

XpertUS and The Human Resources Department

The Personnel Department (a.k.a. HR) plays a vital role in any company. Apart from the traditional HR functions; increasingly management is turning to HR for maintaining records, providing services and facilities, ensuring compliance, etc. HR is involved in a multitude of decision-making activities such as;

1. Hiring (Resume & Interviews) & Downsizing;
2. Resource Allocation & Reassignment of staff;
3. Determining Career Development, Training Needs & Priorities,
4. Performance Evaluation & Bonus Payments;
5. Selecting Teams & Managers;
6. Promotions & Demotions;
- 7.
8. Turnover Analyses/Exit Interviews, etc.

If viewed correctly, all these require some very crucial decision-making effort. In most instances, some manager or a group of managers make these decisions "as they see fit". This inevitably brings about a high degree of "subjectivity", and the associated pitfalls. Recent publications have highlighted some glaring failures in the HR industry, and the need to make better decisions. The high turnover of personnel, especially of "key" personnel is very costly indeed.

XpertUS provides a method by which HR can make good decisions and defend these decisions. Transparency and Objectivity are indelible hallmarks of the XpertUS process.

Without a doubt, XpertUS is a very powerful decision-making tool; yet to get any benefit from it requires a commitment from the User. Users need to develop faith in the XpertUS process. We expect most HR personnel to reject XpertUS at first - this is natural. It will appear as if - it is a lot of work for a small benefit. If "hiring the wrong person" or the loss of a "disenchanted employee" is a trivial matter then there is nothing we can do to help. However if you consider decision-making in the HR function to be important, then you should use XpertUS to make the best possible decisions.

Barry Smart, an HR Consultant and a Psychologist stated that hiring and then losing a professional making 100K, actually would cost a company about 300K, when you factor in, training, loss of competitive edge, etc.

1. The Hiring Process - The Resume

The first step in the hiring process is a review of the resume. Is it consistent with the "Job Description"? Invariably many applicants will meet the basic requirements of the job description - possibly too many to interview. Yet we should recognize that they are all acceptable candidates. Few wish to admit to this - the Personnel Dept. should not eliminate candidates - simply because there are too many. They might inadvertently eliminate an excellent candidate. Yet it is necessary to select a manageable number for the Interview process.

If there are too many to process you may use additional criteria to reduce the number to an acceptable amount. However we warn you that this is a very dangerous step.

Once the candidates have been sorted out, it is time to run XpertUS - based on information contained in the resume. It is perfectly safe to develop an "interview" shortlist based on the results of XpertUS. This is the way HR should proceed.

2. The Hiring Process - The Interview

We all agree that there is no substitute for an interview. In that case, what is the real purpose of the interview? Whether we wish to admit or not, the interview process is, an expression and an interpretation of how we feel about the various issues - it is a very subjective process. We try to find out if the person we are interviewing shares our value system.

XpertUS is perfect for this type of decision-making exercise because it helps you to minimize the subjective element in decision-making.

The criteria used in this process are totally different to the one's used in the "resume" evaluation. We have provided an extensive list of generic criteria - the User should had his/her own criteria, as applicable.

3. Downsizing

"Downsizing" is dictated by bottom-line profit motives. Many reputable organizations offer a very tempting "severance" package to encourage employees to accept voluntary severance. If this is offered across-the-board, invariably the "best" employees take the offer, simply because they can easily get a job with one of the competitors. To circumvent this, some companies reserve the right of refusal; however this becomes a very delicate issue. The

other option is to selectively terminate employees. This too brings with it new problems.

1. The company is open to lawsuits, on the grounds of unfair treatment. An employee can claim (even frivolously) that he/she was discriminated. The cost of defending such a lawsuit could be very high.
2. It is possible that a "good" employee is terminated inadvertently.

Using XpertUS, the organization can minimize a company's exposure on both counts.

However, since XpertUS is based on the method of hierarchical ranking we need to run XpertUS as if we are trying to identify who should be kept, rather than who should be terminated. Those with the lowest points are the ones that should be considered for termination.

4. Promotions

The basic evaluation for promotions is very similar in principle to a "performance" evaluation, with some very significant difference. Is the person available? Will he be happy with the promotion? Would the new position be beyond the person's limiting capacity?

Using XpertUS you could ensure that all these conditions are satisfied. The risk of any errors is greatly minimized.

5. Resource Allocation (Team Selection)

Often companies have to assemble a team to undertake a specific task. Sometimes this can be a simple task not requiring a team of talented people. However often, teams are formed to undertake very important tasks, on a very tight schedule. Typically, this is done by a senior executive of the company, based on his/her own knowledge of the task and the people. Senior management rarely pays attention to the current commitments of the persons under consideration. They tend to use dictatorial powers. XpertUS is ideally suited for this function. Users will have to add their particular criteria depending on the objective. Some typical criteria have been provided.

6. Selecting Team Leaders & managers

Having formed the Team or the Task Force, it is often necessary to appoint a leader. What is important to note is that the criteria, that govern the selection of a leader or a manager, are not the same as that which apply to the "Team Selection" process.

This module contains relevant criteria for the selection of leaders and managers.

7. Reassignment of Personnel

Frequently, fresh graduates are rotated within the organization to give them an opportunity to get to know the company. However, there comes a time when they need to be assigned to a department, and possibly define their career within the organization. Managers take this too lightly. They think "Well, if he doesn't fit-in, we can move him elsewhere". This is a waste of time, talent and treasure. With XpertUS it is possible to work with the individual to identify the best fit. HR should demand that these young persons use XpertUS to make their decision. XpertUS will show their preferences. Then HR can assign them based on availability of space.

Additionally, experienced staff also requests moves, or the company has to eliminate a particular department. These situations require staff reassignment. A more difficult situation is when creating a new department, using persons within the organization. Here the benefit to the new department must be weighed against the loss of the host department.

These are very delicate situations. Management must pay serious attention to this type of situation. XpertUS is ideal for this type of problem. Take note of the criteria provided.

8. Performance Evaluation & Bonus Payments

It is human to assume that "you are as good as the next person". Yet companies have to evaluate employee performance. This is a manager's nightmare. If not handled properly, this could lead to disenchantment and the possible loss of the employee.

What better way - than to demonstrate to the employees how objectively this process was carried out. XpertUS is perfect for this type of situation.

The same arguments hold true when it comes to "bonus payments". Ask any manager, how difficult the process is. Now you have XpertUS to assist you.

9. Career Development & Training Priorities

XpertUS would let an employee determine how he/she wants his/her career development to progress.

Usually companies give employees a list of available courses, and the employee, either alone or along with the supervisor, select the courses. Furthermore most companies are in the habit of pushing all new hires through the same training program - irrespective of their personal traits and career objectives. This procedure is woefully inadequate.

If the manager is allowed to dominate (and influence the process) there is inevitable subjectivity towards the manager's strengths. If left to the employee, he/she will be utterly lost on the priorities.

Before starting the process, it is necessary to write an "objective" description,

this will help determine the criteria. Also the time-span must be identified. There is no point in taking a course that would help a person - ten years from now.

Special consideration should be given to criteria that are hierarchical. E.g. One cannot take a course in "Advanced-Programming" without first completing "Basic-Programming". The employee must meet the prerequisites of the particular training program. There is no way we can incorporate such an option into XpertUS; yet the HR can do this easily.

The company should review this list and add its own requirements.

Consider "Joe White". He has been with the company for 6 months. Now it is time to prepare a Career Plan for Joe. We recommend that you use the XpertUS to ensure a proper plan for Joe. Let Joe participate in his career development. Let Joe and his supervisor run the program, and indicate what Joe's priorities should be, as far as training is concerned.

10. The Exit Interview

If the old adage "Our Employees are Our Greatest Asset" holds true, then the departure of a valued employee is a serious loss. Companies invest a lot of time and money, training their employees. Of course many companies have exit interviews. Yet most companies only "pay-lip-service" to the "Exit Interview".

What is the real purpose of an exit interview?

At least we pretend that this benefits the company and the employee. How?

The employee gets chance to vent his/her frustration, while the company gets a chance to file a piece of paper. Unless the employee specifically gives his reasons for his departure, this type of interview serves little purpose. In fact most employees do not wish to "blow any bridges" thus you would rarely get much out of the employee. Using XpertUS, we can precisely identify the primary reasons for the employee's decision to leave the company.

We recommend that the "Exit-Interview" be conducted two stages.

First, let the employee run XpertUS and express his/her reasons. This will identify the reasons for the employee departure - from his/her standpoint - without any influence from the company. This is a very important step. Most employees are reluctant to "criticize" the company - hence are less than honest in this type of situation.

Second, a company representative should have the formal Interview - we like to call it a "chat-session". The representative will ask some standard and nonstandard questions, in an attempt to identify deficiencies that resulted in his/her departure. This will be the company's viewpoint.

These two pieces of information, especially the employee's XpertUS run, will be invaluable in tracking any inherent weakness within the company.

The algorithms contained within XpertUS are based on sophisticated statistical

methods developed for the study "random" sampling. Hence XpertUS is capable of evaluating the significance of inconsistencies and also indicating if the evaluation is reliable or not.

We tested this technique on several occasions and found the technique to be extremely reliable.

We are not implying that human beings should leave decision-making to computers. However we are convinced that XpertUS is a tool that you can use to effectively in your process of evaluation.

XpertUS has resolved many arguments during decision-making. Managers realize that they cannot simply think of the needs of their department - they have to think of the needs of the company. They also have to minimize subjectivity during the selection process. XpertUS can be a lifesaver to the Human Resources manager.