

**EMPLOYEE
ONBOARDING PROCESS
AND
JOB SEEKERS
HANDBOOK**

Dr. Seedy Drmmeh

First Published

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Dedicated to my family.

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Preface

This book is the combination of human resource management activities and other office procedures designed for applicants and anyone interested in office work. The book is also aimed at reminding HR personnel and those looking forward to work in HR field about human resource management and other related issues. The volume incorporates information about human resource management that can satisfy the more aspiring job seeker and any interested individuals who want to have some basic ideas about the subject.

The book is written after intensive research which included talking with experienced people in human resource Management. The exact information in the book demonstrates the practical HR functions.

I am indebted to people who likes to read books written by me and also provide advice for improvement. Truly, I treasured the efforts of everyone that advised or shared thoughts with me. Special thanks go to my late parents for their financial and morale supports that helped me to contribute meaningfully to the lives of other people. At childhood, it is hard to know what is good for oneself. It was through the support and encouragement of my parents that I attended school.

Lastly, I thank my Mentors, particularly Marius de Jong, from the Netherlands for his guidance and for instilling confidence in me at the time I needed financial and morale support to read. I thanked him for his words of wisdom and inspiration that motivated me to work hard to realize my dream of attaining relevant education.

I appreciate my family's enthusiasm in giving me their honest thoughts as well as for their patience in the course of writing this book.

Acknowledgments

This book helped me to destroy my academic loneliness, not being a full-time intellectual who gives plenty of benefits, such as to contribute in writing and the avoidance of being portrayed as a dull person in the process. I had many discussions and interviews with friends in the same business and thinkers through my first and second edition, and thanks to them, I am able to make a third move on some of the issues. Furthermore, I believe I am closer to realizing my dream in life thanks to the encouragement of individuals who share my interests' I wish to appreciate their efforts. I believe in the testimony that discussions and exchange of ideas with experienced individuals is a quality mechanism for personal development, in addition to library reading, newspapers, the internet etc.

I thank The Gambia Government for instituting abundant development programmes that expedite accessibility to work. The introduction of street lights, for example, by the Government has given many benefits to the general public, as it eases the movement of people, especially vehicle owners who can now drive safely even in the middle of the night. Working at the night especially in the Greater Banjul Area has become increasingly easy since the establishment of street lights along the various roads. Many night workers now feel more comfortable to go to their workplaces without fear.

The good road conditions and the accurate drainage systems in place, thus making travel easier is another remarkable effort by the Government. This good drainage system in place has significantly helped commuters and vehicle owners as it eases the difficulties in moving from one place to another. For any country to develop, it must have strong human capital, and this is possible when a country facilitates free movement of its citizenry from one place to another.

Introduction

Most people start to think of what to do after school. Such thinking often leads to great ambitions. This belief sometimes drives some people through acquiring success in their field of study, thus preparing them to take a leading role in society. It is not a mistake to say that most ambitious people started being responsible at home, in the community or society in general and as they moved on in life they developed the thought and skills of how to become more responsible.

It is every human being's desire to become responsible and to earn a good living, but the way to success depends on several factors, including the desire to contribute one's quota to national development. In this modern generation therefore, education stands as an imperative means of obtaining success, through dedication and commitment to reading in school, libraries etc.

As human beings, we are naturally inquisitive to know whatever transpires around us, so we want to know how we are controlled and guided through certain directions, especially at work. Departments/institutions operate with structures in place, each of which functions by applying the guidelines and procedures often spelt out in the staff service rules just as in the case of the Gambia Revenue Authority. It is an open fact that the human resource departments served as a Police force for organizations/institutions by guiding staff through the right directions. This is a critical area where if it fails to administer its functions accordingly, the department may experience poor administration.

For one to be a member of a model organization where one can work comfortably, one needs to study and know the hierarchy, respect and abide by the organization's rules and regulations. One should be aware

of performance management, which is about analysing the effectiveness of an employee. It is important to know that organizations that are ready to stay in business will not allow unproductiveness at all times.

That is why most organizations work hard to ensure that their staff are provided with the requisite human and financial resources that can enable them to operate efficiently. Productivity must not be compromised, especially when the organization provided all the necessary support to its staff to carry out their tasks.

Chapter 1

Life after School

Most people think of what to do after school. To get a suitable answer for this important question is often difficult as one thinks of different things in life. The majority of the people however would wish to have a good job that can support them and their family. In some situations, students in school ask one another what one would be doing after graduation. Many get bored answering such a question over and over, irrespective of whether one's plan includes going straight for the workforce, or taking some time off. I wish to provide some practical tips for one to prepare oneself for the journey.

Some people have in their mind from an early stage in their life what they would like to be and what plan they need in order to get there. Not everyone is sure of their plan, and that is not bad. For example some people start off in certain fields and then as they move on, they decide on a major one after some time. The work place is not just about pursuit and getting paid, it can also be a place for learning about oneself and the world in general.

When thinking of a job after school, one needs to plan which job one is looking for. How are you going to get employed? How do you decide on a choice of job when there are hundreds of applicants to pick from? It is important you start to ask yourself questions about your choices:

- ◆ What qualities do I have?
- ◆ Would I be interested in HR or IT jobs?
- ◆ What type of working environment is good for one?
- ◆ Do I want a job which is close to my home?

- ◆ Would I prefer to work in a city or not?
- ◆ Would I be happy working in a small organization?
- ◆ Do I like to be with people who are more intelligent than me

Once you limit down your choice, ask your friends or people you know at work to send their job prospects to you. You may also try and visit the organization's website. After limiting down your list to a manageable figure, try and pay a visit to the organization. The best time to do this is when the organization is operating, so that you can get a good idea of what life is really like in the organization. It is important to remember that you are part of many decision makers which organizations are picking from. They would like to know how good you are and what makes you believe that you are the right choice. They may do this by looking at your grade points, scores, personal writing skills and other activities after work.

It is true that life in school is different from life at work. To know this sometimes people often ask questions like "Is life better after school?" For example one may say that one is in school at present and can't wait to have freedom, because one is sick and tired of being considered as a certain type of person, because one comes to school with certain shoes and behaves in certain ways. But as time goes by, one understands that life after school becomes a little difficult but can be a lot more rewarding later when one secures a good job that pays well. It is important to know that school is a place to start some part of your life. Try and do well in school and consider your performance as a head start for the rest of your life. People who are shy on this stage often end up being a failure in life.

As an individual you don't have to get worried about those who think you are something different. Just have in mind that those who fail to learn anything at school will only carry those mistakes for the rest of

their lives and if you see them walking in the street in few years' time, when you will be the one driving nice cars or living a better life. This is a personal experience that I am sharing, as I was one time treated like an abnormal person. Some of my former colleagues are without jobs, I am doing quite well thanks to God. I wouldn't have it any other way than getting educated. Life after school can be difficult or easy depending on the circumstances in which one sees oneself. Talking to other people, I came to know that some people gained experience by moving from one job to another. They began job search immediately after school and later found a job but the job wasn't the right one for them. Then they were fired after only serving for a few years. This experience taught some of them a couple of things:

- ◆ A job may not be like a relation, not something you think of whether for better or worse. But instead, it is for better alone in that if it fails to meet your demand, you have the choice of moving to another job.
- ◆ You may consider the time you spend at work as an investment. It is crucial to utilize your time wisely, just as you would have done when making a decision to invest your money.

Then later some of those people found themselves working in a job they don't like, but as they promised themselves that if they are not happy with their jobs after serving for more than a year, they would leave. This however may not be the right decision to make. After some years of working they come to realize that it is time for them to go, because it is crucial for them to be happy than only looking for money. Other experienced people that I talked with to share some of their working experience with me said:

- ◆ They believe that as an employee you need to value the people you work with than the organization. Every employee would

wish to work with people who have high integrity, ones you can rely on. It is good to work for a reputable organization, but working with good people is much better.

- ◆ They don't stay in jobs that make them unhappy, just because they want to be loyal.

Other experienced people shared three points on this issue:

- ◆ They believe that the unit in which you find yourself working is not important. Employees should see the organization move forward. They should be prepared to learn.
- ◆ They told me that for one to get into a reputable organization and become productive, one must be disciplined. This quality of being disciplined is necessary for obtaining success in life
- ◆ They also said to me that as an employee one should be willing to do some difficult jobs. By doing so one is likely to acquire skills that can help one to move forward.

If one look for a job where there are more than 100 applicants for 10 vacancies as I often see such cases at the Gambia Revenue Authority and was never called for the job, because one is not found to be the right candidate. It should not worry you much. Consider that you have failed this one and be prepared to be working towards something. Try and have in mind that there are other options. In life you may see yourself directed to the wrong path but like ambitious people, when you get into the first choice of yours, you can try other areas. This may work well and you can see yourself doing something good that you never thought of.

Try to find what you like, but you could change your choice and become who you want to be in life. As long as you are determined you will achieve your objective. It is crucial to think about what you want to be in life. Some people just want to be interested in what they do on a daily basis. If you happen to be one who is not happy with what you

are doing, then try something different.

My advice is that in life one needs to do the following:

Work out a basic means, which doesn't have to be huge. But whatever you plan to do, make it an objective and task yourself for some savings and probably investing. This may sound funny to you but failure to do so at an early stage, may lead to difficulties in the future.

- ◆ Try not to be carried out by a free lifestyle. When you start earning a lot more, it may be tempting to start buying many. The more you can control yourself, the more successful you will be with money. I have seen people who after receiving a lot started spending more sometimes on unnecessary things and the end result was disaster as many of them ended up in financial crises. Please don't do this.
- ◆ Do things that you like. Starting a low paid job as long as there is going to be career development is better than a high-paid job in a situation where there is little or no chance of making progress.
- ◆ Be wiser in spending less, to gain more flexibility. When you just get a job and start buying expensive cars and take loans you may be forced to any job because of the difficulties in paying back your loan on a monthly basis. People who are wise have a lot of freedom, with little debt or none. They can travel worldwide and do things without thinking of debt settlement. Be mindful that sometimes people are carried away by the opportunity of taking loans from the office thinking that it is always a good thing to do. But remember you need to pay back the loan probably at a time when you maybe thinking of other projects.

I believe that it is far more important to be happy in life than just to be rich. I spoke with other people who believe that being rich makes

them less happy because richness doesn't drive them to what they want. You may disagree but remember that to be rich is not everything, sometimes you can be rich and lack peace of mind. Making decisions on the type of job to do could be difficult and many are finding it hard, especially when their school result is not appreciated in the developed market. You may get a degree in entertainment because you love that field, but your return on investment may not be good as expected. So if you want a good job, it is important that you select a course in school that can bring good returns to you. It is nice to have a degree in entertainment but think about the environment in which you would see yourself to work.

In this diverse world some people may acquire a degree in for example, mass communication and end up in management. They may love what they do in every minute they spend at work, and their lives may fall into places because of that. I personally believe that in life you can do whatever you wish through hard work and experience, but it is easier to do what you want especially when you have a degree in the field that you like.

Some people make decisions to pursue a degree that will bring them more money in this competitive world. But whatever you wish to do just make sure that you take the right decision that could give you a good job. You may along the line wish to change your job for a better one for example in my own case, I graduated from a good university with a degree in Business Administration, because I found it fascinating and was told that in life if you are smart and have a good degree in that field, the world will be yours. But despite this, I initially found it difficult to get employed immediately after the university. I then threw away my belief in administration and got a job in the Customs Department working at the Internal Audit Unit (jerquing section). To be realistic I was qualified to work in that area as in the case of every

beginner to the department. As I moved on the job and years later vacancies arose in my field of study as it required a degree, I got the job because I was determined to, and worked hard and when the need arose for me to move on to my current job, I was appointed in the job. I have a degree in Business Administration, and if I want to change job I could or stay in what am doing. The point here is that you can manage to find a good job despite your major area in school, but as in my own case, I went through years of earning a low salary and had a boring job that could have been avoided if I had been working directly in my field.

It is interesting to know that most experienced people I spoke with about life after school mentioned the need for progression through life as society sometimes commands. At times it is said that when one has a specialized degree, which defines one's career, because of the training one receives for a specialized degree, may be an order of importance and makes you a right specialist.

To me if you find yourself in a particular field that is different from what you would want to be in, you could still research and be prepared to learn what you wish to do by trying to get to the field you are interested in. It may be great to challenge yourself to do something that wasn't your choice yet you want to do it in order to grow. I call that decision great because it is a trait I admire and believe in.

Notwithstanding, to have a specialized degree can make your job search easier, because you already know the job you can apply for. But a more general "academic" degree can also work out well for you in your job search; especially when you know that learning and acquiring your certificates does not end at getting your diploma. I have been very happy with how my doctorate degree and MBA have allowed me to work in a lot of different fields within the Gambia Revenue

Authority. At some point, your experience can override the components of your major field of study, but for other people, acquiring a degree that prepares them for a particular job is the right decision to make.

Chapter 2

Job Search

Most people who graduated from school begin to think of employment in organizations/companies where they can earn a living and contribute to the socio-economic development of their country. To get employed however requires a job search from different sources in order to meet with the desired job of one's choice. If you happen to be in this situation, then you may ask yourself about the following questions:

- ◆ Do I need any assistance in getting a Job that I want?
- ◆ Do I exactly know the door to knock at?
- ◆ Do I find it difficult to decide which area to work?
- ◆ Would I be called to attend an interview but will never be appointed?

Whichever situation you find yourself looking for a first time job after school can be difficult for some people. But in order to overcome some of those difficulties when looking for a job, you need to search from all possible places newspapers, notice boards, posters or even the internet can be a good sources. I remember when I first graduated from the university, I was not having a choice of job for myself however to get a job was my intention at that time like many other graduates. After a while I picked up my first job through the personnel management office at the Customs Department where after some years of working I acquired some experience and went through the process of learning new skills then I started to think of developing my resumes, preparing better for any other high profile jobs. The training I went through is really rewarding. There are many steps to follow when looking for a job some of which include:

1. Make your resume up to date. A resume is such an important tool in your job search. A simple resume includes a summary of your job experience and educational background. Usually it is the first item that employers look at from a job seeker and can be used to screen applicants, before the interview process. It is often comparable to curriculum vitae in many parts of the world, but can also be different in some countries.
2. Identify your references. Many employers obviously require that applicants possess a letter or recommendation or produce at least two or three referees. However in some parts of the world employers tend not to take the issue of referees seriously but it must be considered as it helps the employer know who the applicant is. Contacting referees before employing someone should not be seen by applicants as ill feeling, but instead a way of helping the employer to get more information about the applicant.
3. Make available a good dress for the interview. Many employers are keen to see that an applicant dresses better while attending an interview. Please do not consider dressing nice while attending an interview as irrelevant, I was involved in job interviews and know how one feels when one sees an applicant appearing in a way that does not please the employer.
4. Search the internet. Job seekers should be able to search for jobs on the internet, in order to look for other avenues other than the newspapers. It is an open fact that we live in an information technology edge and so the importance of knowing how to use a computer and by extension be able to browse the internet is important.
5. Make an information search about the organizations. This will increase your chances of getting prepared for the interview in case you are called upon.
6. Pay a visit to the organizations and if possible make findings

about job opportunities from the Human Resource Department. It may be of help for job seekers to be familiar with the organization's human resource department as they know the staffing issues and vacancies.

7. Be prepared for entry tests. Some organizations may require that an applicant sit for an entry test in addition to the interview process, so be prepared for this.
8. Assess your capability and know how much time you can stay at work. This process will help you to limit your job class.
9. Browse the organization's website, to find out about vacancies available. You can do this by asking people about the organization's website information.
10. Create an e-mail account. If you decide to use the internet for a job search, then it is crucial to have your own e-mail account before sending resumes online. As an applicant you do not want to be missing your important correspondence from an employer, so keep your e-mail account active at all times.

It is true to say that searching for a job could be tough and at times you need help from a hiring authority. When looking for a job, one comes to realize how difficult it could be, especially in the global financial meltdown. There is always competition out there for limited vacancies, and then you need to be intelligent and smarter than ever before. In many organizations no matter the presence of the HR personnel, there is always someone who has the final say on those to be employed. This is true because I have been in this field for some time now and I know how it works. Then it is necessary to know this person. When I say someone who has the final say, I really don't mean HR staff, neither other people who interviewed you, but instead the head of the organization.

This person makes the final decision as he knows what the organization

needs in order to move forward. So this is the person you will need to talk to and convince him if possible that you can make the difference. This is a fact I am working with the HR Unit in a big institution and I know what heads of institutions like to see from a job seeker. Job seekers should know that to find a job that will satisfy them, they need a lot of time and strength and also an important decision to make.

You should know that your first job could be useful in selling you to many other employers out there. It is often a term used in sales, to say you need to know the product (oneself) and the buyer (employers). Be willing to advertise yourself as an important hardworking and loyal worker. This is to market your ability to work towards the organization's achievement.

In deciding for a successful job search, you may also apply the following:

- ◆ Decide which job you want. Knowing the type of job you want can make your job search easier and can also help other people to help you
- ◆ Have a diary with you. This is to keep information on people you want to contact and dates for job interviews you are to attend. Please don't consider this point funny because if you happen to be among those candidates who miss their interviews because of not keeping the date, you will end up being viewed as not a serious applicant.
- ◆ Try to be in constant touch with organizations, as well as individuals who you think can help you get a job. This may sometimes be difficult as you are bound to be embarrassed or be annoyed sometimes. But keep moving because sometimes finding a job does not only come through newspapers or the internet but you

can get the information about a vacancy from people as well.

- ◆ Be always prepared to ask for employers who are looking for potential applicants.
- ◆ Be reviewing your portfolio, and be confident that you can make the difference in society when given the opportunity. As an applicant you need to have that confidence in you that you will deliver if you have the chance to get employed.
- ◆ Be reliable. You should be prepared to get to work on time. It is important to know that there is time and attendance at workplaces so however difficult it may be, try to be at work on time. In a situation where you are to come late or absent, give a reasonable excuse. This will make the employer know that you are not only honest but love your job as well.
- ◆ Show a good attitude to others. This may take you a long way to work. When you join the organization don't think that it is all about work and the employer. Remember that your attitude towards coworkers and customers will even make the employer appreciate you more. It is also important to give the same respect and regard to everyone irrespective of their position or status at work.

To follow the above steps can be of good help to you even though it seems very simple. Along the way however there will be failures and you may be attending many other interviews, but continue pursuing I believe you will get there one day. Worse things are bound to occur along the way, but consider them as challenges that should not deter you. Understanding the right job search steps will assist you to get a job. I believe that a job search is not just about getting a job, but also about getting the right job.

My advice to job seekers is that among all other requirements resumes are very important. Resumes in many cases are short and direct the

readers' attention to the individual's background that is required for a particular position. In certain situations resume writers and human resource specialists accept that a resume should be long and be brief, adequate and accurate description of an applicant's employment account and skills. A resume is a fundamental tool the content of which should be directed to suit each individual job application and/or application aimed at a particular organization. It can also be a simple summary narrowed to one or two pages, indicating the individual's experience and credentials that the employer considers relevant to the position, in which he is looking for a potential employee.

As the world moves faster in the information technology age, the need for sending resumes online becomes increasing. And as the search for jobs becomes electronic, sending resumes online follows. Many employers now accept resumes electronically. Receiving resumes online has changed the way resumes were originally written, read and even handled. However submitting resumes in hardcopies tended to be much more appreciated, because the employer had the chance of seeing the job applicant.

Applicants also send resumes online as this process facilitates the onward distribution of the document to more than one employer via the internet. This facility permits job seekers to share their resumes to employers of their choice via email.

Getting a job after school is essential, so job seekers are urged to be prepared for the course and apply appropriate procedures so as to attain productivity. No matter how difficult it may be, consider the difficulties encountered along the way as challenges and be prepared to move on. Before one realize the difficulties; one is already issued with an appointment letter. One will be happy to receive information that he/she is to collect his/her appointment letter. This is a letter that

is written to a person informing him /her that he/she has been chosen for the position applied for in a particular organization. An appointment letter is the beginning of official relationship between employee and employer. The letter contains information about the employee date of appointment, designation, payment details, who to report to, leave entitlements, insurance benefits, main duties and responsibilities etc. Appointment letters assist employees to understand different aspects of their job including the rules and regulations of the organization.

It is a letter that also guides employees by helping them to know the right nature of their job and the remuneration that comes along with. Here is a piece of advice to employers, when writing appointment letters make sure they are direct to the point and in simple form. Also include all the important requirements for the position. This can make the organization create an impression to the new employees in the organization. Organizations and their HR personnel should take note of the following when writing appointment letters:

1. An appointment letter has to be addressed to the individual who has been offered the position. Those who are already employed may consider this irrelevant but take it seriously to avoid embarrassment to the organization.
2. Use the organization's letter head when printing appointment letters. Almost all organizations have letter heads which are unique and must be used when communicating important documents especially from the organization to the outside world.
3. It is polite to start the letter with the word "Dear", followed by the individual's name.
4. Use the correct address of the individual to whom you are writing to. You can do this by getting the right information from the applicant's documents like the CV or the application letter.
5. Include correct details about the position in the letter. It is true

that no one is perfect so please always take your time to read the letter more than one time. This will help you to eliminate any mistake.

6. Use simple language that the new appointee can understand. Generally the use of simple language is acceptable by all. Remember that possessing a degree does not mean being able to use big words alone.
7. When typing from the computer use a readable font size. Not everyone can easily see small writing so try and use a font size that everyone could read.
8. Try at all cost to avoid spelling or other errors. This you can do by proof reading your letter.
9. At the end of the letter, make the employee feel like he/she is welcome. You can do this by ending the letter with words like "wish you the best of luck in your new appointment".
10. Appointment should be endorsed by a higher authority i.e. Director or General Manager. At my workplace we have different categories of appointees handling differently, the Commissioner General who is the chief executive officer of the Authority has powers to appoint and so sign some positions whereas some senior positions are recommended to the Minister of Finance.
11. The letter should be professionally written as it discloses the reputation of the organization. In some situations the chief executive officer of the organization has the chance to read the letter to see if it is Ok to sign before being issued to the new appointee.

Once you have successfully followed these steps the letter is ready and then call the appointee to come on a scheduled day to receive his/her appointment letter. Please let the new employee receive some smile at the point of receiving the letter. This is important to make him/her feel welcome to the organization. I remember when I was called

to collect my appointment letter at the Personnel Management Office on that unforgettable day in my life, when I reached at the chairman's office the first thing that I took note of was a warm welcomed with a smile a move that motivated me at the spot. I believe employers should be seen to do this.

Chapter 3

First Day at Work

Most of us are eager to start a job after being issued with appointment letters but where to start is often a question that one asks oneself especially on one's first day at work. After months of searching for a job one finally feels much excited seeing oneself at work, a day when one is expected to see much, different people to meet, and will be thinking of how to remember names. It can be a day in which one will be overloaded with information. Obviously it is not possible to remember all; therefore it is advisable that one carefully choose what to remember.

If you are just joining in an organization on your first day at work, you should create a good impression about yourself. This obviously will assist you in having a winning situation. On your first day at work, you should be thinking of how your fellow staff and supervisors look at you and this is crucial in that it allows the staff to decide what they think about you. Their feeling will certainly affect your career development in that office. On your first day at work you will realize that people differ greatly in their analysis of "business casual", and as a new employee try not to be careless so that people take you seriously. It is good to dress nice and look smart. Trust that you have joined an organization that you are ready to add value to.

Good managers will certainly keep you busy on your first day at work no matter how small the task may be. If you are lucky to work with a good member of staff on your first day at work, one who can assist and be willing to answer your questions, you should take advantage of that and possibly get to know his/her contact number quickly. I remember how helpful this move led me to, as I exchanged my contact

number with the first person that I stayed long with on my first day at work. Though no matter how comfortable you may be on your first day at work, remember that no one expects you to master the organization on your first day. A new employee has a lot to learn about the organization and the staff, so make your first impression as the beginning of the journey of no turning back.

Remember that your first impression to staff can lead you into long-term belief and opinions, which is good for staff who takes note of your presence. I believe that the early days at work are when your supervisor/manager has very good impression about you. This is possible after assessing your behaviour and knowing the kind of person you are. Try not to be absent or come to work late. This is important; otherwise you will lose a significant battle that is the confidence they have in you. Staff will obviously take you for who you are, so try to portray a good attitude on your first day at work and on any other day as you move on the job.

At the workplace where you are meeting with different people, and be greeted by many people, their first impressions about you and possibly your future ability can contribute something positive towards your future success with the organization that you are working for. Employees should know that first impressions are often not forgotten, and some people are good at remembering even the way you talked to them on the first day at work. So be mindful of what to say and do, to avoid things coming back to hurt you later.

Do not be afraid or worry much. Many employers do not expect you to hurt them so early, but instead you are to go through a learning process for some time. As an employee you may want to know how to create first impressions when you are just joining the organization. Here is some information obtained from experienced people on this issue:

1. Display a convinced attitude. A good attitude is the only thing that works better in any situations in life. So demonstrate a winning attitude in order to be appreciated quickly.
2. Put on nice clothes. This is your first day at work. Remember that many will be looking at you and you will meet different people.
3. Manifest your team courage. Remember that you are part of a team now, and that teams work well in solving problems and they get the job done quickly. Be nice to your co-workers and concentrate more on sharing information with the team members.
4. Don't be shy to ask questions and for help. No matter your qualifications no one will expect you to know everything, so try to learn the job by asking people who knows. Know that it is better to ask how to do a job than to assume in failure, which can be terrible. Please don't be part of those who are carried away by the false notion that you are too qualified to do certain things.
5. Have a notebook or diary. Take some jottings, especially on the organization's rules and regulations and try to attend any orientation sessions no matter how long it may last.
6. Take the lead. While you are given some task to complete on your first day at work try and take the lead and ask for more. Try not to be waiting for assignments ask for more from the supervisor. This may sound funny to you but the more you are able to do this the better that a reasonable employer will believe that he/she has employed someone who is willing to deliver.
7. Learn about your employer. This should have been done before starting the job. However, being part of the organization provides more opportunity to learn about your employer. Get some documents or publications on the organization in which you can find out about some important information on the organization.
8. Be prepared to work all day. First come to work early, get busy throughout and try to leave the office late. It is too bad to come

to work late at all times as this can immediately tarnish your character to your employer. Always be committed and dedicated to work and take some work with you home if possible.

9. Keep coming to work at all times. Showing up to work every day means a lot in your career development and makes your employers feel confident in you. It is true that along the way you may be sick, or be sad. That can affect your presence, but apart from those natural problems, try to be present to work at all times and to be seen doing something.
10. The office has its own politics and gossiping is much. Try to distance yourself from that however difficult it may be. Remember that your ultimate objective is to earn a living and contribute to the development of the organization. So don't be part of gossips in the office.
11. Limit your personal dealing. Concentrate more on the organization's job than your personal gains. You can be browsing the internet or have some reading when there is no file on your table, but always give attention to office work first.
12. Be part of social activities organized by the organization. Many organizations organize football games, and sometimes dinners for celebrating achievements. Attend them and be seen to have some interest in the organization's social activities.
13. Be quiet and listen more to people. Don't behave like you know everything, but be prepared to listen and learn from experienced staff. As a new employee it is good to listen more than talking. This helps you get information and possibly acquire some skills in the job.
14. Be prepared to appreciate. Show people that you do appreciate their efforts and assistance in the job and this can be extended to as far as the receptionist.
15. Get someone to teach you. This may sound funny on your first day at work, but as you go along find a mentor to guide you

through the job. It can be your supervisor or someone above your position.

16. Remember dates of meetings, appointments, and assignment completion dates etc. This will allow you to set yourself a task of completing or attending meetings on schedule. It is too bad to be missing important appointments and meetings especially when you are just joining the organization.
17. Trust anyone who happens to be your boss and always put him/her in the picture. Inform your boss of your developments and plans, especially on your career development. Try to visit him/her if you can after work in order to build trusting relationships and be prepared to render services to your boss other than the office job. But you may stop such moves in the event that it does not work well.
18. Search about key people in the organization. Find time to meet important people in the organization and if possible spend sometime with them to discuss relevant issues. Some of those people can quickly make you settle down and provides assistance to your success in the organization.
19. Get over your difficulties and challenges. It is obvious that you will face some difficulties as a beginner but see them as challenges and move on towards achieving success.

By applying these steps new employees to the organization can feel at home and they will soon realize the need to be part of a great team where their input is required for meaningful development. It is important to know that some staff are fundamental to your achievement in your new position, just as some crucial departments. I therefore advise you to try in your early days in office to take note of the following departments:

- ◆ **Procurement/Accommodation:** Staff working here takes care of your furniture and other necessary writing materials. The unit in some organizations can also be a major source of gossiping, so the earlier you make friendship with them, the better your office looks like.
- ◆ **Reception: Staff here are like social workers:** They can be of help to you by providing you with all the necessary office line details. But it is often the worse place for gossiping.
- ◆ IT, this department takes care of computers and if you are going to use a computer it is important that you get to know this group quickly. If the staff working in this department are really competent can be of good help to the organization, as they will provide advice and directives on how to correctly use the system.
- ◆ **Guards/Security.:** Get to know these people and be good to them. Be aware that distressing them can make your stay in the office difficult. Don't feel offended to show them your staff ID, and treat them with respect.
- ◆ **Human Resource:** This department handles the human capital issues of the organization. Make them your friends and talk to them, especially on issues that affect your job. Trust me, you cannot do without them. They will be dealing with your files, handling your leave matters, involve in making decision to promote you etc. Apart from these departments, try and know other crucial places that you will need almost every day at work. These places include:
- ◆ **The toilet:** It is important you ask and know where the toilets are. This will save you from getting embarrassed wondering around trying to locate the toilet.
- ◆ **Way out/Exits:** Even though you are just joining the organization try and find out about the exist. It is important because anything can happen and at any time.
- ◆ **Staff canteen:** You want to know how food is obtained while at

work. You also want to know where staff eat during breakfast or lunch time. So knowing where the staff canteen is on your first day at work is important.

- ◆ Place for smoking. If you are a smoker and are just joining the department, there is no harm in asking people about the smoking area. Know this place and use it when smoking and it may be good to non-smokers too. So they can avoid that area.

Obviously if you finally got to your new workplace on your first day, it is nice to have a smile on your face and be making eye contact with people. Showing politeness to everyone you meet from the reception to your office counts a lot on your attitude and will soon make staff recognize your attitude quickly. While moving on to your office, introduce yourself to anyone you meet along the way and don't feel shy to ask their names again in a polite and friendly manner.

It may be good to keep on to some of the good things you learnt in your previous jobs if you had any before and to be applying them in your new position, but know that organizations differ in the way they operate, so learn about your current job and apply the rules accordingly. This is why it is important to ask questions on your first day and any other day at work. In some organizations a new employee is taken around introducing him/her to staff at various departments. If you are lucky to go through this process, take advantage to know people and ask questions. As you complete going around meeting with people in different departments, you are now back to your workplace with some ideas of how the organization operates.

Now you understand that there are different departments within the organization responsible for different functions which lead to the success of the organization as whole. As you go along you will come to realize that certain departments are involved in all the staffing issues of the

organization. The earlier you get to know this the better for you. For those who are joining the Human Resource Department and are thinking of contributing their quota towards human resource development, I welcome you to the next chapter which deals with human resource management.

Chapter 4

Human Resource Management

It is necessary to lay down rules and regulations in every human setup through which people are given the direction to follow for the purposes of attaining their desire objectives. These rules and regulations serve as guideline that must be adhered to by everyone. It is in the same way that organizations have different departments performing different functions but all with the ultimate objective of moving the organizations forward. Some of the key departments include the human resource department. The Human Resource Department is responsible for the management of human capital. It is true to say that staff are the most important component of any organization, and they deserve to be treated with respect and dignity, a course that can lead to employee loyalty to the organization. Staff retention is always a problem but treating employees professionally often counts a lot towards this process.

Human resource activities are somehow interlinked and if one thing goes wrong, others are bound to get affected. HR handles important issues like recruitment, short-listing, and job interviews which are essential towards the development of the organization. It is a process that gives applicants the opportunity to demonstrate their skills more accurately and provides the chances of being more objective in their final selection.

In simple terms, human resource management is an organizational activity that handles matters relating to compensation, hiring, performance management, organization's development, safety issues, benefits, employee motivation, administration matters, training etc. It

can also be described as the staff that consists of the workforce of an organization or a function within an organization tasked with the responsibilities of devising approaches and policies that relate to the management of staff. However the HR does not work in isolation with the rest of the departments.

It is important to know that human resource management is a term developed in the 1960s. The origins of the activity were from organizations that initiated 'welfare management' methods and also those that were applying the principles of 'scientific management'. From this expression came huge administrative management functions, harmonizing a field of related courses and was later known as the 'personnel function'. Human resources then became the common name for this activity.

Human resources have at least two narrated meanings depending on the background. The original usage was driven from political economy and economics, where it was called 'labour' with four factors of production. And the other usage was used in terms of "human resource development" of the staff within an organization. In today's human resource management, the best practices in the management of human resources are those things that optimize a workforce in order to get more, while pushing for efficiency and quality for the purposes of attaining productivity.

There are a number of important areas where human resource methods must be applied, which includes the establishment of feasible and impressive benefits and compensation packages, administering the performance of the employees, making sure that the organization's rules and regulations are adhered to, providing a good working environment, conducting excellent recruitment and applying the best human resource strategies for the organization's future development.

The work of the best human resources practice in an organization is making sure that the above mentioned benefits and pay scales are in conformity with the organization's budget. The organization should also be impressive and competitive to have the best employees who are capable of adding value.

Another crucial aspect of the best practice when dealing with human resource management is the correct and proper evaluation and enhancement of staff performance. One of the key activities of human resource department is performance management and this process should be handled using appropriate techniques. Guiding employees to live within the law is another important aspect of the human resource department, which is always part of the best practice when it comes to the organization's operations.

Human resource departments also take note of well-known issues including discrimination at work, and disability issues, insurance matters, social security issues and other relevant laws that must be respected. This legal practice when applied properly can promote the organization to potential applicants. It is good to know that human resource is about keeping a positive and creative working environment, and best practices, assist in making sure that employees feel good about the organization that they work for. Human resources is an increasingly well-known area that is taking form in organizations and other workplaces worldwide. It is true that people are the most important component in the organizations, and are becoming to rely more on an effective management policy that is applied to human resource.

Since HR applies to the workforce that is managed by the employer, organizations of any kind need good employees in order to operate effectively. It is true to say that managing the workforce can be difficult and because of this, human resource management concentrates more

on delicate and employee analysis to find out what works well with staff. Employee recruitment, training and development are one major aspect of the HR support as an activity towards human capital management. It is necessary for HR personnel to make sure that employees' abilities are accurately and carefully handled in order to receive an important outcome from the organization's investment on its employees. Apart from employee training, HR is also interested in areas of tracking potential applicants for the organization. The department also ensures that employees are given the right job description for the job they will be carrying. It is believed that a correct job description is crucial towards the appropriate functioning of any organization.

Induction training programmes are also often carried out by the human resource department. Some institutions like the Gambia Revenue Authority have a training section that handles such but the unit is under the human resource department of the Authority. It is true to say that recruiting new employees can be time consuming if not properly planned. The HR department is therefore tasked to handle this process carefully in order to attain the organization's aims. In addition to recruitment, human resource also take care of performance review process, which provides an opportunity to managers and their team members to examine performance, narrow down expectations and quality of performance, both what has been achieved by the organization and the employees as well. Career development planning is also essential for employees and the human resource department ensures that this process is aligned with the organization's goals for a particular period.

Human resource departments can set plans and foster policies, standards, systems and processes that can help in carrying out these strategies in many areas including:

- ◆ Employee recruitment, selection process
- ◆ Organizational plan and development
- ◆ Employee performance, attitude and behaviour management
- ◆ Employee relations
- ◆ Workforce examinations and personal data management
- ◆ Employee compensation, rewards and other benefit management
- ◆ Employee training and development (the process of learning management).

In many organizations, the implementations of the above policies are often handled by the human resource department. Human resource departments are also responsible for determining the recent and future requirements of the organization and its people, in terms of skills, competencies, knowledge etc. In doing the analysis, human resource departments should consider the internal and external factors that can affect the organization's developments, motivation for its staff, retention of its employees and other areas.

External factors are those that are outside the control of the organization and they include economic, climate, recent and future market courses, i.e. education, skills, government investments into productions. And the inter influences which are controlled by the organization to foretell, decide and monitor, the organizational customs, formed by the management style, environmental climate and the approach to ethical and corporate social responsibilities .

Human resource management is a difficult area in that it deals with people while at the same time ensuring that both the employees and the organization achieve their goals. In doing so human resource departments often experience challenges especially in their effort to devise ways on how to retain and motivate the best employees.

Working in this area requires adequate skills and the quality to respect and appreciate employees' efforts, especially those who are willing to give extra hours in an effort to contribute something to the organization. It is very crucial for HR personnel to know how to motivate employees so that they work towards the success of the organization. I recommend to you that as HR personnel you should be able to apply the following in order to motivate employees:

1. Handle employees with maximum respect. You should do this even in situations where you feel offended. To be harsh, difficult and unfriendly to an employee especially in public can affect not only the employee, but also the organization. Days are gone when managers could use force on employees in an attempt to control them
2. Be interested in your employees' welfare. Acting like you care for your employees up to the level of their families, gives them the feeling that you are a real human being to work with. Please don't be one of those employers who think that the only time to care for your employees is at the workplace or when there is an assignment to complete.
3. Involve your employees in decision making. This makes employees take ownership of their work. Do not underrate anyone's input in decision making and make employees feel part of your decision. This makes them appreciate you more
4. Provide favourable working conditions for your employees. Basic facilities like air conditioning, lighting system and telephone should be provided to make employee feel comfortable
5. Be polite to your employees. It is good to be saying, please do this "and thank you for the job". Well it is obvious that as human beings all of us feel happy to hear someone saying "thank you for a job well done".
6. Provide awards to employees who have gone the extra mile.

Doing this encourages others to work hard. These awards can be in many forms either monetary or non-monetary, but let it be things that people can appreciate and feel much happier about to the level that they can work harder.

7. Organize parties to celebrate the organization's success. Take advantage of these parties to assure every employee that you appreciate their efforts in taking the organization to wherever it is.
8. Support your employees. Accept the good ways in which your employees handle your customers leading to customer satisfaction.
9. Guide employees through accurate procedures. Enlighten your employees about the organization's policies and be supportive to ensure that every employee understands the policies fully.
10. Avoid unnecessary dismissals and demotions. Writing warning letters could solve most of the problems. Nothing discourages employees than seeing their colleagues being victimized every time by their employer.

It is important for HR personnel to know that many people are willing to begin a career in human resources for a number of reasons, including the belief that it is a fast-growing field with many remunerative chances, so treating employees fairly can make some of them appreciate and join the human resource field. It is believed that in the near future the number of the human resource jobs will increase and for this reason, one may start to think of where to begin. So to be happy with the way human resource issues are handled can quickly make one to settle down.

Human resource management is wide and the department in some organizations is responsible for the development and application of ongoing studies on strategic advances while taking care of hiring and training staff.

The department is responsible for the following:

- ◆ Identifying employee needs and career ambitions
- ◆ Promoting staff interactions
- ◆ Identifying the required skills and knowledge for the organization
- ◆ Providing new practices that can add value to the organization
- ◆ Conducting recruitment for the organization
- ◆ Devising resource strategies for the purposes of sustaining competitive advantage
- ◆ Empowering the organization, by correctly managing the staff.

Planning for the organization is important to ensure that every member of staff makes an effective contribution to the organization, and for identifying the required skills and methods to acquire them. If organizations overdo the dimensions of their workforce, they can experience surplus or even underutilize some of their staff and if they decide to do it the other way round their staff may be overstretched, making it difficult to achieve production.

For any human resource department to effectively conduct human resource planning, it is recommended that you apply the following steps:

- ◆ Do your workforce analysis: Try and fully understand your workforce and know the required skills to move the job forward.
- ◆ Examine the organization internally. Try and identify components which are internal in the organization and that may affect the human resource efforts in meeting with the organizational goals
- ◆ Examine the external components. Find out about the important environmental factors that you expect to affect your workforce's ability.

- ◆ Do your gap analysis. Find out and know the organization's current and future human resource needs
- ◆ Set your priority and work plan. Ask yourself about your human resource priorities and possibly the strategies required to achieve your desired outcome.
- ◆ Conduct evaluation, monitoring and be reporting. Performance is not to be compromised, so engage in evaluating, monitoring and report on employees' performance.

Human resource planning can be difficult, just as planning for all kinds of things, like staff retention, layoffs, training and development and compensation. However there are some things that are used in most human resource planning activities and are useful in making the process active or can even create competitive advantage.

Human resource planning should be linked to the overall business planning or strategic planning process. This is an activity that is to support and assist the organization in attaining its goals. Also it is crucial to know that human resource planning is carried out by the HR department and must be geared to serve the stakeholders and to some extent the organization's 'customers'. So it is important to involve the stakeholders during the process.

For the planning to be more effective, you need to fully understand the organization and its staff, including the mission, vision and other necessary issues, in addition to the environment in which the organization operates. Another important area in human resource planning is to ensure that the planning is measurable and assessable.

Human resource planning is essential for the planning of human resource functions. Human resource management covers a wide area, all of which requires proper planning. The management in some organizations

includes:

1. recruiting
2. selecting
3. hiring
4. orienting
5. training and retraining
6. motivating
7. coaching
8. mentoring
9. recognizing achievements
10. empowering
11. communicating
12. evaluating
13. promoting

The human resource planning process should not just be limited to big organizations as other people may think, but small organizations with a few employees. So as an employer even if you have five staff you need to plan like big organizations regarding human resources and personnel issues. This is a process which should involve the collection and accurate use of the personnel data so that useful inputs can be used in your strategic human resource activities. Collecting wrong data will create poor or bad output to your planning process. When organizations have proper ideas and useful human resource plans, it permits the organization to move training and staff development from using a bad process to a right strategic, well organized and designed to contribute something meaningful to the organization.

In life, education is all about mind preparation and is usually carried out far from the workplace, whereas training is the development of the attitude, knowledge, and skill pattern required from an individual to carry out his/her task or a particular job effectively. Development is

the growth of a person in terms of ability, understanding and awareness. Every human resource department within an organization needs these three important things in order to:

- ◆ Develop employees so as to undertake more tasks
- ◆ Provide the necessary training of new employees
- ◆ Provide judicial requirements like health and safety issues
- ◆ Take employees through induction training and other necessary courses

It is important to know that in the area of human resource management, training and development is concerned with the overall organizational activity which aims at improving the performance of employees and other groups in the organizational setting.

Performance management is key to the development of any organization. It is an area that involves functions to ensure that organizational goals are met in an effective and efficient manner. It can concentrate on the performance of the organization as a whole, a particular department, an employee etc. In an active organization a job is planned out earlier. Planning in that context means setting your performance expectations and aims for groups and persons to route their efforts towards accomplishing their organizational objectives. Involving employees in your planning process will assist them greatly in having a better understanding of the organization's goals.

The fundamental requirements for planning employees' performance comprise the establishment of the components and standards of their appraisal plans. These components should however be measurable, understandable, fair and attainable. Setting appropriate components can help the employer hold employees accountable for works assigned to them. Where proper planning is done and the organization uses

effective performance management process, it can set the basis for satisfying quality by:

1. Putting together employees' ability to work with the organization's mission and goal. This process will assist both the organization and the employee in knowing how the job contributes to the development of the organization.
2. Helping the organization to concentrate attention on setting explicit performance expectations, i.e. results, action and behaviour. This assists the employee to know what needs to be done in moving the job forward
3. Helping in defining career development objectives. This process enables the organization to know what support is needed for the current positions in order to move on and identify the additional skills requirements for employees.
4. Assisting in updating employee status, job coaching and feedback. This process fosters flexibility and permits the employee to identify problems early.
5. Helping in knowing that an appraisal system should be based on the activities undertaken in a particular period and which was clearly communicated by the employer.
6. Managing employee performance can be a tricky and daunting task, but you need to follow the appropriate steps including the need to check, plan and assess.
7. When starting the planning process, you should involve your employees in reviewing your expectations, including issues that collaborate on the development of performance objectives. Also try to update your employees' development goals; this is possible by engaging them. After doing that, you can now develop a performance plan that guide the employees' efforts towards achieving desired outcomes which can support the organizational quality and your employees' success.

8. Discuss the organization's aims and objectives when you hold meetings with employees. This will enable the staff to achieve outcomes through their individual responses.
9. At the end of the exercise, you must have completed assessing employees' performance against the organization's expected objectives.

By this time you have already established new objectives for your next performance appraisals. In order to perform very well, employees should be informed of what is expected of them. And this process begins when you prepare a job description that states the tasks, responsibilities and reporting in the job. A job description also stipulates the universal areas of knowledge and relevant skills that are required from employees in order to perform their duty successfully.

But performance expectation is not just limited to job description. The moment you start thinking of quality on the job performance, then you start thinking about many expected job outcomes, like:

- ◆ The type of goods and services to be produced by the organization
- ◆ The kind of attitude you expect from your employees towards your customers
- ◆ Knowing the organizational values that employees should demonstrate
- ◆ What methods and process the employees would follow .

While talking about performance expectations, employees should know why the job exists, where it should be in the organization and how the responsibilities of the job link to the organization. Performance expectations may cover a wide area but below are the two points that are essential:

- ◆ **Consequence:** Whatever goods and services that are produced by a particular employee are measured through quality or objectives
- ◆ **Manners and conduct:** The approaches and means that are used to make a product and the actions, together with values demonstrated during the process. Conduct and manners can be measured through performance sizes.

Performance objectives and standards are the two most applied methods in defining expected consequences. Both standards and objectives are very important. These can be broken down to the following:

- ◆ **Specific** - Employees should know exactly what standards and objectives are expected of them in an organization.
- ◆ **Measurable** - Objectives and standards should be measurable in terms of percentages, degrees etc.
- ◆ **Relevant** - Employee ambitions, standards and objectives should be in conformity with the overall organizational mission.
- ◆ **Timely** - There should be a period in which results should be presented in order to meet with the organization's needs.

It is important to set objectives as they force the employer and the employee to properly plan for consequences, instead of just functions. To identify objectives, motivate the employer and the employee to constantly look for avenues in improving the organizational objectives and so efficiency. It can also assist in bringing the employee and the organization's operations with consequences to the entire planning and mission of the organization.

It is advisable that you take into consideration the following when

developing or setting objectives which should be discussed with a concerned employee:

- ◆ Think of short-term ambitions but with a long-term outlook. It is known that in many organizations, objectives are set within a year.
- ◆ Know important matters and any obstacles. You should be aware of critical issues as well as be able to identify any obstacles.
- ◆ Be mindful of resources requirement and never underestimate. Do not underestimate but be prepared to spend more where necessary to avoid failure along the line.
- ◆ Be flexible and try to update prestige while at the same time identify problems. Take necessary actions and if necessary change course.

Just as you set an objective go through the process. You need to do your assessment too. This process can lead to the end stage of the performance phase and going through this process carefully can create good chances for you to talk with your employees concerning their previous performance. Analyse the employee's job ability and decide in advance on the employee's future performance. Performance assessment can be used to measure employee performance in their recent job. It is a process which summarizes how a particular employee has contributed during the assessment period. It is among the best practices that an employee should be assessed at least once in a year, or it can take place any time you think is important to appreciate employees' achievements and while deciding how to improve their performance more in the coming years.

Some ambitions are set during the assessment process designed to assist the employee in the following areas:

- ◆ Be happy about the job. There is nothing more rewarding than making the employee feels happy with the job he/she is doing.

- ◆ Be happy for particular contributions. It is important for you to be happy with your contribution especially when it has a positive impact on the development of the organization.
- ◆ Gain from particular response. Feedback is good to help employees know about what to do next as well as improve on their performance
- ◆ Know about the recent and future performance objectives. Employees need to be informed about both the present as well on their future expectations from the job.
- ◆ Have courage to work well and to grow. It is important for any employee to have the confidence and courage that they can always deliver in their job
- ◆ Take an active part during the process. Naturally most people feel happy to be part of a process, especially when it affects their lives.

It is important that the manager and the employee recognize the position in which the employee was known to be successful. You may wish to involve the employee and to do the following:

- ◆ Find a convenient time for you and the employee during which you can discuss and be prepared to keep secrets.
- ◆ Make the employee feel that both of you need to share ideas, which will be documented for possible future use.
- ◆ Allow the employee to prepare for the discussions.
- ◆ Inform the employee to do initial self-appraisal, capturing his/her achievements and identifying necessary requirements that can improve his/her job better
- ◆ Help the employee with some example questions that he/she can use while practicing to evaluate himself/herself. Such questions could be:
- ◆ What did you think is your best achievement?

- ◆ What needs to be done in order to improve your performance?
- ◆ What sort of assistance do you need from your superior in order to perform well?

After this process, the employer should continue with what you established in the whole year through discussions on performance. It is important to be prepared for crucial discussions and when doing so try and apply the following:

- ◆ Provide an enabling environment in which you can clearly inform the employee about the purposes of the discussion. Be positive and make the employee feel comfortable during the process.
- ◆ Talk about important areas of responsibility and give scenarios on some real outcomes. Allow employees to start expressing their views on the questions you provided on their self-assessment, respect and fully understand the employees opinions.
- ◆ Appreciate performance that increases the goals of the job
- ◆ Talk about areas that could have been done much better. State your interest and allow the employee to explain what he/she can
- ◆ Concentrate on the future growth. Allow employees to participate in developing your plans. Try and identify problems or obstacles and decide on how to remedy them.
- ◆ You and the employee should have a common understanding of your future expectations in connection with performance
- ◆ Engage employees in discussing their interests and new responsibilities, find ways of achieving this mission.
- ◆ Assure the employees that your door is open for any further questions, discussions or clarifications concerning the performance issues.

Human resource management is such an important field that requires

attention in order to accomplish the organization's objectives. Human resources have different functions and activities that when carried out successfully can lead to immediate productivity at work thus promoting the organization to people who are eager to contribute something towards its development. I find it necessary to introduce some of the human resource functions in my next chapter and how these functions contribute towards the success of any organization.

Chapter 5

Human Resource functions

Organizations have rules and regulations which give direction to the way their employees operate, thus leading to the achievement of the organization's goal. These laid down procedures are often handled by the human resource department, and in some organizations like the Gambia Revenue Authority, they are subjected to review for the convenience of both the staff and the organization.

It is in this context that the human resource management continues to play an important role in organizations by guiding people through the organization's procedures for the purposes of achieving the organization's objectives. Besides ensuring that employees follow the right procedures at workplaces, the human resource departments also handle a number of functions which include:

Recruitment and Selection: This refers to the process of screening and selecting qualified people for a particular position in an organization or firm. While conducting the recruitment process, human resource personnel ensure that:

- ◆ The process is in conformity with the organization's aims and objectives
- ◆ The applicants are provided with quality services
- ◆ An environment is created that can attract other applicants
- ◆ The good image of the organization is promoted at all times
- ◆ The organization's laid down policies on equal opportunities are sustained etc

While screening and selecting applicants for a job, human resource personnel assess applicant's fitness by looking at their skills in communication, computer literacy in software packages like, word-processing, Access, Excel, and power point. Usually applicant's qualifications are shown through their resumes, job applications, interviews, educational and professional experience etc.

Employee selection is simply the process through which the right individuals are put in right job. This is a step of matching a particular organization's needs with the skills and qualifications of people. Selecting the right candidate for the right job helps the organization in getting quality services thus leading to employee productivity. Organizations that are willing to stay in business take proper screening of candidates during the selection process. This is the time when all the potential applicants for a particular job are tested.

Recruitment and selection are different to some extent. Recruitment is often seen as a positive process that motivates many applicants to look for a particular job, whereas selection is often seen as a denying or negative step because candidates considered unsuitable are left out during this process. While looking for an applicant to fill a particular position in an organization, the recruitment process comes before selection. The Selection process is often seen as a means through which the right candidates with the required abilities, skills and knowledge for a particular job are chosen.

There are some rules that govern the selection process, which include that all employees are selected and taken through the right process. Some organizations use methods during the selection process which are often decided by a panel and can include any of the following:

- ◆ Tests conducted during selection
- ◆ Candidates to produce work samples or portfolio
- ◆ Going through an interview panel

Usually the decision to call candidates to attend an interview depends on what applicants wrote on their job application form or in their application letter, together with their curriculum vitae (CV). My advice is that applicants should provide as much information as they can about themselves, their skills and experience that relate to the job which they applied for. It is crucial to know that organizations find it valuable to hire appropriate employees that can add value to the organization. This is one of the reasons why it is important to add job match as an essential component during the process of hiring an employee, so that the organization meets its desired human capital.

Another crucial activity that is carried out by the human resource department is: employee orientation. It is not just enough to employ someone with the assumption that they can perform well without providing guidance. Let us remember when we went to school on our first day most of us weren't very comfortable as to whether society would accept us or not. New staff that are employed by the organization can feel the same way, because they are joining a new working environment where they will meet some people for the first time. To make these people feel at home employers are to welcome them with a smile and possibly inform them that the staff are happy to see them around.

It is important to take them around and show them the facilities especially those they will need on daily basis like the emergency exit and hazardous areas. While taking them around introduce them to the staff and other key stakeholders that you meet either in their offices or along the way. After that take your time to explain the type of job they

will be doing and to whom they will be reporting. This process will obviously assist the staff to be mentally fit for the job they will be doing in the organization. I remember the day when I first joined the Customs Department. I met the Director General of Customs in his office where he called his senior officers to come and formally welcome me to the department. After their warm welcome all of them gave me their advice and asked me to feel comfortable to work with them. This should be part of every organization's orientation process.

During employee orientation, it is important to prepare a checklist of subjects which can be reviewed with new employees and a convenient time for both the supervisor and the new employee should be provided. It is important to provide new employees with the following information concerning organizations practices and procedures:

- ◆ Time to work and attendance/ cleanliness policy: Well some organizations in The Gambia start work at 8:00 am and close at 4:00 pm and employees are expected to be at work at 8 am from Monday to Friday every week.
- ◆ When salaries are paid: Again organizations may have different days to pay their employees but whatever the case may be just communicate this information to new employees.
- ◆ How much to receive at the end of the month. Usually this information should be contained in the appointment letter.
- ◆ Procedures for overtime and payment requirement. Where there is a need to work overtime, it is important for employees to know this and how much they should expect to be paid.
- ◆ Any training procedures. It is true that everyone likes to be trained for advancement in the job, but organizations have different policies towards training so it is important to inform employees how your organization goes about training.
- ◆ Employee benefits, which they are eligible for like:

- a. Conditions for medical insurance
- b. Matters relating to sick leave
- c. Holidays
- d. Procedure for pensions scheme
- e. Disability and accident insurance cover procedures
- f. Chance for promotion and the procedures
- g. Opportunities to share employee suggestion
- h. Where to park your car etc.

You may also give the following materials to new employees:

- ◆ Handbook
- ◆ Organization's newsletters
- ◆ Issues relating to safety plan
- ◆ The organization's annual report etc

It is important to inform employees about the organization's mission and its thought of handling business, i.e.

- ◆ How you do things in the organization
- ◆ How to treat your stakeholders or customers
- ◆ How to approach people with respect.

Help employees know where the organization's employment posters are placed. It is crucial for you to point out the organization's policy with regard to sexual harassment. Orienting employees is very important and can bring about the following benefits:

1. Reduce costs. When employees are given the right orientation, it helps them to settle down with organization quickly and the organization will save the cost of spending on learning the job.
2. Curtail the level of being worried. If an employee is hired and

put in a strange situation it can lead to unproductiveness. But right orientation minimizes this course and assist the employee to know the procedure, right guidelines to apply for good behaviour

3. Save time for the organization. When employees are properly oriented, the organization saves the time it would have spent with the process.
3. Develop accurate expectations of the job. Good attitude and happiness from the job. This will help the employee know in time what is expected from them and enable them to know the right values and attitudes practiced in the organization.
5. Promote the understanding of the organization's culture and its value.
6. Assist new employees in making better adjustment to their new positions.
7. Allow new employees to know their roles and how they are placed in the organization
8. It assists employees in achieving their objectives and saving the time for learning.
9. Makes the employee have a good working relation by acquiring the right knowledge about the organization's mission, vision, policies, its structure and activities.

It is important to plan for the process of employee orientation in advance. This will assist the organization to handle the orientation properly on the employee's first day at work. So think about the following before the arrival of the employee:

- ◆ Inform staff that a new employee is coming to join you and what he/she will be doing. You may also tell your staff to cooperate fully and provide all the necessary assistance.
- ◆ Provide the employee with tasks that are attractive on his/her first day at work.

- ◆ Provide the employee with a copy of his/her job description, organizational chart etc
- ◆ Provide a good working environment to the new employee.
- ◆ Let the employee be issued with a copy of the organizational policy document etc.

Another important activity that the human resource departments handle is employee motivation. In most organizations it is the wish of the employer to see that the work is carried out through the use of employees input. But for this course to happen, the employer should know how to motivate his/her employees. To fully understand what motivation is all about, one needs to know about human nature and that is where the problem is. It is arguable that to know human nature could sometimes be simple, yet can also be very difficult. It is generally accepted that employees can perform well at workplaces but not by force. Think about the old adage that you can only take a horse to the well, but cannot use force on the horse to drink. Employees too can be given tasks to complete, but without motivation the employer may not receive the desired results. Motivation is however a skill which must be learnt and applied appropriately if the organization wants to achieve success in the business.

When thinking about how to motivate employees, it is important for one to ask oneself the following questions:

1. Can I motivate my employees? In answering this question employers may assume they can't, and that employees can motivate themselves. But the reality is that as an employer you can motivate your employees more than in the case of trying to empower them. You can motivate them by providing an environment where they can be motivated. The most important thing in this process is to know how to provide a favourable environment for each employee.

2. Can money be used to motivate employees? In some situations, giving money, nice office structure and even job security cannot motivate employees fully. So it is important to find out and know what motivates your employees, if you really want them to be productive.
3. What motivates your employees? Different employees can be motivated by different things. When some employees are motivated by recognizing their job performances, others may be motivated through showing care to them and their family.
4. Will increase work satisfaction result in an increase in job performance. It is believed that this thought may not be correct sometimes. But what is important is to align the employees' goals with the organization's goals so that employees work towards the organization's mission.

It is interesting to say that to motivate employees is to begin motivating oneself. If for example one dislikes one's work, it looks like everyone else hates theirs too. On the contrary if you take good care of yourself and your job seriously, you will understand how others should be treated. This is why it is often said that to know how to motivate employees is to know exactly how to motivate oneself. There are a number of things that motivate different employees. Some of these include: times spent with their family, recognition, thanking them for a job well done. As an employer you may wish to support your employees to motivate them in your organization by:

1. Telling them to do more than just knowing what motivates them, but applying the skills appropriately.
2. Writing down activities that motivate and support you and what you think can support your employees. This may sound funny, but can help you greatly.

3. Preparing a list of activities that contain four or six things that you think can motivate your employees. You can do this after involving employees in a form of issuing a questionnaire which employees will fill in, by disclosing what motivates them.
4. Engaging your employees' one after the other. Working with your employees individually during which the manager needs to take consideration of what motivates them can help you know what motivates each member of the group
5. Inviting your employees individually in a meeting, where you can discuss issues relating to what motivates the employee. It is even important to know your employees' favourite food, drinks, names etc, so that you can use some of those things when considering motivating the employee.
6. Being prepared to delegate some tasks to employees: Delegating your authority and responsibility to your employees can motivate them greatly.
7. Trying and rewarding employees: Rewarding employees by presenting them with certificates, cash etc for accomplishing certain tasks can sometimes go a long way toward motivating employees.
8. Creating goals that are specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic, timely, so that employees can attain the organization's desired objectives.
9. Organizing parties, picnics to commemorate employees' achievement. This help employees feel happy that their efforts are recognized by their superiors.
10. Providing an opportunity where employees can interact with the organization's clients. This assists employees to have first-hand information on the organization's performance from its stakeholders and thus the employees quality

Motivation is such an important thing in life and continues to play an important role in employee productiveness. Why do we motivate employees? is a popular question that is often asked . To say motivation is all about survival can be correct, because through employee motivation organizations continue to survive. Motivation is however often considered as the most difficult part of a superior or manager's job, which requires that a superior understands very well things that motivate employees. Some organizations use the following motivating activities that are often arranged according to their importance:

1. One's job security
2. Assistance rendered to employees in helping them with their individual problems
3. Being honest to employees
4. Making the job interesting to employees
5. Good working environment for employees
6. Demonstrating discipline to employees
7. Attractive pay for employees
8. Upgrading employees and having an avenue for employee development
9. Recognition of employee performances etc.

Whether your organization is big or small, when you have a well-motivated workforce your business will be successful. On the other hand when you fail to motivate your employees the tendency is that they will not be productive and so the organization will lag behind. It is therefore important to motivate your employees to become successful on their job. You may also try to do this thus:

- ◆ Form a basis. It is crucial to establish a strong basis for your employees through which they can feel devoted to the organization. Inform your employees about the organization's past

performance and its vision for the future and engage them to know their expectation from the organization and what they wish to be. Provide appropriate orientation to all new employees to the organization.

- ◆ Provide a good working environment. Put your employees in well furnished, decorated offices with necessary facilities. Keep your office open to your employees and be willing to talk with anyone either by answering questions or giving guidance. Remember that working in a good office environment contributes a lot towards employee performance.
- ◆ Place your employees in the right positions. Many employees are willing to move forward within the organizations. Also work closely with everyone and try to know exactly what they want now and what their future ambitions are. Knowing that there is a good thing coming for you in future makes one to struggle hard with work.
- ◆ Provide room for educating your employees. Assist employees to learn the job through training which they can acquire relevant skills. Organize workshops and seminars where employees can learn and ask questions or contribute in decision making that affects them and the organization.
- ◆ Create fun to make employees feel happy. It is sometimes nice to make fun and realize that there is something else in the office not just work.
- ◆ Be prepared to give incentives to your employees. Give some gifts to employees who perform well whether by issuing certificates or some money or bonus to all the employees as a result of the organizations achievements.
- ◆ Keep your promises. Make sure you fulfill promises to employees, especially on their job performances. i.e. when you tell the employees that by achieving certain tasks, they will receive something; fulfill such promises after employee achievement.

- ◆ Assist employees by providing them with a coach on the job. Attach employees to staff who know the job and can assist them to learn quickly.

If any organization fails to motivate its employees, the organization will certainly be facing failure. Therefore it is imperative to know how to motivate employees and motivate them to the point that they can add value to your organization at all times.

I partly talked about coaching when discussing the importance of employee motivation, but coaching is such an important activity at the workplace which requires to be applied carefully at all times especially when new employees are joining the organization. Coaching means the function of an instructor in developing the skills of coaches. It can also mean a course of reinforcing interaction between the employer, or supervisor and the employee. The use of coaching at workplaces helps in increasing performance and thus leads to employee productivity. Coaching provides the opportunity for a supervisor and the employee to discuss issues and find possible ways of meeting the organization's objectives. It is important to know that the use of the word "coaching to refer to an instructor" was first applied around 1830 at Oxford University given to a lecturer who took a student through an examination.

Many supervisors and managers who are interested in career development focus on coaching for the purposes of development process in their organizations. It therefore becomes necessary for human resource personnel to be coaches if they want to acquire productive management ability. Human resource personnel are expected to bring solutions to job procedures and are to be like experts in the job. As human resource personnel you need to apply the following in order to enhance your ability as a coach on the job:

1. Explain the expected performance outcome by giving some important examples.
2. Obtain your employees' views on issues to be discussed.
3. Provide an opportunity to employees where they can identify components that they think contribute to development (enough time, capability, help from fellow employees and the management).
4. Find appropriate ways in which you and your employees can brace positive results
5. Tell employees the importance of the job and how their contributions will impact on the objectives of the organization.
6. Make employees know that you feel happy with their results and that you have the confidence in them.
7. Keep record of your discussion with your employees.
8. It is advisable that for the human resource personnel to make their coaching effective, they should know the following important components of coaching:
9. Conduct coaching as you wish to concentrate on specific employee performance.
10. Check the employee job and allow others to make their comments on it.
11. In the event that you realize successful performance, try to know the factors that led to success.
12. Give enough time to employee to know what to discuss with you
13. Find other ways of getting solutions.
14. Devise a way to agree with employees on any necessary action to take.
15. Organize subsequent meetings to scale results.
16. Appreciate success made and as well as improvement done.
17. Keep a record of important points during coaching sessions.

It is also important to keep track of every question you wish to ask

when thinking of coaching. This process can help you know the components of performance. It is essential to think of the following questions:

- ◆ How do you expect your employee to perform?
- ◆ Did the employee know what is expected from him?
- ◆ Did the employee know how successful the results should look like?
- ◆ Is there any problem that hinders the employee's performance?
- ◆ Did the employee ever carry out such a task successfully?
- ◆ Will the employee be willing to learn?
- ◆ Does the employee produce a successful performance result from the assignment given?

It is important for a supervisor or manager to know that coaching and mentoring are a process that assists both employees and employers to achieve their ability. Generally, coaching and mentoring have many similarities and because of this, some gurus think it necessary to state the common things that coaches and mentors do. Some of these include:

1. They ease the study of needs, motivational requirements, skills required and ideas that can help an individual make the necessary change.
2. Use appropriate mechanisms which are applied in questioning to ease stakeholders' thoughts in order to come up with solutions and measures.
3. Assist the stakeholders in setting necessary objectives and procedures of examining development in relation to the objectives.
4. Helps to focus, listen and ask necessary questions to know what the stakeholders want.
5. Use important means and procedures which can involve training

with one to one.

6. Promote employee commitment towards developing individual growth and necessary changes required.
7. Helps stakeholders in developing their personal effectiveness and discourages unnecessary dependencies at work.
8. Assesses the results generated from the process, by using reasonable measures in ensuring that the relationship between the organization and its employee or stakeholders is successful.
9. Provides guidance for employees to improve on their ability and develop skills in achieving their objectives.
10. Devise a means of managing the relationships to ensure that employees or stakeholders receive good services at all times.

Mentoring is another means of learning the job. It is a process through which one supports and encourages other people to properly manage their learning so that they can develop skills, improve performance and achieve their dreams. Mentoring is often a relationship where one or more experienced persons help another individual to learn and move forward in the job. It is considered, as an important management measure at workplaces, where experienced people in the job guide, for example, a new employee through the job for the purpose of achieving the desired results.

Chapter 6

How to manage people

Naturally every human being at one stage or another manages people either at home or the workplace. Take for example in our various homes, we look after our children and other people around us sometimes to a level that we give directions and guide them towards certain things and so it is also important that organizations have mission and vision statements through which employees are directed towards achieving a particular organization's aims and objectives. People are the most vital aspect of any organization and so they require to be managed appropriately for the purposes of achieving the organization's aims and objectives. But how can one manage people? Well, every manager is expected to know that people are bound to have some weaknesses and this is because human beings are not perfect. As a manager if you realize that an employee's limitation is driving you crazy or is limiting his/her performance greatly, you should try and provide supportive coaching and perhaps that may work well.

It is believed that the most difficult and yet important job for any manager is how to manage people. Managers are expected to lead, provide motivation, inspire and even encourage employees if they want to stay in business. In certain situations managers also have to be involved in hiring, employee discipline and even engage in evaluating their performance. Managers are people who often spend their valuable time providing direction to their employees.

To manage people effectively usually begins at the point of hiring them for a particular job. Let me ask whether anyone has ever thought of newly hired employees and perhaps said to yourself that they made a

terrible mistake by hiring a particular employee. If this is the case, know that you may not be the only one to do that. In situations where you may be thinking of terminating that employee's service may be easy, your chances of taking such a decision may be unpleasant and can likely be difficult. To be an effective manager can be easy, after hiring employees who are skilful and reliable. It is obvious that when employees are skilful and capable of doing their job accurately, work will flow smoothly and customers are usually happy. Managers are however challenged by employees who are not capable of carrying out their tasks appropriately.

To be an effective manager, one needs to focus on selecting the right people when hiring and this process requires the use of the appropriate selection process. It is true that most organizations are tempted to hire people quickly in filling their vacancies and this move forces organizations to compensate for the newly hired employees through training or supervision in order to know the area of help to employees before they become a serious problem.

It is for this reason that managing people becomes imperative, if the organization wishes to attain productivity. In fact, it is an open fact that conditions that were attached to work previously are changing to the point that there is international mobility, shortage in talents, new laws attached to labour and people are shifting locations. Then this is followed by a question that I like to ask where, how and for whom? People are, in turn, changing organizations' structures and cultures. These challenges are forcing human resource functions to change and people in HR are facing more pressure than ever to manifest results from their workforce practices and policies. This helps directors and other business heads to recognize the connectivity between business performance and the people within their organization. And in order to have a good outcome today's business managers have to be good at managing

people. For managers to be able to manage people they should begin with themselves. This is not a difficult thing as one may be thinking. Below are some of the qualities found on a good manager:

1. **Manage.** These managers depend on their employees to carry out important functions and they themselves are involved but not with the attempt of controlling every aspect of the job. A good manager is, however, someone who delegates and sometimes even "asks for forgiveness, instead of permission" to refrain their employees from unnecessary blame.
2. **Have a good team.** Good managers recognize and use the talents of their employees, build and use the capability of their employees fully.
3. **Concentrate on result.** In some organizations, managers are expected to produce the day-to-day results of the organization's needs. But even by doing so, managers who are good at managing their employees will keep a reference point there.
4. **Building relationships:** Since the organization cannot do without people, good managers should know how to build relationships, to the point that they are expected to make it a priority in their day-to-day work. These managers should spend considerable time listening to their employees and making it possible for employees to interact.
5. **Welcome response.** Good managers accept and use response to adjust themselves and to improve the work of their employees. They interact with employees to know better how their employees feel.
6. **Build capacity.** Good managers provide opportunities for their employees to develop their knowledge and skills. This allows employees to be prepared as possible successors in the organization and also for achieving the organization's aims and objectives.

7. **Make themselves accountable:** Good managers allow themselves to be accountable for everything they do. These managers don't necessarily blame others if the system encounters a setback.
8. **Capable of setting standards:** Good managers ensure that every employee understands what is expected from them. They do this by setting simple and jargon free standards throughout and involve employees during the process.
9. **Be committed and willing.** Good managers are always committed to their plans in ensuring that, the organization has value for what it is good at. And they are willing to change any programme that does not meet the aims and objectives of the organization.
10. **Trust by their employee.** Good managers are seen to be honest, fair and have understanding. Such type of managers only give promises they can actually fulfill, and they ensure that every employee is given equal treatment in the organization.
11. **Having discussed about how a good manager should behave at work,** it is important that managers use appropriate measures to effectively manage people at work. People management is an essential requirement for any organization to achieve its aims and objectives. The following can be used to manage people at work:
12. **Communicate with your employees.** Managers should spend a good time with their employees during which they should listen to their views. Hearing from your employees is a great thing and therefore avoid underestimating anyone at all times.
13. **Be in harmony with your employees.** Always try to know what

is crucial for your employees. Pay attention to some of their needs and be seen to ask questions from them from time to time. This may be the quickest way to build relationships.

14. **Creating value.** When making decisions, make it known that the organization needs value for what it is doing and let this be known to every employee.
15. **Laugh with your employees not at your employees.** Have some time for fun with your employees, even within the organization. Before you know employees are motivated by different things, so having fun can make the organization a better place to work for some employees.
16. **Provide support.** Always be available to give support on the job, and provide a coach for new employees. Some employees would like to take some risk but only if they know that when they fail someone will guide them through next time instead of blaming them.
17. **Be part of the team:** Along the way things can get tough, so be there to work with your employees. Don't just sit in your office giving instructions.
18. **Stick to your words.** Be consistent especially in whatever you say. Employees would like the organization to achieve its objectives, so try to provide them with accurate information and make sure you stand by whatever you said.
19. **Respect your employees.** Remember employees feel happy when you recognize and accept their efforts and this will help you succeed. Many employees, like myself, like to be told "Good job keep it up". And know that no matter how employees are motivated differently; every employee accepts a simple expression like "Thank you" from their employer.
20. **Stand back.** Be ready to let your employees get on with what they are doing. Focus on the wider picture and ask yourself what we are trying to achieve. How does our decision fit in our

objectives? etc.

- ◆ Open your doors. Make yourself available to every employee and don't feel too big to ask questions. Also discuss your concerns and worries, and your vision for the organization.

It is important to work for others in organization. In other words for us to attain our aims and objectives, we must be able to relate to other people effectively. And adopting such ideas will help one to do the following:

1. Have people to do things right and make them understand that they are on the right path.
2. Use response to keep informed about what others are doing.
3. Organize important meetings, which can have a real positive impact on the organization's way forward.
4. Give necessary directions and avoid the loss of essential time.
5. Develop your employee's capacity, knowing that you can't do it alone.
6. Have the feeling for others to excel, and trust others to perform certain duties.
7. Motivate people, for the purposes of achieving productivity and for making them feel happy with their job.
8. Encourage and provide support to employees who are under-performing. Ignoring them creates anger and frustrations at work.
9. Avoid exercising too much of your powers, as it annoys others and can lead to consuming unnecessary time.
10. Concentrate on achievements, and avoid personal attacks.
11. Provide incentives to people after achieving results.
12. Interact with your employees. Know what is going on, and listen to comments or suggestions.
13. Make quality an important issue, and communicate this with your employees.

14. Send appreciation notes to your employees.
15. Be prepared to provide instant response with an open mind to your employees, especially on their performance and expected performance as this will assist them to correct their own shortcomings.
16. Demonstrate attentive listening. Don't interrupt people while they are trying to explain their account on something. By listening you will learn lots of things from your employees. Remember that no one is perfect.
17. Avoid shifting blame to your employee. Always focus on tackling the problem.
18. Be proactive, especially in responding to queries within a short time of receiving them.
19. Provide short and precise information pasted on the notice-board, where employees can read without spending unnecessary time.
20. Provide a friendly working environment for your employees where they can express their views without fear.
21. Involve your employees in decision-making, especially when introducing change that will affect them. Remember when people are better informed about change; it reduces their level of resistance, as opposed to imposing on them.
22. Make effective communication a priority within the office.
23. Remember that people are the most valuable thing in the organization, so provide training for them that can bring about progress.
24. Engage your employees in meaningful projects, as people want to be seen doing something important.
25. Apply employee performance appraisal systems and use the feedback to determine what an employee is worth in terms of salary.
26. Sometimes use the word "please" to your employees when

- requiring their services. This makes them happy.
27. Give attention to even small details, since big ones are obvious and be seen to take care of them too.
 28. Think openly, and welcome new ideas so long as they can bring progress. By doing this you will not be seen as setting barriers to development.
 29. Smile with your employees. To give them the freedom of ease at work, employees get worried if their boss keeps frowning at them.
 30. Apply the golden rule in business, which stipulates that you do unto others the way you would like them do unto you. Encourage fairness at work.
 31. Give employees the benefit and don't always be thinking that they are the cause of the problem.
 32. Accept and be prepared to learn from others. Be frank enough to say "I don't" if an employee ask a question that you can't answer.
 33. Ask for employees' opinions on how the organization is performing
 34. Be part of the 4 F club, which means, fair, firm, friendly and possessing foresight.
 35. Try to be flexible and do whatever necessary to get the work done.
 36. Take your time to delegate your responsibility; this will help to avoid unnecessary problems.
 37. Do not embarrass or criticize employees in the presence of their colleagues.
 38. Always treat employees as human beings. Let them know that you are there to assist them.
 39. Conduct a performance appraisal with your employees at least once a year.
 40. Assist your employees wherever possible. They will also be willing to reciprocate

It is true that as a manager you want to see that employee management is your concern. Managing your employees effectively permit the manager to achieve his/her goal. Effective employees' management also allows the manager to use other employees' strength, and capability so as to contribute to the achievement of the organization's work. When employees are managed successfully, it assists in employees' motivation, employees' capacity building as well as retaining employees.

Employee management is seen as the most important job that managers do in organizations. They would like to know how to hire a superior workforce. And in this process a manager needs to know and perform the employees' practices that keep employees motivated, inspired, developing and attaining goals with his/her guidance. By following this, you can be a successful manager capable of making serious differences in the work life of employees as well as your organization.

To begin with, managers need to manage the day-to-day performance of their employees. Managing your employees' performance every day is crucial to effective management. Setting goals, making sure your expectations are clear and provide regular response. Assist employees to perform more effectively. In doing this a manager has to do the following:

- ◆ Engage in performance management. In this way managers get what they requested.
- ◆ Foster concept of self-discipline at all times.
- ◆ Counseling or job coaching.
- ◆ Apply performance management to assist employees succeed and improve on their job.
- ◆ Give accurate response that has a real impact on the job etc.

For managers to be able to manage employees effectively, they must have an interpersonal communication skill as well. Many organizations use person-to-person interpersonal communication as the most regular method of communicating at work in addition to memos, circulars etc. When doing this, a manager should try and apply the following:

- ◆ Provide feedback that has a real impact on the job.
- ◆ Accept feedback with loveliness and dignity.
- ◆ Do well with your employees. Try and have effective work relationships.
- ◆ Know how to hold a difficult conversation with your employees.
- ◆ Know how to deal with employee hygiene and annoying habits.
- ◆ Know how to demonstrate respect at work.

Managing people is all about getting the greatest out of your employees. As your career progresses, you will one day be given the responsibility to manage people. And managing people can sometimes be difficult. Therefore knowing what to do as well as what people need to do can help you greatly in achieving your aims. By doing so try and have the support to do it and get open, clear feedback on people's performance. This will give you a good reputation as people's manager who really knows what /how to get the most out of people.

In applying the people management approach, there are four important questions to answer for your employees:

- ◆ Guidance. What do I need to do and how well can I?
- ◆ Feedback. How am I doing?
- ◆ Rewards. What will happen when I do it well?
- ◆ Support. What happens when I need help to develop myself?

Each of these factors needs to be clearly defined and communicated

to your employees.

Guidance/direction, not because you as a manager understand what you are expecting from your employees, does not necessarily mean that your employees have the same understanding. Therefore having a discussion with the employees on what is required of the job and in addition if there are any specific priorities to take note of should be the first move in effectively managing people. And important issues to cover include:

- ◆ What you need to achieve in a particular year.
- ◆ Data/information required to be used for measuring performance.
- ◆ Steps required attaining the desired results.

People involved should have an accurate record of the discussion, to avoid confusion between the manager and employees on what is expected of the job.

Feedback: Managers should be monitoring the performance of their employees and be providing feedback on it as part of an accurate performance management process. Feedback is important especially in making a difference on work performance and when the employees have confidence in the basis of the feedback. Managers have confidence in feedback especially in situations where their feedback is based on information that they can support. It is therefore important to use feedback which is based on monitored behaviour, actions, statements and results that are work-related. It is also necessary to provide some examples of good and "not very good" performance. This will assist your employees to have confidence in the way you took your time to notice what they are doing as well as your readiness to help in improving them.

Reward. It is important that all the employees have a clear understanding of how the reward and recognition system operates in your organization. It is likely that every employee gets paid for carrying out their job above a certain level. What will happen when an employee performs greatly and above that level? How will that employee be rewarded? In a situation where there is no reward for employees who are outstanding, the likelihood is that they may not put in much effort in the job.

Support and capacity building: This process takes care of the present and future skills, as well as behaviour and knowledge. During this process, managers' discussions need to be focused on the training requirements for their employees in order to carry out their job effectively. Managers should be able to identify the skills and behaviour that are required by their employees. Supporting employees in terms of building their capacity enables them to have confidence and hope in performing their job effectively as well as accepting the fact that they are valued. Allowing employees to decide where they want to be in the future and what they need from the manager in order to achieve their dreams should be every managers Business. Remember that every business can be as effective as the people that work for it. For a manager to make sure that every employee in the organization is effective, he/she need to monitor their performance and give accurate feedback. A manager should be able to set clear goals and involve employees on how to achieve the goals.

In between people management forms the need for team management. I believe for many managers after considering their own team and workplace- think that they have a perfect management environment which is just a dream. However, but the reality is that there are lots of organizations and workplaces where employees work in harmony, but often there are really only a few things that separate the manager

and his/her organization from the best and that is whether he/she have access to everything right now. The most significant thing is the requisite knowledge and skills, to know how to manage and supervise your employees effectively.

Managers should know how to manage employees through team building. It is crucial to build team work and be able to effectively manage them, in order to achieve your goals. Team building skills are important to manager as it help them to become effective. Team building success occurs when particular teams achieves something greater and carry out their task effectively than individuals who work on their own. Also there are two important components in building a strong performance team. The first component in making a team effective is the range of skills and personalities. It is a common belief that when people apply their strengths effectively, they can make up for others weaknesses, especially in a situation where various personality models balance and support each other.

Another crucial factor of teamwork success is when the team's efforts are focused on the same explicit goal, which is the goal for the team. This depends greatly on a high level of good communication in the team and an agreement among team members. At times there are bound to be problems, especially when different individuals decide to create conflicts, exercise authority or even try to dominate the team instead of supporting and balancing each other in a more acceptable manner. Also in some situations a clear goal may be defined for a team, but people will lack commitment towards the group's goals or there may be no agreement on how to achieve those goals, simply because individuals look after their personal views. There can be lack of honesty and fairness that can hinder the important communication and leads to loss of coordination in the individual's efforts. It is therefore important for every team to have a good leader one who is capable of handling the team appropriately.

Some of the additional team building views, methods, and suggestions that are good to try especially when managing teams in the organization are:

- ◆ Ensure that the goals for the team are clear to everyone and that they understand them very well
- ◆ Make people know their roles in a team as this will avert the overlapping of authority.
- ◆ Make the team have trust in you. Create time where you meet team members one-on-one. Also show loyalty to your team members at all times, especially when you expect them to reciprocate.
- ◆ Encourage your team members to build trust within themselves. You can do this by giving them some social time with each other in an open atmosphere.
- ◆ Involve your team members in decision making and listen to their views too. This can make the team feel happy about you, as well as the organization.
- ◆ Always communicate with your team effectively and make everyone keep informed at all times.

Any manager that fails to manage his employees effectively may stay out of the business. And some managers obviously neglect this point. In fact one of the worst mistakes most managers make is that they act as "those who like to control all". Trust me, if you control everything, you will be seen as a terrible manager. And employees will only see you as one who wants to take charge of everything, which can lead to micromanaging, making yourself do much of the job yourself without delegating. And the fact of the matter is that being a control freak will not only limit your business growth but will also destroy your business completely.

Chapter 7

Staff Discipline

Alongside with the idea of managing staff effectively, managers are bound to face some challenges posed by some employees who are difficult and may be attempting to disobey the organization's rules and regulations. Despite staff orientation, some people are naturally difficult to manage no matter what efforts one puts in place, so the need for setting appropriate disciplinary measures is important. Organizations have prescribed rules and regulations that employees should follow at all times as it serves as proper guidance towards productivity, but the question is how many employees actually adhere to these rules, especially when performing their duties on every working day?.

It is true to say that to discipline employee is a very difficult decision to take by managers and supervisors. Because if the process not properly handled, employee discipline could give rise to employees taking their employer to court. So when taking the decision on what disciplinary measures to take on employees, managers should make sure that they have appropriate disciplinary standards and grounds that the employee has committed wrong and requires to be disciplined. The organization should also ensure that the standards setouts for disciplinary measures are applied uniformly. And discipline should not come as a surprise to any employee; they must know what they have done. Sometimes employees are not aware that their managers/supervisors are not pleased with them until they receive termination letters. But actually no good manager/supervisor should be seen doing such thing. What is expected of the employer is to communicate matters to your employees instead of waiting for trouble or poor performance to occur.

I agree that organizations have the right to decide what disciplinary measures to take on their employees if they fail to adhere to the rules and regulations. But when taking such decisions, managers/supervisors should apply the following:

- ◆ Any employee who is to be disciplined must know what he/she has done wrong. To do this is simple, just write to the employee informing him/her about what he/she has done wrong that warrants disciplinary action.
- ◆ The employee must also be given the opportunity to correct the problem, failure of which could compel the organization to carry on the disciplinary action.
- ◆ The organization must provide adequate time for the employee to correct the problem.
- ◆ The employee should know the outcome of inaction.

Organizations must have disciplinary policies that should not confine their right to apply accurate disciplinary measures. It is appropriate for organizations to consider discipline to the seriousness of the misdeed. It should be remembered that the reason for taking disciplinary measures against a particular employee is to instruct and correct rather than to punish the employee. And it becomes essential for a manager/supervisor to let the employee know about areas to improve on, come up with suggestions on how to improve as well as give adequate time for the employee to create room for improvement. There are some difficult situations where the decision to terminate the service of an employee is made. Such cases may include theft, physical fight, and deliberate abuse of office without any reason.

It is equally important to assess the following criteria when determining the efficient level of taking disciplinary action:

- ◆ The extreme nature of the offence
- ◆ Past performance record of the employee to be disciplined
- ◆ The duration that the employee served the organization
- ◆ Previous practice applied by the organization when taking a decision on such issues

There are many types of disciplinary methods to be used by organizations and each of them requires that managers/supervisors understand which one to apply and for what purpose. Among them are:

Progressive discipline: In many situations where behavioural problems arise, manager/supervisors should consider a progressive approach to discipline an employee as follows:

- ◆ As you are aware of a problem, take action immediately by talking to the employee. Use appropriate care in detailing what you wish to correct as well as what steps to be taken. Try and engage your employee in discussions to find appropriate solutions to the problem. At this point the employee needs to be advised and be given direction instead of a reprimand.
- ◆ After giving enough time to the employee to improve on his/her performance and you eventually realize that the employee could not improve, then there is the need to write to the employee officially informing him/her that you are not pleased with the performance. It is important that you make reference to your discussion with the employee as well as telling the employee that if he/she fails to improve then the organization will not have any other choice than to discipline him/her in accordance with the rules.
- ◆ Depending on the organization's disciplinary measures, one may decide to suspend the employee for some period of time without

pay. When communicating such a move to the employee, it should be clear to him/her, that even after the suspension, if he/she still fails to improve, termination may follow. But I personally believe that termination on the basis of performance should only happen when all efforts are made and there is no improvement.

- ◆ When taking the decision to terminate the services of the employee on the basis of poor performance or lack of improvement, the letter should categorically make it clear that the decision to terminate is based on lack of improvement on the job, which is affecting the organization in general.

There is a lot of misunderstanding around the use of progressive discipline at workplaces. Many employees think that they are entitled to disciplinary measures before being dismissed. It is a belief that employers should provide opportunity to their employees to improve on their performance instead of dismissing them. This concept is actually true, but sometimes the system has to be corrected using appropriate disciplinary measures some of which include terminating the services of those who after every opportunity lack improvement on their performance.

In as much as other people find it difficult to terminate the services of an employee, it is also necessary in some situations to hit the nail on the head by advising the employee that he/she has to improve on his/her performance or else face dismissal. It is important for one to be honest and truthful when communicating one's dissatisfaction to the employee as well as one's expectations in the future. When talking to the employee it is also advisable that you narrow down your criticism on work related issue and be fair in your comments, even though the situation is sometimes annoying.

Discipline is important especially when the intention is to improve performance and to correct bad behaviour. The whole reason is to give opportunity to employees for them to improve their performance before being suspended or dismissed. It is important to know that discipline is not the same as punishment, and a good manager will handle disciplinary issues with maturity rather than in a hostile manner. This is why it is important for employees to know why you take disciplinary measures against them, especially on things like "you need to improve on your attitude to work". Therefore it is essential to relate behaviour that is not acceptable to employees that "you've not been able to complete any of your tasks this week and this is not acceptable as the organization works against time". Communicating to the employee how their bad behaviour is impacting on the organization is very important, as the employee is reminded about what is expected from him/her. You may decide to tell the employee that because of delays in his/her work; the other department could not present their report on time, thus affecting the entire organization. As a manager, you may also tell the employee that he/she have to change his/her behaviour and that you expect the task to be completed on time.

Also let the employees know about the consequences. For instance you may tell them that, this is just a verbal warning and if they fail to change their behaviour, you will have to write a formal letter a copy of which will be kept in their personal file. And that the move will be followed by applying the formal disciplinary measures against the employee. By doing this, the manager should at all times ensure that the employee fully understands the outcome of not changing as it makes some employees feel more responsible. However it is crucial for the manager to offer support to employees to change, make them know that they are valuable members of the team and that they can do better. This move goes a long way toward making some employees feel much more responsible, thus allowing them to start positive thinking about the change instead of just being merely defensive.

At times managers/supervisors are confronted with situations where they have to discipline their friends at work. Some managers spend quite a long time with the organization and it becomes natural that they have good friends among their employees and along the line one of them commits wrong and needs to be disciplined. Unfortunately, the manager has to discipline them because he/she is the boss and along that line he/she is expected to be consistent. It will obviously be bad and damaging if you as a manager decided to overlook unacceptable behaviour in one person on the basis of friendship, and start disciplining others. For example an employee who is a friend to the manager has failed to do his/her job and finishes it on time for a period of one month thus affecting the performance of the organization and the manager decided to ignore the problem only to think that his/her employee friend will correct himself/herself, but on the contrary this situation was actually getting worse so much so that the employees' colleagues are complaining. The manager still ignores the employee's complaint on the basis that it is his/her friend who is failing to do his/her task. But after a period of time the rest of the employees decided to behave in the same way and the manager decided to take disciplinary measures against them which can cause serious problems to the manager, as employees may decide to walk out of the organization for a strike which could lead to the involvement of the workers' union. A good manager is not supposed to be doing this.

One mistake that many managers make with regard to employee discipline is that they sometimes think that the word "discipline" in that context means punishment. Just as in the example mentioned above, a manager fears to discipline his/her friend. But in reality staff discipline is all aimed at improving employee performance or behaviour through the process of helping the employee to learn even if it means in the hard way so that he/she will be able to perform effectively. It is therefore important for managers to know the following five common mistakes

that they often make when thinking of disciplining an employee:

Some managers view employee discipline as punishment and that is one of the biggest mistakes they make. Managers who view discipline as punishment often apply negative penalty for breaking the rules, as well as thinking that such a move will bring about a positive move. The use of opposing penalties always results in unpredictable outcome and they may not work in any situation at all, instead they will be doing more harm than good. It is therefore crucial to view discipline as a way of improving employee performance. In a nutshell it is a process through which a manager/supervisor tries to correct employee behaviour for the purposes of improving his/her performance.

Another misunderstanding on employee discipline is when a manager/supervisor views it as confrontation on an employee. Some managers view discipline as something one does to an employee, instead of something to do with an employee. Let's take a true example of the case with the government workplaces. Managers find it impossible to do something to an employee with regard to discipline without proper documentation. Therefore, discipline requires that a manager and the employee work side by side to find amicable solutions to a problem. It then becomes essential to first begin by finding avenues where you and the employee can sit and identify areas of unacceptable behaviour and to find out possible ways of correcting them peacefully.

The other one is to act when it is too late to do so. I don't believe that good managers will just wish to take disciplinary measures against their employees. Well in my own case, I think there are lots of things to do than just to think of disciplining an employee. However in some instances, an act occurs that calls for the need to discipline and most of us only act when it is too late or are slow to respond to an even emerging problem. Well, after talking to other people and listening to

their views, they believe there are a number of factors to this which include:

- ◆ Considering the emerging problem as a first time instance, an accident, and viewing it as not very much important to address it
- ◆ Always wishing to work in harmony and that addressing such issues may lead to misunderstanding
- ◆ The concept that employee discipline can only lead to failure and mistrust.
- ◆ Just fear of taking the bull by the horns (fear of addressing the issue).

It is not however good to delay in taking action for correcting a problem, otherwise a manager may be seen to send a message to employees that undesirable behaviour is tolerated in the organization. Also when the problem gets worse, managers find it difficult to address the employee, compared to when it started.

It is therefore proper that employees are told that unacceptable behaviour at work will not be welcomed, and that any such problem will be dealt with from the outset

Also non-progressive method. In general progressive discipline as mentioned earlier begins with the use of minimum force or disciplinary action, and as the problem continues in situations where the employee is not prepared to change, then the use of strong actions may be required.

Some managers/supervisors however make mistake by ignoring the need to take disciplinary action against an employee where the problem just began and waited until when the situation got worse. This action forces some managers to take hard disciplinary measures when the

unacceptable behaviour becomes extreme. When dealing with a non progressive approach of disciplining an employee, it is good to begin with the use of minimum force immediately.

The other mistake is to miss the root causes of the problem. In certain situations it becomes acceptable when a manager/supervisor who gets frustrated prescribes the law to an employee who causes the problem. And in some instances, the employee who has problems may appreciate this type of approach, especially those who have the requisite skills to do what is desired, but fail to use the skill for reasons best known to them. However difficult it may be, finding the root cause of the problem can assist managers to address the problem quickly. I have seen situations where a manager thinks he could offer a positive reward to an employee for the purpose of changing his unacceptable behaviour, but as time went by he realized that this move did not address the root cause of the problem rather it left the employee to decide on their own, the best solution to the problem.

It is a hard fact that some employees will not succeed because they do not have the skills to deliver, and sometimes employee failure may have something to do with their personal as well as psychological issues. But in actual fact, if a manager fails to find out to know the root cause of any problem, hardly could there be a solution to the problem and this will affect the manager's efforts in improving employee performance.

I believe most people know that discipline is something that needs to be carried out and maintained in any culture, which of course includes cultural practice in both the private and public sectors. Employers often have an obligation to see that their employees behave in an appropriate manner in order to meet their laid down standards of performance and behaviour. This may include making sure that every

employee comes to work on time, perform their task as required, adhere to the prescribed rules and practice as well as to accept and follow the directives from their managers/supervisors.

Many employees who are joining the organization for the first time accept to go by the standards of performance behaviour. But as time goes by, managers/supervisors realize that some employees are not meeting their expectations and then this follows the need to take disciplinary measures. As this situation arises, some managers/supervisors often apply inappropriate disciplinary actions, ignore the need to act quickly, or pretend that nothing happens at all. How many managers/supervisors are aware that failure to take appropriate disciplinary measures against employees, could lead to filing of costly litigation, inappropriate employee termination, low performance, as well as inciting employee grievances.

The first thing to be considered by any manager/supervisor when thinking of disciplinary action is to make sure that any established rules by the organization are reasonable, and that employees are consulted before their adoption. It is important to initially communicate to employees what will follow when the organization's rules are broken up by any member of staff. Also a manager needs to be flexible in the process of enforcing certain rules, taking into consideration that people are the most valuable asset of any organization. The process demands that you open your doors to allow employees to ask questions on issues as well as to express their feeling on anything they view unreasonable.

Alongside the need to take disciplinary measures, managers are expected to have a system whereby an employee who violated the rules is gently reminded about the organization's policy on such issues .This move can serve as a warning to the employee to desist from

such an act. In the event that the employee commits unacceptable behaviour for the second time, then it will be ideal to send a written reprimand indicating the past performance as well as the prior warning which put him on a probationary period. In situations where the employee decided to continue with unacceptable behaviour for the third time a final warning can be issued to the employee and most appropriately in private to avoid embarrassment. Where the employee continues on his/her behaviour then the need to terminate his/her services which is a hard decision to take for some managers, will follow purposely to set example for others to desist from the practice. All such moves should be documented for future reference. In my position as HR manager, I am of the view that employee dismissal should always be considered as a last resort for any manager/supervisor. It must however be categorically clear to every employee that performance must not be compromised by any organization.

Employee discipline can change lots of things in the organization and create room for employees to improve on performance. Some managers/supervisors use the following two reasons for applying disciplinary measures at work:

Support standards. This is to support standards of conduct as well as to assist the person become a good employee by reassuring him/her about the importance of meeting the acceptable laid down standards of performance and behaviour. This belief is based on the idea that employees should at all times be responsible and accounted for their behaviour. In addition the amount of expectation of good standards that are transmitted to employees determines the standards of the employees' behaviour in return.

Prevent poor conduct. It assists in preventing employees from showing bad conduct or violation of the organization's rules and regulations.

Similarly, disciplinary measures taken against employees who violate the laid down rules and regulations can provide a reward for employees who respect and apply the rules and regulations. Discipline in many organizations today is seen as punishment to employees who violate the rules and regulations. However I advise managers to desist from subscribing to this belief. It is obvious that some employees would view discipline as punishment, but it must be put to them that punishment is not the organization's goal. The aim is to change the employee's poor behaviour and create an avenue for him/her to have a positive change and managers should focus on this aim.

- ◆ To have self-discipline: It is an open fact that the best discipline is to have self-discipline. It is natural that as human beings we are expected to contribute our share and to adhere to the rules and regulations. When employees are well communicated with what is expected of them, they control their behaviour in such way that their performance is productive. To have self-discipline is actually based on the belief that employees will like to achieve success rather than think of failure.
- ◆ Unwillingness to take disciplinary measure: Taking disciplinary measures in many occasions puts the manager in a serious difficulty. To be honest, how can a manager, for example, anticipate his/her employees to see him/her as someone providing assistance to them when discipline is naturally painful? Is it possible for anyone to discipline employees without causing resentment?
- ◆ Discipline and its golden rules: Managers that are seen by employees as unfair are not capable of motivating their employees to make important changes in their behavior. It is an open fact that when an employee does not have trust in his/her manager to be fair, that employee may not be much more interested in trying to correct his/her behaviour. When such situations arise the employee often thinks like I should not worry, since I know that

fair treatment will not be accorded even if I should improve on my attendance or redouble my efforts toward work. For productivity to be achieved managers must be people who are respected by their juniors at all times. But for this to happen managers should at all times try to be fair to all the employees, which means taking appropriate judgment when taking the decision on how to discipline an employee. The rule also implies that all employees are fairly treated irrespective of their status or qualifications, just as a manager would want to be treated. It is not good for a manager to have an unnecessary attack on employees; instead you should concentrate on correcting their conduct. When doing this, please as a manager try not to belittle or talk in a manner that will hurt an employee.

Guide for managers to develop and keep a fair and tolerated approach to discipline which should be viewed as the golden rules:

1. To apply the immediate rule, this implies that a manager should take the disciplinary measures quickly when an employee violates the rule, rather than wait for too long. When disciplinary actions are taken immediately as the rules are violated, the employee who violated the rules will have no other thought but to take the discipline with the offence instead of viewing it as the manager imposing discipline. Responding quickly can also control the employees' chance of involving in preventive activities before discipline is actually communicated. An example is that when some employees know that disciplinary actions are to be taken against them they can pretend to be sick or even fabricate stories like "I was evacuated due to sickness to another country". When such cases arise it then becomes difficult to discipline simply because someone somewhere may ask for the reason for discipline.

2. To be consistent with the rule, if more than one employee violates the rules and regulations, and the manager decided to take more severe disciplinary action against one than the others, this move will be viewed as favoritism. If there is any way that managers can lose employees' respect and narrow down their morale is when they are viewed to be imposing disciplinary actions which are not consistent. It is imperative for managers to know that to be consistent with disciplinary actions assist in setting limits, whereas inconsistent disciplinary measures unavoidably lead to desperation and shock. If certain rules are allowed to exist without being enforced, employees can either decide not to adhere to the rules or make them uncertain as to what is expected of them.

3. Positive rule. Managers are at all times expected to have in their minds that the appropriate way to discipline is to rehabilitate and not to punish their employees. What that means is that, appropriate discipline requires good communication. Employees are responsible to see correction of their wrong instead of the manager. When such information is perceived by employees they are likely to see positive change in their behaviour. Good managers who acted in this way are like "a coach" after informing the employee about what is expected of his/her future conduct. It is obvious that many if not all employees react better to this good approach instead of the approach of managers who are seen as enforcing their ideas on employees. It is a fact that with this approach the coach permits an employee to go back to his/her job with the belief that he/she is capable of correcting his/her deficiencies. In the same way managers who are seen as enforcers do not convey the vote of confidence and can make the employee to go back to his/her job with the belief that the manager did not believe the employees can improve better.

Chapter 8

Disciplinary Interviews

It is every human being's wish to know about happenings that take place around them so that one can get prepared for the course in a more decisive way. It is in the same way that employees feel better at work when they are consistently informed about occurrences at their workplaces, be it an act that is performed by them or something that affects the organization as a whole. It then becomes imperative for a manager to know that employees should under no circumstances be disciplined without providing an opportunity for them to tell their side of the story. A disciplinary interview is a formal discussion between the manager and the employee, usually in closed doors either in the Board/conference room as in the case of my workplace at the Gambia Revenue Authority or at the manager's office. It is during this process that the employee is informed that his/her bad behaviour will not be accepted.

In many situations trivial disciplinary matters can be addressed informally between the manager and the employee, but even at that point it is crucial to note that if such matters continue the manager could apply the formal procedure. Even if disciplinary matters will be dealt with informally the employee needs to be written to prior to the meeting informing him/her that an informal disciplinary hearing will take place, and the outcome could be sending an oral warning to him/her.

It is important for managers to know that employees should not be disciplined without allowing them to explain their side of the story. As human resources manager I am involved in this process at the Gambia

Revenue Authority and I know that the practice is not only seen as fair and transparent but is always important since employees who do not "go on the record" earlier during the process usually have the unlimited chance to include in their explanations by making their conduct more acceptable. Also employees who dislike discipline may try to prevent themselves from such process by including claims of protected activity.

The disciplinary interview is not very much different from the other kind of interviews, except that in the disciplinary interview the manager should begin by stating the problem, followed by giving the opportunity to the employee to explain his/her own account of the story.

How to set up the disciplinary interview: If it is possible the interview should be planned at an appropriate time and date which is convenient for the employer and the employee. Managers should be mindful in situations where a particular employee is away from work which may be due to health or other valid reasons. If such cases arise the employee needs to be advised by writing informing him/her:

- ◆ That a disciplinary meeting is scheduled to take place (the venue and time should be stated).
- ◆ Purposes of the hearing
- ◆ The type of disciplinary procedures to be taken (whether first warning in oral/written)
- ◆ The expected result from the hearing
- ◆ Whether they will be allowed to be accompanied by a friend

Preparing for the interview: It is important to prepare for everything in life likewise the disciplinary interview. To prepare and plan for this process is imperative so as to be fair and reliable in taking accurate decisions on the employee's conduct. Any procedure at this stage must be positive in order to prevent the recurrence and will improve behaviour. In my experience at the Gambia Revenue Authority,

employees who are found wanting in committing a wrong that calls for disciplinary actions are usually written to asking them to explain their account of the story. This move enables the committee to get prepared for the discussions. It is recommended that the manager who is to conduct the hearing could be the employee's line manager. This is crucial so as not to increase the management chain since more senior managers could be asked to be involved at subsequent hearings or appeals. On the other hand an alternative manager could hold the hearing if the employee's line manager is involved in the matter that is under complaint.

At the Gambia Revenue Authority there is a committee set up by the Commissioner General known as the Grievance & Disciplinary Committee and it is the committee that sits on matters relating to promotions, appointments and discipline. When the committee receives complaints from the employees' line manager against the employee, the committee writes to the employee asking him/her to explain the matter and employee's response helps the committee to get prepared for the hearing.

However, in instances where it is the manager who is to conduct the hearing he/she should at all-time gather all the evidence, by receiving written statements from the witness before the hearing. It is also advisable that the manager should also study the disciplinary procedures in detail, and adhere to the laid down procedures at the point of conducting the interview.

Conducting the disciplinary interview: At the point of conducting the disciplinary interview it is always important for the manager to do the following:

1. Introduce those in attendance as well as the reason for the hearing.

2. Make the nature of the complaint known.
3. Have time to review the supporting evidence.
4. Invite the witnesses to give their evidence in support of their written statements.
5. Provide an opportunity to the person to throw light on his/her case and where the employee is accompanied by someone, allow the individual to ask questions as well as their comments.
6. Take serious note of all questions and explanations
7. Should there be new emerging facts, decide whether further investigation is necessary, and if so, then it becomes necessary to adjourn the hearing and reconvene the meeting after completing the investigation.
8. Try and arrive at a clear view about the facts
9. In any situation where the facts are denied, decide on the balance of probability which is true.

In such sittings it is always important that someone is present to take notes of the proceedings. I was at one time a secretary to such hearings and my job was to take note of all that was discussed and to present the minutes to the committee members whose recommendations were later forwarded to the chief executive officer of the Authority. When conducting a disciplinary interview, it is always important that evidence is presented of the matter under complaint and this could be in the form of written statements or oral evidence from witnesses. It should be noted that this is not a court of law. It should therefore be understood

that natural justice gives the right to question witnesses.

Issues to consider for disciplinary interview: When thinking of the disciplinary procedure and before a manager decides on any disciplinary measures, he/she should consider:

- ◆ The seriousness of the offence, and whether the procedure gives guidance.
- ◆ Previous penalties imposed in similar cases, and that is why it is important to keep a record of the hearings.
- ◆ The employee's disciplinary record and general service.
- ◆ Whether the proposed penalty is fair in all the circumstances.
- ◆ Where possible the main reason for the disciplinary procedure should be to encourage improvement and not to punish.

After considering the above points the manager is expected to:

- ◆ Take a strong decision.
- ◆ Keep a record of the reasons for the decision.
- ◆ Set time for performance/conduct to be reviewed.
- ◆ Where a formal warning is given you may set an appropriate time for its application.

Where the manager or the committee as in the case of the Gambia Revenue Authority sits on disciplinary hearing and finds that there is a need to reconvene the disciplinary hearing. The manager or the committee in that case needs to:

- ◆ Assure the employee of the decision as well as the penalty if there is any.
- ◆ Tell the employee what improvement is expected, the duration of the warning, and what will happen if there is no improvement.
- ◆ Let the employee be given the opportunity to appeal.

Where all these steps are taken it is important that the manager or the committee keep records of the action taken. In doing so the following needs to be applied:

- ◆ Establish the disciplinary action taken in writing to the employee
- ◆ Always maintain record of the actions taken for the purposes of future reference
- ◆ Find out from the employee whether he / she received the notification of any disciplinary penalty
- ◆ It is important to take proper notes at the disciplinary interview.

In a situation where a warning letter is issued, it is crucial that the letter informs the employee:

- ◆ What sort of improvement is required from him/her in future?
- ◆ Specific date by which improvement is to be achieved.
- ◆ Actions to be taken in case the employee fails to improve
- ◆ Procedure on how to appeal, as well as the period within which an appeal could be made

When a disciplinary interview is properly handled it can bring about lots of benefits to any organization which include:

- ◆ To address the cause of ill-discipline and provide solutions to correct the situation
- ◆ To avert the occurrences of further or even more serious action that may need to be taken against employees
- ◆ Will help general morale, though an ineffective process could take the opposite effect

Where a disciplinary interview is not properly done or are handled poorly it can:

- ◆ Make the employee unclear of the problem or on how to improve
- ◆ Result in unfair dismissal of employees thus making employees claim for unfair dismissal
- ◆ Reduce the manager's respect in the employee's eyes, since he/she can be viewed as being difficult and unfriendly to the employees
- ◆ Makes the employee disgruntled, having the belief that he/she was not treated fairly
- ◆ Discourage or lower employee performance, since employees who wish to take risks in making sure that the organizations achieved its aims will be afraid of making mistakes that could lead to unfair discipline

Chapter 9

Documenting disciplinary Actions

It is an open fact that the human mind is not wide enough to capture and remember all of its activities and so there is the need to document some of the activities for the purposes of future reference. It is in the same way that documenting events at workplaces becomes essential to any organization as it can be used for reference purposes and evidence in many cases especially in instances where dispute or disagreement occurs perhaps on past events.

Naturally, disciplinary actions are unpopular at workplaces so it is important for every potential employer to know that documenting disciplinary actions against employees is imperative at all times. In recent times even employees would expect disciplinary meetings or actions to be in black and white. It can be confirmed that employers these days get more information from the evidence in the form of written exhibits rather than in oral manner. Keeping proper documentation can help the purposes of claiming the central prospective management witness by making available to them accurate tools to refresh their memories about events and happenings that took place some months or even years ago.

It then becomes important for managers to have these basic kinds of documentation that are considered critical in employment:

- ◆ Keeping documents for establishing discipline on not very serious violations. This kind of keeping records is accurate where there are problems associated with employee's performance on the job, attendance as well as other conduct that may not be considered very serious to justify suspending the employee. However it is to be noted that organizations have different policies

towards attendance and performance, but whatever the case maybe the aim of such document keeping is for the employee to know that he/she has been notified of his/her standard behaviour and was provided with the opportunity to change for good. It is a type of documentation which consists of well-defined disciplinary notices which include self-commitment to improve.

- ◆ Keeping documents for establishing reasonable investigation and to proof employees "guilt" for violations that are considered serious. This method of keeping document is suitable when management finds out that an employee's behaviour is worrying that he/she has involved in conduct which justifies the need to suspend him. The aim of such documentation is for anyone to know that the employee's conduct was reasonably investigated, where he/she was provided with enough time to tell his/her own account of the story.

It is important for every employer to keep good documentation. I believe days are gone when an employer should give an excuse for seeing himself/herself in court for a case against his/her employee without producing firm documentation. As an employer one is expected to control both the process of good documentation as well as the timing of the decision taken. Almost all employers should by now expect what employment actions could likely change into legal disputes, like dismissing the organization's long serving employee. If any employer can assume such decisions to end up in legal disputes, then that employer should know how to exercise patience before taking any decision without documenting. It should be every employer's interest to see that their decisions are documented before taking certain actions.

Most people these days are aware that employment decisions are documented. Using documents as proof of evidence are every day becoming more crucial with technological advances even in the

courtrooms and so keeping documents is important for many purposes.

Keeping documents helps an employer in many ways, for example documenting employee meetings can assist to ensure explicit communication with the employee. Written information then provides clarity regarding what an employee was told and dispel the potential for claimed miscommunication between the employer and the employee. Ensuring that employees append their signature on the document further ensures that they agree on what was said when the meeting was held.

It is obvious that keeping documents of an incident provides a record for evaluating the employee's future conduct. Proper documents provide an employee's past record with the organization and thus assists in identifying patterns of conduct.

Documentation in some cases assists in making better decisions, hence writing documents creates an opportunity for an organization to conduct a self-check regarding whether a decision is carefully thought out and properly supported. For example it assists the decision-maker to look at a particular decision in a more objective manner. It is a fact that documents help employers to avoid disputes. Keeping accurate documentation of an employee's disciplinary actions helps in making a difference between a complaint being forwarded to litigation and making the employee accept the decision to discharge. The move can also assist in making difference between what is costly and risky in terms of litigation and probably by extension a court case that could be resolved quickly without delay.

In a situation where a challenge arises, accurate documentation can assist in finding reasonable resolution of the matter and for those who may want to know why. It should be noted that decisions that are

properly documented are hard to challenge. In a trial case, accurate documentation helps the witness to give a true account of the story in connection to past events, promote the witness's reliability, refresh recollection, especially when the situation requires cross-examination and where the issue of stating one's case is required. Proper documentation can help differentiate between a confident, trustworthy and reliable witness as opposed to a witness who appears unprepared, self-contradicting and or even frustrated.

Accurate documentation assists during the process of decision making. It also helps to keep records of all the crucial facts and should form the basis of any decision preferably in a form that everyone can understand. One should assume that crucial evidence and decisions will be challenged by someone and through which one is expected to have documents directed towards evidence that the organization aims to establish. It is natural that documentation should provide the basis for making others know about your decision.

People should have the understanding that the door to accurate documentation is not just what is considered as persuasive writing. Here it must be noted that we don't necessarily mean "opening files" but instead accurate documentation keeps accounts of the decision-making process that focuses on three facts:

- ◆ That the decision taken was actually thought of well
- ◆ Ensure that the decision was considered fair
- ◆ The employer must be seen as a good employer.

Things that are expected from fair decisions could be that:

- ◆ The employer's expectations are clearly known to the employee earlier
- ◆ The employer ensures that such expectations are enforced for

purposes of moving the job forward

- ◆ The employer provides adequate time and notice to the employee that his/her performance or behaviour is not tolerated
- ◆ Communicate to the employee what will happen if he/she fails to improve
- ◆ The employee was provided with enough opportunity to improve
- ◆ The employer provided all the necessary support and guidance to the employee

In many situations, keeping accurate documents by taking note of a discipline decision helps to discuss the decision-making process which usually incorporates some elements like:

- ◆ State the laid down rules that were violated by the employee
- ◆ Make known the legitimate reason for that prescribed rule or state why the rule is considered to be fair, for instance, in cases which involve a performance standard, it is crucial to know that employees are expected to comply.
- ◆ Explain how the rule was transmitted
- ◆ Mention your future expectations from the employee
- ◆ Provide an opportunity for the employee to ask questions or comments on what is expected from him/her, which elements may give any room for claimed misunderstanding in the future
- ◆ Let the employee know what further measures will be applied if he/she continues to violate the laid down rule of the organization
- ◆ Assure the employee of the organization's cooperation and readiness to help him/her in succeeding
- ◆ Make sure the process is dated
- ◆ The employee must be given space to sign and if a situation arises where he/she refuses, take note of the date and time when the employee was provided with a copy of the document which he/she refused.

- ◆ Make sure that such documents are kept confidential and only accessible to those concerned like the committee or the line manager to the employee. In our practice at the Gambia Revenue Authority such documents are kept in a file which is controlled and handled by a secretary to the disciplinary committee and remains restricted for use by any other person.
- ◆ Make sure that such documents are legible and try to use simple language that everyone can understand. It is important to avoid the use of damaging words.

Since keeping records of disciplinary actions is crucial it is important too for one to be able to draft good documentation and in doing so consider the following:

- ◆ Try to be truthful and accurate. Employers should know that any deliberate deceit can obviously return to you. It will be serious for an employee to discover that his/her boss has actually lied against him/her. So keeping accurate documentation should be viewed by everyone as more important than just speeding the process for nothing.
- ◆ Find time to review the document. Ensure that the document is reviewed thoroughly as a draft. In my experience anything that comes out of our meeting is reviewed by the chairman before releasing the minutes to other members. You may also want other committee members to look at the draft; this is to ensure that points discussed are clearly noted.
- ◆ In the end, try to discard the draft and ensure that only the final version is kept safely for any future reference.
- ◆ Be quick in preparing the document as soon as the events take place. Some will obviously argue that preparing document is never late, but doing it quickly can help since issues discussed are fresh in the mind.

I believe that keeping accurate documentation is not difficult at all. All that one needs is to apply the above measures and be committed in ensuring that you and your organization achieve its goal. It is a fact that the world is moving fast and so are organizations. Employers who don't want to be left out should be prepared to adapt to changes and be innovative, creative and proactive at all times. Nowadays many if not all employees know their rights and are aware that if an employer treats or deliberately violates the employment rules he/she can be sued in a court of law. It then becomes imperative for employers to provide support and guidance to their employees at all times

Chapter 10

Rewards, Awards and Recognition

Every human being at one stage or another expects recognition and awards for either carrying out certain things effectively or demonstrating good performance on something. For instance, in our homes, most people as parents usually give some kind of encouragement to kids as a form of recognition especially when they perform well in school. This move naturally motivates the kids to perform more in whatever they undertake. In my own situation I like buying biscuits and chips for kids as a form of encouraging them, and through this I find out that, little things make them feel happy for receiving such as a result of their good performance I always promise them that should they continue to perform well I will continue to buy more chips and biscuits.

It is in the same way that employees need recognition and reward at the workplace. This employee recognition should not be seen as just a beautiful thing to do for workers, but it is to be viewed as a communication tool that fortifies and provides rewards for employees who perform well on the job. It is natural that when employers recognize their employees in a more effective manner they work hard to meet the organization's goals. Many employees if not all would like to know that their work made a difference at the organization they work for. Besides, why the need for contributing all your efforts without seeing a positive impact on the job?

Take an example where a child is being given a chocolate cupcake and chips after completing his/her homework. The child will feel happy

and would like to do more next time he/she has other homework to do. Rewards and recognition can be a powerful tool for motivating employees and improving their performance on the job. There are several types of rewards and recognition. Some have cost connected to them, such as cash bonuses and giving certificates. There are also other types of rewards and recognition which are less tangible but are still effective in my organization. These "non-monetary" rewards could include both formal and informal acknowledgment, giving more important job responsibilities, training opportunities and sometimes the chance of taking part in decision making.

But as a manager or employer how do you reward an employee? The answer is simple. For example a manager may have an employee in his/her organization who has performed extremely well on his/her job throughout the year and he/she is to decide how to reward him. In principle every employee that has contributed significantly towards achieving the organization's goals can be rewarded. It is important that awards in such instances be used as a tool to recognize the employees past performance on the job and to motivate employees to redouble their efforts for more improvement in the future.

You may want to know where to start. It may be ideal to contact the organization's human resource management department for them to inform you about the numerous options and thorough listing of all the available award, and information on how to go about them, possible criteria to be used, an appropriate procedure for submitting requests as well as to determine any proposed award amounts. There are basic steps to follow but first let's look at the main goals of providing rewards and recognition. Jack Zigon in 1998 defines reward as "something that increases the frequency of an employee action". Zigon's definition looks at the obvious desired results of rewards and recognition which is to improve performance.

Also Keller in 1999 stated that non-monetary recognition can also motivate, assist to build feelings of employee's confidence and satisfaction. It is also believed that increasing employee's retention is another important goal of rewards and recognition. But Allen and Helms in 2002 stated that in order to achieve the organization's desired goals, the reward system should be aligned to the organizational strategies. For instance, an organization that operates in line with product differentiation strategy could at all times design its reward practices to promote innovation and to provide special products or services, where an organization that deals with cost reduction strategy could focus on rewards for notions to reduce or do away with costs and employee stock awards to promote an ongoing cost- reduction emphasis.

In general after identifying the employee's contribution to be recognized, the next move is always to determine the best kind of award for the employee: either monetary or non-monetary. However each of the awards has its own specific criteria as well as documentation requirements. A monetary award helps one to have an array of recognition possibilities that are reasonable to recognize and reward differences in individual performance. In a situation where the organization decides to use cash awards it is advisable that the organization uses sound judgment. It could be damaging to make mistakes that could result in serving employees from receiving recognition, or making the deserving employee being left unrecognized. It will obviously undermine the employer's credibility as well as the programme. When you decide to give cash awards, then as an employer you need to ensure that the award is focused on merit and that the amount is proportionate to the level of the employee's contribution. By doing so, the employer ensures that awards granted in his/her organization are considered as reasonable enough. After selecting the appropriate awards system, the employer's next move is to recommend an award amount. It is true that award amounts vary

greatly and should be proportional to the value of the contribution made by an employee, although in some instances they could be limited by available funds to the organization.

Non-monetary awards on the other hand are more varied and special when compared with cash awards and provide some advantages over cash awards. First they assist to meet the employees' needs for recognition, growth and responsibility, and can in many instances be relatively cost effective. Non-monetary awards range from small awards to the oldest form of recognition in an organization, for example honour awards. On the other hand the technical requirements are also varied ranging from awards with no documentation, i.e. certificates of appreciation to other awards requiring signature, e.g. external awards before they are submitted to the organization.

Mike Rushby, HR Vice President at Weyerhaeuser Company, looked at developmental opportunities such as assignments to special projects as a powerful form of non-monetary recognition. He believes that by being chosen to work on a certain task team to achieve the organization's initiative is motivating as it assists employees to acquire new skills and experience, demonstrates trust in their abilities, and adds variety to a particular employee's job. Weyerhaeuser uses the performance management process and individual development plans to assist in identifying strong candidates for developmental opportunities.

Keller also stated that people are motivated to higher levels of job performance by positive recognition from their employers or managers as well as their peers. According to Keller creative use of personalized non-monetary rewards fortifies positive behaviour and improves employee retention and performance. It is however important to note that these types of recognition can be cost effective to provide, but remain priceless to receive.

Employers or managers motivate their employees to improve their performance on the job. In doing so some organizations consider two main reasons why they want employee recognition:

- ◆ The organization wishes to say thanks for a job well done
- ◆ To encourage employees to perform at a higher level than they might otherwise

While in the process it may seem that "to say thanks" is the noble reason for using the employee reward system. Naturally most rewards programmes or systems require that someone judge over the following:

- ◆ An employee who really deserves to be rewarded: Organizations should be mindful of involving too many people in this process since the aim can be diverted through subjectivity. I am saying this because I have personal experience in this. When others' involvement is to challenge or oppose some deserving employees on the basis of hatred.
- ◆ To consider what exactly to be awarded, whether effort or result
- ◆ Whether award are to be given to teams or individuals based on their performance on the job
- ◆ To determine how much the reward is worth.

As a human being how do you feel when you are being judged or when you are waiting to know if someone else has decided if you are been good enough to be awarded a prize? Again I would like to know how powerful it is when someone takes the responsibility of judging their own performance against the goals or standards which were set in the past. In each of the scenarios it will be difficult for one to be quite sure of the outcome.

It is important to know that different organizations have different or many ways to reward employees that result in short-term improvement. Obviously from one's own experience one will know that given enough inducement (or threat) one can get people to change their behaviour as well as their performance. So rewards programmes can work perfectly in the short term, it all depends on how one handles them.

One crucial thing that managers should know is how to reward employees that give long-term improvement performance on the job. Tell me what will happen in a situation where the organization runs out of rewards? Or where a reward is seen as expectation rather than an unexpected gift. One would want to know whether one will continue to get the performance level that one desire? And honestly one may not, and this is one of the reasons why many reward programmes fail.

It is recommended that employers or managers who wish to stay on long-term success of their business will want to answer certain questions like:

- ◆ How can I design the work in such a way that employees find reward in simply performing on the job, rather than looking for external motivators?
- ◆ Do I really need to bribe my employees for them to perform at a higher level?
- ◆ Why the need to have the reward programme in place

I don't think these are easy questions to answer which is why many organizations look for quick and easy ways to reward employees which provides quick results, but not long term solutions to the organization. It is good to first look at the reasons why employees under-perform and then you can change the system if necessary so that employees are encouraged to perform at a higher level.

Alfie Kohn in his groundbreaking book talks about 10 watchouts when deciding to reward employees. According to Kohn a reward actually inhibits things such as creativity, risk-taking, and information sharing, quick problem-solving and encourages directive command and control type behaviour from supervisors.

1. Poor performance and dissatisfaction are often the result, e.g. when an expected bonus level is not achieved even though a great deal of effort was expended or rewards are distributed in an inequitable manner
2. Rewards work best for short-term behaviour changes. If an employer wants lasting change a reward programme probably won't work -as soon as the reward stops the behavior will probably cease as well
3. Rewards don't generally change people's value, attitudes and feelings. Employers may get short-term behaviour change, but not long - term commitment
4. They don't get to the root cause of why people may be performing at a mediocre level, which may mean you need to find more and more goodies to induce people to continue to perform
5. Rewarding everyone equally can lead to conflict and resentment between team members. Conversely award nights can, in an instant, transform the majority of people into losers
6. Can create competition, envy, hostility and distrust between groups and group members
7. Rewarding employees for result over which they have limited control can lead to cynicism
8. They become an expectation rather than a reward. For example if each week a gift certificate is given for achieving a safety standard it is no longer a reward but rather an expectation
9. A belief that only the chosen few will be acknowledged
10. What you reward is what you get so be very careful about what

you reward. For example there is a huge difference in organizational results between rewarding people for gaining knowledge and rewarding people for sharing knowledge.

Many employers and managers that I had the chance to talk to about rewards and recognition believe that rewards and recognition programmes work well when:

- ◆ The programme is straightforward and easy for everyone to understand
- ◆ Employees have confidence in the basis of the acknowledgment, i.e. they know exactly what it takes to receive acknowledgment
- ◆ Employees are very clear about the manner and techniques that they used to achieve the outcome
- ◆ Employees contribute to the reward process and are given the chance to decide on the type of reward that they would like to receive. You can do this by giving the receiver the choice of reward that suits his/her circumstances (participatory reward programme). This however may not be cost effective, especially when the organization does not have enough funds to spend on rewards
- ◆ The reward follows closely the actual performance

When deciding on rewards you need to decide whether the programme that you decided upon, will destroy or build the organization's culture.

A well-thought out and effective reward programme enables one to find ways to reward employees and say thank you while it encourages more of the behaviour, thinking and attitudes that enables your business to be successful.

Where providing reward and recognition for employees is important,

employers show appreciation to employees and other coworkers at all times. There are many ways to do this which include:

1. Praise something that your coworker did well. Identify the specific actions that you found admirable
2. Say "thank you". Show appreciation for their hard work and contributions to the job. Also don't forget to say "please".
3. Offer employees flexible opportunities for scheduling the holidays, if feasible. If work coverage is critical, post a calendar so people can balance their time off with that of their coworkers
4. Know your coworker's interest well enough to present a small gift occasionally. An appreciated gift, and the gesture of providing it, will light up your coworker's day
5. If you can afford to give staff money. End of the year bonuses, attendance bonuses, quarterly bonuses and gift certificates say "thank you" nicely
6. Everyone appreciates food so sometimes take coworkers to lunch for a birthday, a special occasion or for no reason at all. Allow your guests to pick the restaurant
7. Create or provide a fun tradition an avenue where employees can interact and laugh without necessarily causing trouble to anyone
8. Provide training opportunities for employees to develop themselves. It is natural that everyone would want to participate on committees or teams where their talents can be noticed. They like to attend professional association meetings and represent your organization at civic and other events.

As an employer or manager you may have many other important ways of showing appreciation to your employees and try to do this purposely for improving their performance on the job. Every employee feels happy if they find out that their performance is appreciated by the employer just as the employer wishes to see that the organization

achieves its aims and objectives. Always remember that people are the most valuable assets at the workplace and so if they feel happy, the organization will achieve its goals. Employers and managers are expected to know this and work towards providing a favourable working environment for their employees at all times. I say this because of the experience I got from working at the Customs & Excise Department before the coming of the Gambia Revenue Authority.

Rewards, awards and recognition are beautiful ways of saying thank you to your staff. Organizations are therefore expected to have a programme to show appreciation especially to deserving employees at least once every year.

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