

GUIDELINES IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this communication is to address the management of human resources in the organizations. The aim is to discuss a range of issues that are likely to be applied in the management of human resources, such as competence management, organizational development, and administrative management. Reference is also made to some support tools for decision making as well as the coaching process in the management of human resources.

The methodology used is based on a personal reflection upon two decades of professional experience in the management of organizations and human resources and on the bibliographic review on this subject.

We highlight the following main conclusions: (1) the integration of human resources management in the organizational strategy optimizes the entire process of organizational development, contributing to excellence; in this sense we emphasize the importance of the human resources management be in line with the top administration; (2) the human resource management implies recognizing people as a resource (in its more technical and economicist way) but also recognize people as individuals (a human being) with their values, beliefs, identities, attitudes and behaviours; (3) despite these evidences, a larger number of organizations continue to focus their practice in the management of people as a mere resource, being important to investigate and discuss the reasons that underlie this misconception.

KEYWORDS

Organisations; Organizational Development; Human Resources Management; Competence Management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays organizations are designed as open systems that interact profoundly with the sociocultural, economic and political context that surround them (Sousa, 1990), (Friedberg, 1995), (Hall, 1997), (Chiavenato, 2008). These organizations have the need to assure excellence in the more and more global, competitive and diversified markets. All associates must know the mission and values of the organization.

Human resources are generally considered as one of the main factors determining the competitiveness of organizations (Caetano, 2008; Chiavenato, 2008; Wartzman, 2010). Drucker stresses even more this idea saying "people are the only sustainable competitive advantage" (Camara, Guerra & Rodrigues, 2007).

All the organizations have as main objective to reach the excellence. According to Pink (2010), we should think by reference to a "Conceptual Age". The "Information Age", that still prevails, is no longer sufficient for organizations to be distinguished in the markets, as he says, "the future belongs to a very different kind of person with a different kind of intelligence: it belongs to who is able to be creative, to be empathetic, to recognize patterns or generate meaning ... " (Pink, 2010). The author also think that both (conceptual and information) are necessary, but believes that the "Conceptual Age" will be critical to the success of organizations.

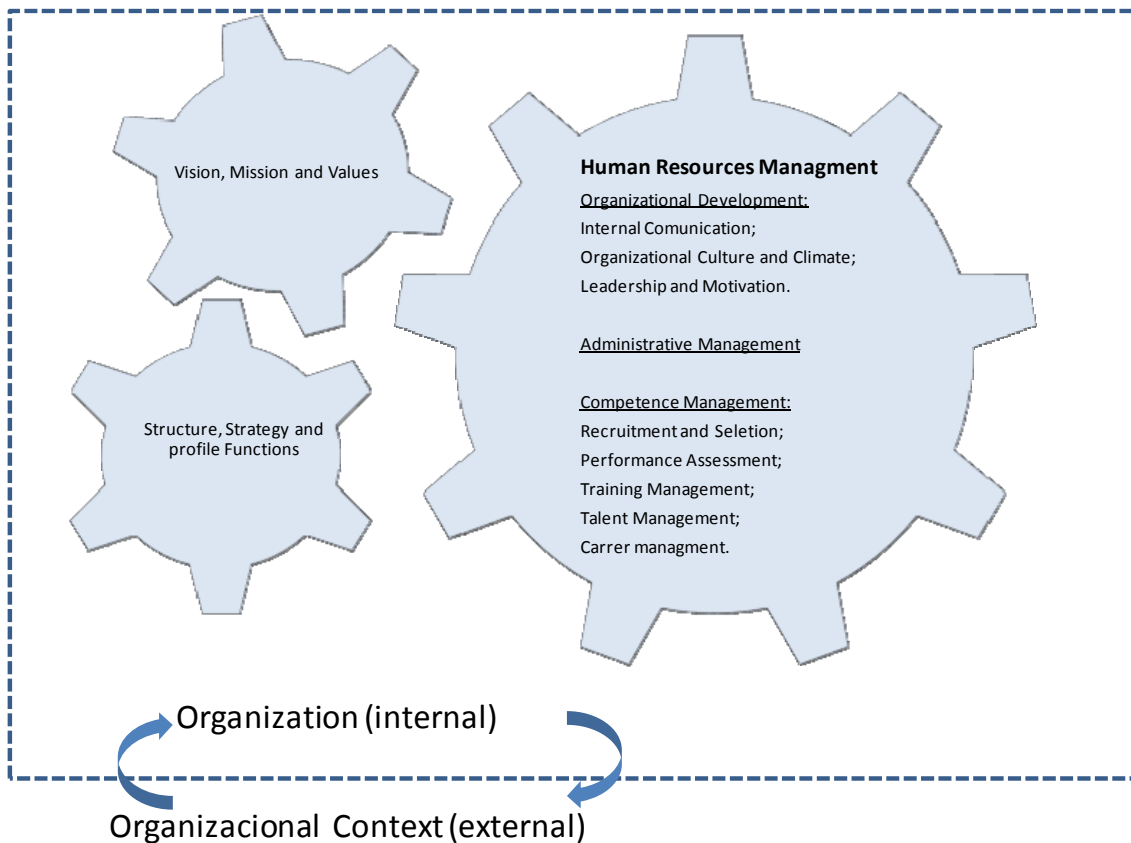
In this sense it is necessary to look to the future, in which people should have greater challenges, where it is necessary something more than the domain of technology and information to achieve organizational excellence and personal/social welfare. Each leader, therefore, faces new challenges that force him to think strategically about the development of human resources, creating committed and motivated teams, to have a proper work environment that is "desirable" by all those who are part of the organization. The leader must "support and participate in the management of people, in partnership with line managers, in order to achieve the desired results." (Camara, Guerra & Rodrigues, 2007).

The purpose of this paper is to emphasize the importance of human resources management (HRM) in organizations, namely: (1) to introduce and discuss the operational means of HRM, particularly: the organizational development (OD), the administrative management (AM) and the competences management (CM); (2) to present a set of complementary tools that support the activities of HRM; and (3) to bring forward and discuss the importance of *coaching* in HRM.

As regards to the methodology, it is assigned to the HRM a central role in the conception of the organizations, arguing that is from it that the existing relationships with the rest of the sectors should be established. Specifically, this communication is mainly a result of the reflection on our personal experience in the organizations and in the review of the literature on the subject, which is considered to be essential to supplement and clarify ideas.

2. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS

The HRM is an area to provide internal services that is subdivided in the categories: OD, AM, CM (Picture 1). The first one is in charge of internal communication, organizational climate and the development of leadership skills; the second one is concerned with the bureaucratic issues; the third one supports the recruitment and selection, the performance assessment, the training management, the talents management and career management.



Picture 1 – Human Resources Management in Organizations

As first and guiding idea it should be noted that the transparency of processes is a mandatory condition in people management.

The human resources manager should first develop its direct associates, so that the HR team can better serve other departments of the organization. The HR department should not be considered as a controlling position, but instead it should be seen as a partnership and internal provider. The main intervention of the human resources manager is to be “the one that makes the OD process easier and to be the active agent in the management of change” (Camara, Guerra & Rodrigues, 2007).

It's also important to understand that the leaders of each department (finance, technology, commercial, product development, etc.) should have the role of human resources manager. In the recruitment and selection of staff, who knows better evaluate the skills required for a particular function? In the development phase of the associates, after integration, who is close to associate? In the assessment process, who has knowledge of the characteristics, behavior, evolution and performance of the associate? Concerning the competences that need to be improved / developed respecting the role of each team element, who is more aware of those needs? Expecting that only the members of HRM department take part in the process of taking decisions (that are implicit in the previously questions), without the contribution of the ones in charge of other departments, makes no sense. However, frequently those responsible, by ignorance or unconcern, do not contribute with HRM, compromising the policy of excellence of the organization.

2.1 - ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The basic idea of the OD is to develop a spirit of change and organizational flexibility and the involvement of the associates in this process. Knowing what motivates associates and their influence on the organization can be used to create strategies that both parties (associates and organization) gain (win-win), leading to the organization toward excellence. We should focus on three areas of OD: internal communication, organizational culture and climate and leadership and motivation.

2.1.1 – Internal Communication

In any human activity communication is essential. Organizations are systems of human activity (independently of the theoretical prism of analysis) and therefore its internal communication is indispensable for the organizational integration (interrelation level between different departments of the organization). The integration is crucial for the organization to keep its operability and be proactive with the external context. Within an organization it is always possible to find two forms of communication: the formal one, contained in the regulations, protocols, direct orders, etc.; and the informal one, which appears in the interactions between the associates and that may be, or not, directly related with the organization of work.

Nowadays the potential of the communication is huge, there are numerous and diverse communication means that are available and susceptible to be used in internal communication. It's important to ensure that the communication process is optimized to contribute to the excellence of the organizations. It's crucial that the message always reaches the different departments of the organization quickly and that the message is received and correctly interpreted.

2.1.2 – Culture and organizational climate

The idea of organizational culture emerges, more recently (eighties), as a metaphor that complements the traditional view of the organization as a machine or as an organism (Gomes, 1944). The same author reinforces the idea that culture is not supra nor infrastructural, but an intrinsic element of the structure that refers to the soft side (i.e. the intangible and/or the informal), without however deny or to oppose to the hard side (i.e. the bureaucracy). The functions of culture in the organizations are: to mobilize energies and focus them on the important goals; to direct behaviors to organizational norms and rules; to promote loyalty and the interest of associates to increase internal cohesion; to raise integration and adaptation levels to the external context (manage the change).

Organizational climate comprises the psychological atmosphere inside an organization. It is crucial to keep a good organizational environment between all the associates (also including the *blue collar workers*), through meetings for reflection, through regular dialogue between departments. This task should be coordinated by the HRM department together with the top of the hierarchy in order to promote effectively the organizational dynamic. All these activities must be part of the objectives of each department, so it can be monitored and accepted as part of the organization strategy. As complementary actions for a healthy organizational climate we have: to implement a good system for conflict management; to promote leisure activities and the celebration of organization day, and in a wide way, to implement a good system of rewards that promote well-being (canteens, medical cares, support for children of associates, etc.).

2.1.3 Leadership and motivation

Regarding the leadership issue, there are a wide number of theories and models available in scientific and technical literature (Neves, 2000), in which it is clear the tendency to distinguish two focus: personal features and behaviors (Jago, 1982, quoted by Neves, 2001). Because of its actuality and versatility, we point out the situational leadership model developed by Ken Blanchard and its

team, profoundly discussed in his book “A superior level of leadership”, first edited in 2007. According to this model (Blanchard, et al., 2010) leader’s behavior can be subdivided in two dimensions the *task behavior* and *relationship behavior*. They categorized all leaderships styles into four behavior types according to a growing autonomy variation given to the associate (telling, selling, participating, delegating) fitted to the characteristics and to the maturity levels of associate (more or less qualified for the task/position) and in conformity with the complexity and/or the level of innovation of the task itself. As we comprehend, the less skilled associate or tasks most complex require special attention from the leader.

In regard to the foregoing, the organization must have programs for the leader’s development such as: evaluations by the associates and self-evaluation to verify the existence, or not, of deviation between leader perspective and the one of its team. Transition workshops are also useful when leaders are replaced, because they contribute to a more pleasant and faster adaptation to the process of change, as regards the mutual knowledge and clarification of expectations. Conscientious action, along with planning, will help to build a favorable climate, with less structural and behavioral disorders. That is, the change processes should not be left at random but shall be planned. It’s HR responsibility to introduce these programs, not forgetting that leaders must be involved and committed to these activities.

Concerning the motivation issue, it is a complex process, induced by an internal or external stimulus, which leads the individual to adopt a certain behavior or conduct with a purpose. All human behavior is motivated, i.e. does not occur randomly or by accident, it can be induced unconsciously. Motivation from an organizational perspective comprises the predisposition of associates to direct their efforts in a way of optimizing organizational goals and, at the same time, their own ones.

We can find in literature several theories and concepts about motivation. We point out three of them, because they are all-embracing: 1) the theory of necessity, from Maslow, where appear, from the basis to the top, the physiological needs, the safety ones, the social ones, and also the need for self-esteem and personal fulfillment; 2) the theory of motivational and hygienic factors, from Herzberg, in which only the motivational factors intrinsic to the individual, are related to the needs that we found in the top of Maslow pyramid, while the hygienic ones are extrinsic to the individual, as his work conditions, leader performance, etc; 3) the theory of equity from Adams, that has a social-cognitive inspiration that reveals how important it is for individuals to check their satisfaction level (regarding the reward) and the intensity of their engagement in relation with the satisfaction and motivation of the others. We think that all these theories offer valuable and references for the effort of associates motivation. They clarify the misconception of classic theories of work organization (Carvalho Ferreira, Neves, & Caetano, 2001) and, simultaneously, alert to the importance of the topics talent management and careers management, discussed later in this paper.

Given what have been exposed, we verify once more that there is a strong tie between leadership and motivation. So, leadership as an extrinsic factor (from Herzberg’s theory) is a very important item in associates’ motivation, which reinforces our confidence in the virtues of Blanchard’s situational model. However, separately, leadership is not enough; there are other individual intrinsic factors equally important, in which *coaching* can play an important role.

2.2 – ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT

Unlike the organizational development already approached and competence management that we will approach next, human resources managing doesn’t have strategic nature. The activities of administrative management are essentially bureaucratic. They are inevitable, and to neglect them can compromise the organizational performance, however, they can’t guarantee by themselves, a desirable organizational excellence. As part of these activities, we have: salary processing, to manage absenteeism, to control laboring times, to make and to cease contracts, to fulfill legal formalities. So, if HRM was confined to these tasks, it would not be necessary the existence of a separate

department, because these obligations could be easily performed by the accountant department or an outsourcing company.

2.3 – COMPETENCE MANAGEMENT

Job description, along with the definition of the structure and of the strategy, must be the basis of the organization policy. As any other process, it must be planned in the moment that the organization is founded, and it does not only appear in emergency moments that, although they are important, cannot be responded in an efficient way. That doesn't mean that job description cannot be reviewed whenever it's necessary.

So, job description must be designed with the contribution of the top managers and directors of departments, in collaboration with HRM department. The job description must include: academic education, professional training, professional experience, and both transversal and specific competences adequate to each function. These competences must be organized by levels, to standardize the requisites for selecting and recruitment, to guide talent, careers and training management, and also, performance assessment.

The cross-organizational competences are those that emerge directly from the values of the organization. As example of these competences: creativity, legality, honesty, flexibility, cultural relativism, results orientation, future orientation, among others. The thing that will actually make the difference between organizations is the priority they give to each competence. For example, for a multinational organization there's no doubt about the importance that cultural relativism has, to fit in the different social, cultural and political contexts in each country it has presence. Other example, normally the organizations that give high importance to the results refer to it in a quite explicit way. Nowadays there is a growing consciousness about the urgency of the results orientation in every kind of organizations, as we achieve, for example, from the principals shaped in the New Public Management and in quality programs.

The cross-organizational competences in the departments are those that are relate, in first instance, with the internal project of a particular department but that involve, or are articulated, with other departments; for instance, in the quality department, where one of the overall objectives is that all associates have knowledge about the organization's civil liability on product safety (in industrial organizations, for example), it is required that all departments involved in producing have them interiorized that responsibility and transpose into their practices. More than that, they (departments) must have a proactive role as guardians of this responsibility.

The specific competences of each function (job) are those who are more technical and have immediate reach in the organizational context.

In summary, the importance of job description reveals to be a central element in RHM.

2.3.1- Selection and Recruitment

As previously mentioned job description is the base element of HRM, so the selection and the recruitment should take into account the job description. Initially, without requiring the intervention of the head of the department requesting, the job description allows the HR manager to draft the recruitment notice and to prepare a script to guide the interview in order to assess the competences of the candidate in relation to the desired profile.

After this phase the HR manager forwards the recruitment process, with its opinion, stressing the hard skills (basic skills involved in academic and vocational training and work experience) of the candidate for the leader of the department applicant to whom the future associate will report. This second phase aims to assess in greater detail the specific skills of the candidate, and also the so-called soft skills such as empathy and fit the style and priorities of department's leader applicant.

2.3.2- Performance Assessment

The performance assessment must have as its goal the perspective of improving the quality of work, associates motivation and performance of the organization itself. The leader orientation is leading to greater identification and involvement of the associates with the organization's mission and values, that is, the involvement with the organizational culture. This orientation should follow the model of situational Blanchard et al. (2010), ie, must be appropriate to developmental level in relation to the performance of the associates.

The assessment should never be, or be used, as an instrument of punishment. Indeed, the very term assessment that needs to be demystified and fully explained to all associates and managers. Assessment should not arise from surprise at the end of the year, however, must be made during the year, when appropriate, either to strengthen skills or to timely improvements to performance.

The form of performance assessment should include: a shortened discretion of the functions (for revision), the results of the achieved objectives in the previous year; grids transversal and specific skills required at the respective levels, the proposed objectives for the coming year, as well as the action plan (training, etc) for the development of associates, as input for training, talent and career management. The analysis must be sensitive both in relation to those associates with lower performance or those with higher performance and evident talent.

2.3.3- Training management

The survey of training needs may emerge from the skills gaps, needs to update the organization and update the skills of the associates (which may arise from the performance assessment and / or development programs). Training can be for associates to provide a new skill, to improve certain skills, or to sustain.

The training of associates within an organization should be viewed as an investment. Provide training to associates just because the labor law requires is a waste of resources (time, financial, etc.) beyond which generates motivation in associates receiving training in technical HRM and trainers themselves. Training should rather be thought of in view of its relevance and return on investment at all levels.

Training plans should be developed taking into account the cross-organizational competences, cross-departmental competences and specific competences to each individual associate basis. Thinking about training in terms of usefulness to the associate / organization and do not looking at the training catalogs and see the ones that seem most interesting, makes all the difference.

2.3.4- Talent Management

The organization must recruit associates who offer better guarantees for the desired functions. This is mandatory for strict adherence of the whole recruitment process, by observing the profile functions. Speaking of talent management can refer to two moments. At first, through partnerships between the organization and training entities, whether at professional level in order to immediately recruit the most talented associates. Secondly, it must be offered to associates all the conditions needed to develop these talents and, of course, its continuity in the organization. This is directly related to the theories of motivation and leadership (Neves, 2000) (Carvalho Ferreira, Nevis, & Caetano, 2001).

The talent management within the organization must result from a joint work between the leader of department to which the associates reports and HRM staff. The department leader should have a stimulating and inspiring attitude, this is so-called coach attitude. Everything starts in the presentation of a new associate integration plan where the expectations of the associate and the

organization in relation to performance are clarified. It must be clear to the associate how it can maximize its usefulness to the organization, as well as how the associate should be consistent harmoniously in his professional and personal life. The monitoring of the new associate should also refer to the different levels of excellence in the performance of its function, clarifying the goals inherent in each of these levels and also referencing the level at which the associate is at the present time and the level expected. In practice, these concerns reflect the teachings of the theory of Herzberg motivational factors and their relationship with the pyramid of needs Maslow (Carvalho Ferreira, Nevis, & Caetano, 2001).

Accordingly, as noted above, the performance assessment at the end of the year, will not involve more surprises even for the leader or to the associate. The whole process of integration and performance was being monitored throughout the year and made the necessary corrections in a timely manner. Key aspect in talent management is that this same process of performance assessment at the end of the year referencing the possibility of the associate to be transferred to other duties, if required, in order to keep their motivation levels high and consequent satisfaction with their situation in the organization.

An important note related to the continuity and the mobility of talent within organizations is the assumption of the idea that today and increasingly in the future, the talents are mobile. In addition, to the care already referenced in relation to the management of talent can still be afforded the opportunity to put these individuals in contact with other organizations in other situations (job rotation) to continuously enrich their knowledge and skills, with particular emphasis on targeted skills for change and proactivity of individuals and organizations.

The talent management can also be mobilized to meet a particular need of the organization by creating a specific and intensive program, with very close monitoring (mentoring), with a view to developing the skills required for the function intended.

2.3.5- Career Management

The career management is linked closely with the elements of competence management previously discussed.

The career management has as main objective to anticipate the needs of specific human resources for the organization through the selection of a pool of potential associates. This care with the anticipation of the needs of talent in organizations can avoid or mitigate the waste of talent, commitment and reduction of brain drain to other organizations. The pool of potential associates is a group of associates identified in the performance assessment or other circumstances, by management or the team of HRM, based on objective criteria pre-defined or other exceptional evidence. These potential associates are intended to take on new responsibilities in the organization, which can lead to the rise vertically or horizontally the simple rise in the organizational hierarchy. The pool management is mainly the responsibility of the HRM team organization.

The conception plans for the development of individual potential associates is achieved through an assessment process. In our perspective, this process should be based on a guideline that expresses the desirable requirements of leadership. The process is to subject the future leaders to a series of tests and activities which emphasize skills already acquired, as well as identify opportunities for development of skills required. Realizing these processes takes place within a relatively short time (two or three days), in favorable environments, so as to give rise, at the end of the process, to the preparation of a plan designed to achieve the desired performance levels for a given function. Examples of specific activities carried out are: simulations (on negotiation, mediation, affectation of resources, strategic planning meetings), presentations, interpersonal relationships, among others, which may be supplemented with interviews.

Leadership roles are a work of continuity in relation to leadership principles (guidelines), by developing specific programs for this purpose, such as: the management team development (MTD),

which work in the soft skills essential for leadership and the management dialogue (MD), which works on the principles of leadership.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The reflection about the various forms of work organization, more recently called organizational development, requires much time and work. Simultaneously, the classic concept of “personnel office”, known as an operational activity, has lost field for the concept of human resources management, supported in theory reflection and in various empiric evidences.

Nowadays HRM is implicit in every organizational dynamics. Its integration in the organization strategy optimizes all the process of organizational development, contributing to excellence. In this sense, we reinforce how important it is that HRM have close collaboration with the board, because this will optimize the whole process.

With all these ideas in mind, it was our goal to emphasize that HRM involves managing people as a resource (in the most technical and economist sense) but not only this. It is primordial to look at people as individuals (human beings), who share their own values, believes, identities and behaviors.

Despite these evidences, a great number of organizations still center their activities in the operation of people as a simple resource. It is important to find the reasons for this mistake.

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