

Mount Ridge Engineering Systems

Case Study

Dr. James Stanworth

RA7941018 Andy Chiou
RA7954079 Tina Wang
RA7954011 Annie Chi
RA7951225 Johnson Hung
95105003 YA Chung Ho

DATE: 2006/11/18

Introduction

At the invitation of the Board of Directors of Mount Ridge Engineering our group had been brought in to perform an analysis of the challenges faced by Mount Ridge Engineering's human resource department, and to offer possible solutions for the board's consideration. Our group has identified four problems that we have felt should be addressed. Each of the problems has been identified, along with the causes of the problem. Many possible solutions for each problem has been listed, along with the best solution our group has felt should be implemented. We have also recommended steps of implementation for each solution.

Give objectives here

Human Resource Structure and Plan Operations

After investigation of Mount Ridge Engineering's corporate human resource structure and plant operation procedures, it is in our opinion that currently the relationships between human resource policies and actual plant operations are tenuous at best. Although we are confident the human resource department has established a fairly complete set of procedures and policies, the actual implementation of the policies at plant level operations do not seem to be thorough enough.

There are several causes for this situation:

1. Rapid expansion preventing proper dissemination of human resource policies.
2. Lack of comprehensive human resource training program.
3. Lack of proper human resource related internal controls.

After analyzing the current situation of Mount Ridge Engineering, we have identified the following possible solutions:

1. Hiring of additional HR personnel. Mount Ridge Engineering's current success owes in part to its timely ability to meet demands. In order to keep up with the pace of expansion, additional HR personnel could be hired in order to train new factory employees in proper HR procedure. However, the salary of additional HR personnel would add a strain to Mount Ridge Engineering's other advantage of low cost.
2. Slowing down expansion to ensure proper training. While a more cost conscious approach than the above, this could possibly jeopardize Mount Ridge Engineering's ability to meet current demands.

As discussed with the other group
Valid but cost issue is of key concern.

Not likely. Need to train around this problem. Look for slack times to train in.

3. Establishment of HR internal controls. This involves establishing a proper chain of command from headquarters down to individual plants, particularly in the form of document processing. Another cost conscious approach, and if applied properly, should ensure maximum application of human resource policies with minimum retraining of current employees involved. However some time may be needed in order for the new internal control practices to fully propagate through the plants.

Focus to suggestion.

It is in the opinion of our group that the third solution should be the best solution for Mount Ridge Engineering. The establishment of proper HR internal controls should allow HR at corporate headquarters to exert greater control over daily plant operations. Human resource issues such as hiring and firing of employees, wage increases and promotions, and leave of absence should be signed and verified by human resource personnel before taking effect. This consolidation of human resource management is not without precedent, as the Department of Defense Education Activity had done so in the 1990s to great effect.¹ Another benefit of consolidation would be the proper adherence to relevant manuals as produced by corporate headquarters. This is not only a corporate concern over proper understanding of company policy, but also a legal concern as established in *Lewis v. Equitable Assurance Soc.*, where the jury found employee manuals to be legally binding agreements. A proper set of internal controls would also prove to be popular with Mount Ridge Engineering's auditors.

Meeting minimum legal requirements is important and a key responsibility of HR. However they need to move beyond compliance to get to performance. Some areas e.g., termination are likely to have more risk of legal implications. Other areas like hiring less so. Keep much HR activity (e.g., hiring at a local level will ease the load on HR. However training is key here.

For implementation of the HR internal controls, we recommend the Chief Operating Officer be the person to make the announcement regarding the change. The memorandum should be addressed to the entire company, with emphasis upon each individual plant

Question 2

Though Newcombe had already developed many benefit packages of human resource as company policies at the beginning, seems nobody followed. Such as, Johnson didn't notify his supervisor when he's absent, Braxton added the incorrect reason through the termination form for Johnson's leave, and the job Johnson did was out of employee handbook. Thus, the root causes of the problems are as below :

1. What Johnson had done was out of his job description or employee

handbook:

Johnson would like to have a promotion due to know a good deal about the equipment operator's job. But seems the standard promotion channel was not set up or Braxton didn't follow the system when doing evaluation. Hence Johnson did a lots but still couldn't get the promotion from Braxton.

2. Johnson didn't follow personnel regulations when he's absent:
As Johnson was not satisfied with the annual evaluation, hence, he was absent without notifying his boss.
3. Drawbacks of the current termination form:
There was no sign loop for HR department to sign, and the leave reason was written by the supervisor not the employee

According to the above mentioned problems, here under are the alternative solutions:

1. Re-designing the termination form and process procedure :
The HR department should be involved in the sign loop, employees should maintain the reason of leave and no revise of the termination form is allowed. For the process procedure, all termination forms should be feedback to HR department, and the employees should have the interview with HR department as well.
2. Correcting the leave reason for Johnson as per his request.
3. Auditing each department to know if it implement company policy or not
4. Setting up a communication channel for employees to highlight or for related supervisors to ask help
5. Reviewing the employee handbook and make sure that all managers know the employee handbook is a legal concern as well. (Due to a jury construed the handbook as a contract of employment that was breached by the employer².)

Considering the company current policy that was low cost production short-term best alternative will be "Re-design the termination form and procedure". And in order to make sure all related departments all clear with company policies, auditing activity can be held at the end of the year. Suppose hiring additional HR personnel is also necessary to support related activities.

Why the form?
No one really seems to know what to do.
Procedure written down but not followed / known. This is primarily a training issue.

Question 5:

From the case, we may understand that the company's strategy is to centralize HR function. However, now the relationship between HRD and other departments are not very close. Even though the company has handbooks or manuals, no employees implement those rules. In the Johnson case, the plant supervisor may decide by his own without noticing HRD. Moreover, he did not put a correct reason of Johnson's resignation and probably will put the company in an illegal situation. We learned that the organization structure is quite loose.

If most employees do not have a clear picture of the company's basic policy and regulation, through the company's expanding, they will hire more and more employees and then similar cases will happen again. HRD should provide a combination of administrative expertise and act as a strategic partner within their company.

We have some alternatives for these problems:

1. Hire more HRD employees to work in the plants and other departments if necessary. If in every department, there is a HRD staff, then HRD person may take care of related issue daily and have the first hand information. Thus, it may make sure the working flow in the plants and prevent plant employees of making decision wrong in related issue.
2. Provide training of company policy and procedure. HRD should offer basic training course of company policy for each department including handbooks and manuals especially for the plants located in other cities. The contents should include the company organization, working flow ...etc. Firstly, it may enhance relationship between HRD and employees. Secondly, employees will have better understanding about company policy and related executive issue. If HRD may offer training to employees, they will understand the role which HRD plays in this company and have more close relationship with HRD. For senior employees, they will correct their wrong procedures and concepts.

Since it would increase more cost if they hire more HRD employees to work in the plants, then offer training to plant employees would be the best alternative to implement. HRD people may either go to plants routinely to offer courses and inspect their flow or plant employees go to head office to accept trainings. This method should be checked after 6 months and see the benefit. **Yes - validate approach**

Question 6

What strategic human resource issues will Newcombe likely face as the company expands to the Northeast? How might this expansion affect the structure of organization and its human resource department?

Through this article, we can see that the Human Resources would face a lot of problems such as the older Human Resource policies, understand the legal and governmental regulations, and the benefits should be changed to fit the right now situations. For example, if the employees got a promotion or dissatisfied with his pay, who can ask for problem or answer them questions? Those are very important because the company may have same problem happen again in the Northeast. During the company expanding, they may need more employees which is hired only by H.R. department at corporate headquarter. If laborer got problem, the H.R. cannot be directly to handle. As this case, the structure of organization should have to make a little change for more efficiency.

Although Newcombe had developed benefit packages such as employee handbook, job description, a salary program, a supervisor's manual, and other basic personnel policies, those are too old to handle right now situations. The biggest problems have been getting management to understand the legal and governmental regulations. Because of the corporate headquarter, laborer got problem, the H.R. cannot be directly to handle. The structure of organization should have to make little change for more efficiency.

Solutions

1. The older benefit packages should have to organize well and add some stipulation to fit right now situations.
2. Make sure plant management and H.R. management to understand the legal and governmental regulations to avoid same problem happen again in the Northeast. **yes**

3. H.R department had better to under the senior vice president chief operating officer. The H.R. cannot be directly to handle problem because faraway from the corporate headquarter.

Yes - but if have one or two HR personnel 'on the road' contact can be increased.

Conclusion

Through the above discussion, we may understand that **Management Decision** Engineering Systems is expanding and HR function just cannot play a significant role in this company. We have several alternatives for this problem **Summarize key issues. Make recommendations clearly for each.** going on job training program, increasing internal control, refreshing, emphasis company policy, enhancing chain of command in order for executive of document processing, implementing a HR strategy policies...etc. They may evaluate those cost and decide which would be the effective way for their company at this moment.

Reference:

1. *Lewis v. Equitable Assur. Soc.*, 361 N.W.2d 875 (Minn. App., 1985)
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3. "Consolidating Personnel Administration Services: Suggestions from the Department of Defense Education Activity's Experience" Woodward, Malcom S. *Public Personnel Management*; Fall 1997.

PRESENTATION FEEDBACK			
GROUP:	ANDY, TINA, ANNIE, JOHNSON, YA-CHUNG		
A	B	C	D
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40%	30%	20%	10%

32	26	15	8
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Comments

TIME 11.02 c.11.39

- Annie – clear introduction – good touch to introduce members and parts they will cover.
- Andy – nice job of video! Could use white board to give key points / have MSWord File / PPT open (but not in view mode) to give point which team member use (hear next slide but not see). Detail, though for reference. Key issues coming out clearly. ‘We feel that this grants too much power...’ This is moving beyond the objective part you’ve done well earlier.
- Key issues: Overly rapid expansion (rapid yes but overly – may be not. HR now has to quickly embed policy through training and close HR contact/ Lack of HR training / Poor HR controls – agree this is a key issue to get clear, particularly in light of legal issues that could loom. Whilst priority to fix need to quickly move to a more *proactive angle of increasing general HR support and contact.*
- Tina – bring points on one-by-one. Key issue – HR not in inside loop – post-exit interviews is a useful approach. Recommendations – follow the audit idea but why redesign the form? This appear to be more of a procedure issue.
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- Ya-Chung – Consistency of pay – key issue, across grades and for job done. Regulation and practise will be different in NE. One solution could be to have support to Newcombe to handle issues for the different regions. Time is an issue – focus on key issues to move more quickly.
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Fired v. termination

Theoretical foundation

Grade: 81%

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PRESENTATION FEEDBACK			
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A	B	C	D
Are ideas presented connected with the aim of the presentation?	Are the ideas presented clearly supported with evidence and logical argument?	Is it easy to follow & to understand? (Are the slides clear and easy to follow e.g. use of new pictures, words, graphs)	Overall impression (is it a group presentation etc.?)
40%	30%	20%	10%

32	26	15	8
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<p>Comments TIME 11.02 c.11.39</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annie – clear introduction – good touch to introduce members and parts they will cover. • Andy – nice job of video! Could use white board to give key points / have MSWord File / PPT open (but not in view mode) to give point which team member use (hear next slide but not see). Detail, though for reference. Key issues coming out clearly. ‘We feel that this grants too much power...’ This is moving beyond the objective part you’ve done well earlier. • Key issues: Overly rapid expansion (rapid yes but overly – may be not. HR now has to quickly embed policy through training and close HR contact/ Lack of HR training / Poor HR controls – agree this is a key issue to get clear, particularly in light of legal issues that could loom. Whilst priority to fix need to quickly move to a more <i>proactive angle of increasing general HR support and contact.</i> • Tina – bring points on one-by-one. Key issue – HR not in inside loop – post-exit interviews is a useful approach. Recommendations – follow the audit idea but why redesign the form? This appear to be more of a procedure issue. • Consistency across plants is critical here for fairness and pragmatic legal reasons too. • Ya-Chung – Consistency of pay – key issue, across grades and for job done. Regulation and practise will be different in NE. One solution could be to have support to Newcombe to handle issues for the different regions. Time is an issue – focus on key issues to move more quickly. • Johnson – avoid split words (Con clusion); agree before hand what will be
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covered so time keeping is smoother.

Fired v. termination

Theoretical foundation

Grade: 81%

PRESENTATION FEEDBACK KERRY/EINSTEIN/ZAYA/SOPHIA/CRAIG'S GROUP			
GROUP:	2 (SECOND PRESENTATION – TEAM ANDY)		
A	B	C	D
Are ideas presented connected with the aim of the presentation?	Are the ideas presented clearly supported with evidence and logical argument?	Is it easy to follow & to understand? (Are the slides clear and easy to follow e.g. use of new pictures, words, graphs)	Overall impression (is it a group presentation etc.?)
40%	30%	20%	10%
38	27	17	8
1. Nice simple logical flow by answering case questions. 2. Benefit packages a little confusing. Maybe a slide to organize the benefit package status and recommendations. 3. Presentation a little long due to repetition of material covered.			
Grade: 90%			

PRESENTATION FEEDBACK: GROUP 1- VEASNA, HOANG, IVO, UDOM, FUNKUIE			
GROUP:		ANDY (ABSENTED), WANG, CHI, HUNG, HO... (CASE 1: HRM FUCTION)	
A	B	C	D
Are ideas presented connected with the aim of the presentation?	Are the ideas presented clearly supported with evidence and logical argument?	Is it easy to follow & to understand? (Are the slides clear and easy to follow e.g. use of new pictures, words, graphs)	Overall impression (is it a group presentation etc.?)
40%	30%	20%	10%
35 ¹	25 ²	17 ³	7 ⁴
<p>Comments</p> <p>¹ Presented ideas connected with the aims of topic is clear direction to understand</p> <p>² This group should put some clear information in slides related to flow of presentation for attracting audiences—(e.g. what kind of best solution of HR policies and benefit package have been using in this case...)</p> <p>³ The information in each slide is easy to understand by answering the questions, but group presentation should use the graph or flow chart of company working flows to show about main points of presentation and so on.</p> <p>⁴ Impression of group presenters should show some evidences associated with previous scholars' ideas (e.g. The scholar A (2000), showed that....)</p> <p>General feedback from group evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation is connected with the contents of case - Lack of participation during presentation in class - One of group members doesn't know clearly about the case - According to one of presenters mentions that HR policies in this case seem to be poorly in management decision process (e.g. when some one will be absented who can handle for that job?) what should you do, if you are responsible for HR mangers or line managers? 			
Grade: 84 %			

PRESENTATION FEEDBACK: ROY'S GROUP			
GROUP:	ANDY'S GROUP (GROUP 2)		
A	B	C	D
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40%	30%	20%	10%
30	25	15	10
Comments 1. A clear and smooth presentation flow and good presenters. 2. No any references or theories are showed, only personal ideas. 3. They suggested that each plant should have only superintendent to handle all HR situations which we think is inappropriate. 4. Could they have Andy check English? 5. They organized it well from beginning to end.			
Grade: 80%			

PRESENTATION FEEDBACK JONAS' GROUP			
GROUP: ANDY CHIOU, TINA WANG, ANNIE CHI, JOHNSON HUNG, YA CHUNG HO			
A	B	C	D
Are ideas presented connected with the aim of the presentation?	Are the ideas presented clearly supported with evidence and logical argument?	Is it easy to follow & to understand? (Are the slides clear and easy to follow e.g. use of new pictures, words, graphs)	Overall impression (is it a group presentation etc.?)
40%	30%	20%	10%
35	26	17	9
<p>Comments</p> <p>Presentation well done without too much reading. Very open. Very clear.</p> <p>Some facts were wrong. ex. Johnson quit; he wasn't fired.</p> <p>Some new, diverse ideas were brought up.</p>			
Grade: 87%			