony the job or not (give reasons)?

**Play Part 3 *Writing CVs*** (stop at the section ‘Extra: Centor Profile’) **then answer the following questions.**

1. What stands out to Neil Taylor’s eye when he’s looking through CVs?

2. What does Neil Taylor think goes wrong with most CVs?

3. Name some of the clichés Neil finds in CVs.

4. What’s the ‘as opposed to’ test?

5. How should you organise the information in a CV?

6. What does Neil say about detail in a CV?

7. What if you haven’t got much to say because of lack of experience?

8. Does Neil think ‘honesty’ is a good policy?

9. What final, basic piece of advice does Neil give?

Discussion or assignment topics

1) Neil Taylor’s analysis refers to applicants for jobs in a creative industry. Would the same points apply to a CV, say, for an administrative post in a public sector company?

If not, what points would not apply/would still apply?

2) Neil prefers CVs written in ‘plain language, more like the way people speak’. Try to think of some ‘plain speaking’ alternatives to the following sentences.

*A highly motivated, dynamic team member, dedicated to proactively solving problems*

*I am dedicated to delivering work of the highest quality*

*I am really passionate about every job I undertake*

3) Look at your own CV and see how many ‘clichés’ you can put into better language. Think about how you can grab the attention of the reader. Think about how you might create different versions, using different language and bringing certain facts to prominence, according to the kind of job you are applying for.

**Play Part 4 *Human Resources Management In Action: The Centor Approach*** **then answer the following questions.**

1. Centor employs……...… people, the turnover is around…..…. They have around…..…..clients.

2. Who actually provides the insurance policies that Centor sells?

3. As brokers/middlemen what two sets of people do Centor have to deal with?

4. How does the Centor approach, under Neil Walton’s leadership, compare to the approach of the previous management?

5. How does HR manager Carly Nunn describe the Centor culture?

6. How does Carly and Oriel define a ‘Centor Person’?

7. How is Centor structured?

8. How does team working help individuals?

9. Where do conflicts occur?

10. How does Neil Walton describe his relationship with his staff?

11. What other key aspect does Walton feel ‘the new Centor’ has compared with the old?

12. According to their surveys, what parts of work rated the highest among employees at Centor?

Discussion or assignment topics

1) Centor wants to investigate launching new products directed at new customers. How might they draw up a plan to recruit a team to do this, who would then try to sell those products?

2) Draw up a list of points why it would be good, or not good, to work at Centor to answer the question: ‘Would I like to work there?’

3) **As HR Manager:** Write a person specification for the vacancy of an insurance salesperson at Centor. It should divide into a) technical skills, experience and b) personal qualities. You should be able to find the job specific technical skills and qualifications of an insurance salesperson by researching on the internet.

4) **As Job Applicant:** Write a covering letter applying for a job as an insurance salesperson at Centor, bearing in mind what you know about the sort of person Centor is looking for.

*Note: to help with this it may be useful to view CLIP 116 in the Clips Library: Appraisal Case Study: Ruth – “Just The Right Person”.*

5) Attempt a definition of **workforce planning**.

6) Analyse and discuss the benefits and drawbacks of **internal recruitment** (as opposed to advertising outside the organisation)

Background Notes

**Recruitment and Selection**

**Introduction**

Good, well trained staff, who work well together, understand what they have to do, complete the work on time and to the standard required are at the heart of every successful business. Achieving this is the aim of **human resource management** which not only strives to ensure the workforce is effective but has to link the management of people with the acquisition and use of other resources at optimum cost to ensure its objectives are well met.

The following factors influence recruitment methods:

* The way the law has been changed (for example on discrimination)
* Rapidly changing technology (for example, new production methods and communication media)
* The increased globalisation of business
* The increasingly participative role that the workforce play in business

**Workforce Planning**

Workforce planning means doing more than just filling vacancies as they arise: it’s about planning to fulfil the aims and objectives of the organisation going forward. The description of the job that falls vacant may no longer fit with these aims: it may be necessary to change the job description and person specification – it may even mean not hiring at all, or postponing hiring.

*External factors*. There are also **external factors** to take into account, for example, changing technology. This may affect the marketing, the production, the administration in the business – in fact every aspect. The skills of new recruits will need to reflect this.

*Smaller businesses.* Workforce planning is just as important in **smaller businesses** – if not more so, as salaries are often a very large part of costs – but is often neglected. And recruiting an *unsuitable* person in a small business can be more damaging than recruiting no one at all, as one person can affect the morale and effectiveness of the whole operation.

*Contracting Out*. It may be a more flexible option to contract out certain parts of the workforce. This will be subject to a cost/benefit and SWOT analysis – again, as measured against the organisation’s aims and objectives.

**Recruitment**

The essence of recruitment is identifying the best potential applicants for the job, and attracting people sufficiently well to persuade them to apply. The law requires that the approach taken does not unfairly ignore any person or group wishing to apply.

Recruitment can be done in a number of ways, each depending on the nature of the job and the likely supply of people to fill it. Highly skilled or professional people are often hard to find which may need costly and national (or international) methods of recruitment. At the other end of the scale unskilled jobs are often easy to fill locally. Added to this is the likelihood that there may be internal applicants for many of the jobs on offer.

**What Job Seekers Need To Know**

Job-seekers need to know the basic facts about the job to know if it is worth applying. In order not to waste time, it is important to *deter* people who would *not* meet the requirements as well as to attract those who will. Among the facts needed are:

* Who the business is and what it does
* Where the jobseeker would work and when work would start
* What they would be expected to do and for what hours
* How much or on what basis payment would be made
* What skills, experience, abilities or qualifications are needed
* What other things are desirable, for example a driving licence
* What degree of responsibility is involved
* Any special requirements or features, for example: working from home, flexi hours, childcare provision, transport provision.
* Any special health and safety issues
* Accurate and complete instructions for responding to the job advert

**What The Business Needs To Avoid**

* Mistakes, ambiguities, overstatement or unfair exclusion which might be apparent or implied by the recruitment literature or the advert
* Any encouragement in the literature which overstates the qualities, requirements or opportunities in the job to encourage applications
* Any action or statement which discriminates between people other than information which defines the job and the requirement to be competent
* The unnecessary use of specialist or complex language.

**Methods of Recruitment**

This is again a matter of costs and benefits. The internet has revolutionised recruitment processes over the last 20 years and, in general, it is now possible to advertise to far more potential applicants much more cheaply than before – but still, time and money can be wasted if the wrong channels are used.

The most common methods are:

* Internal to the business. Here they will be assisted by their own records
* External but using contacts within the business/industry generally
* Local, using formal or informal methods, for example simple local adverts or the job centre
* Media advertisement (including the internet)
* Universities and other educational centres
* Professional magazines and contacts
* Agencies and business consultants
* Former applicants

**Collecting Information to Make Selection Possible**

The business will already know what it wants from the candidate and will have communicated most of this to the applicants. But, and particularly where “short-listing” is likely to be necessary, they need to collect basic information about and from the candidates. This might be collected in one or more of the following ways:

* **A letter of application.** Dangerous if this is the only source, since the candidates may miss out information the recruiters need. But, as one of the methods, it can tell the selectors a considerable amount about the candidate and their skills.
* **An application form (online or written).** This can provide all the facts the business needs since the business personnel have designed it, but it must not specifically or implicitly discriminate except in terms of suitability for the job. The provision of spaces in which to write freely often enables a better short list to be created. Application forms have the advantage that they are a personal record once the candidate is employed.
* **Proof** that qualifications claimed are actually held, for example university degrees or GCSEs
* **A curriculum vitae** (CV). This is a statement of education, qualifications and relevant lifetime experience which the candidates write themselves. Some consider a CV better than an application form but it is often out of date or unhelpful because candidates forget to revise it regularly or do not amend it to focus on the requirements of the job applied for
* **References.** This means asking the candidates to ask someone to vouch for them in the context of the job for which application is being made
* **Interviews.** May be the only form of selection for unskilled or minor jobs, at the other extreme they may be the core of a long process.

There are different types of approach to interviewing.

1. **Biographical:** when the stress is on the individual and relevant features of past experience
2. **Problem solving:** when the candidate is faced with “what if”? situations and required to work them through.
3. **Adversarial:** In which the candidate is put under stress to discover things through the response.

4. **Psychometric testing**: involves candidates answering long lists of questions, often in ‘closed-question’ format (box ticking or grading alternatives) that touch on their personal attitude/aptitude, that hopes to ‘score’ that candidate’s personality in terms of their suitability for a job. For example, a hotel receptionist would typically need to be an outgoing ‘people person’ but also with good organisational skills: the testing would seek to bring this out.

5. **Role-play/team-play**. Candidates attend assessment days when they are put into teams and observed by moderators as to their skills and personalities that come out when faced with group challenges.

In reality most interviews are a combination of all of these elements and in team interviewing it is common for separate interviewers to interview in one of these three ways.

Despite all the above, recruitment is a subjective, inexact science and a short (or even quite long meeting) with a candidate who *seems* right for the job can be deceptive. They can ‘talk the talk’ but can they ‘walk the walk’?

The most effective way to prove this is to have a candidate work for an extended period in the role they are intended to have – either in terms of work experience or during a (say) three month probationary period. This gives both sides the chance to find out if they are suitable. In practice, most recruits can be dismissed within three months without penalty to the employer if, for any reason, they are not deemed suitable. This is a good fail-safe for the employer but it is time-wasting for both parties, who will both have to start again a) finding a job and b) filling a vacancy.

**Selection**

The ideal recruitment process would produce only one candidate who is perfect for the job, but this rarely happens and choices have to be made.

Although never perfectly scientific or objective, the more the candidates are assessed carefully across a range of criteria the better – although many recruiters still say that ‘gut instinct’ plays a vital part. There is a danger in a manager choosing his or her own preferred candidate in that subjective preferences may get in the way of cool judgement – they may, for example, choose someone ‘in their own image’ when that does not necessarily mean they are best for the job. For this reason it is often useful is a third party not in that department is involved in the selection process, for example the HR manager.

**Conclusion**

There is considerable pressure on businesses to adopt recruitment and selection procedures that are effective, job focussed and cost efficient. Procedures must be well structured to meet legal requirements and increasing competition has made getting this right a crucial consideration. Nevertheless, labour turnover after very short periods of time is still high and this suggests that the need for less subjective and more carefully considered processes is still far from fully appreciated and acted upon.

**Answers**

Worksheet

*[please edit this to suit your needs; Answers At The End]*

**Play Part 1 *An Essential Guide To Recruitment & Selection*** (stop at Part 2: The Recruitment Challenge) **then answer the following questions.**

1. Why is effective recruitment so important?

It’s the people in an organisation who will deliver its goals.

2. Is recruitment just about filling vacancies as they arise?

It’s also about **workforce planning**: looking at the people and skills you have in the organisation – look for the gaps, not just now but for the future.

3. In what way is filling a vacancy an *opportunity*?

It may be an opportunity to adapt to changes in the organisation.

4. What is the first stage in filling a vacancy?

*Defining* the vacancy, the *job description*.

5. What does the job description consist of?

*Job title, job description (specification), person specification (what skills and kind of person required)*

6. In what ways can a job be advertised?

*Word of mouth (internally), local notice boards, the internet, employ an agency, press advert.*

7. What are the advantages of recruiting internally?

The person will already know the culture of the organisation

Their skill set and attitude will be known

No risk to the company

Helps promote loyalty in the business

Usually cheaper

8. What reasons might an organisation have for recruiting externally?

‘New blood’ (new ideas).

9. What are the key methods of recruitment?

Go through candidates’ CVs.

Interviews

Aptitude tests (measure candidates’ skills)

Psychometric tests (measure candidates’ personalities)

10. At Centor normally the job candidate has a first meeting with a line manager and the……….human resources***…….*** manager; if they feel comfortable with the candidate, they put them through a process of ***……***competency***……*** testing, followed by a… grammar test and a……hand writing………test.

11. What other checks does Centor make of a potential recruit?

References (including informal) within the industry, Facebook

12. What is the most important quality of a recruit from Centor’s point of view?

The right attitude, will they fit into the company’s ethos.

13. Centor put new recruits on a six months….induction…. programme which is also a….probation…. period.

14. What is the purpose of the probation period?

To ensure there’s a good match of company and employee

15. Name some factors that can work against successful recruitment

Getting the job specification wrong

A manager recruits who is not trained in recruitment

The company has a poor reputation as an employer

Managers leave too much to the HR/Personnel Department

The recruitment strategy not linked to the goals of the organisation

**Play Part 2 *The Recruitment Challenge*** (stop at the section ‘The Verdict’ for possible class discussion: see below) **then answer the following questions.**

1. Why is recruitment at Centor a particular challenge?

It’s a sales environment and the staff need detailed knowledge of insurance rules and regulations.

2. How does CEO Neil Walton define ‘a Centor person’?

‘Work hard, play hard’ attitude, caring for fellow employees and customers.

3. What two key attributes must Tony bring to the job?

Good at selling insurance

Good at managing people

4. Where did Tony feel he had to change his management style to suit different team members?

With younger team members, who may need to be ‘reined in’. Also, the older workers, who might need to be motivated.

5. What is Oriel’s and Carly’s view of the older workers?

They are equally important, they have their experience to contribute.

6. How would Tony react to a salesperson who was having a negative effect on the team spirit?

Give them a set time to change their behaviour, emphasise the positive aspects of their performance.

7. How does Tony organise his priorities?

He keeps a day book and a diary system on a computer.

8. Why did Tony encounter a lot of high pressure situations in his previous job?

It was a start-up, it took five months longer than they thought to get FSA certification

9. What is Tony’s opinion about ‘work life balance’?

He’s ‘a real family man’ but he says he understands it’s work that pays for a decent family life, so ‘work comes first’.

Discussion or assignment topics

*It may be useful to stop this part before the last section ‘The Verdict’ to discuss (or set as an assignment) some or all of the following points.*

1. How do you think Tony did in the interview and why? What was your overall impression of him?

2. Tony was honest about some things: he admitted he is not the best organised person, also that he took some responsibility for failure of the start-up he was involved in: did this this work for him or against him (give reasons)?

3. Do you think the experience of the failed start-up he was involved in is a benefit to him or not (give reasons)?

4. There was a ‘gap’ in his CV when he travelled, before starting a family). Is this a benefit or positive point (give reasons)?

5. Were there any other questions you would have asked (and why)?

6. Did you get any hints that Tony might prejudiced against any particular types of team member?

7. Would you give Tony the job or not (give reasons)?

**Play Part 3 *Writing CVs*** (stop at the section ‘Extra: Centor Profile’) **then answer the following questions.**

1. What stands out to Neil Taylor’s eye when he’s looking through CVs?

The way it’s written, have they got something unusual or interesting to say? Have they got an opinion on what the job demands? Does their personality come through?

2. What does Neil Taylor think goes wrong with most CVs?

They’re just too similar to one another: using the same words, same layouts. The language is too formal.

3. Name some of the clichés Neil finds in CVs.

Team player, proactive, conscientious, passionate, motivated, dynamic, dedicated.

4. What’s the ‘as opposed to’ test?

If the opposite sounds ridiculous it probably doesn’t need to be said.

5. How should you organise the information in a CV?

Put the important things first (most relevant to them). Make it easy to ‘skim’, lots of white space, clear sections, sub-headings.

6. What does Neil say about detail in a CV?

Doesn’t have to have everything in – the CV isn’t to get you the *job,* it’s to get you the *interview*.

7. What if you haven’t got much to say because of lack of experience?

Try to seem interesting and interested, eg: highlight points of work or life experience that might be relevant.

8. Does Neil think ‘honesty’ is a good policy?

Up to a point – if you show how you have learned from negative events or behaviour.

9. What final, basic piece of advice does Neil give?

Get the spelling right!

Discussion or assignment topics

1) Neil Taylor’s analysis refers to applicants for jobs in a creative industry. Would the same points apply to a CV, say, for an administrative post in a public sector company?

If not, what points would not apply/would still apply?

2) Neil prefers CVs written in ‘plain language, more like the way people speak’. Try to think of some ‘plain speaking’ alternatives to the following sentences.

*A highly motivated, dynamic team member, dedicated to proactively solving problems*

*I am dedicated to delivering work of the highest quality*

*I am really passionate about every job I undertake*

3) Look at your own CV and see how many ‘clichés’ you can put into better language. Think about how you can grab the attention of the reader. Think about how you might create different versions, using different language and bringing certain facts to prominence, according to the kind of job you are applying for.

**Play Part 4 *Human Resources Management In Action: The Centor Approach*** **then answer the following questions.**

1. Centor employs….32… people, the turnover is around…..£4 million…. They have around…..2000…..clients.

2. Who actually provides the insurance policies that Centor sells?

The big insurance companies.

3. As brokers/middlemen what two sets of people do Centor have to deal with?

Insurance companies and clients

4. How does the Centor approach, under Neil Walton’s leadership, compare to the approach of the previous management?

More caring, no elitist groups, treating everybody the same

5. How does HR manager Carly Nunn describe the Centor culture?

Work hard, play hard

6. How does Carly and Oriel define a ‘Centor Person’?

Motivated, wants to get on, caring, passionate, who wants to feel ‘part of the family’

7. How is Centor structured?

In teams, about 6 people per team.

8. How does team working help individuals?

Team members can support each other if workloads become high

9. Where do conflicts occur?

If team members feel other members are not pulling their weight or are ‘getting away with things’ (eg coming in late)

10. How does Neil Walton describe his relationship with his staff?

He knows them very well, names of their wives or husbands, children, he says people will always come to him with any problems: ‘open door policy’.

11. What other key aspect does Walton feel ‘the new Centor’ has compared with the old?

Good communication: the staff know what’s going on. A culture of honesty and transparency.

12. According to their surveys, what parts of work rated the highest among employees at Centor?

Being happy and fulfilled at work, enjoying the environment – more important than money.

**ENDS**