

Strategy to define the profile of excellence of a commercial talent, as a competitive advantage of human capital for a leading company in northern Mexico

Estrategia para definir el perfil de excelencia de un talento comercial, como ventaja competitiva de capital humano para una empresa líder del norte de México

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Abstract

The human capital represents, without a doubt, an indispensable force to increase productivity and efficiency in companies overseas. The objective was to define a profile of excellence for talents who can participate in a leading company in northern Mexico. A second objective was to prepare a judgment of the company regarding its recruitment and personnel selection procedure. The parameters were qualitative and a questionnaire with open questions was used as a data collection instrument. The ideal profile for each position was identified considering previous experience, academic training, skills, and even intangible variables such as the company's organizational culture. The coordination of the candidate's work area and the recruitment area, as well as the selection of personnel, was analyzed. The priority of company employees to fill their vacancies over external candidates was considered. In addition, a structuring of a competency model was pondered. The results showed that in the selection process, the verification of the information provided in the resume, such as personal and work references, is emphasized.

Intellectual capital, Personal, Ideal profile

Resumen

El capital humano representa, sin duda, una fuerza indispensable para elevar la productividad y eficiencia en las empresas en todo el mundo. El objetivo fue definir un perfil de excelencia para talentos que puedan participar en una empresa líder del norte de México. Un segundo objetivo fue elaborar un diagnóstico de la empresa referente a su procedimiento de reclutamiento y selección de personal. Los parámetros fueron cualitativos y como instrumento de colección de datos se utilizó un cuestionario con preguntas abiertas. Se identificó el perfil ideal para cada puesto considerando experiencia previa, formación académica, competencias, e incluso variables intangibles como la cultura organizacional de la empresa. Se analizó la coordinación del área de trabajo del candidato y el área de reclutamiento así como la selección del personal. Se contempló la prioridad de los colaboradores de la empresa para cubrir sus vacantes, sobre candidatos externos. Además, se ponderó una estructuración de un modelo por competencias. Los resultados mostraron que en el proceso de selección, se enfatiza la verificación de la información proporcionada en la hoja de vida, como referencias personales y laborales.

Capital intelectual, Personal, Perfil ideal

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Introduction

Human capital is defined as a way of valuing the set of experiences, knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, values, habits and capacities of the collaborators that a company, an organisation or a country has (Kenton, 2023). This human capital contributes to the increase in the productive labour force, which is why it can be considered the most basic and important resource for generating economic growth, accompanied by increases in productivity and efficiency (Ross, 2021).

In the middle of the last century, the economist Schultz (1961) mentioned that education and training should be considered as an investment as it would lead to higher productivity in companies. In fact, the term intellectual capital was coined, which to this day is known as human capital or human capital theory.

Once the human capital theory was generated, it was expected that in its first decades there would be a significant upturn in the transformation of firms; however, this effect did not occur (Schultz, 1983). It became evident that labour productivity did not depend solely on investment in staff education, but that other factors such as taxation, wage controls, company incentives and strong public sector intervention were required to minimise differences in the pay scale among workers (Taberner, 1999).

Some companies in Mexico and other countries do not have solid job descriptions in the commercial area, which means that, even when the recruitment and selection process is rigorous, the expected results are not obtained when the candidate is hired. As a consequence, the company suffers a loss of time and an unanticipated waste of money.

Considering this background, the objective of this study was to define the process for the selection of the profile of excellence of a competitive talent for a leading company in the north of Mexico. A second objective was to elaborate a diagnosis of the current recruitment and selection procedure, suggesting competitive roles and skills by assigning a value to the requirements of an ideal profile.

Methodology

The study was carried out in a leading company in the north of Mexico, in a Mexican company, founded in the city of Chihuahua, state of Chihuahua, Mexico in 1957. The company is a proudly Chihuahuan firm, with an international presence, which stands out for the production of environmentally friendly products that support the agricultural sector in solving productivity and quality problems in their crops.

The company's mission is to develop and commercialise differentiated products and technologies in agriculture with the purpose of contributing to a sustainable nature. The company has an international presence with the products it manufactures.

It is important to mention that its vision is "...to be the company with the largest market share in the segment of agricultural products with a sustainable approach in Latin America", and in order to achieve this vision, the company is continuously applying expansion strategies, either by developing new products or by searching for new national and international markets.

To achieve the objective of the study, an interview was designed and applied to the person in charge of the recruitment and selection process of the commercial area within the company, in order to identify through this field research the selection models used by the company. The population was external and/or internal candidates for vacant and newly created positions for employees of the company. The parameters were qualitative given that the object of study is a group of people who are already working in the company in different positions of the four positions to be analysed. For this research, a "questionnaire" with open-ended questions was used as a data collection instrument, in which the occupants of the different positions mentioned above answered the questions posed.

With the results of the questionnaires, the most relevant aspects to be considered for the adequate job description of the different positions of interest were determined. The ideal profile for each position was identified, the recruitment and selection process was conducted more efficiently as well as with a more specific approach to meet the real needs of the company.

In other words, the profiles of each applicant were compared with the ideal profile already established by the company.

Results

Considerations regarding the company under study

The company, through the person in charge, mentioned that, from their point of view, it is essential to draw up a profile of the position. This profile should consider logical aspects such as previous experience, academic training, competencies, and even intangible variables such as the company's organisational culture. In this last aspect, the coordination of the candidate's area of work and the area of recruitment and selection of personnel should be considered, as well as the priority of the company's collaborators to fill its vacancies, over external candidates. In addition, the structuring of a competency-based model.

The results show that in the selection process, emphasis is placed on the verification of the information provided in the curriculum vitae, such as personal and employment references. Candidates are asked to provide a letter stating that they have no criminal or police record, state and federal databases are checked to ensure that they do not have any lawsuits, the IMSS is checked for weeks of contributions, and payroll receipts are requested for the candidate's current or last job.

The company takes the recruitment and selection process seriously and therefore has an adequate budget to cover the costs of psychometric tests, medical examinations and to cover the annual membership fees for different specialised employment websites such as OCC, INDEED and LINKEDIN.

Sometimes the head of the area applying for the vacancy puts pressure on the recruiter to speed up the candidate selection process. The vacancy application (personnel requisition) that the company has, has all the necessary spaces for the area requesting the personnel to specify the profile of the vacancy they need. There is a flow chart of the recruitment and personnel selection process, as the recruitment and personnel selection process is of utmost importance for the company.

It is important to mention that there is a database of resumes of potential candidates, easy to consult in an exclusive e-mail for recruitment. For a quick selection of resumes, the analysis of education, experience and diplomas is used as a filter to eliminate unsuitable candidates. Management approval of the vacancy application, which initiates the recruitment and selection process, can take 1 to 3 days, while the recruitment and selection process takes 1 to 15 days. The most common means of recruitment used by the company is a mixed programme (staff recommendations, agreements with universities and specialised employment websites).

The selection process always includes the following tests: knowledge, psycho-technical, psychometric, psychological, personality and simulation tests. The final decision to select the candidate to fill the vacancy is taken by mutual agreement between the immediate supervisor and the human resources manager.

The necessary resources available to the company for the selection process are human, technical and/or technological, financial, administrative and marketing. The company currently uses the following internal recruitment techniques: voice-to-voice with employees and email recruitment.

Researchers Robertson and Smith (2001) documented an excellent analysis of the recruitment process, emphasising the fact that many companies do not upgrade in the short term. These authors suggested the use of meta-analyses for selection and an article by Schmidt and Hunter (1998) identified meta-analyses with 17 selection methods.

Of the responses (Analysis)

For the analysis of the results, the interviews were first transcribed and then the responses were grouped according to similarities and differences, as well as general aspects and specific positions. The data were then contrasted with the theory and the textual testimonies were analysed to enrich the analysis of the data collected from the interview. These were extracted from the transcripts of the questionnaires resulting in the following job descriptions of the different positions: sub-zone leader, zone leader, regional leader and market leader.

Job description: Sub-area leader

The objective of the position is to promote the productive development of farmers by seeking to increase their profitability and thus capture a part of that incremental value for the company, through the implementation of the business model and the demonstration of the value offer to the client.

The individual responsibilities of the position are: Meet your Demonstration Process budget to ensure effective Demand Generation. To be fully conversant with the Value Offerings and their demonstration process. Comply with the specific training programme for your role. Conduct field tests (quick and folios), follow up on them and document the results obtained. Prepare progress reports and follow-up of activities of the operational plan, through the internal platform.

Conduct meetings and presentations in the field, with the intention of disseminating the results, influencing the generation of demand. Maintain and increase the number of customers served under the company's business model. Maintain an adequate physical condition to be able to deliver face-to-face advice in the field.

Responsibilities shared with other positions are: Support the area leader in generating demand from potential customers. Collaborate with the commercial management leader with information. Collaborate with marketing activities. Support in the collection of information on customer non-conformities.

Organisational Parameters: Reports to the area leader. Interaction with marketing and technical support staff. Interaction on dotted line with other Sub-zone Leaders and interaction with market development leader.

Job description: Zone Leader

The objective of the position is to lead your team in the implementation of the company's business model, in the customer segment defined as a priority in your area. He/she must transmit to his/her team a strategic sales vision, as well as a discipline in the implementation of the demonstration process and management indicators.

The individual responsibilities of the position are: Implement the company's business model, seeking to meet budgeted sales growth. Meet your demonstration process budget to ensure effective demand generation. Fully understand the value proposition and its demonstration process. Compliance with market development. Comply with the specific training programme for your team and role in technical, commercial and marketing aspects. Updating commercial tools.

Plan, execute and control the activities of the operational plan corresponding to your position and to the sub-area leaders under your responsibility. Knowing the commercial agreements with the distributor, monitoring their compliance. Manage the relationship with commercial support entities such as technology transfer advisors; distributors and key accounts (Sales > 5MDP). Preparation, execution and control of the expense budget for your area and create a climate of motivation, innovation and growth to maintain a good working environment.

Responsibilities shared with other positions are: Define strategies, action plans, annual sales budget in conjunction with the regional leader, business development leader and market development leader. Working together with the research and development area for the introduction of new products in the market, as well as conducting qualitative product research. Provide input to the Business Management Leader and assist with Marketing activities.

Organisational parameters are: Reports to the regional leader. Interaction with marketing, technical support, supply chain and records personnel. Commercial leader Mexico.

Interaction with market development leader.

Staff supervised are sub-area leaders and decision rights are sales budget and projection of their area, relationship with distributor in their area and distributor/customer commercial strategy.

Job description: Regional leader

The objective is to lead his team in the implementation of the company's business model in the customer segment defined as a priority in his region. He/she must transmit to his/her team a strategic sales vision, as well as a discipline in the implementation of the demonstration process and management indicators.

The individual responsibilities of the position are: Implement the company's business model, seeking to meet budgeted sales growth. To meet your demonstration process budget to ensure effective demand generation. To fully understand the value proposition and its demonstration process. Market development compliance. Manage the relationship with commercial support entities such as Technology Transfer Advisors; distributors and key accounts (Sales > 5MDP). Comply with the specific training programme of your team and role in technical, commercial and marketing aspects. Updating of commercial tools. Plan, execute and control the activities of the operational plan corresponding to your position and the leaders under your charge. Knowing the commercial agreements with the distributor, monitoring their fulfilment. Preparation, execution and control of the expense budget for your area. Create a climate of motivation, innovation and growth to maintain an adequate working environment.

The responsibilities shared with other positions are: Define strategies, action plans, annual sales budget in conjunction with the business development leader. Working together with the research and development area for the introduction of new products in the market, as well as conducting qualitative research of the products. Provide input to the business management leader and assist with marketing activities.

Organisational parameters are: Reports to the commercial leader Mexico. Interaction with marketing staff, technical support, supply chain, records and business management leader. Interaction with human capital. Staff supervised are indirect zone leaders and sub-zone leaders. Decision rights are: Sales budget and projection of their region. Relationship with the distributor in their region. Commercial strategy distributor/customer and technical strategy by crop in their region.

Their level of influence is in the recruitment of staff in their region and selection of the commercial channel.

Job description: Market development leader.

The objective of the position is to lead your team with discipline in the implementation of the company's demonstration process, in the crop segment defined as a priority in your area.

The individual responsibilities of the position are: Guardian of the value propositions per crop in his/her region. Designs the protocols for the demonstration of the value propositions per crop. Oversees the intelligent use of resources (services) that support demand generation. Follows up on the execution of demonstration processes. Controls the execution of the demonstration processes (percentage of progress, number of processes in execution, number of processes with satisfactory results in terms of quality and time). Training in the correct execution of the demonstration process and creating a climate of motivation, innovation and growth to maintain an adequate working environment.

The responsibilities shared with other positions are: Define strategies, action plans, annual sales budget in conjunction with the regional leader and commercial director. Working together with the research and development area for the introduction of new products in the market, as well as carrying out qualitative research on products. Provide input to the business management leader. Collaborate with marketing activities and support in the collection of information on customer non-conformities.

The organisational parameters are: Reports to the commercial director Mexico and interacts with commercial, marketing, technical support, supply chain and records staff.

Decision rights: Value offerings (current and future) per crop in the region. Demonstration protocols of the value offerings by crop and approval of the demonstration processes to be executed by the sub-zone and zone leaders.

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Conclusions

It is concluded that the company under study does not have updated job descriptions, which is causing: confusion in defining the limits of each position in the commercial area as they do not know exactly what the inherent functions are. A control system is recommended to evaluate the fulfilment of the objectives of the recruitment and selection process.

It is notorious that a certain candidate is recruited to fill a vacancy and it turns out that he/she was not the right person. It is also concluded that some employees are not clear about their place in the company and that their values are not aligned with the culture of the organisation. Some employees are uncertain as they do not know whether they have the authority or responsibility to make certain decisions.

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