
5 THE ROLE OF HR IN THE SUCCESS OF NGOS

Abstract

This article discusses the role and importance of Human Resource Management in the success of Non-government organisations. Human Resources are the greatest assets of the NGOs in planning and execution of their strategies and in-turn reaching their end objectives. This article also discusses the link between HR Strategy and the NGO Strategy and also highlights on the importance of proactive and agile Human Resource policies and practices. The Strategic Human Resource Management could lead to higher efficiencies and effectiveness in the functioning of the employees of NGOs. In-turn this would become competitive tool in the success of NGOs.

Key Words: *NGO, Human Resource, Operations Strategies.*

Introduction

Today NGOs play a major role in the development of the society. Their contributions along with the Government and private organisations are highly recognised and appreciated by the society. The competitive environment has compelled the NGOs to streamline their operations and thus enhance their efficiencies. This has resulted in the use of IT and Strategic Human Resource Management as a competitive tool in their success.

The quality of Human Resource plays a significant role in the success of an NGO. It is the people who make the difference between one NGO and the other. Moreover, "the people recruited" in an NGO create the culture which can be leveraged for the advantage of the NGO in particular and the society at large. Though Finance and Infrastructure play a major role in the effective functioning of the NGO it is HR which differentiates one NGO from the other and creates a distinctive identity.

Any NGO's operation strategy has its objectives that are the criteria to evaluate the working efficiency. Operations strategies can be referred in many types and calculated by various factors like objectives of Planning, Organising, Leading and Controlling. This would be followed by effective feedback mechanism which will help an NGO to bridge the gap if any by streamlining its operations. Most of the NGOs do not care about the link between Operation Strategies and the Strategic Human Resource Management.

The NGO managers need to know the importance of recruiting quality human resources for successful operation and to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its people. The following are the link between Operation strategies and Human Resource policies:

1. Operation strategies: Based on low cost

1.1 NGOs features

- Long-term goals
- Low cost for operation
- Detail reports needed.
- Clear assignment of responsibility and accountability
- Simple service process design

1.2 Human Resources policies

- Specific description of tasks or duties
- Focus on rules and regulations
- Careful training
- Achievement based payment
- The aim of working efficiency assessment is to control.

2. Operation strategies: Based on difference

2.1 NGO's features

- Reinforce Service above Self
- Design new processes
- Put priority on systems and processes
- Focus on reputation and quality of services
- Attract competent human resources

2.2 Human Resources policies

- Competency –based Human Resource Management
- Proper Job description
- Allocation of roles and responsibilities based on competencies
- General staff supervision
- Outside service for some tasks
- Promotion of Teamwork
- Competency-based recruitment and selection
- Competency- based performance appraisal
- Competency- based rewards and incentives

How to Attract Best human resources ?

Biggest challenge faced by NGOs today is how to attract great people and retain them. In this regard Human Resource department has to play a key role. Since NGOs are service organisations the people play a significant role in their success. It is imperative that the Human Resource Department has to design appropriate strategy in attracting best people to the organisation.

Jim Collins in his book Good to Great says "Get the right people on the bus...Once you have the right people in place, figure out the path to greatness."

Today NGOs in India are unable to attract best of the people to their organisations. Even the fresh MBA graduates prefer to work in MNCs and top Indian companies and they are not interested to build their career in NGOs. The success of any NGO is mainly depending on the quality of its people. So having right people for the right jobs with the right competencies is the key determinant of success.

The seven-step process evolved by renowned Management Consultant Jim Geier for attracting and retaining the best people in any organisation are as follows:

Step 1: Develop operation strategy

The first step is to develop a roadmap. One need to define:

- What are you doing?
- Where are you going?
- What is your contribution to the society?
- How do you differentiate your NGO from others offering similar services?
- How will you approach your target audience?
- What are your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats?

It is important to take the time and effort to answer each one of the above questions. One cannot define the competencies required for the people serving in your organisation unless one get answers for the above questions. With this one can design competency framework which includes the organisational competencies which are common to all role-holders and at least two functional competencies which are function specific. It is also important that one write down his/her roadmap and continue to refine it over a period of time.

Step 2: Define your organisation's culture

Culture has been defined in Webster Dictionary as "the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterises an institution or organization".

The very existence of any NGO is determined by its culture. Culture defines who you are as an Organisation and it also defines what you stand for; how you want to be known by your target audience, stakeholders, employees and the society.

Many Organisations find it valuable to define culture in terms of their vision, mission, and values. This is a written document which is being circulated to all employees and the stakeholders of the organisation. The purpose is to remind everyone of the core values of the organisation.

Step 3: Identify the required people skills, competencies, and experiences

Identify the people needed to achieve the organisation goals and who will best fit into the culture of the organisation. Getting the right person for the right job with right competencies will determine the organisation's success.

In this step, one need to identify the right skills and competencies that are needed for the effective functioning of an organisation. These are not job descriptions at this point, but overall guidelines. For example in an organisation the following were the ten core leadership competencies that were used to evaluate the candidates.

- Strategic orientation
- Entrepreneurial
- Result oriented
- Communication skills
- Relational skills
- Business astuteness
- Analytical skills
- Motivating and leading others
- Team-oriented
- Cross-cultural adaptability

Over the period of time, these competencies will evolve as organisational competencies which are used as tools for performance reviews, succession planning, and recruitment strategies.

Step 4. Identify, attract, assess, and hire the right people

Many talent acquisition managers perceive this step to be the most frustrating and time consuming, but it is the most important. The successful execution of Step 4 will ensure the success of the organisation.

Take the profiles you developed in Step 3 and develop job descriptions. This requires you to think hard about what each job is. If you don't have a clear understanding of the position, how can anyone else? It is important to focus on the tasks, responsibilities and the competencies necessary for the successful completion of the job. Focus on the fact that you're looking for candidates who have the skills, knowledge and the right attitude required for the job as well as the appropriate "fit" for your organisation's culture.

These job descriptions will help during your recruitment advertising, help those interviewing candidates define the interview questions, and help evaluate the employees one hires. Job descriptions can be sophisticated or simple.

When interviewing candidates for a job, it is important to involve others also in the process. Everyone has weak spots in interviewing. Let others participate in the selection process and also go

through the profile and job description. Then make a final selection as a group, choosing the candidate who best fits both the position and the organisation culture.

Step 5: Reward your people

It is vital to reward the good people in the organisation. One should start by developing compensation and benefits policy. One need to understand the compensation package for a given position—the split between base pay and incentives and how competitive one in this regard. In addition, one need to determine if he/she will have other benefits such house rent allowance, house and car loans, transportation facility, medical benefits, funding for children education etc. In short one need to view a person's compensation in terms of both salary and benefits.

Rewards need not be only monetary. Rewarding can be as simple as telling people they are doing a great job. This short statement will take one miles ahead in ensuring that good performers realise they are making significant contributions to the success of the organisation and also keeping them engaged.

Be prepared to pay more to Good people with the right experiences, skills, and competencies. A recent survey by Robert Half International and CareerBuilder.com showed that compensation levels will be rising to better compete for the good candidates.

Step 6: Develop and train your people

It is essential that you know who the good people are in your organisation. You can't afford to lose any of them. They help drive your business strategy, deal with customers, and drive your success. Do whatever one can to not lose the top performers.

One way to identify the people strengths and weaknesses in an organization is to create a succession-planning process. This process allows you to identify your key performers and put in place a personal development plan that will address their gaps to prepare them better for future opportunities.

Possible methods of developing organizations' key people could be any combination of the following: training courses, the opportunity to fill in for the boss, promotion, and involvement in special committees, projects, or task forces. These will give good employees an indication that they are important to the business and give organisation an opportunity to see how they perform.

Step 7: Communicate, communicate, communicate!

This looks like a simple step, but it is the one area where most managers are rated as "Does Not Meet Expectations." Studies done by brand-name consulting firms have shown that organisations that communicate well with their employees have a direct correlation to stronger retention, higher revenues, and increased profitability.

You simply must communicate. Inform your organization about what is happening. Listen to what they are saying. Ensure you communicate to all levels of management and they, in turn, are communicating with their teams. People look toward their boss for information, so middle managers and first-line supervisors need to know what is going on in the company.

One cannot go wrong if one over-communicates. Be as transparent as possible on the issues.

Remember to treat your employees the way you'd like to be treated.

Conclusion

In this competitive environment the success of any NGO depends mainly on the quality of service they offer which in- turn depends on the quality of people working in the organisation. It is imperative that the NGOs build good image in the society which will give them an advantage in attracting best of the people to the organisation.

The B-Schools and Universities should impart a subject dealing with functioning of NGOs in their curriculum so as to create awareness among the students. Building a culture and value of Service above Self among the younger generation would help the NGOs to attract best people. Once the NGOs are able to attract best people to the organisation next step is to train and motivate them for the long term retention. The salary structure should include both the base salary and other performance based incentives. The performance appraisal should be transparent and should be based on the self and reporting manager's assessments. A certain weight- age should also be given to the feedback from the target audience who will receive the service.

The Government and private initiatives in establishing a premier institute on NGO management inline with IRMA (Institute of Rural Management Ahmadabad) will facilitate training of required quality managers for NGOs. At college level it is important to start Job-oriented courses on NGOs to provide quality manpower to NGOs. The success of NGOs such as 'CRY', 'Smile' etc. are mainly attributed to their service and quality of people. It is high time for the NGOs to evolve HR Strategies to attract and retain best people.

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