

**Case  
Study  
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# **Recruitment and Selection**



MINISTRY OF  
MANPOWER

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## **Preface**

Effective recruitment and selection are critical to organisational success. They enable companies to have high-performing employees who are also satisfied with their jobs, thus contributing positively to the firm's bottom line.

On the contrary, poor recruitment and selection often result in mismatches which can have negative consequences for an organisation. A misfit who is not in tune with the organisation's philosophies and goals can damage production, customer satisfaction, relationship with suppliers and the overall quality of work. He can also adversely affect the morale and commitment of co-workers and negate efforts to foster team work. Training your way out of a wrong hire can be very expensive. Effective recruitment and selection are therefore not only the first step towards organisational excellence, but are important cost control mechanisms as well.

The first part of this study covers the broad spectrum of recruitment and selection processes and shares knowledge on developing unique recruitment and selection systems that are aligned with an organisation's interests. The second part is an illustration of the recruitment and selection strategies of five showcase companies operating in Singapore with highlights of their unique and successful practices.

## CHALLENGES IN RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

### Labour Market Competition

Whether the national economy is healthy or weak, staff turnover and attrition necessitate organisations to constantly search for talents. The Ministry of Manpower's annual statistics reported that labour participation rate in the younger age group is declining. The percentage of people aged between 15 to 29 and 30 to 49 has decreased by more than one percentage point and two percentage points respectively, while the 50-59 age group is clearly increasing (by about three percentage points) in a four-year period between 1998 and 2002<sup>1</sup>. With an aging population, employers without systematic manpower planning may fall short of meeting their recruitment needs.

### Talent Shortage

On 1st July 2002, Reuters reported that "Singapore's government and big businesses blame a limited talent pool for their dependence on a political elite and a growing number of foreign chief executives." Singapore's shortage of talents has been ascribed to a number of factors, such as the surge in retirement amongst the baby boomers with insufficient replacements coming on stream from succeeding generations, as well as brain drain from the more developed countries. Insufficient homespun expertise has proved recruiting to be a daunting task. Very often, companies have to resort to importing talents to fill key positions.

### Layoffs will not Ease Recruitment and Selection

With layoffs putting about 40,000<sup>2</sup> active jobseekers on the market, it seems at first that employers will have an easy time filling the needs of their organisations. While recruitment is extremely trying in a tight labour market, employers face a different set of challenges in a soft labour market scenario.

Firstly, with an astounding volume of resumes flooding the market, employers are faced with the voluminous task of screening and filtering applicants. A large amount of their time is therefore spent filtering out unqualified applicants rather than picking the desired ones.

Secondly, according to the Ministry of Manpower, of the retrenched workers in 2002, 49 per cent is made up of workers over the age of 40. Of this group, many are either unskilled or lowly skilled, with secondary school level education or below. They are unable to immediately fill the existing job vacancies as they do not have the relevant skills and knowledge required in today's economy. This therefore pares down to a much smaller pool of qualified candidates available to employers.

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Manpower, MOM Statistics, [www.mom.gov.sg](http://www.mom.gov.sg)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

## **GROUND RULES FOR RECRUITING SUCCESS**

### **Defining the Position**

Defining the position is extremely important as it sets the direction for the rest of the recruiting processes. The problem with most companies is that they do not really know who or what they want. They must overcome this difficulty quickly to prevent their recruitment from being flawed right from the beginning.

To define a position, proper job analysis and job specification should be prepared and documented. Job analysis is a systematic study of the tasks, knowledge, skills and abilities required of the job. Job specification, on the other hand, specifies the qualifications in terms of knowledge, skills and other competencies, relevant experience, training, education, certification, as well as physical and mental demands required of the incumbent to perform a job well. Analysing the background and experience of current high performers may be helpful in documenting job specifications. Putting job analysis and job specification together enables the recruiters to gain full clarity of the person they want to hire in a well-written vacancy notice.

### **Compensation and Benefits**

Remuneration is an essential component. Employers would do well to survey the market for pay and benefits information to arrive at a competitive reward structure that will entice applicants.

### **Review Ethics and Codes Regulating Recruitment**

The last thing organisations want is to be labeled as an unethical employer. It ruins the good reputation that has been built up over the years and it definitely does not help in attracting candidates. Countries such as the United States are very fastidious about unethical recruitment and selection processes. Violations related to discrimination, privacy rights and negligence are taken seriously.

In Singapore, in recognition of our heterogeneous workforce, the Ministry of Manpower, together with the Singapore National Employer Federation (SNEF), the Singapore Business Federation (SBF), and the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), have drawn up the Tripartite Guidelines on Non-Discriminatory Job Advertisements and the Code of Responsible Employment Practices to promote peace and harmony among our fellow workers. A summary of the guidelines and codes can be found in the appendices.

### **Institute Speed of Hire as a Competitive Advantage**

Employers no longer have the luxury to hire at their leisure. The intensity of talent shortage means that the key success attribute of recruiters is how fast hiring is achieved.

## FORMULATING ATTRACTION STRATEGIES

Activities conducted to attract talent occur first in the recruitment process and are the most crucial for determining recruitment and staffing success. The maximum value of a recruiting cycle is fixed once the applicant pool is established. To attract the best, companies need to stand out from the rest by incorporating the best practices.

### Employer Branding

Progressively, we hear companies lamenting the lack of suitable candidates to fill open positions. The war for talent is not new and will continue to be so given the characteristic of an increasingly complex and competitive landscape.

To win the war for talent, organisations must be aggressive in establishing their corporate brand. While many may know the benefits that an “employer of choice” can bring (from attracting high calibre job applicants to having attrition rate well below that of competitors), not many actually know how to go about positioning themselves to be one.

Research and insight analysis of several companies known to have a rich inventory of talents shed light on how they win this war on talent by leveraging their employer branding practices<sup>3</sup>.

- *Create a winning employee value proposition*

Companies with superior value propositions have a compelling answer to why talents flock to them. A strong employee value proposition translates into a stronger pull on talents. Companies with a winning employee value proposition (see Exhibit 1) understand what motivates talents and put it into practice.

At the heart of the findings, non-remuneration related factors emerge as winners in motivating talents. Values and culture; a well-managed company; great jobs; freedom and autonomy; company and jobs with exciting challenges are rated tops for absolutely essential in crafting a powerful employer brand.

Supporting the findings, another study<sup>4</sup> undertaken with Fortune Magazine in association with its World’s Most Admired Companies reveals that top rated companies with strong brands share a similar trait: the omnipresence of their culture and values. They “walk the talk” to promote greater assimilation leading to a more supportive and collegial work place for their employees.

Taking the findings a step further, executive talents can be segmented into various pools according to what motivates them to perform. For instance, one particular group may seek growth and advancement in a successful company while another group may demand exciting challenges and stimulation in the job. Crafting a powerful employee value proposition means tailoring a company’s “brand” and the jobs it has to offer. By doing so, companies are appealing to the specific people it wants to find and keep.

- *Outstanding employers sends a clear message that talents are valued*

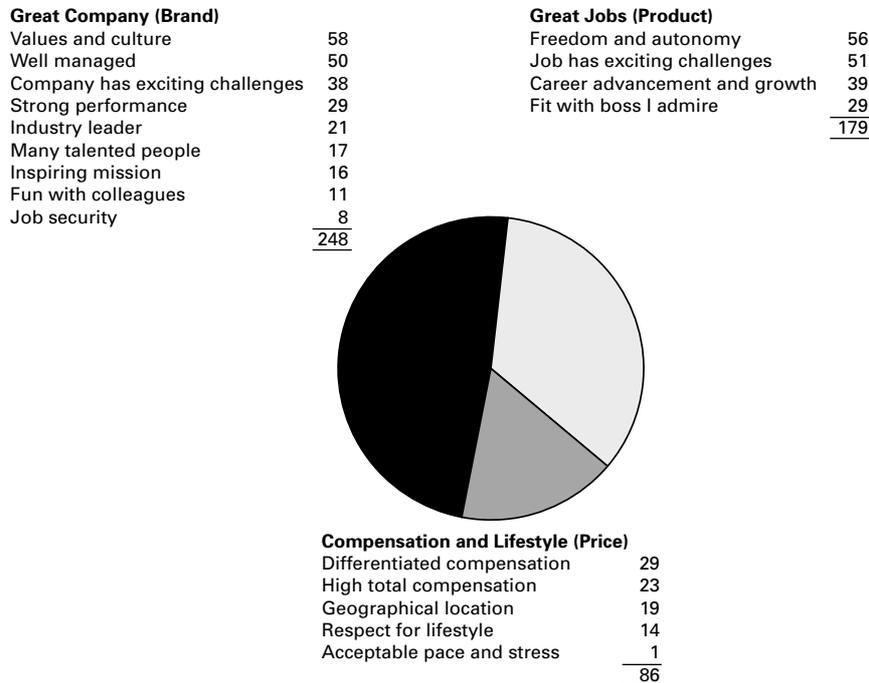
While the main ingredient of a strong employer brand is in its value proposition, what is equally important is the consistency in their talent quest approach. Great companies send a clear and consistent message that talents are valued before and after hire. As a company’s brand is owned by the public (brand is what the public perceives it to be), consistency in the way it is portrayed to the public is critical to the healthy development and maintenance of it.

<sup>3</sup> “The War for Talent”,  
The McKinsey Quarterly 1998  
Number 3, Chambers, Foulon,  
Handfield-Jones, Hankin &  
Michaels III

<sup>4</sup> “A New Competitive Edge:  
Seven Lessons from  
Outstanding Employers”,  
Hay Working Paper, 2003

## Exhibit 1: What motivates talent?

### Percentage of Top 200 Executives Rating Factor Absolutely Essential



Source: The McKinsey Quarterly 1998 Number 3, Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin & Michaels III

## Publicity

Even if your company is yet an “employer of choice”, that should not stop you from reacting to the onslaught of competition.

Identifying your strongest selling point and getting the word out about it is a lot more useful than many traditional recruitment methods like participation in job fairs and advertising. Do not let your company’s unique practices go unnoticed. Ensure Human Resource works with your Public Relations for a well-coordinated message and the press will pick it up.

Some of the most coveted practices that could be publicised include:

- Flexible work arrangement
- Organisation’s support for innovations
- Promotional opportunities and prospects to learn and grow
- How performance is recognised and rewarded

For instance, if you have a great incentive and benefits programme like Chick-fil-A, an American chain of restaurants, and Continental Airlines, generate publicity around it and people can instantly recall your company when they are looking for a job.

### Case Example<sup>5</sup>

#### “Chick-fil-A’s Team-based Sales Programme Receives Local Publicity”

Chick-fil-A has “Teaming for Success”, a team-based sales programme for restaurant operators and their employees. When a team meets its quota, it wins a chance to go on a trip. Once, Chick-fil-A sent five or six teams, a total of 50 and 60 people, to the Ritz Carlton Kapulua, Maui, Hawaii. The trip was publicised in the local papers.

Positive press shows people what a great place it is to work in Chick-fil-A. The press release excited their employees who spread the word around. As a result, Chick-fil-A’s referral programme becomes so successful with up to 50 per cent of new hires sourced from referrals.

<sup>5</sup> HR Magazine October, 2000  
“Read All About It”

**Case Example<sup>6</sup>**

*“Continental Attends to Motivation and Public Relations”*

*Continental Airlines puts priority on publicising its five-year-old Perfect Attendance Programme. Employees with perfect attendance for six months win \$50 American Express Gift Certificates, as well as a chance to win one of the eight top prizes - a new car.*

*Press releases were sent to every newspaper; and stories, photos of winners (with their cars) and videos of the ceremony were sent by request. The publicity has paid off. Continental not only has the lowest absenteeism rate in the industry, it also impresses the public for its great management.*

**Reinvigorate Traditional Recruiting Methods**

Traditional methods can be great sources of hire because they are usually low cost and target a broad audience. They can nowever be enhanced to maximise their value.

- ***Break the Mold Using Creative Advertising<sup>7</sup>***

To stand out from the crowd of competitors, today’s recruitment advertising should do more than promote job openings.

- A. Avoid stale advertising

Shift the message even if a recruitment advertisement was highly successful in the past. Stale advertisements will not generate sufficient interest after a period of time.

- B. Understand what your audience wants to hear

It pays to research on what your target audience value and to tailor the recruiting message that will strike a chord with them. Creative advertisements usually succeed in capturing mass attention, but employers want to do more than that by luring their target audience to show interest in their message.

**Case Example<sup>8</sup>**

*“Adobe’s creative advertisement helped changed the company’s image”*

*Adobe wanted to change the way their industry perceived them to be: slow to embrace new media and not a place where cutting-edge software was being developed. To kick-start the initiative, Adobe launched a creative advertisement campaign. The headline “Come build the tools to break the rules” positioned Adobe as a place where people could be creative and make a statement. The message reminded people of an innovative and irreverent culture that the company had always offered their employees. The playfully altered images of fine art reinforced the message.*

*Feedback for the advertisement campaign was overwhelming. Not only did it generate a buzz throughout the Silicon Valley technical crowd, it also encouraged a new generation of engineers to work in Adobe.*

- C. Consider using humour

**Case Example<sup>9</sup>**

*“Hogging the Classifieds”*

*Carroll’s Foods of Virginia Inc., a swine producing company livened up the classifieds with their humorous advertisements. An advertisement seeking financial analysts was titled “Never a Boar” and it featured a cartoon pig talking on the phone. Another advertisement featured a pig standing atop a truck over the words “High on the Hog” in an advertisement for truck drivers. Carroll’s consistent theme featuring catchy taglines and crisp and humorous illustrations helped to draw applicants from a wide geographical location. The upbeat and progressive disposition of the advertisements excited readers about working in the company. They were even willing to consider driving a little further than they normally would for work.*

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Source: HR Magazine, June 2000, “Breaking the Mold”, Martinez

<sup>8</sup> TMP Official Web site

<sup>9</sup> Source: HR Magazine, Jun 2000, “Winning Ways to Recruit”, Martinez

#### D. Push the employment advantage

The trend today is to help talented people balance work and life. To get the attention of their targeted outreach, employers can use advertising to distinguish themselves as “family-friendly” with enticing benefits programmes and flexible working schedules.

With the recent upheavals in the labour market, stability and security might just be the winning employment advantage if your company has escaped unscathed in the current spate of layoffs.

- **Re-engineer High-Impact Employee Referral (ER) Programme**

Existing employees are your best source of recruiters. The truth is, not many companies realise the impact a good referral programme can bring. Hence it is not uncommon to find ER programmes lay dormant. A successful referral programme reduces your cost-per-hire significantly and at the same time promotes a stronger sense of ownership in the organisation.

To spear-head a successful ER programme<sup>10</sup>:

- A. Create a themed programme. Market the ER programme the way marketers market their products. Have a catchy and upbeat theme to get everyone working in the company to talk about it.
- B. Publicise successful hires. Announce recognised contributions via the company’s newsletter or intranet on a regular basis. Employee’s effort can also be acknowledged at special meetings or luncheons. The objective is to communicate the message that the ER programme is real and that their recommendations are highly considered.
- C. Use frequent giveaways to boost communications. Use a staggered approach in giving out freebies to build awareness. Freebies can come in all shapes and sizes like T-shirts, water bottles, CD holders or even emails.
- D. Offer attractive bonuses to employees who make successful referrals. Keep the benefits highly visible.
- E. Kick off the ER programme yearly. This serves as a powerful reminder to employees and keeps the ER programme alive year after year.
- F. Develop a web-based employee referral programme. Take the cue from the employment giant, Cisco Systems.

#### **Case Example<sup>11</sup>**

*“How Cisco Makes Friends”*

*Cisco Systems incorporated technology to revive a promising traditional recruiting method - Employee Referral Programme. Launched in April 1996, Cisco’s message was simple: “If you have a friend at Cisco, give them a call - there might be a job waiting for you! If you don’t have a friend at Cisco, visit our Web site and we’ll find one for you. Your friend will teach you about the company, introduce you to the right people, and lead you through the hiring process.”*

*Cisco’s web referral programme “Friend” is anything but slow. When surfers click on the eye-catching “Friends” button, they will be swept into the firm’s recruiting pipeline instantaneously. Surfers are contacted by Cisco, befriended by one Cisco employee, evaluated by engineers and managers, and offered a job - all in less than a fraction of the time most companies would take to recruit.*

*Besides “Friend”, Cisco continues to carry out their traditional employee referral programme by rewarding employees with a thick bonus of \$1,000 every time a referral is hired. Employees also receive gifts such as mugs, athletic bags each time they make a recommendation.*

*Cisco’s referral programme is hugely phenomenal with referral rates at twice the industry norm and accounts for an astounding 50 to 60 per cent of new hires.*

<sup>10</sup> Source: HR Magazine, August 2001, “The Headhunter Within. (Employee recruitment),” Martinez

<sup>11</sup> Source: Bill Birchard, Fast Company Issue 10, August/September 1997, page 138

## Invest in Innovative Recruitment Methods

As more and more organisations realise the value of a good hire, the need to look beyond traditional ways of sourcing surfaces. The lack of reach to the passive group of applicants inherent in traditional ways of recruiting is one factor that prompts organisations to tap into innovative sources for recruitment.

- **E-recruitment**

E-recruitment is one innovative method of recruitment that its use has been on the rise. E-recruitment is more than posting advertisements on the Internet. It is about leveraging a wide range of web-based technologies.

Consider the success of e-recruitment at GlaxoSmithKline, a large pharmaceutical company based globally.

### Case Example<sup>12</sup>

#### *GlaxoSmithKline*

*The e-recruitment team in GlaxoSmithKline sources for candidates, promotes their on-line brand and develops on-line recruitment strategies amongst all other applications using web-based technologies.*

*The on-line recruitment facility enables anyone who visits the global corporate web site to request to be notified of suitable jobs at a later stage; has the ability to save and retrieve personal profiles; and includes the option to e-mail a job to a friend. They can even leave their curriculum vitae in GlaxoSmithKline's database for use by recruiters as and when a suitable vacancy occurs. Such web-based technologies build a database of candidates that GlaxoSmithKline can tap on for current and future recruitment needs.*

*According to GlaxoSmithKline, their statistics to date show that they are reaching an ethnically diverse population of people from all over the world, a feature that is key to a global organisation. The best part of e-recruitment is that it is fuss free, fast and effective. Without doubt, GlaxoSmithKline expects majority of its candidates to be hired through its on-line facility and its reliance on traditional methods to be considerably reduced.*

- **Target Sourcing**

Another innovative recruitment method is generating applicant lists from target sources such as alumni directories, trade conference attendance, professional association memberships and possible referrals from your own clients. Recruiters then conduct cold calls to potential candidates to narrow down the pool for selection.

- **Benchmark Recruiting<sup>13</sup>**

Many successful organisations such as General Electric devote a team of resources to benchmark best practices with other equally, if not more, successful organisations. Benchmark recruiting takes basic benchmarking a step further by utilising it as a recruiting tool to find target candidates.

Benchmark recruiting refers to the process of identifying individuals who developed and implemented the best practices in their organisations. These individuals demonstrate not only their superior knowledge, but also their ability to get good ideas implemented. Displaying characteristics of a "high performer" have made them invariably ideal targets to recruit.

However, getting through to these high performers can be extremely difficult. Organisations could have devised stringent controls to prevent headhunters from talking to them. Most high-performing individuals who are not hunting for another job would also refuse to answer calls from recruiters. When they do, they often have little time or interest in talking to them.

<sup>12</sup> E-Recruitment at GlaxoSmithKline: Features @ PharmWeb. Available at :[www.pharmweb.com/News/features/feature.asp?FeatID=138](http://www.pharmweb.com/News/features/feature.asp?FeatID=138). [Assessed on Mar 03 2003]

<sup>13</sup> J. Sullivan (2002) "Using Benchmarking as a Recruiting Tool": Electronic Recruiting Exchange Web Site. Available from: <http://www.ereexchange.com> [Assessed Mar 03 2003]

Benchmark recruiting allows you to call as a subject-matter expert instead of a recruiter, hence avoiding the stereotypical image of a recruiter. Responses received would be a lot more favourable. This is because when doing benchmarking, you are essentially complementing the target candidates by asking about their best practices while at the same time, giving them an opportunity to learn about the best practices at your organisation.

Benchmark recruiting therefore allows you to gather best practices information, identify target candidates, as well as build relationships with these target candidates all at the same time. Even if you fail to recruit the best candidates identified, the relationships built would still enable you to use them as referral sources since they probably know other outstanding individuals whom they have benchmarked with.

The other advantage about benchmark recruiting is that it can occur at any level in the organisation. Organisations can teach their managers or top performers how to conduct benchmarking so that they can begin gathering both best practices information as well as names of key individuals involved. In this way, everyone in the organisation contributes to effective recruitment.

Benchmark recruiting can be carried out in these ways:

- Identify individuals within your company who are currently doing benchmarking on best practices. Use them to identify potential candidates and either have them pass the names to recruiters or do the initial recruiting themselves. The latter approach is generally more effective as you have “equals” talking to each other.
- Identify individuals who benchmark your organisation. Those who actively benchmark are usually rapid learners since they are exposed to best practices from leading organisations. This invariably makes them very desirable to hire.

In general, benchmark recruiting is targeted and slow albeit superior in talent scouting. It is therefore not suitable if organisations need to fill a position fast.

## HOW TO SELECT RIGHT?

After sourcing for target candidates, the load of recruiters is not relieved until the most suitable candidate for the job has been identified, assessed and selected. The success of sourcing is futile if employers fail to narrow the group of prospects to pick the most optimal candidate.

Research in the United States shows that organisations with effective selection systems can better identify and hire employees with the right skills and motivations to succeed in the positions and organisations. When employees are successful in their jobs, organisations benefit through increased productivity, higher quality products and services<sup>14</sup>, as well as lower employee turnover. The value-added contribution from superior performance is averaged between 19 and 49 percent, depending on the technical difficulty of the job<sup>15</sup>.

To select right, employers should first understand what contributes to high job performance.

### Cornerstones of Job Performance

#### Person-Job Fit

Person-job fit is a match between a person's knowledge, technical skills and abilities, and other requirements typically identified through job analysis. It is an integral part of a candidate's actual on-the-job success, especially for jobs that demand specific sets of skills and technical knowledge. Without a proper match between the person and the job attributes, improvement of an individual's long term job performance with training or coaching will be minimal, hence resulting in low productivity.

On a broader scale, there is a common myth that hiring highly intelligent persons with the highest level of skills and knowledge will result in maximum contribution to performance. This may not be so. People actually perform best when they are fully engaged by the challenges of a job<sup>16</sup>. Unless highly intelligent individuals are provided with a steady source of intellectual stimulation, they may not only become poor performers but may become counterproductive as well.

#### Person-Group Fit

Traditionally, organisations have selected employees based mainly on candidates' key attributes and job requirements. This has led to a focus on recruiting based on cognitive ability, specific knowledge and skills relevant for the job. While person-job fit is crucial for ascertaining the ability to perform the technical aspects of the job, it is no longer sufficient for selection as industries move to more dynamic and complex environments with an increased emphasis on work teams. Individuals must also be able to operate and contribute positively in a team-oriented work environment.

Person-group fit is the match between the new hire and the immediate workgroup. Quality interactions between the new hire and his/her workgroup are vital because the performance of other group members is somewhat dependent on the newcomer's ability to interact with them. Research demonstrates that team members who share certain beliefs and values are likely to express more positive work attitudes than those who do not<sup>17</sup>.

Person-group fit can also occur when newcomers have distinctive qualities or characteristics that complement or support the characteristics of the existing group members<sup>18</sup>. Since all group members have some personal attributes and deficiencies related to overall group performance, group performance is enhanced when the deficiencies of one team member are complemented by the strengths of another member in the team.

<sup>14</sup> "Recruitment and Selection", Paul R. Bernthal for Development Dimensions International

<sup>15</sup> "Employee Turnover: The role of cultural mismatching", William F. Kraemer, PhD for Self Management Group

<sup>16</sup> Based on Presentation from the 12th Equipment Management Workshop : "The New Art of Hiring Smart: Matching the Right Person to the Right Job", Arlen T. Swenson International Institute of Marketing Excellence, Inc

<sup>17</sup> Ostroff & Kozlowski. (1992). "Organizational socialization as learning process. The role of information acquisition. Personnel Psychology, 43, 849-867

<sup>18</sup> Muchinsky & Monahan. (1987). "What is person-environment congruence? Supplementary versus complementary models of fit". Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 31, 268-277

### Person-Organisation Fit

Person-organisation fit is the congruence of an individual's personality, beliefs and values with the culture and values of an organisation. A cultural mismatch between new hires and the organisation has been demonstrated to be a significant contributor to potential job dissatisfaction and reduced work group cohesion, thus leading to poor job performance and high attrition rates.

New hires who can identify with the culture of the organisation are more likely to value the incentives offered by the organisation. As incentives are meant to motivate, new hires who attach importance to such incentives are likely to improve in work attitudes and to remain in the organisation.

### What Selection Tools to Adopt?

Selection tools that assess variables directly related to the job draw inferences about the candidate's future performance. The closer the selection tools are related to the job, and with a greater ability to test the coverage of required knowledge, skills, and abilities, the higher the predictability of a candidate's future job performance.

Employers are advised to use a combination of selection tools (observed in Exhibit 2) to assess fitness between a person and the job, the group as well as the organisation.

### Exhibit 2: Selection Tools and Validity

Selection Tools	Description	Validity
Work Sample	<p>Tests in which candidates actually perform a part of the job so that success in doing the part of the job can be determined. To maximise the effectiveness of work samples, the task or aspect of the job may need to be carefully selected to allow a realistic assessment of the prospects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First, candidates should be allowed a reasonable time to complete the tasks.</li> <li>• Second, they should not need in side information or specialist knowledge to complete the task.</li> <li>• Above all, each candidate should be asked to perform the work sample under the same conditions as the other candidates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High validity in assessing person-job fit.</li> </ul>
Cognitive Tests	<p>Cognitive tests or general mental ability assessments differentiate candidates on mental ability that is required of the job. These tests are most commonly used for entry-level jobs and for applicants without professional training or advanced degrees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High validity in assessing person-job fit.</li> </ul>

Selection Tools	Description	Validity
Structured Interview	<p>Structured interviews ensure that questions are job-related, thereby contributing to the correspondence between selection methods and suitability of the candidates selected. Types of structured interviews include:</p> <p>a) Criterion-based interviews</p> <p>This form of structured interview is based on pre-planned standard questions ranging over all aspects of the job. The interviewers, the structure of the interview and the questions are selected to explore the requirements needed for effective performance of the job. Criterion-based interviews also attempt to probe only specific skills or competencies relevant to the job.</p> <p>b) Situational/behavioral interviews</p> <p>These are used to project candidates into the future by asking ‘what if’ questions. The questions can be chosen to reflect aspects of the job which are known to have difficulties or are critical for successful performance. These areas could be identified from job analysis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High validity in assessing person-job fit.</li> <li>• Moderate-High validity in assessing person-group fit.</li> <li>• Moderate-High validity in assessing person-organisation fit.</li> </ul>
Assessment Centres	<p>Candidates attending an assessment centre participate in two to three days of group and individual exercises, role-plays, managerial simulations, and psychometric tests that assess managerial potential, problem-solving and decision-making skills. The candidates are watched closely by trained observers who meet and reach a consensus rating of the candidates for a number of variables considered important for effective management. Assessment centres are most widely used for managerial and high level positions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High validity in assessing person-job fit.</li> </ul>
Personality Tests	<p>This method stems from the belief that personality tests help recruiters determine individual characteristics not obtainable from the resume and thus increases the probability of finding a good fit between the employee and the job.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate validity in assessing person-group fit.</li> <li>• Moderate-Low validity in assessing person-organisation fit.</li> </ul>
Biographical Data/Weighted Application Blank (WAB)	<p>Biodata is drawn from the biographic profiles of previously successful jobholders. Based on the criteria for job success (e.g. long versus short tenure), research is conducted to identify biodata that would help to predict which type of applicants would be successful on the job. Certain discernible features are then used as aids for the selection of future jobholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate-Low validity in assessing person-organisation fit.</li> <li>• Moderate-Low validity in assessing person-group fit</li> </ul>

Selection Tools	Description	Validity
Unstructured interview	Unstructured interview involves little planning on the part of the interviewer. As such, interviews tend to vary greatly between interviewees. The prevalent use of unstructured interviews generally lies in the organisation's lack of time and resources to conduct a more structured interview.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low validity in assessing person-organisation fit.</li> <li>• Low validity in assessing person-group fit.</li> </ul>
Reference Checks	Most organisations ask candidates for lists of references that include previous supervisors or co-workers to check whether the candidate is a good worker. As the lists are generated by the candidates, the references would most likely be those who would present a positive image of the candidates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low predictive validity.</li> <li>• Mainly used as a pre-employment check to ascertain the truthfulness of candidates.</li> </ul>

### A Superior Approach: Competency-Based Selection<sup>19</sup>

As business dynamics change, so do the competencies required of executives. As a consequence, employers are required to look to experienced executives from outside their organisations to fill new strategic roles. However, hiring experienced external executives, especially for key strategic positions, can create a potentially costly dilemma. While external hires bring new insights and expertise that would take too long to develop in-house, these transplanted executives often fail.

To overcome these challenges, the use of competency-based selection has become a standard practice for many organisations worldwide. Examples of such organisations include L'Oreal and Unilever. Competency-based assessment and selection is used to first, identify the characteristics of those executives with the skills to implement the company's growth strategy and at the same time succeed in their unique corporate culture; and second, to accurately identify and select executives that possess these capabilities. Extensive research in this area highlights the following:

- In every organisation, some incumbents perform more effectively than others
- These individuals work differently from the typical employee
- Differences in approach relate directly to specific characteristics (competencies) of outstanding performers that are often absent in typical performers
- The best way to discover the characteristics that relate to outstanding performers in a role is to employ a systematic way of studying and measuring its top performers, documenting their characteristics and converting these into a set of selection criteria for new hires.

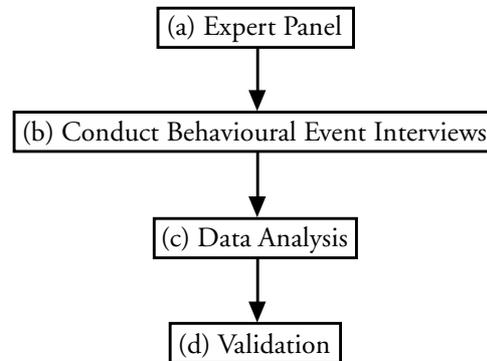
In brief, competencies predict success. Organisational competencies are attributes for achieving competitive advantage and people competencies are characteristics that superior performers exhibit more often with better success. The underlying competencies tend to drive people's long-term behaviour and thus their long term performance. Competency-based selection shifts focus to observable behaviours which are indicators of these underlying characteristics.

<sup>19</sup> Based on excerpts from "Competence at Work: Models for superior performance", by Lyle M. Spencer, Jr., PhD and Signe M. Spencer using methodologies from The Mclelland/McBer job competence assessment (JCA)

## Steps in Developing a Competency-Based Selection System

### *Step 1: Develop competency model(s) for the target job(s).*

There are various approaches to developing a competency-based selection model. A shorter competency model process is one based on expert panels as shown below.



- a. For each target job or job family, an expert panel comprised of knowledgeable human resource specialists, managers and superior job incumbents is convened to identify (brainstorm) key accountabilities, career paths that typically lead to the job and competencies employees need to perform the job at a baseline or 'threshold' level and a superior level.
- b. Conduct Behavioural Event Interview (BEI). If possible, a few superior incumbents are interviewed to confirm and provide narrative examples of competencies identified by the expert panel. BEIs are most valuable in identifying the nuances of how competencies are expressed in an organisation's unique culture and context.
- c. Data Analysis. Data from the expert panel and the BEIs are analysed to identify behaviours and personality characteristics that distinguish superior from average job incumbents and those that are demonstrated by all incumbents adequately performing the job.
- d. Validate the Competency Model by rating or ranking a criterion sample of superior and average performers on the competencies identified and confirming that superiors are ranked higher than averages on competencies.

### *Step 2: Select or develop assessment methods to assess the competencies of candidates for jobs.*

Wide ranging assessment methods can be used (refer to previous section on "What Selection Tools to Adopt?"). A popular and cost effective assessment method is the Behavioural Event Interview (BEI) which is high in validity and fast to implement.

Those who are conducting assessments need to be trained. Usually, most people can in two or three days learn to conduct and code a BEI with sufficient reliability to make effective selection decisions.

### *Step 3: Develop a competency-based job and person database and matching system.*

Once more than a few jobs have been studied and people assessed, a system is needed to track job competency requirements, employee competencies and job-person match data. This system will assist to prompt the most appropriate candidate for the job.

## Benefits of Competency-Based Selection Method

While competency-based selection requires a high initial investment, companies can reap numerous benefits after implementation. Refer to case example for more information.

- **Competitive Advantage**

An organisation that knows how to assess competencies effectively can for example, hire "underpriced" but highly entrepreneurial individuals.

- Employee Retention

Competency-based selection improves performance and reduces attrition. High job performance predicts high retention because good performers need not be fired; and satisfied employees are less likely to quit.

- Succession Planning

There may be an organisational need to identify new hires with the potential to become future managers or leaders.

- Short Learning Curve

Competency-based selection can cut new hires' learning curve period by 33 to 50 percent. New hires with the relevant set of competencies to do a job become fully productive earlier.

- Adapting to Organisational Change

Any change in an organisation involves shifting people out of some jobs into others that they are able to do. As such, changing organisations need to know which employees have the competencies to adapt and be successful in their future jobs.

- Determining Training and Development Needs at Entry

A gap between the competencies needed and what skills the new hires possess indicates the training that new hires will need.

### **Case Example<sup>20</sup>**

#### *Competency-Based Selection*

*A US based company needs over 100 new executives each year to meet its worldwide growth objectives. However, the average tenure of the executives it hired from outside was only three years. Those who grew within the company and made it to the executive ranks typically lasted four years, a slightly better record.*

*To identify the characteristics of those executives with the skills to implement the company's growth strategy and at the same time succeed in their unique corporate culture, this company engaged a consulting firm as partner in its competency-based selection efforts.*

*The result of the company previously cited had a very interesting discovery after using the competency-based selection. They discovered that while the "outstanding" executives they identified were driven by the call to improve the bottom-line results, these outstanding executives were not the ruthless and aggressive group as known in the market place.*

*This group of outstanding executives identified by the company had incredibly positive respect for individuals. They were very optimistic about what they and others could achieve, and were motivated by forming strong personal relationships. Other competencies the company identified as contributing to success included high levels of "ego maturity" and "genuineness", indicating that they acted consistently with how they thought and felt.*

*After uncovering the characteristics that determined success in the organisation, it became apparent that many of the outside hires were mismatched with the company's culture and hence the high failure rates.*

*Upon reflection on the results, the top management team concluded that executives who "grew up" in bureaucratic, political organisations did not fare well in this company because they focussed too heavily on managing process as opposed to managing the business. Experienced external executives who came in and expected their position power to yield results instead of person-relationships were also often rejected.*

*The findings changed the way the company recruited. They were able to better identify the kind of executives who would fit into their company's culture. They discarded traditional interviews and began using structured interviews based on critical incidents which better identified characteristics that made for a good fit with the organisation, thus leading to superior job performance.*

*The end result was a much lower turnover rate -attrition declined by 80 per cent.*

<sup>20</sup> Source: Increasing the odds of Success with Outside Experienced Hires," A Case Study of Competency-based Assessment and Selection, Hay Group Working Paper

## EVALUATING THE SUCCESS OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

So far, readers have been presented with various aspects, guidelines and considerations for developing recruitment and selection systems. But no process is complete without an evaluation of its efficiency and success. Increasingly, discussion has been centred on the use of metrics to measure the success of recruitment and selection.

### Why use Metrics?

Metrics contribute to Human Resource attaining the level of being a business partner within the organisation. The use of objective numbers allows Human Resource to speak the language of business by tying staffing functions to business objectives.

Metrics also help push continuous improvement. Comparing results over time tells you whether and how fast you have improved. Objective numbers help focus recognition and attention on recruitment and selection programmes that are good.

Quantifying and comparing the success of each process in recruitment and selection underscore where resources should be better allocated. While reviewing each recruiting approach gives an idea of what works and what does not, allocating resources based on objective analysis results in cost effectiveness in recruitment.

### What to Measure?

As the recruiting profession continues to evolve, metrics have likewise grown in size. Given the numerous metrics that have been developed, which ones truly measure the right thing? The answer is to focus on strategic impact areas that align with overall business objectives as follows:

- Cost
- Time
- Quality
- Satisfaction

These areas when combined, link performance and contribution of the recruiting function to the firm's bottom line. Exhibit 3 shows examples of metrics that measure each strategic area of impact. Exhibit 4 is a sample questionnaire for measuring the expectation and performance of hiring manager.

<sup>21</sup> Staffing.org. Available at <http://www.staffing.org/measure/time.html>.

<sup>22</sup> CpH can also be used to measure cost-Per-Hire of each recruiting source. It not only enables the cost comparison of different sources but is also a good benchmark for planning future recruitment strategies budgets

**Exhibit 3: Measuring Efficiency and Effectiveness of Recruitment and Selection<sup>21</sup>**

Strategic Area of Impact			
Cost	Time	Quality	Satisfaction
<b>1) Cost-Per-Hire (CpH)<sup>22</sup></b> $\frac{\text{CpH} = \text{Recruiting Costs}}{\text{Number of Positions}}$	<b>1) Time-to-Fill</b> Number of days between the date the position was approved for staffing and the date the new employee started work.	<b>1) On-the-Job Performance Appraisal</b>	<b>1) Hiring Manager Satisfaction</b> General questionnaire completed before and after the recruitment process. Rate on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being the most important, criteria that is important to the hiring manager, and compare it with the actual performance on the same set of criteria (refer to sample questionnaire in Exhibit 4).
<b>2) Staffing Efficiency Ratio (SEr)</b> $\frac{\text{SEr} = \text{Total Recruiting Costs}}{\text{Total Compensation of those Recruited}}$	<b>2) Time Ratio (Tr)</b> $\text{Tr} = \frac{\text{Actual Time to Start}^*}{\text{Contracted Time to Start}^{**}}$ <p>* <i>Actual Time to Start is the average number of days between the first day of recruiting for a position and the first day new employees are on the job.</i></p> <p>** <i>Contracted Time to Start is the negotiated "time to start" between the hiring manager and the recruiter prior to the recruiting process.</i></p>	<b>2) New Hire Quality</b> Review the expectation of the hiring manager previous listed and on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being Met), assess how close the new hire came to meeting each expectation. Use these numbers to arrive at the overall conclusion of the quality of new hire.	

**Exhibit 4: Hiring Manager Satisfaction Sample Questionnaire**

Criteria	Important to Hiring Manager	Actual Performance
1. Timeliness of initial recruiter contact	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. Effectiveness of planning	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Recruiter's understanding of position	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. Process(es) overview	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5. Recruiter's knowledge of market	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6. Sourcing options	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
7. Timeframe to refer candidates	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
8. Quality of referred candidates	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
9. Quantity of referred candidates	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
10. Diversity of referred candidates	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
11. Information provided to candidates	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
12. Assessment of candidates	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
13. Coordinating, scheduling,...	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
14. Offer/closing effectiveness	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
15. Communications from recruiter	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
16. Recruiter's ability to resolve problems	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
17. High level recruiting skills	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
18. Helpfulness of recruiting staff	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<b>Summary</b>		
<b>Overall Satisfaction</b> Comparing all ratings, assess how closely the recruiter met your expectations: 1 2 3 4 5		

Source: Staffing.Org

Other than the four strategic areas that have direct impact on performance and contribution to the firm's bottom line, it is recommended that new hire failure rates be factored in when evaluating the success of recruitment and selection. This is because failure of new hires is a very costly phenomenon. Anomaly alert recruiters to identify and resolve any inadequacies in the recruitment and selection processes (refer to Exhibit 5).

**Exhibit 5: Example of New Employee Loss Metric<sup>23</sup>**

(Simple-adjusted turnover for new employees for each of the three years of employment)

	Lost in 2002	Lost in 2001	Lost in 2000
Employees hired in 2002	Y%		
Employees hired in 2001	V%	U%	
Employees hired in 2000	S%	R%	Q%

The use of metrics in evaluating success of recruitment and selection is relatively new especially in Singapore. It is useful for organisations to track their costs and ratios so that there will be an objective indication of what can and should be improved.

<sup>23</sup> staffing.org

## Agilent Technologies

Established in 1999, Agilent, a spin-off from Hewlett Packard, is a globally diversified technology company focusing on high-growth markets in the communications, electronics and life sciences industries. Due to its increasingly global and multicultural stance towards its customers, suppliers and strategic partners, Agilent must be positioned to relate and react to diverse needs and expectations.

### The Challenge

Being a worldwide organization, Agilent's manpower planning is done on a global basis. Agilent Singapore has to compete with and convince business decision-makers worldwide why operations are best located in Singapore. The business case for Agilent Singapore is contingent on the re-skilling of Singapore labour force, rigorousness of workforce planning and the ability to attract talents.

The task to attract talents complicates when the economy expands. Agilent needs to poise itself uniquely and adopt a robust strategy to counter competition from big brand names.

### Strategising Recruitment & Selection

#### *Re-engineer process*

To mirror its core values which are speed, focus and accountability, one of Agilent's key performance indicators for recruitment is the speed of hire. Given the stifling competition for talents, Agilent believes success accrues in seizing candidates before competition does. To do so, hiring managers now take over the scheduling and conducting of interviews instead of having recruiters act as intermediaries. In addition, through continuous human resources support in the areas of seminars and knowledge transfer, hiring managers in Agilent are well equipped with information such as competitive market pay ranges to offer outstanding candidates a position at the first instance.

#### *Maximise Technology*

To reach out to the diverse pool of job applicants, Agilent revolutionised the technology behind recruitment. Employment application is confined to on-line process for building a database that Agilent can tap globally. Using the same third party software worldwide, Applicant Tracking System rates candidates with a template jointly customized by the hiring manager and the recruiter to suit the position in hire and filters candidates on a 'tier-by-tier' basis to select those who best meet the criteria.

One added merit of technology is the ability to trickle candidates for another open position in Agilent. In view of the fact that skill sets differ for the various business groups in Agilent, candidates who are unsuitable for a particular position may well be suitable for another position. Candidates are automatically prompted by the system if a position that arises matches their career profiles.

#### *Develop Referral*

Having experienced high success rates with referral, Agilent is actively pursuing and developing its referral channel for hiring excellence. Knowing the key to a successful referral programme lies in awareness creation, Agilent markets the campaign the way marketers promote brands. A catchy tagline "It's About You" is coined to instill the notion that everyone in Agilent is a recruiter and they can recommend friends and relatives for suitable openings.

Accruing to the success of Agilent's referral programme is the strength of its corporate culture and work environment. Agilent's shared practices in open communication promote understanding of the kind of people that will fit and excel in the organisation, thus making employees apt to recruit. Having won the 'Best Employer in Asia' award and similar accolades globally, Agilent's brand name works in favour of employees recommending suitable positions to friends and relatives.

Currently, Agilent's referral programme contributes to approximately 21 per cent of new hires and recruiters are hopeful that the figure will rise to 40 per cent in the future.

### *Impression Management*

For overall effectiveness of recruitment and selection, Agilent advocates managing the impression of new hire from the first day of work. Hiring managers are reminded to ensure the new hire's workstation is fully equipped and operationally ready on the first day. The significance of such "On Boarding" process is to drive home the message that the company places a strong emphasis on "productivity".

### **Moving Forward**

The latest emphasis within Agilent is to develop "head-hunting" capabilities. Like headhunters, Agilent aims to conduct its own research on the types and sources of jobs that are in high demand in Singapore. This would mean reduced cost in print advertising, agency costs, etc. due to reduced reliance on conventional recruitment methods. Moreover, equipped with headhunting skills, recruiters in Agilent would be able to undertake complex hiring assignments including those that require them to look beyond the shores of Singapore to fill jobs. Finally, recruiters who function more like headhunters are better able to contract with hiring managers on hiring requirements when they approach recruiting from a consulting perspective.

Agilent would also like to see an increased attention in "re-recruiting" its workforce. Agilent feels that recruitment does not stop short at a successful hire. Efforts need to be directed to its current workforce to re-engage them in their current job. Continued articulation of Agilent as a "Great Place to Work" is done through frequent communications, town hall meetings and constantly keeping employees informed of business directions.

## Citigroup

Citibank, a member of Citigroup, commenced operations in Singapore in 1902. Now a century later, the bank has evolved to a diverse franchise of businesses including the Citigroup Corporate & Investment Bank, Citibank Consumer Bank, The Citigroup Private Bank, Citibank International Personal Bank, Smith Barney Private Client Group and Citigroup Asset Management. With a presence in more than 100 countries, Citigroup is a leader in the financial services sector and a choice partner of corporations, consumers and high net worth individuals. To remain a leading force, Citibank recognizes the importance of excellent recruitment and selection processes.

### The Challenge

Identifying and hiring the right talent is particularly difficult in Singapore's competitive financial services sector. This is compounded by the country's small population which limits the talent pool.

### Recruitment & Selection Strategy

The bank's recruitment and selection strategy has always been to attract the best talent by leveraging on its strong brand name, meritocratic practices and the opportunities it offers as a diverse and global organisation.

Cost effectiveness and the incorporation of best practices are also rigorously pursued in the recruitment process.

The selection process includes a vigilant screening for competencies, skills, experience and integrity before an offer is made.

### Decentralised Recruitment

Recruitment used to be centralised and led by a team of recruitment specialists. The country recruitment specialists have since been decentralised. They are now employed within each business group as a HR generalist offering a spectrum of HR services including selection and recruitment.

The bank also outsourced the task of resume management to an external vendor and invested in a web-based resume management system which enables recruiters and line managers to have real time access to curriculum vitae remotely. The system is equipped with e-recruit features, which free up the recruiters' time in screening, interview scheduling and replying to unsuccessful applicants.

The centralised database with a vast reservoir of talent allows recruiters to mine for suitable candidates, thereby optimising cost of advertising and agency search fees.

### Outsourced Administration

The HR function is inevitably saddled with a variety of administrative activities, which often distract HR practitioners from their true purpose, which is to provide value-added HR services. The outsourcing of such administrative chores liberated substantial time and resources for HR practitioners, allowing them to be more strategic and effective in their roles. In outsourcing, a "hub and spoke" model was adopted. The generalists supporting the various businesses formed the "spoke", while the "hub" represented a centralised Human Resource unit, which included product specialists as well as administrative functions that are partly outsourced.

The net effect in outsourcing has been substantial in terms of cost synergies, standardised and simplified processes, and reduced bottlenecks in recruitment. As the vendor has to ensure adequate staffing during staff's absence due to vacation and medical leave, turnaround time has remained consistent. Productivity and morale among the HR practitioners also improved as a result of outsourcing. Outsourcing has enabled Citibank's recruiters to focus on value-added features of recruitment such as evaluating staffing gaps, driving creative employment strategies, refining individual processes and formulating strategies and solutions to counter recruitment and selection challenges and issues.

### **Talent Inventory Review**

Talent building over the years has allowed Citigroup to rely significantly on internal channels to fill key positions. Its Talent Inventory Review (TIR) process is one of the most successful sources of recruitment for executive as well as managerial positions as candidates have proven fit with the Bank's corporate culture.

The purpose of TIR is to assess the current performance and future capabilities of the company's leadership team. It assesses the individual's personal profile, including qualifications, experiences and career interest, and designs a development plan for each high potential staff. This is done once a year. Through disciplined and consistent practice over the years, it has become a robust succession-planning tool built on a comprehensive talent inventory database.

The process is also helpful in determining the leadership team's readiness to compete in the marketplace by examining the performance and growth potential of individuals and integrating this information across the diverse functions and businesses of Citigroup. It also highlights the staffing and development actions needed to build and maintain a world-class leadership team. From the staff's perspective, it provides them with a vehicle to assess their performance, professional skills and development needs against their long-term career objectives.

### **Internal Job Posting**

An internal job advertisement policy is diligently practised for all job openings. Internal staff are encouraged to apply for positions across the franchise locally and globally. This policy underscores the bank's commitment to competency and career development, contributing to broader skills set, greater job satisfaction, morale and staff retention.

### **Employee Referral Programme**

The bank has a successful employee referral programme to complement its other recruitment activities. It enables employees to play a part in identifying potential candidates for permanent and contract positions in the organisation. The rewards for successful referrals vary, depending on the level of the hired candidate.

### **Structured Interview for Selection Success**

Interview process to screen candidates for the organisation is highly disciplined. As a large corporation with a proud heritage, strong corporate culture, distinctive values and work ethics, Citigroup's assessment techniques need to be rigorous to select candidates with the right fit.

Interviews are structured to elicit candidates' past behaviour, preferences, choices, patterns and insights, which are then used to predict the likely trends of their behaviour in the future. Using the same software globally, the results of interviews are able to provide insights on candidates' general approaches, their motivations and dislikes, accomplishments, strengths and weaknesses, and their attitudes and assumptions about people. It can also go far in helping to predict how a person will react to a specific set of circumstances.

### **Moving Forward**

Citigroup continually assesses its recruitment and selection strategies, policies and processes, with the objective of hiring the best in the shortest time and at the lowest cost, whether such hires are from internal or external sources.

The HR system is currently being enhanced to achieve even better efficiency. The system will allow candidates to be identified using objective selection criteria. Self-service portals will be available to candidates, hiring managers and HR throughout the recruiting cycle. Some of the enhancements include real-time tracking of position openings, candidates status, success profile, cost per hire, cycle time and market salary data.

In the pipeline are plans to set up a regional shared service center for more streamlined HR processes and cost synergies.

## **DSO National Laboratories**

Established in 1972 to undertake defence research and development in Singapore, DSO was corporatised in 1997 as a not-for-profit organisation to enable it to have more flexibility and autonomy in operations. Going against the current of a burgeoning life sciences industry, DSO is faced with an uphill task of creating a compelling reason for the young to take up a career in research and development.

### **The Challenge**

DSO's biggest challenge is in attracting qualified candidates who are interested in research and development.

### **Strategising Recruitment & Selection**

#### *Aggressive Employer Branding*

DSO needs to position itself in the minds of key audiences such as the current generation X and generation Y. Through media exposure, sponsorships and various communication programmes, DSO has progressed swiftly in making their brand seen, heard and recognised. DSO focuses a lot on delivering its superior employee value proposition through a cohesive and consistent message which it believes is key to reaching out to the right candidates.

A large part of DSO's branding effort is directed at students. Unlike other corporations, DSO's recruitment has to begin much earlier. As the continuous supply of qualified manpower resources is contingent on the academic path chosen by students, DSO invests heavily in school events to promote development sciences and DSO concurrently. On top of it, the objective for holding school events is to identify talents as young as possible. One such investment is a mentorship programme for junior college students in Singapore.

#### *Targeted Talent Pool Building*

As the nature of jobs in DSO is highly specialised and technical, recruitment cannot and should not be confined to as a human resource function. Exploiting its connections with key industry and interest groups, line management is encouraged to network with external groups and assist in talent spotting. With budgets allocated, line managers 'wine and dine' with their key interest groups in an attempt for a more targeted talent pool building.

#### *Leveraging Industrial Attachment Programmes*

DSO has experienced success from their industrial attachment programmes conducted in partnership with tertiary institutions. The industrial attachment programme is a low cost and effective screening method to determine the predictive fit between the person and the job, the work group and the organisation. DSO has good records of participating students returning to and succeeding in the organisation after graduation.

#### *Emphasis on Selecting for 'Fit'*

DSO is aware that good employee selection translates into high retention rates for the organisation. It believes that behavioural-based selection that elicit behaviours, traits and motives beyond skills and knowledge are essential for predicting a candidate's ability to integrate and perform in the organisation.

In addition, DSO will pilot run psychometric tests prior to the final selection of candidates to better ascertain the suitability of the candidates' temperaments and personalities for the job.

### **Moving Forward**

DSO will continue to explore innovative channels to source for the right candidates. For instance, it will collaborate with overseas partners such as overseas outreach groups to attract talents. These groups will assist DSO to build its brand name overseas, target Singaporean students studying abroad and attract them to be a part of DSO.

## Great Eastern Life Assurance

With total assets of \$28.1 billion, Great Eastern is the largest public-listed insurer in Southeast Asia. Great Eastern commands the leadership position in the life industry in both Singapore and Malaysia, with 34% and 25% market share respectively in 2002.

### The Challenge

Despite being a large company with 700 employees in Singapore, Great Eastern used to carry the tag and all the connotations of a 'local' company. To attract talent, the task was to put Great Eastern on parity with other multi national corporations through a top-notch policy in rewarding and developing its people, creating a great work culture and environment and other features, which are often seen as lacking in local companies.

### Strategising Recruitment & Selection

#### *Brand Values*

Great Eastern's corporate branding and identity was recharged in 2001 to reflect a more dynamic Group and its focus on a holistic approach towards financial planning. The focus is in line with Great Eastern's vision to be the choice financial services provider in the region and beyond.

For Great Eastern, employer branding is more than just advertising and mouthing catchy slogans. Great Eastern wants to build a brand that starts from within and permeate throughout the organisation. It is about transforming people's attitude, corporate culture and inspiring employees to take the leap. In short, it is about weaving 'Life is Great' into its people and culture. The company wants to be known as the employer who creates opportunities for its people to develop himself or herself, create something new and make an impact. Great Eastern's People Excellence initiatives impressed the press so much so that publicity is frequently generated.

As a testimonial, Great Eastern's new head office at Great Eastern Centre is a hallmark for its commitment towards enhancing professional training and a long-term educational plan. The new space also symbolises the sovereignty of Great Eastern and serves to foster a sense of pride for people working in the company.

The concerted efforts towards brand building have helped Great Eastern tremendously in recruiting fresh talents. With its new image today, people are excited to become a part of the company.

#### *Develop Human Resource Infrastructure*

Great Eastern sets its sights on transforming Human Resource into a strategic partner. The Human Resource self-service infrastructure is designed to take away the mundane tasks so as to relieve the team's time and resources to perform strategic roles such as selling the company's brand name and developing solutions to manage human capital.

For instance, Great Eastern's iRecruitment, a feature of HR Self-service, is fully automated and enables head of departments, business units and relevant personnel to view the status of recruitment process once they submit a manpower requisition on-line. iRecruitment provides maximum transparency that enables greater staff participation and ownership of recruitment. For example, hiring managers can review resumes, rank candidates, conduct background checks and pursue (or reject) candidates for job vacancies. They can also track candidates' progress throughout the interview process, update candidates' details, present offers to desired candidates and bring in new hires through this transparent platform.

Increased participation and ownership of recruitment activities at the departmental levels means that department heads have vested interests in the new employees' success. This facilitates coaching and mentoring once the candidates are recruited.

### *Personality Profile Analysis with a Twist*

Culture and group norms shape the work process in Great Eastern. When using personality profile analysis, Great Eastern ensures that the criteria for selection is not based solely on personality types that are suitable for the job but also those that will replicate the desired culture and spirit of the organisation. For instance, the recommended personality type for a Human Resource executive may be one with profiles of high 'compliance' and 'dominance', but in Great Eastern where creativity and empowerment is valued, a high 'influence' is also desired.

### **Moving Forward**

To perpetuate Human Resource as a strategic partner, Great Eastern will empower line departments with skills such as effective interview techniques and diagnostic skills in assessing candidates. The increased skills and abilities complemented by the existing HR infrastructure will encourage line departments to adopt an active role in recruitment and selection. Ownership and vested interest in recruitment ensures that hiring managers continue their efforts to induct, orientate and train new hires for subsequent high job performance.

## Unilever

Unilever is one of the world's leading suppliers of fast-moving consumer goods. With a total of 265,000 people worldwide and 90 percent of its managers recruited and trained locally, Unilever is committed to embrace diversity in a working environment where there is mutual trust and respect.

### The Challenge

The challenge for Unilever is nothing less than making it the 'ideal employer'. Unilever must overtake some strong competition and offer the best in terms of careers opportunities, personal development and rewards.

### Strategising Recruitment & Selection

#### *Employer Branding*

Unilever actively promotes its Unilever Employer Brand (UEB). A strong emphasis and positioning in employee personal development and career opportunities gives Unilever an edge in attracting candidates. Evident in its communication, Unilever is dedicated to help employees plan their careers and achieve goals that are important to them. A browse in their official web site will reveal the interest that Unilever takes in helping people plan their careers. "Interactive personal evaluation toolkit" and "My Competencies" are examples of the career tools offered to assist visitors make the right career choice.

#### *Diversity in Hire*

Unilever believes that having a diverse group of people who can adapt and grow in response to changing market conditions is key to meeting its business objective of achieving sustainable growth. When selecting candidates, recruiters and hiring managers carefully consider if the candidates will contribute to the diversity of the existing work groups. There is a tendency not to hire likes. The philosophy is to recruit and select outstanding candidates with qualities that complement the existing work groups.

#### *Competency-Based Selection*

To build an Enterprise Culture and deliver sustainable growth, Unilever engaged the help of external consultants to identify the competencies associated with growth achievement. Integrating key findings from various sources, a 'competency dictionary' that is unique to Unilever in achieving its organisational goal of building an 'Enterprise Culture' is developed. The 'dictionary' provides a framework for growing desired leadership behaviour as well as enables Unilever to select candidates who possess the desired competencies that brings success.

### Moving Forward

The importance of competency-based selection in Unilever has triggered a series of training programmes for Human Resources and line managers to fully equip them with skills and techniques to conduct competency-based assessment methods such as Behavioural Event Interviews (BEI).

Unilever aims to enhance the UEB. Improving communications and making aspirations for its UEB to be clearly understood inside and outside the company are Unilever's key objectives for the near future.

## COMPOSITE ANALYSIS OF SHOWCASE COMPANIES

Features							Benchmarks		
	Recruitment Channels	Selection Instruments	Pre-Employment Checks	Selection Criteria	Impact	Measurement Indicator	Cycle Time	Cost-Per Hire	
Categories of Employees	Majority of case companies recruit predominantly from the following channels	Most commonly used selection instruments	Most commonly found tests for all levels of jobs	Most commonly found selection criteria ranked in degree of importance	The greatest say on the final selection of candidates lies with	Most commonly found measure of effectiveness for Recruitment and Selection	Amount of time on average to recruit to recruit	Cost on average to recruit in the following years	
Managerial	1. Internal sources	1. Situational interview 2. Criterion Based interview	Past employer checks	1. Candidate's Potential 2. Proven Work Experience 3. Candidate's fit with Company's values and ways of doing things	Line Management	1. New Hire Attrition 2. Speed of Hire 3. Performance Appraisal of New Hire 4. Cost of hire	30 - 60 days	Year 2001: - \$830 Year 2002: - \$711	
Professional/ Technical	1. Internal sources 2. Advertising 3. Referral	1. Criterion Based interview 2. Situational interview		1. Ability to perform technical requirements of the job 2. Candidate's potential					
Sales	1. Referrals 2. Job web sites 3. Advertising	1. Situational interview 2. Criterion Based interview		1. Ability to perform technical requirements of the job 2. Proven work experience					
Office/Plant Personnel	1. Advertising 2. Recruitment agencies	1. Panel interview 2. Criterion Based interview 3. Unstructured interview		1. Proven Work experience 2. Ability to perform technical requirements of the job					

Source: Agilent, Citibank N.A., DSO National Laboratories, Great Eastern Life & Unilever.

## CONCLUSION

Key findings of Part I demonstrate that companies with outstanding recruitment and selection practices enjoy higher dollar returns in each successful employee hired. Their new hires are better “fits” in their work groups. They also share values, traits and behaviours that are highly regarded for success in the organisation.

In many cases, recruiting can no longer be confined to the traditional ways. With the war for talents intensifying, employers are broadening their reach of qualified applicants through the use of innovative recruiting channels. Static recruitment no longer suffices in today’s context of cost effectiveness and efficiency.

Rigorous assessment and selection processes are vital to pick the one most suitable for the job. Traditionally, employers have focused on assessment methods that are highly correlated to the content of the job, hence most able to predict ability to perform the required duties and tasks. However, organisations have come to realise that success of the candidate hinges on more than just the ability to carry out tasks and duties well. The cornerstone of superior performance lies in the synergy created by a close fit with the work group and with the organisation’s culture.

No process is complete without an evaluation of its success. To drive growth through hiring excellence, recruiters should start tracking their recruitment processes with metrics. The use of objective evaluation measures can assist recruiters to better allocate their budget to more useful processes.

Best practices from five showcase companies in Part II provides insight on successful recruitment and selection approaches. Summarised findings reveal two predominant practices in recruitment and selection.

First, all companies interviewed accentuated the importance of employer branding in attracting highly suitable candidates. Those falling behind the branding game are diligently playing catch-up while those already enjoying the returns from their strong employer brand grow other areas to enhance recruitment and selection.

Second, most of the showcase companies maximise the use of technology to screen resumes, filter applicants who best meet the preset criteria and build a database of applicants for future use. Technology does most of the initial screening and expedites the hiring process tremendously thus enabling recruiters to approach, interview and offer a position in an instance.

# APPENDIX A

## CODE OF RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

### Introduction

Singapore society is multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious. Employers and employees must appreciate the diversity of the workforce and work together to achieve workplace harmony. Employers should treat all staff fairly and continue to recruit based on skills, merit, experience, capability and relevant job requirements.

This code is jointly issued by the Singapore Business Federation (SBF), Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) and the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC). It helps employers promote and observe responsible employment practices in their workplaces regardless of race, religion, age, gender, marital status, disability or factors that have no relevance to the requirements of the job. The code encourages self-regulation on the part of employers and employees in areas of employment including recruitment, selection, appraisal, job upgrading, posting and training, as well as terms and conditions of employment.

### Guiding Principles

This code is based on the following guiding principles:

- Candidates for employment should be selected on merit, experience, capability and other job requirements.
- For situations of business necessity where race, language, religion and culture are considerations for the job, parties must recognise that selection is based on the special attributes of the candidates who meet the requirements of the job.
- Employers should adopt good human resource practices, including non discriminatory employment practices in order to attract the best talents for the organisations.

### Selection Criteria Applied Consistently

Employers are recommended to apply selection criteria consistently for all aspects of employment, including recruitment, training, appraisal, job upgrading, and posting. Such criteria should be specifically related to the requirements of the job and avoid references that have no relevance to the requirements.

Examples of requirements include:

- Type of experience, such as marketing experience.
- Amount of experience, such as five years in relevant field.
- Educational qualifications, such as diploma in marketing.
- Specific skills such as technical and managerial, such as language or computer skills.
- Personal qualities required for the job, such as willingness to travel.

Criteria and the terms and conditions of employment should be:

- Made known to all employees and job applicants on request.
- Circulated to all employees on a regular basis.

While discrimination is not condoned and selection should be based on requirements of the job, there are situations of business necessity where a person's race, nationality or origin could be a requirement for the job. Such situations of business necessity might include:

- Food & beverage services where race, language or religion is a requirement or qualification for the job.
- Personal services such as welfare, education or similar personal services where the holder of the job provides individuals of a particular race which can most effectively be performed by persons of the same or other particular race.

In such situations of business necessity the employer has to explain to the employee and make it clear that selection is based entirely on job requirements.

#### **Examples of specific requirements for business necessities**

- Language requirements, e.g. companies with business interests in China which are recruiting officers to handle major Chinese clients may require the officers to be conversant in Mandarin. The language requirement should be stated clearly - “Conversant in Mandarin” instead of “Chinese only”.
- Religious sensitivities, e.g. Employees working in a Halal kitchen must be in compliance with the certified requirements of MUIS; Cashiers in a supermarket may be required to handle pork at check-outs.

#### **The Recruitment Process**

All staff handling job applications should be trained to recognize and avoid discriminatory practices. The following paragraphs spell out the key principles at each stage of the recruitment process:

##### **a. Advertising**

The Tripartite Guidelines on Non-Discriminatory Job Advertisement (March 1999) should be adhered to. Selection criteria should be stated clearly in the job advertisement, and should principally be on relevant qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience based on job requirements.

Discrimination at this stage of the recruitment process can be avoided by ensuring that the contents of the advertisement follow selection criteria spelt out earlier at para 3.

Some points to consider include:

- *Religion*  
Religion should not be a criterion on advertisements except in cases where employees have to perform religious functions as part of the job requirements.
- *Age*  
Employers should not state age as a requirement for employment unless the physiological nature or practical requirements of the job task may have a negative effect on the health of the applicant. In such a case, the required physical attributes should be described rather than indicating an age limit.

#### **Example**

Deliveryman - Applicants are required to carry loads of up to 15kg, rather than applicants below 45 years old only.

Employers are discouraged from asking the age and date of birth of the applicant. This may deter older workers from applying for employment or may otherwise indicate possible intent to discriminate based on age.

- *Marital status*  
Marital status should not be a criterion as jobs can be performed either by singles or married persons.
- *Gender*  
If practical requirements of the job need employees of a particular gender, then an objective reason must be specified.

**Example**

Female immigration officer to conduct checks on female persons.

**Examples of acceptable criteria in job advertisements**

(Based on Tripartite Guidelines on Non-Discriminatory Job Advertisements, March 1999)

- Amount of relevant experience i.e. at least 2 years of service in purchasing
- Educational qualification i.e. Secondary/ NTC 3 qualifications
- Relevant skills or knowledge i.e. fluent in English & Chinese, class 3 driving license
- Relevant attributes i.e. highly disciplined, physically strong, good communication skills.
- Other job requirements i.e. able to work on rotating shifts or public holidays

**b. Internal recruitment**

For positions that are filled through internal recruitment (i.e. job upgrading, postings, transfers), employers are encouraged to inform all eligible employees of the opportunities and job requirements.

**c. Vetting applications**

At the pre-interview stage, it is recommended that all applications be processed by applying the selection criteria consistently. It is recommended that application forms avoid questions that may suggest an intention to take account of factors that would, or might, discriminate the applicant on various grounds.

**d. Short-listing**

It is recommended that a shortlist be drawn up on the basis of criteria that provide objective standards for assessing the experience and capability of each applicant.

Employers are encouraged to:

- Guard against making premature assumptions about the abilities of persons of particular race, nationalities, etc.
- Train personnel staff to recognise the danger of such assumptions and to be objective by matching abilities of the applicants to job requirements.

**e. Tests**

If tests are used for selection purpose, it is recommended that they are:

- Specifically related to the job requirements and measure applicants' actual or potential ability to do or be trained for the job.
- Professionally designed whenever possible.
- Reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain relevant and free from bias in content or scoring.

**f. Interviewing**

During interviews, it is recommended that:

- All staff involved in the interview process be trained to recognise and avoid questions that can be perceived as discriminatory.
- Questions asked at job interviews relate only to the requirements of the job.

- Where it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect performance of the job, interviewers should discuss this objectively without questions that may suggest that the candidates' background or circumstances may influence the outcome of the interview.
- Interviewers are encouraged to record the assessment they have formed of the applicant's ability to meet the selection criteria. This will help to ensure that the applicants have been fairly assessed.

After the interviews, employers should select candidates strictly on the basis of suitability. The unsuccessful candidates should be informed.

### **Recruitment through Employment Agencies or Employment Services**

Should employment agencies or employment services be used for recruitment, employers are encouraged to advise agencies to follow the recommendations in this code. In particular, they should state clearly that vacancies are opened to all.

### **Appraisal, Job Upgrading, Posting and Training**

In areas of appraisal, job upgrading, posting and training, employers are strongly encouraged to do the following:

- Where an appraisal system exists, employers examine the assessment criteria to ensure that employees are assessed and promoted on merit and performance and that the criteria adopted are consistently applied and non-discriminatory. It is a good practice to establish measurable standards for evaluating job performance.
- Where opportunities for job upgrading, training, or posting arise, employers inform all eligible employees of the conditions and procedures for application.
- Employers review rules that restrict or preclude posting between certain jobs and change them if they are found to be discriminatory.
- Employers examine policies and practices on selection for training, and other opportunities for personal development with a view to ensuring that they are not discriminatory.

### **Employers' Role**

Companies are strongly encouraged to

- Make a commitment to apply the code.
- Publicise the policy and educate both management and employees, so that they understand their roles and appreciate the sensitivities and issues.
- Set up proper mechanisms to deal with complaints of discrimination.
- Take steps to ensure that the code of practice is followed closely.

### **Employees' Role**

Employees can also help to eliminate discrimination. They can:

- Familiarise themselves with the code of practice.
- Contribute positively to the development of workplace culture free from discrimination.
- Exercise vigilance and tolerance at the workplace to ensure communication and practices do not disrupt workplace harmony.
- Seek to resolve grievances arising from discrimination at work through dialogue, discussion and proper mechanisms.

### **Conclusion**

Both employers and employees have responsibilities in minimising and eliminating discrimination in the workplace. Employers who need assistance in applying the code can seek advice from the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) or Singapore Business Federation (SBF). Unionised employees can seek advice from their unions in situations where they feel they have been discriminated.

## APPENDIX B

### TRIPARTITE GUIDELINES ON NON-DISCRIMINATORY JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

#### Introduction

Candidates for jobs should be selected based on merit, experience, capability and other relevant job requirements. This is in line with the principle of meritocracy in Singapore.

The Singapore Constitution states that all persons are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection under the law. In line with the principle of equality and good employment practices, employers should not select candidates on grounds of race, religion, descent or age, which are of no relevance to a job. Towards this objective, the Ministry of Manpower, together with the National Trades Union Congress and the Singapore National Employers Federation, has formulated a set of tripartite guidelines to serve as a reference for employers in the selection of candidates.

To help enhance Singapore's international competitiveness, Singapore employers have to hire the best and most suitable candidates for the job. They cannot afford to deprive themselves of talents by selecting candidates of a particular race, religion, age or gender. As Singapore moves into the new economy, it is increasingly important to adopt good human resource practices especially non-discriminatory employment practices. We note that only a small minority of employers have adopted discriminatory criteria in recruitment practices and would like to encourage them to make use of these tripartite guidelines so that they can select the best candidate for the job, based on their job requirements.

#### Criteria which should NOT be in Job Advertisements:

##### *Age*

Employers should avoid stipulating age as a requirement for employment. However, if a younger person is required to carry out physically-demanding work such as fire fighting, the required physical attributes or other job-related criteria should be clearly described rather than indicating an age limit.

Unacceptable examples:

- Candidates below 35 wanted for clerical or executive positions
- Candidates below 35 preferred

Instead:

- Physical work required. Applicants will be shortlisted only after passing physical fitness test.
- Selected candidates required to handle heavy equipment

##### *Gender*

Where practical requirements of the job dictate the need for employees of a particular sex, this must be supported by acceptable rationale.

Unacceptable examples:

- Female sales executive wanted
- Male dispatch driver wanted

Instead:

- Selected candidates required to handle heavy equipment
- Women's Fashion Boutique requires salesgirl to model clothes while on the job

##### *Marital Status*

Marital status is an irrelevant criterion in employment, as jobs can be performed equally well by either married or single persons.

***Race***

Race should not be a criterion for the selection of job candidates as multiracialism is a fundamental principle in Singapore and selection based on race is unacceptable. Employment advertisements which include statements like “Chinese preferred” and “Malays preferred” are therefore unacceptable.

***Religion***

Religion is unacceptable as a criterion for recruitment EXCEPT in cases where employees have to perform religious functions as part of the job requirement. In such cases, the requirements should be clearly and objectively presented.

**Acceptable Criteria*****Educational Qualifications***

Examples

- Secondary/NTC 3 Qualifications
- Diploma/GCE A Levels required
- Degree in Computer Science required

***Relevant Skills or Knowledge***

Examples

- Fluent in English and Chinese
- Ability to service and repair production machinery
- Must be computer literate
- Class 3 and 4 driving license
- Ability to drive forklift
- Knowledge of Microsoft Office

***Relevant Attributes***

Examples

- Highly disciplined and self-motivated
- Outgoing and pleasant personality
- Mature, independent and resourceful
- Good communication skills
- Physically strong

***Relevant Experience***

Examples

- At least two years secretarial experience working with senior management
- Experience with metal stamping machines

***Other job requirements***

Examples

- Able to work on rotating shifts and public holidays

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## FEEDBACK FORM

### Case: Recruitment and Selection

We value your feedback. Please take some time to fill in this feedback form & fax it back to us.

1. How useful is this case study in providing you with some suggested approaches to deal with the HR issues / problems faced by your company?

Very useful     Useful     Moderately useful     Not useful

2. How do you rate the presentation and user-friendliness of this case study?

Very good     Good     Neutral     Poor

3. Would you consider implementing at least one of the strategies / approaches highlighted in the case study?

Yes     No

Other comments:

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### My Particulars:

Name: (Mr / Mrs / Mdm / Ms / Dr) \_\_\_\_\_ Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel No: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



## Recruitment and Selection

A case study commissioned by the Ministry of Manpower

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