CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF ATTRACTING AND RETAINING TOP TALENT IN THE INSURANCE SECTOR

Dr. Ben Kajwang PhD.

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Dr. Ben Kajwang PhD, ACII(UK), AIRM(UK), FIIU, FIIK, CPT, Chartered Insurer
Chief Executive Officer, College of Insurance, Nairobi, Kenya
Corresponding Author Email: bkajwang@coi.ac.ke

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The insurance industry encompasses being able to provide superior service while selling products, which means employees should have the skills and abilities to interact professionally with people. Finding this combination in potential employees can be difficult. The goal of this study was   identify and discuss the critical elements of attracting and retaining top talent in the insurance sector. The purpose of this work is to enhance the readers' understanding of the domain of talent attraction and talent retention, and how the former culminates in the latter, specifically as a tool for retention of employees.

Methodology: A desktop literature review was used for this purpose. Relevant seminal references and journal articles for the study were identified using Google Scholar. The inclusion criteria entailed papers that were not over five years old.

Findings: It was found that researchers have advocated for the use of the new technologies in the recruitment process and training programmes in generally all organizations. It is therefore necessary that HR leaders equip their HR practices (recruitment process, training and mentoring programmes and company culture) with the modern technologies that will help them reduce the recruitment and training cost, save time and keep the company's image at the top.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: The study recommends that insurance firms Review their company's job description at least every two years is necessary to boost the company's image and attract top talent employees. The firms should also use of recruitment softwares that catch the eye of promising candidates is necessary so as to make the hiring process more convenient and efficient for both the HR leaders and promising candidates.

Keywords: *Critical Elements, Attracting and Retaining, Top Talent, Insurance Sector*

INTRODUCTION

Today's organizations seem to change much more rapidly than in the past because of increased competition and the ever-changing business environment. This explains why organizations require attracting and retaining top talent in order to improve their performance and remain competitive. Employers face extreme obstacles related to managing talented employees because of the shortage of critical skills and potential employees' reluctance to affiliate themselves with particular employers (Selivanovskikh, 2018). A study by Muia (2017) indicated that found that over 60% of insurance executives in Kenya stated that identifying and attracting new talent is becoming increasingly difficult. The Kenyan insurance industry is affected by employee turnover, which results in the loss of profit and productivity for the business. The specific business problem is that some insurance managers lack strategies to retain talented employees (Martin, 2016). The problem of having non-professional employees in the insurance sector has led to the resulted to low employee productivity and subsequent customer dissatisfaction (Nzyoka & Orwa, 2016). It is therefore important that HR professionals in the insurance company adopt efficient strategies that will attract top talent employees and retain them in their organizations.

Talent management is the HR practice that addresses competition for highly skilled, high value labor in global markets (Nginyo, 2019). Talent management encompasses all organizational activities with the intention of attracting, selecting, developing, and retaining the best employees in strategic roles (Johannsdottir, Olafsson & Davidsdottir, 2017). Human resource managers must reposition the HR function to inform and support decision-making by organizational leaders.

According to Nakhata (2018), a well detailed job description is one of the key strategies of talent management. Potential and well skilled employees look out for job descriptions of the various job posting before they consider applying for the job. As organizations transform and grow through the modern technology, job descriptions can become outdated. Departmental structures may be improved and updated and the various employment roles change hence the need to oftenly review the job description of the various positions in an organization. Schlechter, Hung and Bussin (2018) studied the effect of job description review on talent attraction in Nigerian auditing firms and found that companies that review their job descriptions at least every two years are able to attract top talents into their work place.

Some of the key details that need to be included when coming up with a job description include job title and location, clear duties and responsibilities, specific skills required, reporting lines, tools and equipment used and actual salaries and benefits. HR professionals who miss out on this may end up with a pool of unqualified candidates since the potential talents look elsewhere for better opportunities. It's therefore necessary for HR professionals in the insurance sector to apply these key details in their job descriptions. This will transform the dull job postings into dream job promotions and attract qualified and skilled employees in their organizations (Dordan, 2017).

Banerjee and Gupta (2019) asserted that talent attraction through online recruitment websites showed that investment in job description softwares that consistently update the job descriptions maximize the efficiency and success of the hiring process. One of the biggest category of recruitment software is the Applicant Tracking System (ATS). An ATS is basically focused on

tracking and managing candidates within an organized database. According to Barber (2019), 94% of recruiting professionals who use ATS have an effective hiring process and assists in the battle of recruiting long-term talent. The most common ATS systems that employers migrated to in 2020 are SAP, SuccessFactors, Workday, ICIMS and Taleo which have had a positive effect on talent attraction (Dineen and Soltis, 2020).. Research has also shown that use of Job Aggregators such as Indeed, LinkedIn, Google for jobs and ZipRecruiter play a central part in the talent attraction since direct applicants make up 48% of all hires (Anderson, 2016, Van Esch, Black & Ferolie, 2019). Similarly, a meta-analysis by Mohamud (2020) on the influence of online recruitment on talent attraction found that that use of Human Capital Management Software (HCM) such as Ceridian, SAP, SuccessFactors, Workday, Oracle Cloud HCM and ADP provides core administrative support and attraction of top talented personell.

Moreover, study by Tnande (2017) showed that Candidate Relationship Management Softwares (CRMs) such as Yello, Beamery and Avature assist in attracting, engaging and nurturing candidates. Talent Intelligence Systems such as Ideal also helps HR leaders in making of fair talent decisions by providing support with resume screening, employment lifecycle and increased productivity. A study by Ahmed and Chang (2019) also showed that Video Interviewing tools such as HireVue, VidCruiter and Interview Stream simplify the online interview process.

Delayed recruitment process is one of the factors that contribute to promising candidates looking for opportunities elsewhere. It also leads to top talents slipping away to the hands of competitors. According to a survey by Half (2018), potential job candidates may opt for another offer after waiting too long about a preferred role. Most HRs have preferred to use recruitment softwares such as ATS to hasten the hiring process, this is through automatically ranking applicants based on a set of predetermined criteria (Chan and Wang, 2018).

Feedback is also a crucial part of the talent attraction process. A high percentage of job seekers have reported being ghosted after applying for certain jobs. According to the CareerArc survey (2017), 72% of job seekers who have had a bad candidate experience have told others about it either in person or online. Other job seekers have given poor online reviews about some companies and this has affected the customers buying decision of such companies. To alleviate such problems, companies have opted to use Candidate Relationship Management softwares and the ATS software that help them attract, engage and nurture candidates during the recruitment process.

According to Cai and Klyushina (2019), promising candidates in the today competitive recruitment process look out for organizations where employers have attached innovative benefits for the employees as well as creating favorable workplace relationships. Such innovative benefits according to include; favorable healthcare options, fair remuneration, convenient retirement benefits, personal development programs, child and day care support, maternity and pertanity leaves and recreation and social interaction activities.

Falola (2016) found that employees in an organization can only be retained as long-term investment if the company has a strong and positive culture which mainly relies on leadership, effective communication and premier benefits. Employees need a work environment where they can freely express their opinions and have employers that are willing to listen to them. Such a work environment will enable employees to work as team hence promote cooperation and making of better decisions in the company. Hence HR leaders should focus on gathering

employees' feedback to ensure that the working environment reinforces a strong and positive company culture.

Neupane (2017) studied the influence of training, coaching and mentoring programmes on talent retention in UK insurance sector and found that it enhances skills, capabilities and knowledge of employees for a particular job. The training process is usually continuous throughout the lifetime of the business. Training in the insurance sector involves everything from the product sold, customer relations and understanding the regulations set by external bodies and how they change or when updated. It is necessary that employees in such a sector have full- knowledge about their organizations in order to meet the industry's changing needs and remain efficient in the competitive market. In the insurance company the most modern approach of training is eLearning since it offers relevant and up to date information and will help the employees meet the industry's changing needs and remain efficient.

A literature review study by Nguyan (2020) showed that every employee in any working environment that is happy and feels valued will be motivated to work hard, deliver results and bring in new ideas to help grow the business. Employee engagement model is a blueprint which helps us understand how employees can be made productive, feel empowered and valued in the workplace. It involves making and implementing of policies that are aimed at generally improving the quality of life of an employee at work from their well-being to career opportunities (Anitha, 2019). Application of these models may help companies develop their own systems aiming at improving the work environment, maximizing employees experience, ensuring job satisfaction and eventually retaining top talents. These models include:

Maslow's model

Maslow's model outlines the Maslow's hierarchy needs which has had a significant influence on most business courses in the management of the employees needs. Abraham Maslow in his paper "A Theory of Human Motivation" identifies five basic needs that when employers attempt to fulfil will motivate their employees. (Maslow, 2000). These needs include, physiological needs, safety, sense of belonging, esteem and self- actualization. According to this theory, these needs have to be satisfied for an employee to be motivated to perform at his/her best. Physiological needs which are basically the biological needs(food, shelter and clothing) for human survival are the primary needs that need to first be satisfied then the rest of the needs come later. Safety needs like security at work and home can be provided by the company and society. Employees need to feel a sense of belonging through acceptance, friendship and trust at the workplace. Esteem need is meet through the desire of reputation and respect in the workplace. Lastly, self –actualization involves displaying of full potential by employees, self fulfilment and personal growth. It is therefore important that insurance sector aim to satisfy these needs according to their order of importance leaving out none of them in order to retain top talent employees.

The Kahn Model

The Kahn model by William Kahn (1996) is considered one of the oldest models on employee engagement. It emphasizes on three psychological conditions that are associated with personal engagement and disengagement of work. These conditions are meaningfulness, safety and availability. Meaningfulness in that they feel valued about their work by both themselves and others, emotionally and psychologically available to perform the work and good relationship between employees, co-workers and supervisors (Kahn, 2013).) According to Kahn engagement

concept, employees illustrate engagement by making choices of how much of their personality they would reveal and express at their work. The disengagement concept is when employees are doing just enough to remain employed and not offering the emotional and physiological energy to the job.

The AON- Hewitt model

This model examines individual engagement as well as organizational records. Individual engagement is the emotional and intellectual involvement that motivates employees to do their best work and behavior of engaged employees to demonstrate positive outcomes in the business like customer satisfaction and increased sales. According to the model, there are six engagement drivers and three outcomes attached to these drivers that lead to individual engagement in an organization. These drivers include quality of life, work, people, opportunities, company practice and rewards which influence talent retention (Gustomo, 2015).

CONCLUSIONS

Attracting and retaining of top talents in the insurance sector is a big challenge due to small size staff and failure to use efficient recruitment software that help HR leaders identify and retain top talent employees. It is evident from this review that researchers have advocated for the use of the new technologies in the recruitment process and training programmes in generally all organizations. It is therefore necessary that HR leaders equip their HR practices (recruitment process, training and mentoring programmes and company culture) with the modern technologies that will help them reduce the recruitment and training cost, save time and keep the company's image at the top.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, the HR managers in insurance firms should: Review their company's job description at least every two years is necessary to boost the company's image and attract top talent employees. Use of recruitment softwares that catch the eye of promising candidates is necessary so as to make the hiring process more convenient and efficient for both the HR leaders and promising candidates. Appreciate, motivate and recognize their employees oftenly and consistently. Conduct surveys to measure the level of satisfaction of the employees in the organizations and identify the areas that need improvement in order to enhance employee engagement. Use the most modern training approaches available since they save time, reduce the training cost and equip employees with relevant and up to date information that they need to meet the industry's changing needs. Enhance equality and fairness in the working environment which will enable employees have a sense of belonging, feel valued, appreciated and recognized at work.

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