# [HR Planning, Talent Acquisition, Retention and Reward Strategies]

## Lecture Title: [Talent Acquisition: A Focus on Recruitment]

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**Date: 9 March 2026** 9.00 – 13.00hrs

21 ACADEMY

**Masters in Human Resources Management**

# Learning Objectives

- Understand the Talent Acquisition Process.
- Define and explain the key stages and importance of recruitment for talent.
- Learn about the various methods of recruitment and how to write job postings.
- Critically propose or apply appropriate tools and methods used in talent acquisition.

# Learning Method

- Lecture focused on learning objectives supported by formative assessment tools, to provides feedback and information during the instructional process, while learning is taking place, and while learning is occurring.

- Formative assessment through participative learning activities will be utilised evaluating students' comprehension and academic progress throughout the lecture - particularly with respect to understanding and applying HRM concepts.

# Talent Acquisition Process

- The concept that the strategic capability of a firm depends on its resource capability in the shape of people (the resource-based view) provides the rationale for resourcing strategy.

- Armstrong (2019): The firm's most important resources and capabilities are those which are durable, difficult to identify and understand, imperfectly transferable, not easily replicated, and in which the firm possesses clear ownership and control.

- These are the firm's 'crown jewels' and need to be protected; and they play a pivotal role in the competitive strategy which the firm pursues.

- The essence of strategy formulation, then, is to design a strategy that makes the most effective use of these core resources and capabilities.

- The aim of this strategy is to ensure that a firm achieves competitive advantage by attracting and retaining more capable people than its rivals and employing them more effectively.

- These people will have a wider and deeper range of skills and will behave in ways that will maximize their contribution.

- The organization attracts such people by being ‘the employer of choice’.

- It retains them by providing better opportunities and rewards than others and by developing a positive psychological contract that increases commitment and creates mutual trust.

- Furthermore, the organization deploys its people in ways that maximize the added value they create.

- A positive psychological contract refers to the unwritten, mutual expectations and perceived obligations between an employer and employee, characterized by trust, fairness, and reciprocal fulfillment.

- It exists beyond the formal contract, fostering high engagement, commitment, and, when maintained, reducing turnover.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RG4RKacGo_s

# The strategic HRM approach to Talent Acquisition

- Strategic HRM emphasizes the importance of human resources in achieving organizational capability and therefore the need to find people whose attitudes and behaviour are likely to be congruent with what management believes to be appropriate and conducive to success.

- In the words of Townley (1989), organizations are concentrating more on ‘the attitudinal and behavioural characteristics of employees’.

- This tendency has its dangers. Innovative and adaptive organizations need non-conformists, even mavericks, who can ‘buck the system’.

- If managers recruit people ‘in their own image’ there is the risk of staffing the organization with conformist clones and of perpetuating a dysfunctional culture – one that may have been successful in the past but is no longer appropriate in the face of new challenges (as Pascale, 1990, exclaims, ‘nothing fails like success’).

- The HRM approach to resourcing therefore emphasizes that matching resources to organizational requirements does not simply mean maintaining the status quo and perpetuating a moribund culture.

- It can and often does mean radical changes in thinking about the skills and behaviours required in the future to achieve sustainable growth and cultural change.

- It also means using a systematic approach, starting with human resource planning and proceeding through recruitment, selection and induction, followed by performance management, learning and development, recognition and reward.

# Integrating business and resourcing strategies

- The philosophy behind the strategic HRM approach to resourcing is that it is people who implement the strategic plan.

- As Quinn Mills (1983) has put it, the process is one of ‘planning with people in mind’.

- The integration of business and resourcing strategies is based on an understanding of the direction in which the organization is going and the following considerations.

# Considerations affecting the integration of business and resourcing strategies

- The numbers of people required to meet business needs.
- The skills and behaviour required to support the achievement of business strategies.
- The impact of organizational restructuring as a result of rationalization, decentralization, delayering, acquisitions, mergers, product or market development, or the introduction of new technology, for example, cellular manufacturing.
- Plans for changing the culture of the organization in such areas as ability to deliver, performance standards, quality, customer service, team working and flexibility that indicate the need for people with different attitudes, beliefs and personal characteristics.

# The components of People Resourcing Strategy (Armstrong 2019)

- Human resource planning– assessing future business needs, deciding on the numbers and types of people required and preparing plans for obtaining them from within or outside the organization
- Creating an employer brand – developing the organization's employee value proposition
- Retention strategy – preparing plans for retaining the people the organization needs
- Absence management strategy – planning for the control of absence
- Flexibility strategy – planning for increased flexibility in the use of human resources to enable the organization to make the best use of people and adapt swiftly to changing circumstances
- Talent management strategy – ensuring that the organization has the talented people it requires to provide for management succession and meet present and future business needs
- Recruitment and selection strategy – planning the approaches used to obtain people so they can "add value."

# Learning Activity

## Application of Concept in Practice

- From the Features Editor, People Management Journal: *'We're planning a full-length piece about "adding value", and in seeking a cross-section of reader views we'd welcome your input.'*

- *What does it mean in your organization for a people resourcing HR professional to 'add value' and how do you know when you've done it?*

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# Key Stages and Importance of

# Recruitment for TALENT

# Importance of Talent Recruitment

1. **Access to Expertise**: Recruitment ensures hiring individuals with specialized knowledge, filling skills gaps within the organization.

2. **Competitive Advantage**: Attracting and retaining top talent strengthens the organization's position in the market, enabling innovation and growth.

3. **Cultural Alignment**: The recruitment process fosters a workforce that matches the organization's values and vision, contributing to a cohesive and productive work environment.

4. **Employee Retention**: Hiring the right candidates reduces turnover rates, saving costs on continuous recruitment and training.

5. **Adaptability to Change**: Recruitment helps organizations stay agile and resilient, enabling them to address evolving challenges and seize opportunities.

# Key Stages of Recruitment

- Recruitment for talent is the process of *identifying, attracting, and selecting individuals with the right skills, qualifications, and potential to fulfill organizational needs.*

- It plays a crucial role in ensuring business success by building a workforce that can drive innovation, productivity, and growth.

# Key Stages of Recruitment

1. **Workforce Planning**: This stage involves analyzing organizational needs, forecasting future demands, and identifying gaps in the current workforce.

   It sets the foundation for the recruitment strategy.

2. **Job Analysis and Description**: Define the role by outlining key responsibilities, qualifications, and skills required.

   A clear job description ensures alignment between candidates' abilities and job expectations.

3. **Talent Sourcing**: Actively search for potential candidates through channels like job boards, social media, recruitment agencies, or employee referrals. This is often supported by employer branding efforts to attract top talent.

4. Screening and Shortlisting: Review applications and resumes to identify the most suitable candidates.

Techniques such as initial interviews, skill assessments, or automated tools can streamline this process.

5. Interviewing: Conduct structured interviews to assess candidates' qualifications, experience, and cultural

fit. Behavioural and situational questions are commonly used to evaluate critical competencies.

6. Selection and Offer: Choose the candidate who best meets the criteria and extend a formal job offer,

including details of salary, benefits, and terms.

7. Onboarding: Once hired, ensure a smooth integration into the organization with training, orientation,

and support. This helps new employees settle in and perform effectively.

# Tools and methods used in talent acquisition.

- The choice of methods and media used to attract candidates can determine the numbers and quality of candidates and whether or not they decide to apply for the role.

- Organisations have a wide variety of methods to choose from, including the use of:

- the internet, including corporate websites and social media;
- advertising, including local and national press, specialist publications, radio and TV;
- informal personal contacts, such as word of mouth; normal personal contacts, such as employee referral schemes, careers fairs and open days;
- noticeboards, accessible by current staff and/or the general public;
- external assistance, including job centres, careers services, employment agencies and ‘head-hunters’;
- links with schools, colleges and universities

# Defining the talent required

- The traditional approach to defining the type of people an organisation wants to attract involves writing a comprehensive job description of the job to be filled.
- This enables the recruiter to know exactly what the purpose, duties and responsibilities of the vacant position will be and its location within the organisation structure.
- A well-written job analysis and a descriptive job description is the first step towards a successful Recruitment and Selection plan.
- A job description is a set of guidelines to assist in profiling the type of person competent and confident in carrying out a designated task.
- The job description enlists the essential tasks that need to be fulfilled, but should never be person-specific or focused on a specific target group. In reality, this is not the case in most organisations.

- The next step involves drawing up a person specification that is based on the job description, and that identifies the personal characteristics required to perform the job adequately.

- Characteristics are usually described within a framework consisting of a number of broad headings.

- A frequently cited frameworks are the seven-point plan ( Rodger, 1952 ). The framework is perhaps now dated, and some headings can appear to be potentially discriminatory (e.g. physical make-up and circumstances). Nevertheless, it continues to form the basis of many person specifications in current use.

The traditional Seven-Point Plan of Alec Rodger in 1952 from the National Institute of Industrial Psychology, London of matching the job and the job applicant still exists:

1. *Physique*
2. *Achievements in the form of qualifications and experience*
3. *Logical capability*
4. *Special Aptitudes*
5. *Extra-curricular activities*
6. *Disposition*
7. *Flexibility and Adaptation*

- Whatever exact format is used, the person specification can form the basis of the recruitment advertisement, it can help to determine the most effective selection methods and, if applied cor rectly, it can ensure that selection decisions are based on sound, justifiable criteria.

- However, the compilation of a person specification needs to be handled with care.

- Predetermined criteria can contribute to effective recruitment and selection only if full consideration has been given to the necessity and fairness of all the requirements.

- Preconceived or entrenched attitudes, prejudices and assumptions can lead, consciously or unconsciously, to requirements that are less job-related than aimed at meeting the assumed needs of customers, colleagues or the established culture of the organisation.

- Examples of this might include insistence on qualifications or experience that are not specifically required to undertake the role or sex role stereotyping.

- The job-based approach to recruitment and selection can be inflexible in a number of ways.

- For example, the job description may fail to reflect potential changes in the key tasks, or the list of duties and responsibilities may be too constraining, especially where team-working is introduced.

- This concentration on a specific job and its place in a bureaucratic structure may be detrimental to the development of the skills and aptitudes needed for the long-term benefit of the organisation.

- In order to accommodate the need for greater flexibility and the desire to encourage working ‘beyond contract’, many organisations have replaced traditional job descriptions with more generic and concise job profiles, consisting of a list of ‘bullet points’ or accountability statements.

- The recognition that jobs can be subject to frequent change can also reduce the importance of the job description and increase the relative importance of getting the ‘right’ person.

- This approach has the potential for greater flexibility, as it enables organisations to focus less on the job itself and more on an individual’s attitude to work and their adaptability.

- For example, research into call centre recruitment and selection found that a positive attitude was more impor tant in candidates than their ability to use a keyboard ( Callaghan and Thompson, 2002 ).

- In a talent management approach, a combination of the job-oriented and the person-oriented approaches may be adopted in order to recruit people who can not only fill a specific vacancy but can also contribute to the wider business goals of the organisation.

- One way to achieve this is via the use of competencies.

- The term ‘competency’ can be interpreted in different ways but is generally used to refer to personal attributes of individuals, that is, ‘the behaviours that individuals must have, or must acquire, to perform effectively at work’ (CIPD, 2012f: 1).

- Competency-based recruitment and selection involve the identification of a set of competencies that are seen as important across the organisation, such as planning and organising, managing relationships, gathering and analysing information and decision-making.

- Each competency can then be divided into a number of different levels, and these can be matched to the requirements of a particular job.

Feltham (in Boam and Sparrow, 1992 ) argues that a competency-based approach can contribute to the effectiveness of recruitment and selection in three main ways:

1. The process of competency analysis helps an organisation to identify what it needs from its human resources and to specify the part that selection and recruitment can play.

2. The implementation of competency-based recruitment and selection systems results in a number of direct practical benefits.

3. Where systems are linked to competencies, aspects of fairness, effectiveness and validity become amenable to evaluation. These competence frameworks can be used for more than just recruitment and selection.

- However, competency frameworks can be difficult to apply in practice and therefore may not achieve the goals of the organisation.

- The main reasons for this are that managers do not see the benefit of the competency framework and are not trained adequately in its use; there are no clear links to what the business is aiming to achieve; and many frameworks are a mix of different concepts, which makes them unwieldy ( Whiddett and Hollyforde, 2007 ).

- What a competency-based approach may discover is that recruitment is not always the answer.

- There are usually a variety of strategies for achieving a particular competency mix and no ‘right’ solutions.

- For example, if specialist skills are scarce, an organisation may choose to replace the skills with new technology, train existing staff, or hire specialist consultants when needed in preference to employment of permanent staff ( Feltham, 1992 ).

- When recruitment and selection are deemed appropriate, a competency-based approach achieves a visible set of agreed standards that can form the basis of systematic, fair and consistent decision-making.

- A recent variation is in the use of a ‘strengths-based’ approach to recruitment, which involves ‘identifying individuals’ strengths, such as roles they particularly enjoy or at which they excel, and then matching them to appropriate types of work, hence enhancing individual performance’ (CIPD, 2016: 1).

- Decisions about the most appropriate method (or methods, as many organisations will use more than one) are likely to be influenced by the level of the vacancy and its importance within the organisation.

- Other factors to be taken into account when choosing the most appropriate method include the resources available within the organisation (in terms of people and finance), the perceived target groups and the organisation's stance on internal versus external recruitment.

- HRM literature emphasises the need to have well-developed internal labour market arrangements for promotion, training and career development, which would suggest that many openings can and should be filled internally (Beaumont, 1993).

- However, a number of organisations, particularly those in the public sector, have policies that require the majority of posts to be advertised externally.

- Survey findings suggest that, although the majority of workplaces treat external and internal applicants equally, a fifth give preference to internal candidates and 1 in 10 prefer to recruit externally (Kersley et al., 2006).

# Online recruitment

- Over recent years, there has been a significant increase in use of technology to recruit candidates and the majority of respondents to the latest CIPD survey on recruitment (CIPD, 2015) have enhanced or developed their own corporate website.

- Online recruitment enables organisations to reduce the time and cost of recruitment and reach more potential applicants.

- Online recruitment can be used in a number of ways: ● to advertise vacancies on corporate websites, job sites or social networking sites; ● to deal with applications, for example, email enquiries, emailed application forms or CVs, online application forms; ● to enhance employer brands; ● to create a personal relationship with the talent pool, for example, through the use of recruit ment blogs.

# Social networking

- Research undertaken by CIPD found that most  organisations (80 per cent) use social media in recruitment but most do not have a dedicated strategy or fully understand how to maximise it.

- Frank Durrel, TMP Worldwide Head of Digital, suggests a number of ways that social media can be used in the recruitment process, from simply providing information to candidates to arguably more effective interaction and engagement with the target audience.

- For example, Jaguar Land Rover created a video and enabled graduates to personalise this with an image of themselves and then share it on social media.

- Interaction can also be used to identify the most suitable candidates: GCHQ launched a code-cracking campaign on social media and only those candidates who could crack the code were directed to the organisation's website to apply for the job in cyber-security.

# Reflective Exercise

- Visit the websites of a number of organisations that appeal to you as potential future employers.
- Compare and contrast the different uses of social media in recruitment.
- *Which approaches seem to you to be most effective? Why?*

# Recruitment documentation

- The response to applicants should indicate the overall image that the organisation wishes to project.
- Some organisations prepare a package of documents, which may include the job descrip tion, the person specification, information about the organisation, the equal opportunities policy, the rewards package available and possible future prospects.
- Some give candidates the opportunity to discuss the position with an organisational representative on an informal basis.
- This allows the candidate to withdraw from the process with the minimum activity and cost to the organisation.
- Much relevant information can now be supplied online, thus improving access and reducing costs.

# Recruitment documentation

- The design of application forms can vary considerably, but the traditional approach tends to concentrate on finding out about qualifications and work history, and usually includes a section in which candidates are encouraged to ‘sell’ their potential contribution to the organisation.

- A more recent development is the adoption of a **competency-based** focus, requiring candidates to answer a series of questions in which they describe how they have dealt with specific incidents such as solving a difficult problem or demonstrating leadership skills.

- Some organisations, particularly in the retail sector, include a short questionnaire in which applicants are asked to indicate their preferred way of working.

# Recruitment documentation

- A variant on the traditional application form, ‘biodata’ may also be used. Forms consist of a number of questions that are partly factual (e.g. university attended) and partly about attitudes and values.

- The results are then compared against an ‘ideal’ profile, which has been compiled by identifying the competencies that differentiate between effective and non-effective job performance in existing employees.

- Biodata questionnaires are costly to develop and need to be designed separately for each job ( Taylor, 2014). There are also problems with potential discrimination and intrusion into privacy, depending on the information that is sought.

- Taylor (2014) suggests that the apparently arbitrary nature of making selection decisions on the basis of questions such as university attended or preferred holiday destination ‘is disturbing, however effective the approach might be at determining job performance’.

- Few employers report the full-blown use of biodata, but the principles appear to influence the design of longer and more sophisticated application forms, often completed online.

# Building a Talent Acquisition Strategy

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVt_Y6Dmdnk

# Masters in Human Resources Management

# Application of Learning: Crafting the Perfect Job Posting

**Objective:** Understand the components of a strong job posting and practice writing one for a fictional position.

- **Total Duration:** 60 minutes

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# Application of Learning: Crafting the Perfect Job Posting

1. **Warm-Up Discussion (15mins minutes)**
   Start by reflecting on these questions:
   - What makes a job posting stand out to you as a job seeker?
   - What frustrations do you experience when reading poorly written job ads?
   Discuss and compile a list of "do's" and "don’ts."

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## 2. Break Down the Components (15 minutes)

Review the key elements of an effective job posting:

- **Job Title:** Clear, concise, and searchable. Avoid jargon.
- **Overview/Summary:** Briefly describe the role and how it fits into the company.
- **Responsibilities:** Focus on key, day-to-day activities (use bullet points).
- **Qualifications:** Specify required skills, education, or experience, but keep it realistic.
- **Company Pitch:** What makes the company special? Mention culture, perks, or values.
- **Call to Action:** Encourage applications with details on how to apply.

**3. Scenario Assignment (10-15 minutes)**

Imagine your company is hiring for one of the following positions (or make up your own!):

- Social Media Manager
- Software Engineer
- Event Planner
- Marketing Specialist
- Groups to write a job posting for their chosen role.

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## 4. Writing the Job Posting (15-20 minutes)

Based on the components above, participants should draft a job posting. Encourage creativity while focusing on clarity, inclusivity, and accuracy.

## 5. Group Sharing and Feedback (10-15 minutes)

Have everyone share their job postings. Provide constructive feedback:

- Does the job title grab attention?
- Is the description clear and engaging?
- Does it strike the right balance between appealing and realistic?

# Writing an effective job posting

...is all about attracting the right candidates while clearly communicating the role and expectations.

1. **Start with an Engaging Job Title**: Use a clear and concise title that reflects the role accurately. Avoid jargon or overly creative titles that might confuse applicants.

2. **Introduce Your Company**: Share a brief overview of your company, including its mission, values, and what makes it a great place to work.

**3. Provide a Job Summary**: Write a short paragraph summarizing the role, its purpose, and how it contributes to the company's goals.

4. **List Key Responsibilities**: Use bullet points to outline the main tasks and responsibilities of the role. Keep it concise and focused on the most important aspects.

**5. Highlight Required Skills and Qualifications**: Clearly state the skills, experience, and qualifications needed for the role. Be specific but avoid creating an overly long list.

**6. Showcase Benefits and Perks**: Mention what makes the job attractive, such as competitive salary, flexible working hours, health benefits, or professional development opportunities.

7.**Include Location and Work Arrangements**: Specify whether the role is remote, hybrid, or on-site, and provide details about the location if applicable.

8.**Use Inclusive Language**: Ensure your job posting is welcoming and inclusive, avoiding any language that might unintentionally discourage certain groups from applying.

9.**End with a Call to Action**: Encourage candidates to apply by providing clear instructions on how to submit their application.

# Selecting talent

- The stages described in the previous sections constitute recruitment, and are primarily concerned with generating a sufficient pool of quality applicants.

- The focus will later shift to selection (in another lecture)  with other stages concentrating on assessing the suitability of candidates.

# GROUPS EXERCISE AND DISCUSSION

- Talent management for leadership positions In 2022, the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM,) commissioned independent research with 750 UK organisations across the public and private sectors to identify the challenges they face in recruiting and developing skilled leaders and managers. The key findings are that most organisations lack a functional talent pipeline with many having no talent plan at all.

- As a result, many UK organisations are heavily reliant on external recruitment for management vacancies, especially at senior levels. This is driven in large part by shortcomings in internal leadership and management development. At the same time, almost half (47 per cent) of employers cite the lack of internal staff capability as the single biggest barrier to ensuring an effective pipeline of leaders and managers.

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# GROUPS EXERCISE AND DISCUSSION

- Part of the problem is that the criteria for recruitment vary hugely between junior and senior management levels.

- Often, first line managers are recruited on the basis of technical skill and knowledge, but while these skills are deemed useful for junior managers, they become less important in senior management, when strategic and financial skills become crucial.

- Employers recruiting in this way are likely to end up with teams led by ‘expert novices’ – technical experts with low awareness and poor leadership and management skills, who struggle to satisfy the immediate requirements of first line management and are ill-equipped to progress into senior positions.

- A shortage of ‘softer’ leadership and management skills also presents a particular challenge to UK employers.

- Organisations consistently struggle to find managers at every level who are emotionally intelligent, inspirational and creative – attributes that are considered critical for twenty-first-century management as businesses adapt to diversity, complexity and change.

- Despite these deficits and deficiencies, only 57 per cent of employers have a plan in place to ensure that they have a pool of leaders and managers that are suitably skilled to fill future vacancies.

# GROUPS EXERCISE AND DISCUSSION

- Questions

1. What are the main implications of the lack of an effective talent pipeline for organisations?

2. What steps can organisations take to address the problem in the short term and in the longer term?

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