Strategic Human Resource Management

Introduction

The human resource refers to the department in an organization that deals with the recruitment and welfare of all employees. Unlike other units in a company, the human resource is extensive, substantially involved in all company's dealings, and it is also inter-departmental (Boxall 2011, p. 56). Thus, the work of the human resource is to understand the nature and the processes of the organization as a whole and to implement the business strategies that demand the working together of all the human workforce within the company. Many human resource challenges currently face the world of business due to the evolution of the human resource unit. Human resource challenges refer to the issues that cause problems within an organization to the managers, employees, and the organization itself that are related to the way the personnel department is operating (Wright 2011, p. 94). It is not easy to tackle and address these problems because they touch many people in the organization. Therefore, it is the role of the team to develop key strategies that are aimed at finding solutions to the HR challenges. The role of the human resource personnel is changing and so is the business world. The effectiveness and the performance of the department depend on the understanding of the corporate strategic direction and its ability to influence policy and decision making. Moreover, human resource management challenges have to be addressed for the organization to succeed (Guest 2011, p. 7). The paper will identify and explain three human resource challenges facing organizations in the United States of America. It will further analyze the human resource practices and strategies that organizations could and are following to overcome and tackle the challenges.

Human Resource Challenges

There are many changes in the business world that affect the human resource in many issues. This is due to the increasing and fluctuating economy combined with the international and local advancement in the economy (Bratton 2012, p. 300). Despite the regional and national differences, the issues appear to be similar to all the organizations. This is clear that companies have to navigate through the waves of the global complex economy and strategize themselves to attract and retain the employees they will need to accomplish the success. Survey of different firms and companies in the United States has shown that, organizations will continue to face challenges from the evolving nature of work itself and the workforce (Storey 2014. p. 312). This is an indicator to the human resource managers that they should get ahead of the challenge by understanding the future technological, societal shifts and demographic changes in the business world to position themselves in solving the problems. The three most significant human resource challenges facing organizations in the United States are adapting to an increasing changing employee profile, understanding staff qualification, and retaining and engaging a growing workforce (Scullion 2011, p. 67).

Challenge One: Adapting to an Increasing Changing Employee Profile

Human resource unit is faced with the challenge of adapting to a changing worker profile. For instance, it is expected that millions of women employees will flood the global workforce in the coming years. Also, part-time and temporary workers are flooding the workforce, and this has posed a significant challenge to the human resource management (Harzing 2010, p. 345). In addition, the virtual workforce has increased as a result of the technological advancement. People are able to seek employment through the internet, carry out the interview virtually and secure jobs even in other countries. The human resource interacts with them virtually but they have never met face to face. This is a difficult way of managing such a workforce (Bloom 2011,

p. 1698). The organizations have to position themselves to adapt to the new breed of employees. The new workforce has been as a result of the demographic changes that have posed enormous pressure on the private and government sector to start and implement creative solutions to educate and integrate a diverse working population. The cultural diversity among the employees makes managing people the greatest challenge facing the human resource department (Hendry 2012, p. 145). Moreover, experienced workers are leaving the workforce and thus the leadership positions remain void. Also, the older employees in the United States are working past their retirement age. This aging population of workers in the States continues to pose a significant challenge to the human resource. This will force the workers to keep working to earn their salaries for social safety benefits because the pensions and retirement benefits will no longer be available (Kehoe 2013, p. 368). This is a challenge because old and less committed workers will have to be retained in the business world even when they are not adding any advantage to the organization. Thus, the human resource has to develop incentives and strategies to eliminate these workers (Bloom 2011, p. 1700).

The challenge is difficult to tackle because these older employees, the women, and the part-time job seekers have the right to employment in the United States. The firms will need to develop new skills and search for new training opportunities for the old employees especially in the field of technology where they may feel uncomfortable and less experienced than their younger colleagues (Kakuma 2011, p. 1655). If the issue is not addressed, the firm will fail because a lot of processing and manufacturing processes are so much dependent on technology. Also, organizations will need to successfully transfer and manage knowledge and experience the younger employees as they join the markets to exercise their careers. Companies will also need to employ the young generation in the positions that require more experience and tenure after

ascertaining what additional training they need to take up the leadership[CITATION Box11 \p 117 \l 1033]. However, preparing the youths in the United States will also present with challenges. For instance, the geographical regions with high youth unemployment rates such as Maryland State show concern that many of the youths will leave workforce permanently thus bringing up a lost generation. Thus the companies have to come up with education and skills that are attractive to other employees. The human resource management unit has to work with the education sector and the government to create solutions that prepare the future generation of workforce for employment opportunities (Chand 2016, p. 1).

Moreover, the organizations are trying to maximize the potential for women who are underrepresented in the job markets. For instance, out of five hundred companies in the world, there were only thirteen women chief executive officers in the year 2012 with nine of these from the United States (Bratton 2012, p. 590). The concrete reason for women under-representation is the fact that women take time out of their job places to look after their families. However, because of the need to adapt to the changing workers' profile so many women in the US are childless because of the challenges they face after joining the male-dominated club. The issue has been taken and embraced by the politicians and the constitution which favor half female representation in the electorate. The government has also infringed the business sector to advocate for an increased number of women appointed to top management jobs (Bamberger 2014, p. 126). Thus, the firms have to develop ways of dealing with the political interferences that have imposed unwanted changes. Companies have to develop the means to maintaining high potential, committed, and interested women by giving them breaks from full-time work to attend to family commitments. The human resource has to meet the women's demands regarding promotions and salary increment with added benefits to maternity leaves, child health care, day

car, and flexible working hours (Ulrich 2013, p. 201). The workforce has expanded to cover an international market and thus the human resource has to engage virtual workforce for effectiveness to be noticed. If the challenge is not tackled effectively, it might pose problems to the companies in that the employees will not be satisfied and thus they will not be able to perform. Also, the rapid changing workforce of the youths, women, old people, and the temporary workers will not be taken care of and this might bring a deficiency in the labor market. Also, the virtual workers will not be able to perform efficiently, and there will be a failed human resource that translates to a failed organization. Employees are the primary stakeholders in a firm who determines its success or failure. If they are not adequately managed, they are unsatisfied and demotivated. They do not work in commitment thus bringing failure to the company (McWilliams 2013, p. 1301).

Challenge Two: Understanding Workers' Qualifications

The nature and definition of work continue to evolve and develop and thus managers have reported that the education systems have not provided the range of skills that the employees need in their career. The today's' obstacles between the skills fostered by the traditional education and the actual skills required for the job have presented a significant challenge to the human resource (Guchait 2010, p. 1229). This becomes difficult for the human resource to assess the job applicant's qualifications. This challenge has further been complicated by the lack of standardization in the education sector especially from the global view. Businesses are expanding and hiring from beyond borders. Therefore, there is the need for the human resource to assess job qualifications before hiring their workers. This becomes a challenge because of the existing disparity between education institutions and the countries themselves (Farndale 2010, p. 163). The human resource should be able to understand these differences so as to be able to make

more informed decisions before employing workers, especially from foreign countries. They should also collaborate with other functional units within the organization to boost their understanding of qualifications needed by their employees to effectively executive their functions (Iles 2010, p.180).

Furthermore, in the United States there is a rapid population decline due to lower birth rates. Many companies are in fear of future skills shortages especially in the field of engineering and technical roles. Some tasks such as strategic vision and complexity handling are among the most difficult skills to find among the senior executives (Schuler 2011, p. 510). The problem this challenge has posed is the inability to cope with the competitive external environment. Some employees in the lower positions are perturbed by a lack of creativity, interpersonal communication, and adaptability. Without these skills, many graduates in the US have been deemed unemployable. This has caused shortage of manpower in the technical organizations and thus the human resource management should develop a more proactive approach in securing employees with the qualifications they are looking for (Bradley 2015, p. 1). The human resource has to have a dialogue with the institutions of learning and the government to discuss how students should be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills needed for their jobs. The institutions have to change the way the courses are taught by integrating contemporary business issues that will be essential in equipping the future workforce with skills to bridge the labor-market niche (Dias 2016, p.1).

Challenge Three: Retaining and Engaging a Changing Workforce

The nature and the composition of the workforce are changing and so their expectations and motivations are changing too. The human resource is the department that deals with the employment and the retention of the employees. It is therefore, the role of the human resource to

understand what the workers value (Chan 2016, p. 1) For instance, do the employees value prestige, compensation, or freedom at job place? It has to adapt benefit policies, incentives, and retention strategies that are not driven by financial benefits. Employment does not only mean competent and able staff, rather the human resource has to ensure that the employees are committed and productive. The workers should not leave the work within short periods of time because this will lead to increased turnover costs with wasted training invested in them. However, the challenge is not an easy task to solve (Farndale 2010, p. 167). Many employees are not dedicated to their work. Studies show that only 13 percent of the global workers are engaged in their jobs while 63 percent are not engaged. This means that many of the employees are not motivated. The rest of the 24 percent are unhappy and unproductive and they spread negative attitudes to their coworkers. The younger generation of workers has shown loyalty to the organizations and is ready to make an impact. The human resource has to explore different employee retention techniques that should be developed by considering the preferences of the individuals (Wooldridge 2014, p. 1).

In addition, the human resource has to adopt motivational strategies such as promotions, salary increment, and trainings to boost their employees' commitment and retention capacity. This is a challenge to the human resource because demotivated workers tend to leave the jobs and do not work as they are supposed. They only work under supervision and they are liable in spreading negative attitudes to the other employees (Mayhew 2015, p. 1). The whole organization becomes a corrupt workforce and this will lead to failure of the company. When employees leave the job within a short period of time, the human resource has to incur a lot of expenses in looking for other able and competent replacements. In most cases, this is an expensive task because it comes with additional training for the newly recruited. In the business

market, the organization may lose trust and its integrity is compromised that may lead to its failure (Guchait 2010, p. 152). A company where the employees are satisfied and motivated will work tirelessly to see the goals of the organization are met. The success of the firm signifies the success of all departments with the human resource being the pivot because it is the main stakeholder in every organization.

<div align="center">Human Resource Practices and Strategies</div>

The two human resource challenges selected are; understanding the workers' qualifications and retaining and engaging a changing workforce. Workers are the main role players in any organizations and thus the criteria for their selection and recruitment as well as retaining them should be considered. No firm can function without employees. In tackling human resource issue, good practice must be ensured (Quelch 2011, p. 1). This constitutes of having an able and willing human resource that understands the need and the preferences of the employees. Good practice also entails a transparent human resource that puts the needs of the whole organization and works to see the firm's goals are met. Also, good practice involves the use of methods and strategies that are not financially dependent (Iles 2010, p. 185). For instance, if the human resource wants their employees to be satisfies and motivated, they can offer promotions and training opportunities to them rather than rewarding them with money.

The components of an effective human resource strategy would be; first, investing in leadership development. Organizations have to invest in their own employees to develop them into leaders they want them to be. This is the best component. The human resource has to expose their best workers to an intensive leadership environment (Wright 2011, p. 95). This will serve as a long-term planning strategy because their lowest employees can rise to great leaders who can lead the organization in the future. Moreover, it acts as a motivational tool. Once the workers

recognize that the human resource is investing in them to make them better, both the organization and the employee will succeed. The second component is creating a culture of collaboration and integration. The human resource has to work with the team to bring other employees up into the circle of leadership. Rewarding the individual success is not sufficient to make the team succeed and grow. The third component of an effective human resource is developing effective communication skills. Leaders should be good communicators. Communication may vary between different organizations and thus the human resource should develop a culture of training people on proper communication. Excellent communication within the organization and the employees will foster teamwork and build trust among the employees. On the other hand, poor communication creates uncertainty and mistrust (Wright 2011, p. 96). Another component the human resource needs to develop is the drive for real accountability. The human resource must be accountable; they should own problems they need to develop solutions for them. The human resource also, needs to be human and reward emotional intelligence. They should focus on helping new leaders sharpen their emotional intelligence because it is critical for the success of employees. The last component is the need for the human resource to act and advocate for employees of all levels. They should fight for their employees' welfare especially concerning education, employment, and retirement. Employees should not be mistreated especially by being denied their pensions and retirement benefits in their old age. They should be compensated in case of accidents in the job place (Wright 2011, p. 98). If the United States of America human resource personnel adopt these strategies, they will be able to save a dying generation of employees as a result of misunderstood qualifications for their jobs and in retaining and engaging a changing workforce. The human resource practices in the US are suitable for other regions in the world because the challenges faced by the organizations and companies in

the US are the same as the challenges in the global market. Thus these practices and strategies should be adopted globally (Dias 2016, p. 1).

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

The human resource management is faced with many challenges that need to be addressed to save the business world. The problems are not only in the United States, but they are shared by many economies in the world. It is the role of the human resource within the organizations to develop good practices that will help them to tackle the challenges they are facing. They need to work in collaboration with the employees to help them implement these strategies. The human resource has many responsibilities in an organization that can be summarized by being vital in developing the next generation of leaders who will be innovative and creative to take the business world to the next level.