



UNIT 4

Recruitment and Selection

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Discuss the Importance of Planning in the Recruitment Process
- ✓ Explore the Ideal Recruitment Procedures
- ✓ Identify the Importance of Interviews for Recruitment

Unit 4

Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment of staff and hiring is a vital element of hospitality services organisations. Employing front-line staff with a “natural” appeal to and kinship with customers is especially important, while staff performance can be improved through customer care programmes. The indispensable qualities that hired individuals must possess include an inviting personality and a commitment to delivering good service. Careful staff selection and hiring is important to cut down on staff turnover and reduce disciplinary problems, as well as to enhance employee satisfaction. You must take sufficient time to choose the right person who will fulfil the job requirements and fit in with the rest of the team. Much of the unit manager’s time can be occupied with the recruitment and selection of staff, especially if the turnover is high. When faced with time pressures, it can be tempting to take short cuts with recruitment and selection and fast-forward the process, but this frequently becomes a false economy because it leads to the wrong people being hired. Before actually starting the process of hiring or selecting, it is important to take the time to consider the job carefully, what is expected of the person to be hired, and what kind of a person will be suitable to carry it out. A lot of managers associated with hospitality and retail operations end up creating problems for themselves due to a failure to make proper hiring and selection efforts. They fail to attach sufficient importance to the need to plan carefully when hiring new employees. The first step is to consider the duties, obligations and skills required for the job. The next step in recruiting new staff involves examining their motives for seeking employment and their needs in the early stages of employment and beyond.

Flexible Employees

The demand for hospitality services changes over time. In certain cases, such variations are predictable – the demand changes with the days of the week. For example, Monday is a low-demand day, while Saturday is a high-demand day; January sees a slowdown of business whereas December tends to be rather busy. It is common for these variations in trends to differ considerably, with roughly 50% of the week’s sales taking place on Friday and Saturday, while 50% of the annual sales take place in November and December. In some situations, the variations are more difficult to anticipate – changes due to weather conditions can result in more or fewer sales than normal.

In every situation, you must be able to call on the necessary staff required to meet the demand. This means being able to call in more staff in busy times and reducing staff numbers when sales are slow. Traditionally, full-time staff numbers have been maintained at the lowest levels possible and the focus has been on retaining more ‘skilled’ employees who can be supplemented with extras as required.

- 1. Regular part-time staff:** working on a regular basis for a pub or restaurant for a varying number of hours every week depending on the needs of the business;

2. **Casual staff:** such workers work full-time for a fixed term to fulfil the demands of the busy season or during the absence of the regular staff;
3. **Casual staff:** intermittent workers who work during the hectic periods. In certain situations, they may be used for specific kinds of jobs such as banquets or parties;
4. **Agency staff:** this type of a worker is associated with a contractor or an agency that supplies staff to cover planned or unplanned shortfalls.

These different foundations have made it possible for managers to fulfil their staffing requirements while minimising the financial obligations involved in employing staff when the demand for services is slow. However, some problems do arise when using this approach:

- Employee loyalty to services, customers and organisations generally declines;
- Employee earnings vary and create dissatisfaction;
- It can lead to greater labour turnover;
- Skill levels may be low because of limited investment in training;
- The quality of service may suffer;
- It may lead to lower productivity and sales per hour;
- Customer repeats decline because of higher customer dissatisfaction.

One way of bypassing these problems is to recruit full-time employees in greater number, while establishing a more flexible workforce through more skills training.

Regardless of the type of employment relationship – part-time, full-time etc. – hiring cannot take place in a vacuum. Hospitality retail employers are in competition with other service sector owners for workers, and any particular service establishment may be hiring people with similar skills to those desired by another service sector employer:

- Supermarkets;
- Shops and stores;
- Other hospitality employers;
- Offices;
- Call centres, etc.

The workforce available and your ability to draw enough staff with the right skills and characteristics are dependent upon the competition from other businesses and a group of factors that affect the overall supply of the workforce available in the market.

1. The degrees of employment or unemployment signify a major factor in hospitality services labour markets. In a sector with low unemployment, hospitality retail organisations can experience difficulties in hiring people.

2. The industry profile of a given locality can yield fewer or greater numbers of recruits being potentially available even within a given level of unemployment. It has been harder to hire people for the hospitality retail sector in areas based on 'heavy' industry. Knowing the possible hardships will allow you to be more persistent in your efforts to hire people in the given scenario.
3. The availability of people in the labour market differs in different regions and locations in the country. With a greater number of women and young people available for employment along with men, the potential supply of available workforce will be higher. The availability of workers also changes over the year, as some people may be looking for a second job to make additional income for Christmas or the summer holidays. Understanding this ebb and flow and the dynamics of interest in a second job can help you attract people for fixed terms to cover the more difficult times.
4. The locations where people live in relation to the workplace and the ease of transport facilities to the workplace are also major factors. The prospect of returning home on public transport from late-night duties in a remote part of the city may limit the number of potential recruits unless they have their own transport. Mapping the localities with housing schemes and transport facilities available can help to build a picture.
5. Educational facilities like secondary schools, universities and colleges of higher education all offer part-time, temporary, and casual workers. Establishing lines of communications with relevant staff members in colleges and schools will aid in approaching potential employees.

The Importance of Planning Ahead

The more care and planning given to the recruiting and selection process, the greater the chances of locating employees who will stay with your organisation and make positive contributions to the establishment. Rapid recruitment always leads to problems later. Some useful points to build into the plan include:

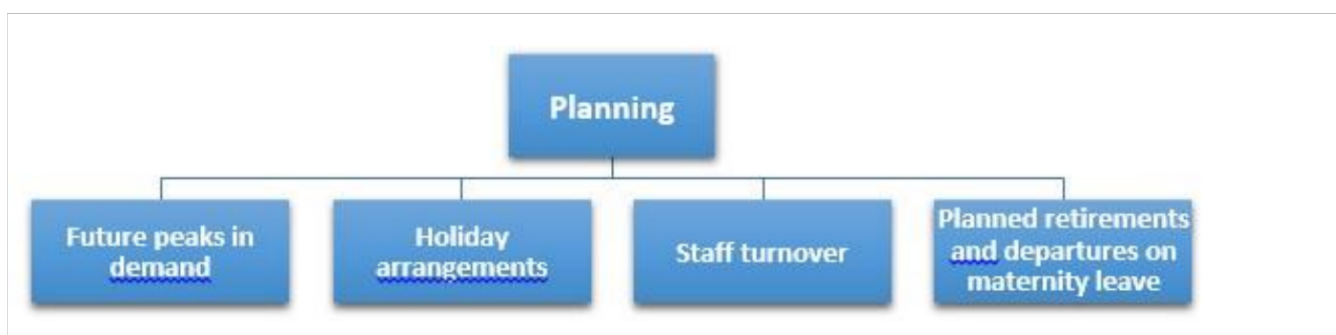


Fig. 4.1

1. **Future peaks in demand:** In the Christmas build-up, or any other period when sales are above average, extra staff are needed.
2. **Holiday arrangements:** When staff take planned annual holidays there is a need for temporary replacement staff to cover for absent employees.
3. **Staff turnover:** This creates an on-going demand for replacement staff. Often it is more cost-effective to recruit replacement staff in batches to match the predicted loss.
4. **Planned retirements and departures on maternity leave, etc.:** These will create vacancies that have to be filled. They are predictable and need to be planned within the recruitment process.

It is vital to review the process of hiring new employees and the amount of time needed to construct an effective performer. Points such as the time needed for recruiting, the average number of applicants required, the number of interviews that have to be conducted, and the induction duration and training programme all have to be considered. The more time you take with these steps, the more time you will have for the process of planning for the future. Flourishing recruitment is unrushed and systematic.

Describing the Job to be done

Even the tiniest establishments must take the time to think about the work to be done by the new employees. By thinking carefully about the demands of the job, you will be in a significantly stronger position to hire an individual who can make a positive contribution.

The Job Description

Begin with the job, not the job-holder or the terms and conditions under which they are to be employed. The job description has to include these broad headings: Job title, department, and location. Allocate the job a name and a position.



Fig. 4.2

- Job function: what is the job about?
- Job superior: to whom will the job-holder answer?
- Job subordinates: which jobs will the holder supervise?
- Relationships with others: non-hierarchical relationships.
- Main duties: what is to be done?
- Occasional duties: what is done now and then?
- Limits to authority: what the job-holder can/cannot decide.

When compiling these guidelines, it is essential to think about the job and what you expect the job-holder to achieve. The chief duties are described with the help of active verbs. It is advisable to show the current job-holder the description to ensure that the job description correctly portrays the job being conducted now – organisations are dynamic and jobs change.

Describing the Ideal Recruit

It is common for managers to make mistakes in the process of recruiting staff as they do not always think carefully about the ideal person capable of undertaking the job as described in the job description. A carefully designed job description will help you to think about the person required – their background, previous experience, training and education, and characteristics and personality.

Below are some of the categories that need to be considered:

- Physical make-up: age, appearance, build, health, speech, eyesight. (Note: it may be possible to justify a specific sex, e.g., for a lavatory attendant post, but seek advice on this.)
- Education and training: school qualifications and grades, further or higher education, recognised skills programme.
- Work experience: experience in industry, specific industry or sector, similar type of work, work in related sector with transferable skills, responsibilities for people or money.
- Personality: sociability and extraversion, empathy, honesty, stability, leadership, etc.
- Personal circumstances: requirement to work, requirement to work shifts, requirement to live in/out.

While compiling this list it is important to keep in mind that the law requires you to offer equal opportunities. Open discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity or religion is against the law. However, an excellent unit manager will go beyond the law to make certain that every worker and prospective worker is treated fairly and equally.

Considerations regarding the type of individual required to lead also brings to mind the following:

- How you will run checks on the worker's qualities and abilities;
- The process of selection;
- The best places in which to find this type of employee.

Attracting Candidates

Once you have finalised the duties of the post to be filled and identified the type of person needed, you should investigate the best sources from where such a candidate will be found before thinking about how to attract them. The purpose of attracting applicants is to ensure that a sufficient number of them apply for the job in order that the ideal candidate might be selected from amongst them.

- Having too many applicants can create as many problems as having too few.
- The aim must be to appeal to a suitable number of applicants.

Candidates will be attracted from the available local labour market, and the following items indicate some basic methods of communicating with potential applicants to let them know about job vacancies. As all advertising proves, the more focused and accurate the message, the greater the chances of it appealing to the suitable applicants. Unclear, deceptive and fraudulent descriptions of the job or the individual required are always counterproductive.

Internal candidates come from inside your unit and can include the following:

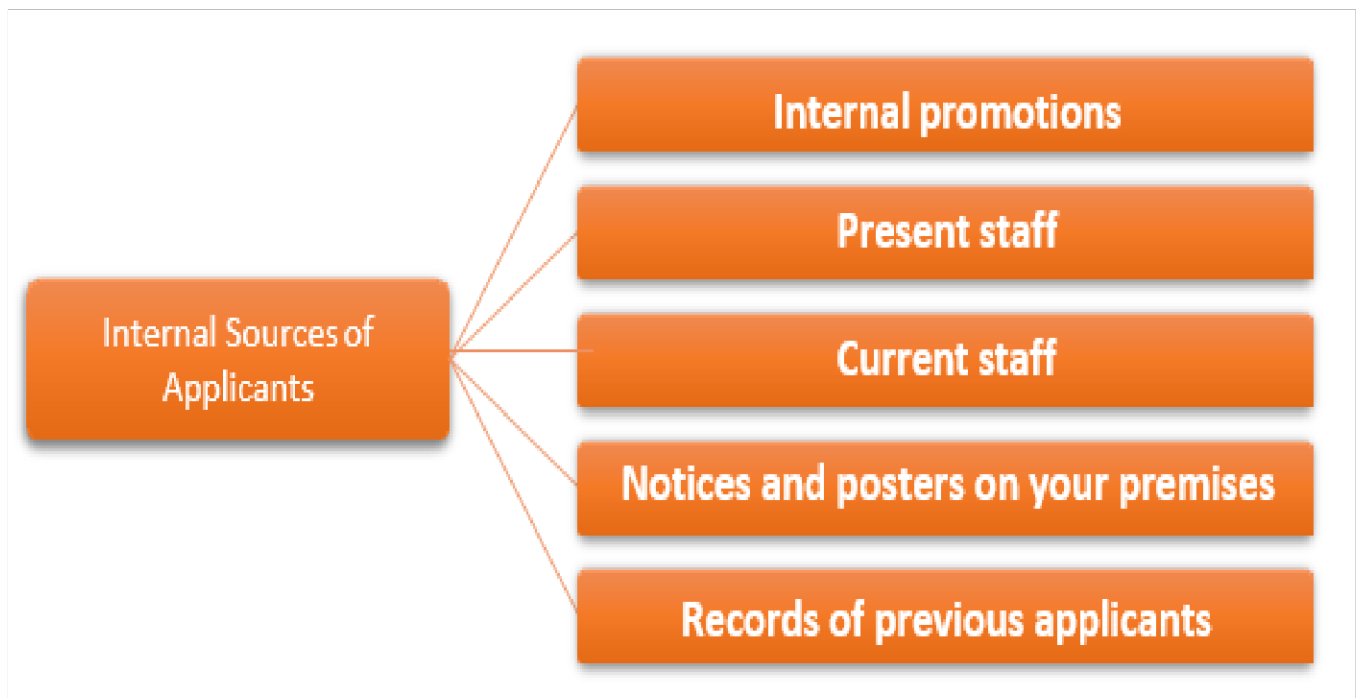


Fig. 4.3.

Internal promotions – help in building staff morale and show workers that they can progress if they stay with you.

Present staff – are temporary, part-time, or casual workers who desire to be employed full-time. As above, this provides motivational benefits, but more importantly you will have a better understanding of the worker than would be the case with an external applicant.

Current staff - can make recommendations of individuals they know (family/friends). Again, this provides a better knowledge of the new worker. It is also cost-effective as advertising costs are cut. However, there is normally an introductory fee to be paid to the staff member making the recommendation and there is a danger of establishing cliques in the work environment.

Notices and posters on your premises – customers or their contacts can also be sources of prospective employees. While fairly cheap, there may be issues with the impression created by the on-going worker turnover. In addition, some establishments do not approve of customers becoming employees; others feel it is an advantage.

Records of previous applicants – it is standard for the process of recruitment to attract a surplus of suitable candidates for the available vacancies. It is wise to keep the details of such applicants on record in order that they might be contacted should another vacancy arise. Steady interest in working in the establishment can be an indication of future stability.

External sources of applicants can include:

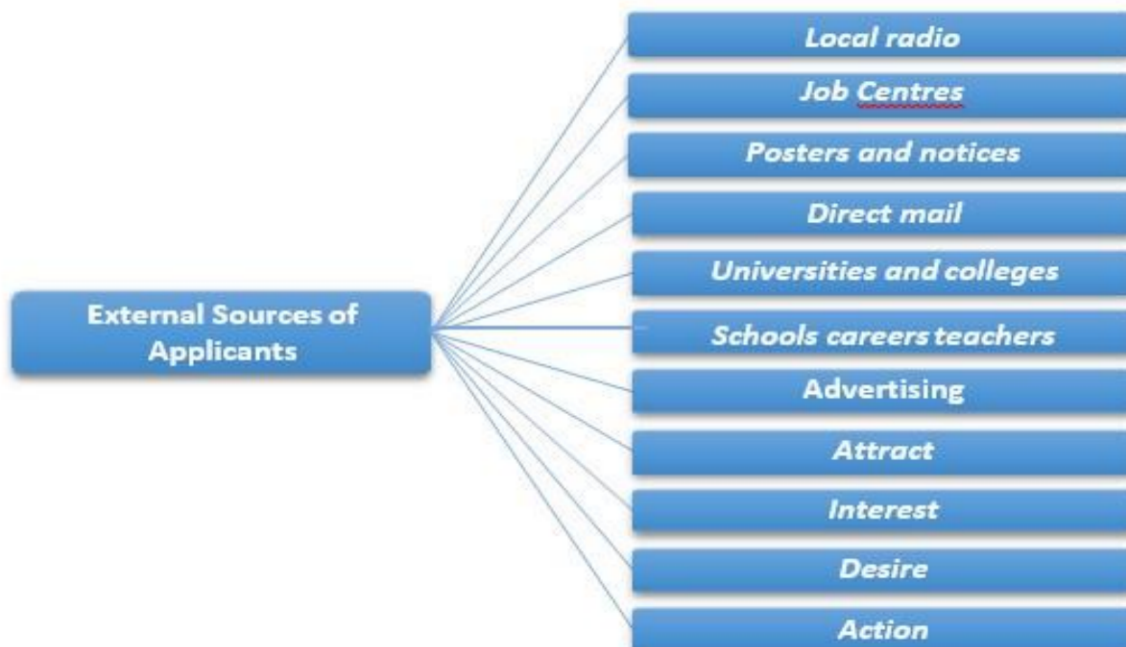


Fig. 4.4

Newspapers - via local newspaper advertising, some management and skilled jobs might be filled by people recruited from the national labour market. The major benefit here is that the ad will be seen by a large number of individuals who may be interested in the job. Such advertising can take the form of box advertisements or classified ads. The former are expensive and best left for large recruitment campaigns.

Local radio - gives good coverage and may be employed in major recruitment campaigns – perhaps when opening a new unit – but can be expensive for a continuous recruitment process for a single unit.

Job Centres and other state employment agencies can offer permanent, usually low-cost sources of workers. In some cases, commercial recruitment agencies may be used, but they tend to be rather expensive for typical front-line staff.

Posters and notices in shop windows or local clubs are normally low-cost and visible to individuals who reside in the locality.

Direct mail postings to local housing estates: again, this applies to the local area and is an inexpensive method. It is useful for openings and re-launches.

Universities and colleges near your establishment are a good source of workers. Students on hospitality, tourism or leisure programmes are well worth prioritising, but almost all students provide a good source of potential recruits. It is also worth getting in touch with course leaders or career officers as well as Student Unions.

Schools careers teachers are also a good source of workers in terms of both young people completing their schooling and in search of permanent employment and current students in need of part-time, temporary and casual work. Work experience seminars are also a good source of workers - many courses have two- or three-week periods for work familiarisation. Hospitality managers can make use of such sessions to advocate careers in their establishment.

Time used in establishing contacts with significant individuals in these local organisations will prove to be a valuable investment for the future. This is a special need of hospitality retail organisations as they experience rapid staff turnover. Elevated levels of staff turnover can be an expensive reality in some units, and it is important to ensure that you have a strong supply of prospective labour.

Advertising

Many of the sources of recruitment that will be available to you as the manager of a unit will come from outside the unit. In certain cases, recruitment notes will be provided by the head office, and you will not have the freedom to spend too much money on advertising - perhaps only display advertising in the local papers. However, regardless of the medium, keep in mind the general points that lead to successful job advertising.

Attract the interest of the prospective applicant. Typically, this will boldly display the title of the job (e.g. Kitchen Assistant). Ensure that this key factor stands out and cannot be missed.

Interest - after the individual's attention has been gained, inform them of who, what, and where the work is and the company name. In a few words, you should describe the function of the job and its location; offer a short outline of the type of individual required, the salary, and opportunities for advancement. Your aim is to attract the right kind of applicant and discourage those who are unsuitable.

Desire - your purpose is to make the advertisement arouse a desire within the reader to act and follow up on the advertisement. At this point, many mistakes are made. In certain cases, the adverts are simply too boring; in others, there is an overselling of the job and erroneous information. A desire has to be stimulated in the reader by offering truthful information.

Action - give clear instructions about how to follow up on the advertisement- for instance, a telephone number or an address from which interested people can request an application form. While this is a very obvious point, it is a typical mistake made in many advertisements.

Obtaining Information from the Candidates

The application form has to be designed in such a way that it is simple to complete and allows candidates to provide the information you need to assess their suitability:

- Name;
- Address;
- Gender;
- Age;
- Education and training;
- Past work experience;
- Other interests;
- Personal circumstances;
- Names and addresses of referees.

The application form should be designed in a way that gives you easy access to the information required for the application to proceed; more importantly, it should allow you to check immediately whether this information has been supplied by the applicant.

A simple layout with unambiguous questions is essential. A typical mistake is to provide insufficient space on the application form. This prevents applicants from supplying all their details and it is likely to contain vague questions.

Short-listing the Candidates

The applications received have to be reviewed in order for you to decide which applicant most closely matches the job specifications. The applications should be sorted systematically, and you should

compare each one with the specification criteria using a matrix. This will enable you to see clearly how closely each candidate matches the outlined requirements, as well as allowing a comparison of the candidates.

Selection

The purpose of the selection process is to find out as much information about the candidates as possible so that the final decision to hire or not to hire is based on sound information. Normally, the selection of workers for work in hospitality retail establishments takes place after a simple interview with the manager; however, there are other options worth considering.

One-to-One Interview

The unit manager or a deputy conducts the candidate interviews individually on his or her own. This method saves time for the management but the weak point is that only one person's judgement is involved. It is too easy for the interviewer to fail to perceive some vital elements of the interviewee's quality; alternatively, he/she may allow personal prejudices to intervene.

Two or More Interviewers

This interview is conducted with one or more interviewers - the unit manager along with a deputy or deputies. Here, the aim is to include a wide range of insights and skills on which to base the selection. In certain situations, one person asks the questions while the other simply observes and takes notes. While this procedure places greater demands on management time, it yields good results and builds in safeguards against individual prejudices.

More than One Interview

When there are several suitable candidates, managers might conduct an initial round of interviews and short-list candidates to appear in a second round of interviews – these normally take place on a different day. This type of selection is expensive both for management and the candidate. Normally, this kind of approach is used when selecting skilled staff or management personnel. The advantage is that more candidates are seen, and the selection is eventually based on the candidate's performance on two occasions.

Role Play

In role play, the intent is to provide the candidate with a real situation and ask them how they would deal with it, enabling them to perform in the given role. This provides more information about the candidate in a non-interview setting. For example, the candidate might be asked how they would deal with a certain type of customer complaint, with the manager playing the role of the disgruntled customer. In other cases the candidate might be asked to sing or tell a joke. Role plays and performance evaluation generally require more than one manager. Role play approaches are also more expensive, as the candidates undergo a dual process of interview followed by role play. More positively, role play elicits a wider set of behaviours by and information on the candidate.

Personality/Aptitude Test

Aptitude and personality tests can provide more information about the applicants, which the recruiter can use to reach a final decision. There are various types of personality test but certain issues can arise with them. It is possible to measure the different dimensions of *extroversion and introversion* as well as dimensions of *stability and instability* using these tests. Likewise, aptitude tests measure a person's overall abilities and suitability for a specific type of job. However, while these sets of measures seem to be 'scientific', they are not foolproof predictors of future work presentation. It is entirely possible for the worker's performance to be affected by other external factors, and it is also possible for a person acquainted with such tests to give answers that are not a true reflection of their abilities and personality. However, used in conjunction with other hiring techniques they can provide some valuable aid in the decision-making process.

References

References from previous employers or character witnesses also provide important information and are a vital part of the hiring process. A typical procedure is to follow up on the references after the initial interview; some managers even ask for references prior to the interview. In the latter situation, current employers may not know that their employee is applying to another firm, which can create problems for him/her. However, information provided through references can be very helpful when deciding between candidates. While references can be very helpful, information collected through them should be used with caution, as they can be subject to bias.

- In the majority of cases, employers might offer excessively and explicitly damning criticism of the employee.
- In other cases, they might be excessively complimentary about an employee they wish to get rid of.
- In some other cases, the bad feelings created because an employee wishes to leave may cause the employer to be unfairly critical of the worker.

Selection Interviews

As indicated before, the selection interview's purpose is to obtain additional information about an applicant in order to make a better choice. Employers often feel a good deal more comfortable about judgements that they make in an interview than is justified by experience. Interviews have a number of flaws: You have to judge people based on only one short meeting. People tend to 'perform' in a formal interview; hence, an interview may not necessarily provide a true reflection of their work abilities.

It is also possible that a formal environment will make some people nervous, thus hindering their performance. The interview depends on subjective judgement and may involve the 'halo effect' or a prejudice. Some of these issues can be resolved by having a few colleagues present during the interview process, and by making a judgement based on various sources of information.

Prior to the Interview

1. All other managers taking part in the interviewing process will have been identified and invited.
2. The interview procedure has been identified; test and role plays to be used in the selection of applicants have been selected.
3. Make sure you have read through all the candidates' application forms and identified issues that need to be explored with each candidate.
4. You have identified a quiet and available room for the interviews.
5. Sufficient time has been allocated for each interview.
6. You have invited the candidates to attend at the appropriate time.
7. The room layout has been considered along with the style of the interviews.

During the Interview

1. Adhere strictly to the time allocated - poor time-keeping can create a bad impression.
2. Start by introducing yourself and the other interviewers; this helps the candidate relax.
3. Explain the interview and selection process; in particular, let them know when they might expect the result.
4. Assume a relaxed and friendly style.
5. Start with simple, general questions.
6. Ask open-ended questions, as they prompt interviewees to talk.
7. Listen to answers with care and pick up on issues that arise.
8. Always give the impression that you are interested in the candidate and are genuinely concerned to provide him/her with a fair chance.
9. Give the candidate an opportunity to ask questions.
10. Understand that the interview is a two-way process and you want each candidate to depart with a good impression of the organisation.
11. Close the interview on time and in an orderly manner, and make sure the candidate knows what will happen next.

After the Interview

1. Take notes about what the candidate says – using a scoring system can help to make the selection.
2. If more than one interviewer is involved, confer with the others to decide on the candidate to be selected.
3. If references were not asked for earlier, request them now; once they arrive, confirm the appointment (or reconsider in the light of the references).
4. Write to the successful applicant confirming the appointment and give instructions on joining. The selection and recruiting procedure has to be carried out in a fair and legal way.

Once the selection has been made, an induction programme has to be instigated to help ease the new employee into their new job quickly and effectively.

New Employee Induction Programmes

An Induction Programme helps to welcome the new employee and make them feel that they belong to the organisation. The organisation benefits from providing induction training in the following ways:

- Helps to reduce customer service problems;
- Enhances productivity levels with new employees becoming effective more rapidly;
- Shows statutory duties for safe and hygienic working practices.

Regardless of whether new employees are part-time, full-time, temporary, or casual workers, they will all need Induction Programmes.

When an Induction Programme is being planned, it is essential to consider the information and experiences that will help the new employees to settle in and how to provide them. Normally, it is advisable to deliver an Induction Programme over a period of time. It is unwise to provide excessive amounts of information on the first day. Good Induction Programmes take place over the initial few weeks.

On the First Day of Work

Remember that every new recruit is likely to be nervous about their new job, and the chief objective is to put them at ease. Excessive amounts of pressure and insufficient preparation for work pressures are major causes of staff turnover. Ensure that each newcomer knows the location of the main facilities they will need. It is helpful to use a 'buddy' system for the new recruit, with the established colleague showing them how things work and helping them fit in. A basic health and safety rundown and an explanation of proper hygiene procedures is beneficial at this point. While practices differ, induction is effective when the new employee is timetabled as an 'extra' for the initial few days. He/she may be asked to work with a more experienced employee, as it is vital to minimise the pressure at the early learning stage.

Further Reading:

- ✓ *Recruitment and Selection: Strategies for Workforce Planning and Assessment, (2020), Carrie A. Picardi*
- ✓ *Call all Volunteers: New Ideas for recruitment and managing, (2021), By Dr. Jesse O. Bolinger*