

## CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF CANDIDATES AS THE BASIS FOR SUCCESSFUL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS

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### Summary

Selection of candidates is an activity of assessment of applicants' skills to perform duties of the post for which they have applied. It is based on predefined criteria and methods, with the intention to select the best candidates. The most important goal of the selection of candidates is an attempt to estimate current and future ability of applicants to perform tasks that they have applied for in a manner that will minimize the possibility of a wrong choice. The importance of the selection process is not reflected only in the relatively high costs of recruitment and selection process, but also in the consequences of wrong choice which cannot be accurately perceived or financially express at the time of selection. This is particularly true of health care organizations with regard to the specific complexities and responsibilities of health care activities performed by health care workers and associates.

**Key terms:** human resources, selection of candidates, selection criteria, health care institutions

### Introduction

Human resource management is the final stage of development of personnel management as one of the stages in the development of human resources and represents a response to changes that occur daily in all areas of life and work, including the work in health care organizations. Generally speaking, the modern way of managing human resources, as one of the most important managerial functions, includes "selection of goals, establishing policies, planning, organization, coordination and control of activities, within the framework of human resources, by taking management actions to achieve the set goals and to achieve the very purpose of existence of the managerial position as a subsystem in organization's functioning."<sup>1</sup>

According to the teachings of the representatives of the Michigan school, the very process of human resource management should be based on four functions:

- Selection of staff,
- Employee performance management,
- Rewarding employees and
- Development of employees

In a way that will lead to continuous improvement of performance of the specific organization.

### 1. Objectives and specificities of human resource management in health care organizations

Human resource management should ensure that the organization consists of employees who can successfully keep up with the changes that occur daily in all areas of work and life, including the work in health care organizations, transforming the "threats" coming from the environment into the "chances" for the organization.

The main objectives of human resource management in health care organizations should be included in<sup>2</sup>:

- the establishment of harmony between changes in the needs and requirements of service users and changes in the way of performing the services,

- ensuring the competence and motivation of employees to perform assigned activities,
- continuing education of employees for the better performance of duties and tasks assigned,
- continuous adaptation of organizational forms of business to the needs of citizens and other users of services,
- the creation of working conditions in which the criteria of competence, professionalism and results achieved will be a basis for rewarding and advancement of employees and
- creating opportunities for employment of insufficient, and retention of existing human resources.

In order to successfully achieve the stated objectives of human resource management it is necessary for the "top management" of health care organizations to prepare "work packages" attractive enough for employment of the best and bringing in the insufficient human resources, as well as to use various forms of education and training to continuously improve working potential of their employees. Within this, the "top management" of health care organization must clearly define what knowledge and skills the employee must have, how to motivate the "creative human resources" to "come" to the organization and how to keep them, taking into account the specifics of health care organizations and the environment in which they operate.

### 2. Specificities of human resource management in health care organizations in FBiH

Specificities of human resource management in health care organizations, as opposed to human resource management in other organizations, are primarily a result of the complexity of tasks and responsibilities of health care performed by healthcare workers and associates. Another, almost equally important factor that influences the management of human resources in health care organizations is contained in the current manner of budget financing of health services. The current chronic lack of financial resources directly affects the quality and safety of the provided health services through the inability to retain the best human resources that are increasingly opting for private practice, and the impossibility of bringing in the missing human resources and purchasing lacking modern medical equipment. The lack of a clear strategic plan for

<sup>1</sup> Slobodan Camilovic, "Basics of human resource management", "Tekon", Belgrade, 2007, page 13.

<sup>2</sup> H. Gutosic/ S. Draskovic, "Human resource management", FJU, Sarajevo, page 25., /modified/

development of health care in FBiH - as a basis for planning of the health care at FBiH level as a system of social, collective and individual measures, services and activities aimed at prevention and early detection, timely treatment and rehabilitation, and preservation of health in FBiH - also directly affects the quality and effectiveness of human resource management in this institution.

The fourth aspect of specificity of human resource management at the level of health care organizations comes from the specifics of each patient and his health problems whose treatment, in addition to the formal and actual professional competence, requires maximum concentration of health care personnel in providing health services and their full commitment to the patient and the work they perform. Since health care workers are still only humans, who also have their health and other issues, they rightly expect that their work, which is usually stressful and subject to risks of transmission of certain diseases from the patient to the health worker, is adequately rewarded and that the management of the health care organization has full understanding and works to overcome their material and immaterial problems. This implies that health care workers and associates who work in a specific health care organization should be trained and motivated to provide the "best" or high-quality and safe health services for patients, and that the process of planning, recruitment and selection of candidates should be focused on the selection of the best.

### 3. Influence of candidate selection methods on human resource management

Selection of candidates is an activity of assessment of applicants' skills to perform duties of the post for which they have applied. It is based on predefined criteria and methods, with the intention to select the best candidates. The most important goal of the selection of candidates is an attempt to estimate current and future ability of applicants to perform tasks that they have applied for in a manner that will minimize the possibility of a wrong choice. The importance of the selection process is not reflected only in the relatively high costs of recruitment and selection process, but also in the consequences of wrong choice which can not be accurately perceived or financially express at the time of selection.

The selection procedure is carried out as follows. After the human resources managers receive the short list of candidates, they go on to define criteria and methods for the selection of "best" in terms of the needs of the organization. As the process of defining criteria and methods of selection of candidates is not easy, it is necessary to first define the general, desirable and undesirable groups of characteristics that the chosen candidates should or should not have.<sup>3</sup>

#### 3.1. Candidate selection criteria

<sup>3</sup> Thus, for example, "while hiring, the employers will always give preference to candidates who are able to: solve problems, work in team, show initiative, follow the proper procedure for performing tasks, orient according to customer demands, show enthusiasm, readily take responsibility, show flexibility, show loyalty, candidates who wish to improve themselves and who have a positive effect on others..." H. Gutosic / S. Draskovic, "Human resource management", FJU, Sarajevo, page 111-112.

According to Torrington, the most important individual criteria for selecting candidates typically include:

- Rodger's seven-point plan<sup>4</sup>,
- Frasers framework<sup>5</sup>,
- Organizational criteria,
- Functional criteria and
- Criteria for certain jobs.

In applying Rodger's seven-point plan one tries to ensure the selection of "ideal" person for the post by answering the following questions:

- what physical characteristics the candidate has and what would be the ideal physical characteristics for the post,
- candidate's achievements,
- general intelligence of the candidate in terms of requirements of the post he applied for,
- special abilities of candidates,
- candidate's interests,
- personal character and
- circumstances.

Fraser's framework for the evaluation of candidates, also aims to "define" the "ideal" candidate through answers to the following questions:

- ability to influence others,
- qualifications or knowledge of candidates,
- innate abilities
- what motivated candidate to apply,
- adaptability to different possible situations and
- emotional balance of the candidate.

Unlike Roger's seven points plan and Fraser's framework that are focused on the analysis of individual characteristics of candidates, organizational criteria should provide candidates with the best characteristics in terms of "values" that are sought in the organization. In this case, more focus is given to the type of personality, attitudes, flexibility, commitment and goals, rather than to the ability to do the job for which the candidate applied for. It is most often used in organizations that are planning or implementing rapid changes, in a way where the operations that the candidates will work on quickly and frequently change.

#### 3.2. Candidate selection methods

According to Torrington<sup>6</sup>, the choice of selection methods depends on several factors such as:

- The criteria of selection for the position to be filled. Will the group or individual selection methods be used?
- The eligibility and suitability of the method in terms of candidates who will be involved in the selection.
- Capabilities of personnel involved in the selection process to apply certain methods such as, for example, specialized tests.
- Administrative facilities to simplify the selection process, for example, it is easier to organize two or three individual interviews than it is to ensure that all members attend an interview on the same day.

<sup>4</sup> Alec Rodger, *Seven Point plan*,

<sup>5</sup> John Munro Fraser's *fifefold framework*

<sup>6</sup> D. Torrington, L. Hall, S. Taylor, "Human resource management", "Data status", Belgrade, 2004, page 193,

- Time factor in the situation where the hiring is limited in time.
- Accuracy through combination of different methods of selection and potential costs of the selection process and the candidate selection.

Accordingly, the most often used methods of individual selection of candidates in modern conditions include:

- assessment of candidates based on provided documents,
- analysis of the CV,
- analysis of recommendations and endorsements,
- application forms,
- self-assessment,
- selection through phone interviews,
- testing and
- interview.

-Assessment of candidates on the basis of documents submitted is usually used for preliminary selection of candidates. It is carried out in a way that members of the committee conducting the selection process evaluate the quality of candidates in terms of how they complete the appropriate application, writing style, expression, biographical data and the like. The biggest advantage of this method of candidate selection is reflected in the low cost and short time required for the selection of candidates, and the biggest drawback is the inability to eliminate the high dose of subjectivity of certain members of the committee.

-Analysis of the CV as a method of selecting candidates is based on the assumption that the future behavior of candidates may be assessed on the basis of information submitted in his working biography (CV). In the analysis of CV, members of the committee for selection of candidates pay attention to the sequence and rate of development, any change of occupation, "gaps" in the biography, the rate of change of employment and similar elements. Analysis of professional development of the candidate can point to the logical or illogical professional development, and the possibility that the candidate could pass certain experience from competing companies, if he worked in such companies on the same or similar jobs.

-Recommendations and certificates stating what and how the candidate worked in the past, given by previous employers, are also used as criteria for preliminary selection of candidates. The most important disadvantages of this method are reflected in the fact that the recommendations may contain a high dose of subjectivity, and certificates may contain only basic information about the candidate and jobs on which the candidate has worked. One of the main weaknesses of this method of selection is the fact that the employer will sometimes write a good review for a "lousy" candidate, just to get rid of him more easily.

-Application forms as a method of selection of candidates are used in many organizations. As any other method of selection of candidates, this method as well has its advantages and disadvantages. The basic advantages are reflected in the relatively low cost of their application, the possibility of comparing the same data for different candidates, the possibility of subsequent verification of the selection process and the relatively short time required for the selection process. The main disadvantages of the

application form are the impossibility of gaining a personal impression of the candidate, the possibility that another person fill out the application form, the possibility that a candidate forgets to fill in certain fields on the application form and similar.

-Self-assessment as a method of selecting candidates can be performed in one of the following two ways. The first way to implement this method is to provide applicant with as much information about the organization and work to be done as possible, so the candidates could independently assess their capability to perform the jobs offered.

The second way to use self-assessment method is to invite the potential candidate or candidates to the organization on probation work for a determined period of time. This approach allows the candidate a better insight into the type and manner of tasks to be performed, and the organization to acquire more complete impression of the candidate and his or her abilities.

The main disadvantages of applying self-assessment as a method of selection of candidates are reflected in the fact that people, which are employed for the first time, usually take more time to demonstrate their skills and capabilities, as well as in the fact that the organization could designate an inappropriate mentor, or even does not designate a mentor at all, who would be responsible to help the invited candidate.

-Selection through telephone interviews, as a method of selecting candidates, is lately more often used than the "application form", or is used in combination with the application form. The essence of this method of selecting candidates is to schedule an appointment for telephone interview with the candidate - which usually lasts 20-30 minutes - and provide him or her with the information on what will be the topic of conversation. Applicants are informed that if they are successful they will be invited for a one-day or two-day stay in the organization. The most important disadvantages of telephone interview as a method of selecting candidates, from the organization's standpoint, are reflected in the fact that staff who conduct the phone interview is not sure whether they are talking to the right person. The main disadvantages of this method from the candidate's standpoint are reflected in the inability to immediately provide answers to all questions or to misunderstand certain questions, therefore giving wrong answers to them.

-Testing as a method of selection of candidates is increasingly being used despite the fact that the views on effectiveness of this method are divided. Those who advocate testing as a method of selecting candidates as the main advantages cite the validity of the method, the reliability of gained data, possibility of engaging a specialist to interpret the results, the possibility of subsequent verification of the regularity of method's application and possibility of continuous improvement of tests. Advantages of testing are also reflected in the possibility of multiple uses of already made tests.

Opponents of the use of testing as a method of candidate selection claim that the application of this method does not guarantee the selection of the best candidates, that the validation procedure is too long, that the specialist

interpretation of test results can sometimes be questionable and that the questions in the tests and criteria for evaluation are not always clearly defined in advance, and the very method of assessment of candidates can be based on social, racial, sexual and other biases.

When using testing as a method of selecting candidates the following types of tests are most often used:

- tests of general intelligence,
- tests of special abilities,
- tests of trainability,
- achievement tests and
- personality tests.

Methods of group selection of candidates have become especially popular after World War II. According to Plumbley, the aim of these methods of selection is focused on gathering evidence on the ability of candidates:

- to work complementally with others,
- to affect others and the way he/she does so
- to verbally express,
- to think clearly and logically,
- to use previous experience and to devote to new problems,
- to establish the type of his/her role in the group.

According to Plumbley, the three main groups of tasks that can be used in this type of selection are: groups with no leaders, command and executive exercises and group problem-solving.

#### **4. Results of investigation of the influence of existing methods of selection on the selection of the best candidates in the PI "Health Centers" of Sarajevo Canton**

Since each of the above mentioned individual and group methods of candidate selection has its advantages and disadvantages, whose positive or negative results are manifested only after the selection is finished, we tried to interview 65 employed health workers and associates in the PI "Health Centers" of Sarajevo Canton, in order to determine whether the criteria and methods of selecting candidates that are being used in the institution provide the selection of best candidates, and which criteria and methods of candidate selection should be given primacy in the future. The results of this survey draw to following conclusions: Only 33.80% of interviewed employees believe that the criteria now being applied in the selection and election of candidates in the PI "Health Centers" of Sarajevo

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#### **Legislature**

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- Amendments to the Law on labour, Official Gazette of FBiH, No. 32/00 and 29/03.
- Law on health protection, Official Gazette of FBiH No. 46/2010,

Canton ensure selection of the best candidates. Approximately the same percentage of interviewees did not know whether the existing selection criteria ensure the best results, and 27.7% of interviewees believe that the current method of selection and election of candidates does not ensure selection of the best candidates.

-Analysis of candidate's CV as a method of individual candidate selection received the votes of 55.40% of respondents, and the interview method, which is currently mostly used in the selection and election of candidates in the PI "Health Centers" of Sarajevo Canton received 44.50% of the votes. However, the highest percentage, 66.40%, of votes of respondents went to the use of a combination of two or more methods of candidate selection.

-When it comes to using the test method as a basis for the selection and election of candidates, 75.30% of interviewees gave preference to the tests of general intelligence and personality tests /66.10%/ compared to the tests of special abilities and trainability which received about 42% of votes each, and achievement tests which received only 21.50% of the votes of respondents. In ranking the twelve potential selection criteria which should be considered when choosing a candidate in the PI "Health Centers" of Sarajevo Canton, interviewees in the first place put the candidates character, in the second qualifications and knowledge, in the third criteria of general intelligence in terms of job tasks for which the client applied, in the fourth criterion of candidates interest, in the fifth criterion of candidates emotional balance, and the twelfth place was given to the circumstances in which the candidate should carry on the tasks for which he/she was employed.

#### **Conclusion**

If the above stated results are accepted as a basis for making conclusions, one can conclude the following:

- It is necessary to improve the existing methods of selection and election of candidates in health care organizations in FBiH, through a combination of multiple methods of selection which should prioritize the analysis of CV and interview. Tests of general intelligence and personality tests, as the methods of candidate selection, should be preferred to the tests of special abilities and trainability,
- candidate's character, qualifications and knowledge should be a top three criteria for election of employees in health care organizations.

### **Standards**

- Accreditation standards for health centers, AKAZ, 2005. Accreditation standard AKAZ 1C.- Human resource management