

PROBLEMS IN MANPOWER PLANNING

Many manpower schemes fail completely or do not reach their full potential, mainly because the programme is not implemented in the way for which it was designed.

Some of the reasons for these failures are indicated below:

- (a) The lack of sensitivity to problems and solutions

This important obstacle to the implementation of effective manpower planning is caused by the general apathy of line managers. Management still seems to be particularly concerned about financial and material resources and has a tendency to neglect the critical factor of human resources. Over the past few decades, productivity has increased as a result of improved technology, but any further improvement will depend, to a very great extent, upon improved manpower utilisation. In this respect, management is required to show a greater respect to the role of manpower in profitability.

- (b) Short term profit goals

In the short-term there is a tendency to view manpower planning as unprofitable and too costly. This represents the traditional view that costs of personnel are overhead costs and not direct costs. It is essential that management review this problem and weigh the benefits against the costs. It is possible that this lack of concern over manpower planning could be attributed to lack of information. If information is not forthcoming, then manpower planning is a futile exercise.

(c) Lack of criteria.

The lack of information can lead directly to the absence of criteria *against* which to measure performance. It is not an easy task to measure human performance without the use of adequate quantitative data. It is easy to measure the depreciation of material goods, but human beings tend to appreciate with the passing of time, and this appreciation quality has never been measured. The tendency of management is to measure human beings, only in terms of their cost to the organisation. Management should become aware of the fact that the evaluation of performance is long, complex, uncertain and abstract, and it is necessary that they continue their planning without the use *of* objective criteria.

(d) Complexity of the organisation

Many organisations have increased tremendously in recent years and some appear to have difficulty in determining the exact size of the workforce. They appear to be incapable of updating the retrievable information which is essential to manpower planning. Because of the increasing complexity of organisations, it is becoming more essential to keep a track on the movements of employees, as well as all the personal details which may be of use in planning. This is where the personnel manager and his staff must exercise a keen supervision.

(e) Rapid changes

The rate of technological change causes difficulties in manpower planning. This is because, at times, it is difficult to keep up with the technical development. There is always resistance to change within an organisation,

but somehow this resistance must be overcome if manpower is to be utilised effectively. One possible method of overcoming this resistance to change on part of the existing staff is to introduce new employees, with new ideas from outside of the organisation.

(f) Lack of communication

This problem is the oldest and most common in personnel administration. Manpower planning is now becoming a sophisticated process, only involving the use of experts, and these experts must have rapid access to accurate information.

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