1243.3424.02 – Human Resource Management & Employee Relations

Semester B – 2014

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SYLLABUS

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
This course is designed as an introduction to human resource managers for general managers. The intent of the course is not to provide technical skills in human resource management, but rather to provide a strategic framework for understanding human resource management, particularly as it applies to the high technology firm.

COURSE CONTENT AND SCOPE:
The course seeks to present human resource management as a strategic issue no less significant than the management of any other organizational strategic asset. Day-to-day human resource quandaries are discussed in the context of mainstream economic, psychological and sociological theory. By the end of the course, students should have a good understanding of the contingencies that need to be considered in the design of human resource systems that are congruent with and supportive of particular business strategies.

READINGS for Meetings 1-14:
Most readings come from:
AND

Meetings 1- 3: Human Resource Strategy
Compulsory Readings:
1. B&M Chaps. 1 and 7
4. JetBlue Airways: Starting From Scratch” HBS 9-801-354

PLEASE READ JETBLUE BEFORE THE SECOND CLASS MEETING AS MOST OF THIS SESSION WILL BE DEDICATED TO IT!
Meetings 4&5: The Employment Relationship

Compulsory Readings:
1. B&M Chap. 3
2. United Parcel Service” HBS 9-488-016

Recommended Readings:

Meetings 6 - 8: People-Flow Subsystem

Compulsory Readings:
1. Kulik - Chapters 3-5 (pages 29-82)
7. Bitstream” HBS 5-898-255

Recommended readings:


Meetings 9 & 10: Performance Evaluation & Management

Compulsory Readings:
1. Kulik - Chapter 6
4. “Merck & Co., Inc. - A” HBS 9-491-005

Recommended readings:

Meetings 11 & 12: Compensation

Compulsory Readings:
1. B&M Chap. 5 (Required)

Recommended reading:

**Meeting 13: Pay for Performance**
Compulsory Reading:

**Meeting 14: Employee Relations**
Compulsory Readings:
1. B&M Chap. 6
3. “Sprint-La Conexion Familiar A” HBS 97C001

Recommended readings:
STUDENT ASSESSMENT:

Course Assignments:

Part (1): Individual Case reports (20% of final grade)
Each student will be assigned one case study to analyze in detail, with the grade based on the quality of the responses to the case-specific questions. Worth a maximum of 20 points. **Case reports must be submitted before discussion in class.** Each case analysis should be no longer than 6 pages in length (double spaced, 12 point, Times-New Roman). **Questions to address in specific case reports are given below.**

Part (3): Final Project (80% of final grade)
These are to be done **IN TEAMS of 2-4 students.** You should view this project as an exercise in consulting. As such, your consultant report should be **no longer than 15 pages long** (double spaced, 12 point, Times-New Roman type, 1 inch margins on top, bottom and sides). Moreover, you should defend each of your interpretations and suggestions by citing the relevant research literature (as cited in the text). Papers that fail to back critical statements on the basis of the research literature will be penalized up to 20 points. **The final project is due on the last day of the semester. For each week delay, 5 points will be deducted from the project grade.**

The project requires that you do the following:

- Describe each of the following HR subsystems in the organization in which you work using the model in the text as a guide:
  - People Flow Subsystem (staffing)
  - Performance Management Subsystem
  - Reward Subsystem (compensation)
  - Employee Relations Subsystem
- Assess the degree to which these three subsystems are internally aligned.
- Present a brief synopsis of the business strategy of your firm and the nature of the HR-relevant business environment within which it operates currently and is likely to operate in the future. Then assess the degree to which these three subsystems are and will remain externally consistent.
- Given your assessment of the internal and external fit of the HR subsystems, what changes would your recommend that your organization consider regarding its HR strategy?

Case report questions to address:

JetBlue Airlines
1. What are the key success factors for JetBlue to survive and continue to grow, and what will it take to execute on these factors?
2. This case was written at the beginning of 2001. With 9/11, all airlines experienced a drastic cut in passenger traffic. 9/11 occurred just after JetBlue hired some 1000 new employees. What should JetBlue do in order to handle this cut in projected demand?
3. With a growing organization came two problems: (a) Passenger complaints about poor/inconsistent service, (b) employee interest in being represented by a union. How should JetBlue respond to these challenges? (Hint: See any of the three readings in the Required Reading for Meetings 1-3).

United Parcel Service
1. Describe UPS’s traditional approach to staffing and personnel advancement. Is this approach still appropriate given the change in UPS’s external environment?
2. Describe UPS’s traditional approach to controlling the way in which its employees do their job. Is this approach still appropriate given the change in UPS’s external environment?
3. Who are the major stakeholder groups in this case? What are their key concerns regarding a shift in the nature of the employment relationship?
4. Suppose that UPS decides to grow on the basis of an acquisition – what steps would you recommend UPS implement and at what stage of the acquisition process to ensure the success of such a move from an HR perspective."

Bitstream
1. Jim sole can either hire the head of the new network print manager project from within Bitstream, or go to the external labor market. What are the tradeoffs (i.e., advantages/disadvantages) of these two alternative recruitment sources (internal vs. external labor market)? (HINT: See Fernandez-Araoz et al.’s article in Required Reading).
2. Based on the details provided in the case, develop a job description for this new position and specify the job requirements.
3. How should Sole select from among the four remaining candidates? Present at least three selection mechanisms that might be used (e.g., interview, resume, references, simulation) and for each, specify strengths and weaknesses. If you chose interview as one of your mechanisms, be sure to indicate: (a) what type of interview you would use, (b) who you would ask to do the interviewing, and (c) what questions you would ask (and why). (HINT: See Menkes’ article in Required Reading).

Merck A
1. Who is covered by Merck’s Performance Appraisal System?
2. What are the major problems with Merck’s Performance Appraisal System? Are these problems evident from Exhibit A2? Why or why not?
3. What is a compa-ratio, and how might performance scores influence an employee’s compa-ratio? How might turnover be affected by having a large number of employees reaching a compa-ratio of 125% during a slow or no growth period? During a period of downsizing?
4. To what degree is pay (or change in pay) related to performance under the existing system? What would you recommend doing to strengthen the
relationship? (HINT: See (1) DeNisi, & Sonesh and (2) DeNisi & Kluger articles in Required Reading).

Camp Dresser & McKee
1. In what ways does the BIPS system fit with and contribute to CDM’s human resource strategy? In what way does the BIPS process provide a response to the firm’s current business environment?
2. What are some of the problems that you can identify with the CDM’s approach for pay for performance for titled employees? (HINT: See Gerhart, Rynes, & Fulmer article in Required Reading for Meeting 13).
3. What, if anything, may be done to solve the problems with the BIPS process noted on pp. 7-9 of the case? (HINT: See the article by Beer et al. in Required Reading).

Sprint – La Conexion Familiar
1. What dilemmas must Sprint confront in having to respond to the union’s attempt to organize its workers?
2. What would you recommend to Sprint’s management to do? What are the likely implications of your recommendation with regard to Sprint’s ability to remain competitive in the long-distance market? How is your recommendation superior to Sprint’s other alternatives?
3. How should Sprint respond to Art Henderlon’s interest in putting more effort into organizing a union than in making sales calls (his job)?
4. While Sprint is opposed to unionization, other companies that we have discussed (e.g., UPS, Southwest) have invited the union in. Why would management invite a union in and would that strategy work at Sprint? (See article by Doucouliagos, & LaRoche in Required Reading for Meeting 14).