MGT/P/B 224: Managing Human Resources

Course Overview, Readings, Requirements, and Schedule

Course Overview

In the course of your career you will need to make decisions regarding how to manage, compensate, and motivate people. These are not trivial decisions; they have distinct consequences that can affect the success of your organization. As many managers and organizations now realize, effectively managing an organization’s human assets can serve as a key source of competitive advantage. As such, decisions about managing people must be carefully thought out with regard to the organization’s strategy, environment, and goals.

This course is designed for students to gain understanding and sensitivity to fundamental issues involved in the successful management of policies and practices related to human resources. In MGT/P 224, we will explore the different choices firms make in governing and managing their workers—decisions as to wages, benefits, performance evaluation, working conditions, etc. We will analyze employment systems’ fit with firms’ environments and strategies, and the consequences of choices managers make regarding policies and practices. The general goal is to enable you to think both strategically and systematically about managing an organization’s human assets.

It is important to note that this course is not specifically geared towards those interested in specializing in human resource management. Its primary focus is not on the operational details of personnel administration, but rather on establishing the connections between human resource management and other concerns of general management.

This course is divided into two main sections. In the first, we consider the importance of alignment: the alignment of human resource practices with a firm’s external environment, strategy, and culture, and aligning human resource practices so they are internally consistent. In the second section, we focus more specifically on a set of elements that constitute an HR system (e.g. recruitment, selection, performance evaluation, etc.).

Course Requirements and Grading

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Group Project &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Case Analyses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work/Life Issues Report</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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Required Readings  Course packet

There is no textbook for the course. The readings are drawn from a number of sources. They
include some academic articles, excerpts from longer works, cases, and short articles from the popular and business presses. Some additional materials may be distributed as the course progresses.

Your grade will be based on

(1) A group project analyzing the employment systems and management practices of 1 organization of your choice. The project will consist of a paper (12 pages max., double-spaced) as well as a group presentation on the final day of class. It is due Session 10 and the paper and presentation together are worth 35% of your grade. More details will be given on the project as the quarter gets underway.

(2) Two individual case analyses of your choosing (based on the Case Analysis Questions for Sessions 2-7), which are together worth 20% of your grade. Papers cannot exceed 3 double-spaced pages in length. Good analyses will present the case issues in relation to the course concepts and the other readings for relevant sessions.

(3) A report due Session 8 in which you analyze how work/life issues were addressed in your most recent or current job. (NOTE: If you do not believe your most recent/current job provides an adequate example for this analysis, you may alternatively interview someone not currently enrolled in MGT/B/P 224 and analyze how work/life issues were addressed in their most recent or current job.) Good analyses will provide a clear, detailed description of the relevant HR system (using examples wherever possible) and a thoughtful analysis of what the consequences of these were for the firm and the affected workers. You should also provide specific recommendations for the firm as well as consideration of how these recommendations would affect both the firm and its workers. Papers cannot exceed 3 double-spaced pages in length. This will be worth 10% of your grade.

(4) Participation. Participation counts for 35% of your grade, and includes class attendance, informed involvement in class discussions, cases and exercises. Attendance is critical for your learning in the class – if you cannot attend class, make sure to notify me in advance via e-mail. Participation is evaluated seriously; I appreciate timely, relevant, and interesting contributions that are constructive and contribute toward moving the discussion forward.

(5) I use the following scheme to grade student participation in each class:
   3: Excellent
   2: Good
   1: Satisfactory
   0: Absent with reasonable cause and advance notification;
   -3: Absent without cause

Notice! For all written assignments:
1. I do not accept late papers.
2. Please adhere to all page limits, using 12 point font size and double spacing (and no fiddling with margins, either!). Any excess material will be ignored.
3. In my evaluations I take into account the quality of writing and presentation, the use of examples, and correctness of spelling and usage in assigning a grade.
Academic Integrity: All students who take this course are governed by the University of California's standards of ethical conduct for students, in particular, the sections on academic conduct and integrity. These sections set forth the responsibilities of students and faculty to maintain a spirit of academic honesty and integrity at U.C. Davis. It is essential that you are aware of this code of conduct and the disciplinary actions that may be taken in the event of a violation. A copy of the Code of Academic Conduct may be found in your student handbook or at: http://sja.ucdavis.edu/pdf/CAC.pdf. Further details may be obtained from the GSM Associate Dean or the Office of Judicial Affairs.

Winter 2013: Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Session 1: HRM and the Five Factors
Assigned readings:
- “The Five Factors”, James N. Baron and David M. Kreps, Strategic Human Resources, Ch. 2.
- “Get Big, Stay Small”, Alex Frankel, Punching In: The unauthorized adventures of a front-line employee, Ch. 5.

Session 2: Internal alignment of HR Practices
Assigned readings:
- “Consistent HR Practices,” Baron and Kreps, Strategic Human Resources, Ch. 3.
- Case: “Club Med” A and B
  Case Analysis Questions:
  1. Evaluate Club Med’s HR system, including recruitment, training, placement, and performance evaluation. Is this system internally aligned?
  2. How do these HR practices fit with the external environment and with Club Med’s strategy?
  3. What would you change at Club Med?

Session 3: HRM as Competitive Advantage
Assigned readings:
- “Distinctive Human Resources as Firms’ Core Competencies,” Peter Cappelli and Anne Crocker-Hefter, Organizational Dynamics, 24(3), 1996, p. 7-22
- Case: Sonoco Products Co. (A)
  Case analysis Questions:
  1. What was happening to the packaging industry at the time of the case? How will these changes impact Sonoco’s strategy?
  2. What were Cindy Hartley’s objectives for changes at Sonoco? How do these proposed changes fit with the external environment and with Sonoco’s strategy?
  3. How successful were the HR changes? Was the sequence of changes the right one?
Initial Project Status Report Due

Your group should submit a short written summary that includes:

- Group members’ names and emails
- The organization you plan to study
- The contacts you have or plan to establish

Have one representative from your group prepared to give a quick summary to the class that includes the organization you plan to study and contacts at that organization you plan to interview (or how you plan to go about establishing those contacts). You should also note any interesting issues you hope to investigate and any questions/concerns you have regarding your project during this report.

Session 4: HRM and Organizational Culture

Assigned readings:

- Case: “Perlegen Sciences.” Linda Hill.
  Case Analysis Questions:
  1. What are the characteristics of the HR system at Perlegen?
  2. How do they fit with its culture and its external environment?
  3. What would you recommend to Margus with regard to integrating Brandeau?
     What would you suggest to Brandeau?

Session 5: Staffing & Recruitment

Assigned readings:

  Case Analysis Questions:
  1. What are the key decision points used by S.G. Cowen in making hiring decisions?
  2. What is your evaluation of the process used by the firm? What is your evaluation of the criteria used by this organization in making hiring decisions? In making your evaluative assessments, be sure to bring in assessments of fit with any of the relevant Five Factors.
  3. Which two candidates would you select if you were a member of the recruiting committee?

Session 6: Performance Evaluation

Assigned Readings

- Case: National Semiconductor’s India Design Center
  Case Analysis Questions:
  1. What is your assessment of the 360-feedback process used by the IDC team? What are its potential benefits? What are its risks?
  2. If you were one of the senior managers at the IDC, what would you want to happen
during the team feedback meeting? What concerns, if any, would you have going into this meeting?
3. What actions should Ashok and the other managers take to integrate senior managers into their team?
4. What other types of teams would benefit from this 360-feedback intervention? What conditions need to be in place to make it successful?

Session 7. Incentive Systems & Goal Setting
Assigned Readings
• Case: Harrah’s Entertainment, Inc.
Case Analysis Questions:
  1. What are Harrah’s HR practices, and how are they aligned (or misaligned) with its strategy?
  2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Harrah’s gainsharing program?
  3. What advice would you have for Winn about her recommendation to Loveman?

Session 8: Work-life policies and practices
Assigned Readings
  - Case 1: Integration of Work and Life
    ◦ Alex Montana at ESH Manufacturing Co. Thomas J. Delong, Michael Kernish

Session 9: Diversity in the Workplace
Assigned readings:
• Case: Karen Leary

Session 10: Final Project Presentations