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EMPLOYMENT

GERMAIN GIROUX

In all enterprises, one finds buildings well looked after. In order to do this, departments specialize in purchasing, production or processing, selling or distribution. It is not possible to secure the desired profit without taking into account the principal factor: the personnel.

To manage is to organize, direct and control. If one admits the necessity of human capital in the enterprise, one must recognize the urgency of the need of an organization and a rational control of the employment of personnel. And among the problems that every firm must face in the direction of its personnel, employment is not the least.

The manager tries to push to the maximum the use of all the potentials by a multitude of means and procedures, of which the methodical application can often only be made by expert and specialized labour. The worker is not merely a unit of work or a number, he is also a technical capacity, an entity, in brief a human value that must be studied, directed, instructed and controlled, and all this from the first time he enters the factory.

Importance and various methods of hiring

Employment, as Léon Bourdel has written, « is the creation of human collaboration and the choice of the element which renews and animates, it is the call in the unknown, on which may depend the prosperity or failure of the enterprise ».

If the choice of a trade is one of the most important acts of a lifetime, the choice of collaborators is as important for the success of an enterprise, because there is inter-action between the worker and the employer. One must not take less care in choosing collaborators than in choosing a machine or a tool. Since a collaborator is required, it would be preferable to talk about personnel selection.

It is important to proceed to an employment which is adequate from the individual, social and economic point of view.

Everyone is guided in his search for happiness by his tastes, his character, his aptitudes and his individual interests. A methodical selection takes into account these very human factors in assigning a worker to a position for which he

seems naturally fitted. When in a task that suits him and pleases him, a worker is more efficient.

In the social sphere, the selection must take into account the safety of the worker, in avoiding accidents due to incompetence, physiological or psychical state. In the same way, a careful selection prevents the causes which destroy the physical and moral health of the worker by the elimination of the abnormal or undesirable elements, by the rejection of the subjects of which the physical health is not consistent with the requirements of the work to be done. There are also a few misfits, inconstant or unstable, who are also very often a great problem, not only for industry but also for the community, because they become readily factors of disorder and enemies of industrial peace.

We may state that, from an economic basis, a methodical selection of labour has for result a production maintained and increased, more stable employment, a better quality in production, fairer wages and at the same time a decrease in cost price because of a smaller labour turnover.

Various methods of employment

In the empirical system, the first-comer is hired from the impression of the moment. This method is very often at the mercy of many uncontrollable factors. It is superficial, dangerous and often mistaken, because it does not take into account the various things that make up the human factor.

Moreover, one may try to choose a worker because he possesses the qualifications and aptitudes to accomplish his future work efficiently, but without giving him any facility to train himself. Here the incapacity of the worker appears often rather late, making a burden for the enterprise and sometimes a nuisance for the community.

The ideal is to look out for the aptitudes of the candidate in order to better adapt him to his task, at the same time supplying the training and development facilities. Such a method of employment could not be carried out without the use of methods to discover the place where the candidate has the most chance of adapting himself.

Knowledge of job requirements

This is the analysis of the work to accomplish by the study of the different factors which affect the employee in the accomplishment of the task and which affect his admission. It is necessary to know the type of work with its particular aspects, physical and psychical aptitudes required to do it.

The establishment of job specifications presupposes a knowledge from the technical, physiological, psychical and also medical point of view of a task, all of the factors which affect admission to an employ. Observation and experiment are the surest guides in the preparation of this analysis, which includes the following principal points: identification of the task, description of duties and responsibilities inherent to the job, the making up of the list of working conditions: the place, the hours, the character and permanence of the work, the position of the worker; the qualifications required, such as physical, intellectual or psychical aptitudes; the establishment of a program of training, promotion or advancement; the fixing of the terms of hiring and the salary system; finally, it is necessary to imagine the personality of the worker, i. e. the appearance or education that he must have, if he must be bilingual or not, with initiative or not.

These items make up part of the details of job specifications. This description must make known all the aspects of an occupation to be filled and situate it in a definite enterprise. In order to make up these indispensable specifications, the foremen and competent workers must be consulted and, if possible, the one making out the specifications should do the work for a while.

Sources of labour supply

There is no point in going into much detail in regard to this. There are two main categories: interior and exterior. Among the interior sources, there are promotions and transfers as well as the recommendations made by the employees. The principal exterior sources are: former employees, friends, schools, government or private employment agencies, labour unions, classified advertisements, recruiting agents, clubs, associations, etc. All these sources have not the same value. They may vary from one locality to another. It is important to verify the results in order to furnish the industry with competent workers, able to satisfy the requirements of a task.

The Application Form

This form serves as a basis to try and discover if the qualifications of the candidate correspond to the requirements of the job specifications. It must be adapted to the necessary characteristics of the employ and carefully drawn up. It is current practice to divide the application form into five distinct parts: the civil status, schooling, professional training, former employment, and supplementary personal information. Once this important document is filled in, it is easier to continue with the interview.

The Interview

Interviewing is an art. The art consists in a general ability, combined with aptitude, knowledge and experience having for result to acquire information while furnishing the candidate the desired information. The study of the general rules of psychology helps avoid unpleasant errors, and to concentrate on the interesting facts and to control what the candidate has to say. There are no fixed rules and each candidate constitutes a separate case.

A good interview is based on collaboration and mutual confidence. The candidate must be treated with respect. It is an important point, because in case of hiring, he will be a more sincere collaborator, while, if he is rejected, he will keep a good impression of his interview. As much as possible, interviews should be private in order to make the applicant feel at ease. Without entirely dominating it, the person who is conducting the interview must not permit the applicant to take charge of it. In order to do this, it is necessary to know how to listen and speak at the opportune time in order to direct the conversation towards the exchange of the desired information.

There may be a preliminary interview, where it is comparatively easy to reject the inappropriate candidates. If a final interview is decided upon, it takes place after the tests have been taken and the medical examination made, which gives a better idea of the value of the candidate.

The Tests

Tests are instruments which help to point out and measure in a relative fashion the aptitudes of a candidate. They are a guide, a method and not

an end in themselves, to better judge and estimate. To obtain an appreciable result, it is necessary that the psycho-technician know the job requirements.

Which all goes to say that a test is based more on experiment than on reasoning, because the test represents with the most possible fidelity, the essentials of the task to be done, or the level of each function following a breaking down of each task into one of its functional elements. A test, to be of value, must count in measurable units the psychological factors of a task. Before applying the tests, it is necessary to verify the value. By applying them to competent workmen to know their relative value, one risks less to work in the dark.

The classification of tests in relation to their object are of three main categories: aptitude tests, tests of special abilities and personality tests.

Aptitude tests measure the latent capacity of a candidate to undergo an apprenticeship stage if the facilities for training are furnished him. They are of different categories: intellectual aptitudes and mechanical aptitudes.

In the latter case, we have aptitude and special abilities tests, dexterity and manipulation tests and performance tests, often completed by personality tests.

I will not attempt to describe to you the different kinds of tests applicable in industry, in use in Canada and the United States. There are some for all needs. In the tests, it is not so much the quantity of the forms which is important but rather the quality and the results of the test chosen. If the candidate shows by the tests that he possesses the necessary aptitudes, one may then direct the candidate towards the medical examination.

The Medical Examination

The work of an employee is more efficient if his health is good. The continuance of his employment, the quantity and the quality of his work are closely connected with his physiological state. Physical sickness and moral unrest are the great maladies affecting all workers. The inherent risks of the machine age have increased accidents, industrial diseases, the causes of exhaustion, etc. The elimination of physically inapt candidates meets a need of individual and collective security.

It is up to the doctor to state of just what the medical examination for new employees may consist. It may be permitted to note that this examination should be made to trace all the predispositions of the candidate to cause accidents or contract industrial diseases. And the doctor, in this case, uses as a guide and with advantage, the job specifications.

Placement

Hiring finishes with the admittance of the worker to the personnel and his introduction to his work. It is necessary to make each new employee feel that he is a member of the enterprise in order that each may give his collaboration to the group and the total efficiency. It is necessary to introduce the worker in order to show him that he is not an outsider but rather an appreciable help, a new worker, necessary to the production. It is also recommended that explanations be given on the history of the company, the type of product manufactured, the company's policy, the activities and the rules.

Conclusion

These are the main lines in employment, such as it should be carried out. With such a system, one is far from haphazard methods, where employees were hired « at the door ». Such a system suits particularly the aspirations of the worker and the needs of the industry. One sees recognition of his personality, whereas the other finds an appreciable profit. It has been proved to-day that the personnel of an industry is more than any single item on the balance sheet. Such a system of selection makes it easier to recognize the potential value of the labour required, at the same time eliminating « floaters », i.e. those workers who go from one industry to another, like a butterfly from flower to flower. This category of workers brings a kind of useless inflation, burdens the budget of an industry and contributes very often in altering the morale of the personnel and threatens industrial peace. Finally, a rational selection of personnel means for the employer, an appreciable economy in the cost of training, a lower rate in replacing personnel, a more stable labour supply, and a cost price more in line to meet growing competition.