

Comprehensive Exam Question Pool B

Masters Degree in Human Resources

Division of Professional Studies

Created January 2007

*Due to program changes over the past few years, individual student eligibility to take the Exam should be determined from the catalog of the year of their admission to the MS HR program. **This question pool is for students in the 2006 catalog forward.** Consult with your local campus to determine the eligibility requirements.*

FORMAT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

Students will be given questions on eight (8) core courses in the HR program and must answer any **three (3)** of the questions. You will be required to respond to any three (3) of those questions by selecting 1 question from each group.

Group 1 Legal Issues

HRCU 630 Conflict and Negotiation

HRCU 648 Legal Issues

Group 2 HR Generalist

HRCU 644 Recruitment and Selection

HRCU 645 Human Resources Systems

HRCU 646 Training and Development

HRCU 650 Strategic Human Resources Management

Group 3 Remuneration

HRCU 647 Compensation

HRCU 653 Benefits

Group 1 Legal Issues

HRCU 630 Conflict and Negotiation

Question 1

Surfing the net on Company Time

Helen Barnett was shocked by what she was seeing on the computer screen at the desk of John Smith. On the screen was a picture depicting a sexual act! The picture appeared on a porn web site that John had evidently visited. Helen supervises 25 customer service representatives for Mega Insurance, a company specializing in home insurance. The job of a customer service representative is to assist clients with claims, insurance quotes, and other queries. Each customer service representative is to assist clients with claims, insurance quotes, and other queries. Each customer service representative works in a cubicle furnished with a computer, a desk, and a phone headset. Only Helen has a personal office. Mega Insurance prides itself in its efforts to make greater use of electronic technology in servicing its clients. Quotes for insurance and even

samples of policies are often sent to clients via the computer. Most of the information representatives need to answer customer queries is available at their fingertips.

John had been employed with Mega Insurance for the last six months. His 90-day performance review had been satisfactory. Lorraine Biggs, a co-worker who sat in the cubicle close to John, had inadvertently discovered the pornographic picture. When her computer malfunctioned, Lorraine had gone to John's cubicle to quickly retrieve some data to respond to a customer's query. It was not unusual for representatives to use another staff member's computer. John was out to lunch and his computer was in standby mode. When Lorraine, hit the enter key, the picture appeared and its graphic nature disturbed Lorraine. She immediately called Helen over to the workstation. When Helen check John's browser, it seemed that John had visited the website more than a dozen times that morning. She felt that she needed to confront him using company time in such an unproductive manner.

When John returned from lunch, Helen confronted him and told him about her discovery. John was irate. He told her that he had visited the site on his "break time," not company time. Furthermore, he felt that it was an invasion of his privacy that a co-worker and Helen had gained access to his computer. Helen told John she had no recourse but to report his behavior to the human resources manager. After he left Helen's office John himself went to the human resources manager Josie Downs. John believed that the supervisor's actions violated his constitutional right to privacy. Downs hold John, "even though the company did not have a written policy prohibiting visiting websites, all employees were expected to use their computers for work-related purposes. Unnecessary surfing ties up our ISDN line capacity and could impact service delivery. In addition, you exposed two of your fellow colleagues to "pornography." He then went on to say, "Mega Insurance operates on a trust basis in all of its relationships with employees."

Two days later, John was suspended for using the company's computer system for nonproductive, personal purposes. When he received his suspension notification, John told Downs that he "would sue Mega Insurance" for violating his right to privacy. He also told Downs that he knew of many other employees who "surfed" the net and used the email for personal purposes.

Questions:

1. Did Helen's actions invade John's right to privacy?
2. Was the company justified in suspending John? Why or Why not?
3. What should the key elements of an employee computer and web use policy? Be specific.
4. How would you address John's claim that others were doing the same thing but were not caught?

Question 2

Can He Wear an Earring at Work?

Peter Wood was hired as a personal services representative at North Town Bank, a small bank serving North Town for over 30 years. The bank had a reputation for being one of the more conservative places of employment in town. Because it offered good wages and benefits, the bank had no problems finding employees.

Personal service representatives sit at desks in the wood panel lobby of the bank to assist bank customers with account queries and other problems. All bank personnel were required to dress according to company rules. Men were expected to wear dress shirts and ties, while women were required to wear dresses or skirts. It was only recently that the bank had instituted “Casual Friday” on the last Friday of each month. On that Friday, employees could wear business casual clothes. Men could wear golf shirts or other shirts with collars. Women could wear slacks with appropriate blouses and/or sweaters. No jeans, shorts, halter tops, and t-shirts were allowed. Employees with tattoos were required to wear clothes that would cover tattoos.

When Peter reported for his first day at North Town Bank, he came dressed appropriately in a shirt and tie. But he also had a discreet but noticeable gold loop earring in his left earlobe. When the branch manager saw Peter wearing the earring, he told Peter to remove the earring since it was not consistent with the bank’s employee dress policy. Peter became upset and pointed out that no one had told him during the employment interview that he could not wear an earring to work. The branch manager pointed out that if Peter had worn the earring during the job interview; he probably would not have been hired. He further stated that, because of the earring, Peter did not present the professional image they desired for their personal service representatives. Peter pointed out that female personal service representatives were allowed to wear earrings at work. The branch manager said it was customary in society for women to wear earrings but not men. He again asked Peter to remove the earring. When Peter refused he was fired.

Peter felt that he had been discriminated against and vowed that he would take legal action. In the employee handbook, there was the following reference to the wearing of earrings: “Visible jewelry must be small and tasteful as determined by management. Jewelry must not interfere with job performance.”

Questions

1. Is Peter a victim of discrimination?
2. Evaluate the branch manager’s comment that Peter would not have been hired had he worn the earring during the employment interview.
3. Evaluate North Town’s dress policy. Is it clear? Is it appropriate? Is it legal?
4. What Resolution style would you recommend to the Branch Manager? HR Manager? What is the probability that this is avert legal action? Explain.

Question 3

Spiked Milk

A reputable southern construction company employs six experienced construction supervisors for its various construction jobs. These supervisors have the overall responsibility of hiring and firing and seeing that the construction proceeds as close to time and cost schedules as possible. They also have the responsibility of overall quality control of the construction.

Larry East, age 55, has been a supervisor for this company for many years. He is never absent and has established a reputation for getting the job done right and close to schedule. He has supervised the construction of several prominent building and is now supervising the construction of several prominent buildings and is now supervising the construction of a college fraternity house. Larry's approach to handling his employees is firm and sometimes harsh. He doesn't take any back talk, and everyone who works for him usually earns his or her pay or isn't on the job for very long.

The owner and manager of the company had become concerned about Larry because rumors implied that he was an alcoholic and that he drank on the job. The owner knew that Larry drank a lot and had a stormy, cavalier home life, but he didn't know whether he was drinking on the job.

One day, the manager was talking with Larry and noticed a definite bad breath odor smelling quite alcoholic. This happened on several occasions, and office and storeroom clerk noticed that almost every day he would come in and buy two Cokes at a time then take off in his company truck, presumably back to his job site.

The manager decided to talk to Larry about this subject. When he confronted Larry with the rumors, the bad breath, and two Cokes at a time, Larry denied that he was drinking. He said that the rumors were just that and that the two Cokes were for himself and his carpenter supervisor. The manager told him that he would have to let him go if he were ever caught drinking on the job. He reminded Larry that the firm's progressive discipline system included a rule that states, "No employee is permitted to go on duty or remain on duty if he or she possesses, is under the influence of, or is consuming an alcoholic beverage. Violation of this policy will result in dismissal."

About a year later, when the construction season was again in full swing, stores began floating around about Larry's drinking. The employees on his job talked about the quart of milk he drank every day. They wondered why he had started drinking so much of it lately and wondered if he "spiked" it and used it to combat his odorous breath. Sometimes his speech seemed definitely slurred, but Larry was gravel-voiced and had sloppy speech habits anyway. The workers also were amused by the stories he'd tell about things that had happened to him. They were just stories, of course, but lately they were getting pathetically farfetched and made no sense at all.

The manager couldn't help finding out about some of the things that were said about Larry, and he wondered what he should do. Larry had never actually been caught drinking. His construction job was going up satisfactorily, but it was a little behind schedule due to the

inability to get good carpenters and laborers at the beginning of the construction season. Worker turnover was perhaps a little higher on this job than average.

Questions:

1. What course of action should the manager follow? Why?
2. To what extent should the manager go to try to catch Larry drinking on the job?
3. What action, if any, should the manager take if Larry confesses to being an alcoholic?
4. Does the manager presently have sufficient proof that Larry is working under the influence of alcohol?
5. Critique the firm's alcoholism rule.

Question 4

Motivating and Maintaining Morale during Downsizing

MEI is an organization involved in the retail industry operating more than 100 retail stores. The company's headquarters is going through what is termed "modernization." A new information system is being implemented which will completely alter the way the firm does business. In addition, it will affect the staffing required by the company. The new software began to be rolled out last year, and it is projected that at least another year is required before the rollout will be complete. All personnel within the corporate office, including the large clerical staff, attended a four-day, comprehensive, hands-on computer training program and were told to incorporate the new software into daily use.

The completion of the rollout will primarily affect the clerical staff. It is the company's objective to eliminate the majority of these individuals. The idea behind this is the technology of the new software will enable all management-level personnel to perform their jobs efficiently without the need for clerical support. The MEI company has informed its large clerical staff that most, but not all, of their jobs will disappear once the rollout is complete. The prospect of future unemployment along with the uncertainty

Regarding when their jobs will be terminated has greatly affected the staff morale.

Complacency, lack of initiative, and complaining have accompanied the loss of morale.

The firm has one additional problem, which is that some of the clerical staff are long-term employees who are accustomed to how the company operated 10 years ago. These employees have not adapted to the new software or the other new programs that have been implemented. Thus, these employees do not provide the full clerical support needed by management. Rather, they perform only those aspects of their jobs that existed prior to the introduction of the new software plus other mental jobs sufficient to keep them busy.

Individual managers must determine how to motivate all of the clerical support staff for the remaining time that they will be employed and must also determine how to motivate some employees to use the new software. Someone must determine which clerical help should be

retained once “modernization” is complete. The firm wants to keep all of its clerical staff until then.

Questions

1. What actions should be taken in order to increase the morale and motivation level of the clerical staff?
2. What actions can be taken to motivate those employees who are not using the new technology required of their job?
3. What criteria should be used to determine which clerical employees should be retained?
4. Should the firm attempt to solve its motivation problem by conducting further training?

HR 648: Legal Issues in Human Resources

Question 1

Mammoth Technology develops and manufactures computer products.

Approximately 100 new employees are now being hired for the company's New Products Division, which produces hi-tech wireless products. These positions require specific technical knowledge.

The Manufacturing Division, which manufactures basic electronic components, is being eliminated due to a significant reduction in demand for this product as a result of the new wireless products. Two months ago a notice was sent to all 50 employees in the Manufacturing Division that the Division was being eliminated. The notice stated that the Manufacturing Division employees could submit applications over the next 60 days for other positions they were qualified to perform. The notice further stated that employees not selected for other positions would be laid off at the end of the 60 days and receive severance pay. At the end of the 60-day period, the 20 employees who had not been selected for other positions received Lay Off Notices.

As the new Human Resources Manager it is your responsibility to oversee the recruitment for the new positions and the staff reductions. It is also your responsibility to respond to employee complaints.

COMPLAINT #1

Six of the employees who received layoff notices have filed a complaint alleging age discrimination. This complaint states the following: "We are being laid off because of age. Although we have all been with the company between 15 and 20 years we have been selected for layoff because of our age. Each of us applied for other positions but were rejected. Although we do not have experience with wireless products, we could and should be trained by the company to do this work. If we do not receive resolution of this issue with the company we will have to consult an attorney to represent us in this matter." The ages of the employees in Complaint #1 are between 54 and 61.

COMPLAINT #2

Another employee who received a layoff notice has also filed a complaint. Mark Thompson who has been with the manufacturing division for twelve years filed the following complaint: "Since receiving the notice that the Division was being eliminated, I applied for and was rejected for two positions in the new Wireless Products Division because I did not have specific experience with wireless products. I have however, taken advanced computer courses and can perform the work required for these new positions

I believe the real reason I was not selected for a new position is my disability. Since my medical condition was diagnosed three years ago, I have asked the company for reasonable accommodations. Although the company has complied with my requests, management has made comments such as "too bad he's not old enough to retire," "what will be the next request?"

“Although I have a progressive muscular disease I want to and can, with reasonable accommodation, continue working, I believe I was rejected for the new positions, which I was qualified for, because management does not want to continue granting me the necessary accommodations.” (“Mark Thompson is currently 37 years old.”)

Response

1. Identify and briefly describe the Federal Statutes, which may have been violated in Complaint #1.
2. Identify and briefly describe the Federal Statutes, which may have been violated in Complaint #2.
3. Discuss the two theories of discrimination and how they may apply to Complaint #1, Complaint #2.
4. Discuss how you would investigate the claim of age discrimination including any statistical evidence you would like to compile and analyze.
5. Discuss the overall approach you would take to investigate the allegation of disability discrimination in Complaint #2. As part of your response, include a definition of disability as defined under the applicable Federal Statutes and the meaning of essential job duties and reasonable accommodation.

Question 2

Home Cast, Inc. manufactures home improvement products. Home Cast, Inc. has approximately 1000 employees. You have recently been hired as the Corporate Human Resources Manager. One of your responsibilities is to investigate employee complaints. In the last week you have received complaints from two employees regarding a recent recruitment for Sales Manager. Home Cast currently has six Sales Managers and this additional position is being added to support the company’s increased sales. Three internal candidates applied for the position. The candidate selected for the position is a black female who has been with the company a little over a year but had ten years of sales experience in a similar industry.

Complaint #1

Linda Garcia who has been with the company six years filed a complaint stating that she believes she was discriminated against because of her race. The complaint states: “I have been with Home Cast for over five years starting in the Product Division and advancing to my current position as a Senior Sales Representative. While at Home Cast I completed my Master’s Degree in Marketing, which is highly relevant to the position of Sales Manager. All my performance reviews have been outstanding, which is the highest rating one can attain. I meet all the requirements of the position. There are no Hispanic Sales Managers. Three of the ten Senior Sales Representatives are Hispanic, yet there are no Hispanic Sales managers. I believe this is evidence of discrimination based on race”.

Complaint #2

John Alexander who has been with the company for four years as a Senior Sales Representative filed a complaint saying he was denied the promotion because of a complaint he had previously filed against his Manager when she denied him a salary increase because of his use of FMLA and an absence due to a work injury. His complaint states: “In the last two years it has been necessary for me to take FMLA on two occasions. The first was for eight weeks to recuperate from major surgery. Six months after returning from the leave I needed to use FMLA again for four weeks due to my child’s illness. Three months after returning from my second leave, my performance evaluation was due. Additionally, due to an unsafe condition at work, I was injured and was unable to work for three weeks because of the injury. The Department Manager stated that due to the twelve weeks I had taken for FMLA in the last year and the absence because of my injury at work, projects had to be transferred to other employees. Although the quality of my work continued to be excellent, my absences had caused me to fail to meet all my objectives, therefore, my manager stated I would not be given a salary increase. I did not believe this was right and I filed a complaint with Human Resources. As a result of my complaint my Manager revised my review to grant me a salary increase. I know my Manager was angry about this and I believe that I am now being retaliated against and discriminated against in this recruitment. I have a Bachelor’s Degree in Business and have been in the Marketing Department for four years with an additional six years in Sales and Sales Management in my previous employment. I meet all the qualifications for the position.”

Response

- 1) Identify the Federal Statutes (spell out) which may have been violated in Complaint #1.
- 2) Identify the Federal Statutes (spell out) which may have been violated in Complaint #2.
- 3) Describe the two theories of discrimination and how they may apply to Complaint #1, Complaint #2.
- 4) Discuss the overall approach you would take to investigate the allegation of race discrimination in Complaint #1 including any statistical evidence you would like to compile and analyze.
- 5) Discuss how you would investigate the complaint regarding the alleged discrimination under FMLA and the work injury and specifically the aspect of retaliation.
- 6) Identify any additional actions you believe are relevant to investigating and resolving these complaints.

Question 3

Nuview, Inc. develops and manufactures computer products. Nuview has a workforce of 1,000 employees disbursed throughout three Divisions. The newest Division has 200 employees, but is expanding rapidly. This Division is developing and manufacturing high dollar products targeted for the Gen-X market. You were hired two months ago as the new Corporate Human Resources Manager for Nuview, Inc. In the last two weeks, you have received two complaints from employees.

COMPLAINT #1 - Recruitment

Joe Steady filed a complaint because he was not selected for the position of New Product Development Department Manager. His complaint states: “I have been with “Nuview for fifteen years, the last five as a Product Development Manager. I have an excellent work record and have a Bachelors and Masters Degree in Business. I am fully qualified for this position. I believe the reason I was not selected for this position is my age. The person selected for the position is younger with less management experience.” Joe Steady is 52 years old. The person selected for this position is 41 years old.

COMPLAINT #2 – Recruitment

Mary Johns, who has been with the Company for twelve years as a Product Development Supervisor, filed the following complaint: “Since learning about the new Division, I have applied for and been rejected for two positions in the new Division. I was told the persons selected were “more qualified”. I have taken advanced technical courses and have a Bachelors Degree in business and am working on my Masters Degree in Business. I am qualified for and can perform the work required for these new positions.

I believe the real reason I was not selected for a new position is my disability. Since my medical condition was diagnosed three years ago, I have asked the company for reasonable accommodations. Although the company has complied with my requests, I have heard that management has made comments such as “too bad she’s not old enough to retire”, and “what will be the next request?”

Although I have a progressive muscular disease I want to and can, with reasonable accommodation, continue working. I believe I was rejected for the new positions, which I was qualified for, because management does not want to continue granting me the necessary accommodations.”

Response:

- a Identify and briefly describe the Federal Statutes, which may have been violated in Complaint #1.
- b Identify and briefly describe the Federal Statutes, which may have been violated in Complaint #2.
- c Discuss two theories of discrimination and how they may apply to Complaint #1, Complaint #2.
- d Discuss the overall approach you would take to investigate the allegation of age discrimination in Complaint #1 including any statistical evidence you would like to compile and analyze. Specifically discuss the issue of the age of the selected candidate vs. the age of Joe Steady. Cite any cases you believe are relevant.
- e Discuss the overall approach you would take to investigate the allegation of disability discrimination in Complaint #2. As part of your response, include a definition of disability as defined under the applicable Federal Statutes and the meaning of essential job duties and reasonable accommodation. Cite any cases you believe are relevant.

Question 4

Genstar, Inc. which sells home improvement products, has approximately 1000 employees. You have recently been hired as the Corporate Human Resources Manager for Genstar, Inc.

In the last week you have received three internal complaints. The first complaint is about a recent recruitment for a Marketing Manager. The second complaint is an independent contractor issue from the Information Technology Department, and the third complaint is from an employee in the Finance/Accounting Department alleging sexual harassment.

COMPLAINT #1

You received this complaint from Carol March, who is classified as an independent contractor in the Information Technology Department: “I have been working for Genstar, Inc. for almost two years as an independent contractor in the Information Technology Department. The work I perform is the same as several of my co-workers who are employees of Genstar. When I was hired I planned to apply for a regular position as an employee when one opened up. No positions have opened up, although three additional independent contractors have been hired.

I believe that I am not being justly compensated. My co-workers, who are employees, receive paid vacations, health insurance, retirement contributions and some even receive overtime for work on weekends. I asked my Department Supervisor about this and he said that he understood my concerns, but “it was all legal because the independent contractors are paid more per hour than the employees, so that the compensation is equal.

I think I should be classified as an employee and be given employee benefits, including overtime for all the hours I have worked on weekends for the past two years.”

COMPLAINT #2

John Boddy, a Financial Analyst, has filed the following complaint alleging sexual harassment. “Since I was hired by Genstar, Inc., I have been subjected to an increasingly hostile environment. Shortly after I was hired, one of my co-workers asked what I did prior to coming to Genstar, Inc. I replied that for several years while I was working to complete my M.B.A., I worked as a male model for a swimwear company and a fitness company. After this conversation, I started hearing comments about my “modeling career”. I then started receiving anonymous pictures on my desk showing men in underwear and swim trunks with typed notes saying, “I would love to see you in this! Let’s arrange a photo session!”

Since I was new to the Company, I was reluctant to complain about this. Last month one of the Regional Sales Managers asked me to join her for a drink after work. After we had a couple of drinks, she asked me why I didn’t continue my modeling career. When I responded that modeling was just a way to make money to finish school, she commented that “my body could make a lot of money and she would certainly like to check it out for marketability!” At that point I told her it was late and I needed to leave. She seemed offended and said, “Fine, it’s your body and your career” and she left the bar.

Last week I received my performance review from my Manager, Roy Goode. I received a “satisfactory” review. When I asked why the review was only satisfactory, Mr. Goode answered that I needed to work on my communication skills and my ability to develop good working relationships. I believe that I was rated as only “satisfactory” because of my refusal of Ms. Charming’s sexual advances. The sexual comments and my “satisfactory” review are

evidence of sexual harassment.” John Boddy was hired a year ago as a Financial Analyst. During orientation all employees are given a copy and explanation of the Sexual Harassment Policy.

RESPONSE

- 1) Identify and briefly discuss the Federal Statutes which may have been violated in Complaint #1.
- 2) Identify and briefly discuss the Federal Statutes which may have been violated in Complaint #2.
- 3) Describe two theories of discrimination and how they may apply to Complaint #1, Complaint #2.
- 4) Discuss how you would investigate the complaint regarding the alleged independent contractor issue. Cite any cases that you believe are relevant.
- 5) Discuss how you would investigate the claim of sexual harassment and include a definition of sexual harassment as it has been defined under EEOC guidelines and case law. Cite any cases that you believe are relevant.

Question 5

Innovative Solutions is a provider of medical technology. Over the last three years Innovative has substantially increased its sales while reducing its staff from 360 to 300 employees. Increased services demands have been met through leased employees, consultants and independent contractors. In the last month two complaints have been filed regarding Innovative’s Human Resources practices. As the new Human Resources Manager, the company President has asked you to investigate and resolve the complaints.

Complaint #1

One of the independent contractors, Mary Morris has filed a claim stating she is actually an employee and should be compensated as an employee. The complaint states the following “Approximately one year ago I was hired as an independent contractor for Innovative. Since being hired I have been performing the same duties as the Support Specialists who are employees. The Support Specialists receive overtime and benefits, including contributions to a retirement plan. I am frequently required to stay late to finish projects but have not been compensated for the extra time. I believe I am entitled to approximately sixty hours of overtime, additionally I should be receiving health and retirement benefits”.

Complaint #2

Complaint #2 is a Notice from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commissioner that a complaint has been filed by a former employee. It is your responsibility to investigate and respond to this complaint.

Jose Torres was laid off two months ago when the administrative support section of product development was re-organized. This re-organization resulted in the layoff of 12 of the 20 employees in that Section. Jose had been with Innovative seven years at the time of the layoff. Jose’s complaint reads as follows:

“I was laid off due to a company reorganization. I believe I was selected for layoff because of my race and disability. Four other Hispanic employees were also laid off. My work record with Innovative was excellent. My last performance appraisal stated that “my work consistently exceeded standards and I was a valuable employee. Additionally, I believe I was discriminated on the basis of my disability. Two months before the reorganizations I requested a reasonable accommodation because of a disability my doctor recently diagnosed. When I told my Manager of the need to accommodate my disability through special equipment he commented that this was an expensive accommodation and requested I see a company selected doctor. I saw the company selected doctor, who agreed with my doctor. My Manager then finally said he would order the equipment. At the time I was laid off the equipment had still not arrived. Since I was laid off new employees have been hired to do work in my section. One of my friends from Innovative has told me that none of these new employees are Hispanic. I believe my race and disability are the real reasons I was laid off.”

Response

- 1) Identify the statutes which may have been violated in Complaint #1.
- 2) Identify the statutes which may have been violated in Complaint #2.
- 3) Discuss the two theories of discrimination and how they may apply in Complaint #1 and in Complaint #2.
- 4) Discuss how you would determine if Mary is an employee or independent contractor.
- 5) If Mary is determined to be an employee, discuss how you would determine if she is entitled to overtime.
- 6) Discuss the overall approach you would take to investigate Jose’s complaint including any statistical analysis you would perform as part of your investigation of Jose’s complaint.
- 7) Define disability/handicap under the applicable statutes.

Question 6

Syntex is a research and training firm marketing their services to small and medium size firms. Syntex which has approximately 200 employees, has aggressively been marketing new services. Over the last six months Syntex has acquired several new clients and has created some new positions.

A recruitment for a Senior Project Manager has recently been held. There were three internal candidates for the position. The candidate selected by the Vice President of Client Services has been with the firm approximately a year, but had four years of project management experience at another firm, plus extensive sales and marketing experience. Two employees have filed complaints regarding this recruitment. The job description for the position of Senior Project Management requires five years of project management experience and an ability to establish and maintain clients. Marketing or sales experience is also desirable. The President of Syntex has asked you as a Human Resource Consultant to investigate and respond to these complaints.

Complaint #1

Joe Greene has been with Syntex for eight years and is currently a Project Manager. Joe applied for but was not selected for the position of Senior Project Manager. Joe filed the following complaint: "I have applied twice for the position of Senior Project Manager and both times another employee with less experience was selected for the position. My performance record with Syntex is outstanding. I have received bonuses and commendations from management and frequent compliments from clients. I have an MBA and over 25 years experience in research and project development. After being turned down the second time for this position, I have come to realize that the reason I have not been selected for this position is because of my age and use of my Family and Medical Leave. Due to a serious medical condition it was necessary for me to take a three-month medical leave last year. I have now recovered from this condition and am fully performing all my duties. My Manager has made several comments since my return about the need to have a "full team". It was also necessary for me to use FMLA over the past three years to assist my wife who also has a serious medical condition. I have established excellent relationships with my client, and can relate to clients of any age. I believe that my age and use of Family Leave, are the real reasons I was again not selected for the Senior Project Manager Position."

Complaint #2

Sue Rothman filed a second complaint regarding this recruitment. Sue has been a Project Manager for Syntex for nearly four years and has six additional years' experience as a Project Manager before coming to Syntex. Sue's complaint states the following: "I recently applied for the position of Senior Project Manager but was not selected. I believe that the reason I was not selected for this position is my gender and my previous complaint regarding sexual harassment at Syntex. I have the five years of required experience for the position and have a Masters Degree in Communication and a Bachelors Degree in Business.

There are ten Senior Project Managers, and only one female Senior Project Manager, although females represent 12 of the 30 Project Managers. I believe this shows the company does not want to promote women to senior positions. Approximately one year ago I complained about a sexually offensive environment at Syntex. E-mails of a sexual nature were being circulated in the office. Frequently these e-mails contained jokes and comments derogatory to women. Additionally, a lot of comments were made at the office regarding research which was being done for a client concerning the marketing of a sexually oriented product as an alternative to Viagra. I complained about this hostile environment several times to my Manager before this problem was corrected. I heard several comments about my being the "e-mail police" and that other employees' privacy was violated by the company's new monitoring of e-mail. I believe my non-selection is also a form of retaliation for my making this complaint. I believe my reporting of the sexual harassment and my gender are the reasons I was not selected for the position."

Response:

- 1) Identify and briefly describe the Federal Statutes which may have been violated for Complaint #1.

- 2) Identify and briefly describe the Federal Statutes which may have been violated for Complaint #2.
- 3) Discuss the two theories of discrimination and how they may apply to Complaint #1 and Complaint #2.
- 4) Discuss how you would investigate Joe's claim of age discrimination including: Statistical evidence, if any, you would like to compile and analyze.
- 5) Discuss the requirements for FMLA and Joe's allegations of discrimination based on his use of FMLA.
- 6) State the definition of sexual harassment as it has been developed under EEOC guidelines and case law.
- 7) Discuss how you would investigate Sue's complaint of retaliation based on sexual harassment including: Statistical evidence, if any, you would like to compile and analyze.

Group 2 HR Generalist

HR 644: Recruitment and Selection

Question 1

Everything.com is a rapidly growing Internet company that sells... everything. Warehouses are scattered throughout southern California, but corporate headquarters are located outside of Los Angeles. Fifty people work at headquarters, with another 500 located at the company's five warehouses. Over 90% of the company's deliveries are to private residences. The executive team would like to expand deliveries to companies doing business in southern California. In order to do this, the company estimates that it will need to double its workforce over the next two years. The company is facing severe shortages in two job categories, package handlers and drivers. Package handlers fill customers' orders, pack the merchandise into space efficient containers, and place the packages on the delivery trucks. Drivers are responsible for the actual delivery of the packages to customers' homes. You are the new Vice President of Human Resources for Everything.com. You will be presenting a comprehensive recruitment and selection plan to the executive team at the Strategic Planning Retreat in October. You have been trying to anticipate the critical issues and likely questions that the President and the executive team will have regarding the proposed staffing plan. Remember that they are not experts in HR, and will need fairly straightforward and concise answers to their questions. Address their concerns in your answer to the questions below.

- a. What type of staffing model will you be using in this plan, the person-job match model or the person-organization match model? What is the difference between those two models anyway? Which one is more appropriate for our company, and why?
- b. How will you communicate our organizational image to new recruits? What are the basic components of the recruitment message you want to communicate to job applicants? What is this thing called a "realistic job preview"? I read that it can help with turnover. Explain to me why that would work on our turnover problem.
- c. What kind of selection instruments are you going to use on applicants for these two jobs? Why did you pick those specific predictors? What kind of criteria will you use to evaluate the effectiveness of those selection predictors? I've heard of validity, reliability, and utility. What are they exactly and why do we have to care about those things anyway?
- d. Describe the type of forecasting you used to estimate our demand for labor. Where are we going to find these people?
- e. What types of recruiting sources are likely to yield the most applicants? Why did you select those? Are we going to do any internal recruiting? Why or why not? How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your recruiting program?

Question 2

The California Super Avocado Company or CSAC has succeeded in crossing a lemon with an avocado and the company is about to market this revolutionary fruit. No longer will the consumer have to buy lemons to improve the avocado taste, and the Lemocado fruit will not turn brown if not eaten quickly. CSAC is planning a nationwide rollout of this premium priced

product and it will hire a separate sales team to introduce the fruit to every supermarket in the U.S.

The management will need to hire 30 District Sales Managers and sixty Merchandisers to adequately market Lemocado on a continuing basis. The management is not sophisticated in recruitment and employment techniques so they are relying on you as the Chief of Talent Selection to make the plan. The District Sales Managers work with produce distributors, supermarket managers and chains to price and sell the Lemocado in a highly competitive market. Sales Managers tend to have come up in the produce business through employment in produce markets, supermarkets or even with growers.

1. How will you determine which KSAOs are needed for success in the position of District Sales Manager.
2. What 3 predictors would you establish for the position of District Sales Manager? Explain why each is a good predictor.
3. The recruitment and selection project is seen as an expensive project and the management wants to be sure turnover in these positions is low. What do you recommend to assure retention?
4. Existing personnel may want to apply for these positions. How will you organize the internal recruitment and selection program? Will your message be an attractive message or a realistic message and why? What predictors will you use that would not be available when recruiting externally?

Question 3

Billy Kidd has opened a ski shop at White Pass almost five years ago. . The shop has been very successful and he is now expanding and opening a small lodge, adding a repair facility, a snack bar, and an espresso stand and increasing the amount of ski instruction available. This expansion has occurred during the off-season and it is now late August and Billy needs to staff his expanded operations. You had taken some lessons from Billy a couple of years ago and the two of you have become friends. He knows you are an HR professional with a degree in HR from Chapman University and that you have a good deal of experience in recruitment. HHe has asked you to help staff his new operation with competent employees who will help him realize his goal of eventually becoming a destination resort for skiers throughout the country.

As you talk with Billy you find that at this moment he has only his wife and one instructor lined-up to work for the coming season. It is important to note that Billy's lodge is quite small and only has five rooms but again, with plans to expand. The point is that all of Billy's recruitment will have to come from external sources.

After some consideration you agree to meet with Billy up at his lodge. You have just pulled in to the parking lot and Billy is there waiting for you.

1. Outline your staffing plan aimed at helping Billy ensure he has a qualified staff ready by November. What would be your recommendation as to which staffing model would be most appropriate? Why?

2. What would be the essence of your recruitment message to prospective employees? Explain to Billy what is meant by “realistic job preview.” Why is that an important factor in the recruitment process?
3. Certainly two of the jobs for which Billy will be recruiting are a ski repair expert and a cook for the snack bar. What predictors would you use and what specific criteria would you utilize to evaluate applicants for each of these positions?
4. What other advice, if any, would you give Billy regarding his efforts to staff his expanded operation?

Question 4

Campus Cards is a small company that sells greeting cards. Three friends started the company. They met while attending Chapman University’s M.S. in H.R. graduate program. As students, the three friends were frustrated by the lack of selection in greeting cards to celebrate the joys and commiserate the frustrations of attending graduate school. The major greeting card companies only offered graduation cards during the months of May and June. The three friends did some market research and were convinced that there was a niche for greeting cards that specifically dealt with the types of events students encountered while enrolled in graduate school. Their most popular line of cards were the “Congratulations on Passing Your Comprehensive Exams” cards. Every spring and fall, about six to eight weeks after comprehensive exams were given on university campuses, sales of these cards spiked dramatically.

One of the unique aspects of Campus Cards is that they are sold only in campus bookstores. Unlike Hallmark and Carlton, Campus Cards has no freestanding stores in shopping malls. Campus Cards does not sell gifts and accessories, it only sells cards. Campus Cards is located in the historic city of Orange, within walking distance of Chapman University. Fifty people work for the company, including artists, printers, sales representatives and administrative staff. Campus Cards are sold in 50% of the college bookstores in California. Over the next two years, the three friends would like to see its cards sold in 100% of the college bookstores in California. In order to do this, the company estimates that it will need to double its workforce over the next two years. Their five-year strategic plan includes expanding Campus Cards beyond California’s borders into neighboring states.

The three friends make up the executive team of Campus Cards. Friend 1 serves as the President of the company. She has very aggressive growth plans for Campus Cards. Friend 2 serves as the Vice President of Finance. He wants Campus Cards to grow, but he doesn’t want to spend any money getting there. You are Friend 3. You recently changed jobs in the company becoming the new Vice President of HR. Your immediate project is to design a staffing plan to help Campus Cards meet its strategic plan. The company estimates that it will need to double its workforce over the next two years. Campus Cards is facing severe shortages in two job categories, artists and sales representatives. Artists are responsible for designing all of the cards sold by Campus Cards. Sales representatives call on the managers of campus bookstores to get your cards sold in their stores. As you work on the staffing plan, you realize that maybe you should have taken HR 644 Recruitment and Selection before dropping out of the HR program.

You will be presenting your comprehensive recruitment and selection plan to the executive team at the Strategic Planning Retreat next month. You have been trying to anticipate the critical issues and likely questions that the President and the executive team will have regarding the proposed staffing plan. Address their concerns in your answers below.

- a. What type of staffing model will allow us to hire people not just for these two jobs, but for long term careers with our company?" Explain the difference between the person-job match model of staffing and the person-organization match model of staffing. Explain which model is better for Campus Cards.
- b. We don't need to do any recruiting. People will want to work for Campus Cards because we're a fun place to work. But just in case anyone asks, don't tell them about the bad aspects of these jobs and the negatives about our company. We don't want to scare anyone away from accepting a job with our company. Right?" Convince the President that these ideas about recruiting are wrong and lay out a simple recruiting plan for these two positions.
- c. "I don't believe in selection instruments. I go with my gut feeling when I'm hiring someone. Let me conduct all the interviews. I can pick a winner every time." Convince the President that these ideas about selection are wrong and describe the three best selection instruments for these two jobs. Explain why you picked those predictors. For each predictor, discuss its reliability, validity, utility, and legal defensibility.

HR 645: Human Resource Systems

Question 1

Angie Burris was not sure what to expect in her first meeting with the investment bankers. Mark Fellows, the Chairman and founder of Technicraft, Inc., had simply told her to be there, and to be prepared to talk about what she would do as the new company's Director of Human Resources. Unless the bankers were satisfied with answers from the members of the newly appointed management team, there would be no funding – and thus, no company.

The first couple of hours of the meeting were spent discussing the Business Plan, status of current product development, and marketing prospects. Eventually, however, Chris Dunn, the obvious leader of the banking team turned to Angie and asked her how her HR department would be organized, and what role or roles she and her organization would play in the start up stages of the business. As a follow-up question, he then asked how those roles might change as the company began to grow. Finally, he asked her to elaborate on the functional responsibilities she and her organization would have.

The Business Plan showed that Technicraft would hire 100 new employees during its first year of operation, and grow to approximately 1,000 employees in five years. All employees would be located in the company's Southern California facility.

- a. How would you describe the **roles** your organization would perform for the company? How would these **roles** evolve and change over time? **Note:** If you choose to answer this question, be aware that the **roles** of HR are **not** the same as **HR functions or organizational subsystems**.

- b. If you were Angie, how would you answer the question about the **functional** responsibilities (activities and/or practices) of HR that you would provide initially, and then later on as the company began to grow? **Note:** The HR organizational subsystems you studied describe the functions of HR. Please do **not** list or describe the **roles** of HR in answer to this question.\

Question 2

Everything.com is a rapidly growing Internet company that sells... everything. Warehouses are scattered throughout southern California, but corporate headquarters are located outside of Los Angeles. Fifty people work at headquarters, with another 500 located at the company's five warehouses. Over 90% of the company's deliveries are to private residences. The executive team would like to expand deliveries to companies doing business in southern California. In order to do this, the company estimates that it will need to double its workforce over the next two years.

Everything.com does not currently have a person in charge in Human Resources. The President of the company is interviewing applicants for a newly created position, Vice President of HR. The twenty four year old founder of Everything.com isn't convinced that the company needs a

VP of HR, but his mom, a successful HR executive herself, has been warning him repeatedly that it's time to pay attention to HR issues in his company.

You have applied for the position of VP of HR at Everything.com, and are trying to anticipate the critical issues and likely questions that the President, his mom, and the current executive team will have for applicants during the four-hour interview. Remember, except for his mom, they are not experts in HR, and will need fairly straightforward and concise answers to their questions. Address their concerns in your answers below.

- a. What are the three major HR issues confronting businesses in today's environment? What types of HR issues are start up companies like Everything.com most likely to experience?
- b. What are the three most important HR subsystems or programs that the new VP should implement? Defend your choices.
- c. How could the President of the company evaluate the overall effectiveness of the new HR department?
- d. What are the five most pressing HR issues facing all companies in their first year of existence? Assuming this company survives, what are the five most pressing HR issues it will face in the next 3-5 years? Explain why you selected these issues.
- e. What is the relationship between the company's strategic plan and its HR programs? What is the relationship between a company's performance appraisal system and its selection system?

Question 3

Campus Cards is a small company that sells greeting cards. Three friends started the company. They met while attending Chapman University's M.S. in H.R. graduate program. As students, the three friends were frustrated by the lack of selection in greeting cards to celebrate the joys and commiserate the frustrations of attending graduate school. The major greeting card companies only offered graduation cards during the months of May and June. The three friends did some market research and were convinced that there was a niche for greeting cards that specifically dealt with the types of events students encountered while enrolled in graduate school. Their most popular line of cards were the "Congratulations on Passing Your Comprehensive Exams" cards. Every spring and fall, about six to eight weeks after comprehensive exams were given on university campuses, sales of these cards spiked dramatically.

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two years. Their five-year strategic plan includes expanding Campus Cards beyond California's borders into neighboring states.

As stated, the three friends met their first semester in the HR graduate program. They were so excited about their business venture that they quit their jobs to start this new company. As with most start-ups, the new business quickly consumed all of their time. The three friends knew they would have to choose between getting their new business off the ground and continuing with their graduate studies. Sadly, they decided to put their graduate education on hold and all three dropped out of school, vowing to complete their degrees some day. The only class in HR that the three friends completed was HR 645 – Human Resource Management.

The three friends make up the executive team of Campus Cards. Friend 1 serves as the President of the company. She isn't convinced that the company has any HR issues to worry about. Friend 2 serves as the Vice President of Finance. He is constantly worried about how much everything costs and is very concerned about spending any more money on "overhead". You are Friend 3. You serve as the Vice President of Administrative Staff. More and more of your time is being spent on people problems and you have been warning your friends repeatedly that it's time to pay attention to HR issues in your company. You are firmly convinced that the company needs a full time Vice President of Human Resources. You would be willing to do the job, but you want to be clear about your role in the company and the direction that the job would take.

You and your two friends are meeting next week to decide whether the company needs a VP of HR. While you are still not sure whether you want the job, you do know that Campus Cards needs to create this position. You are trying to anticipate the critical issues and likely questions that your friends will have during this meeting. Address their concerns in your answers below.

- a. What types of HR issues are start up companies like Campus Cards most likely to experience? What role should HR play in this company? Defend your choices.
- b. What are the three most important HR subsystems or programs that the new VP of HR should implement if we create this position? Defend your choices.
- c. How could the company evaluate the overall effectiveness of the new HR department?
- d. Assuming this company survives, what are the five most pressing HR issues it will face in the next 3-5 years? Explain why you selected these issues.
- e. What is the relationship between the company's strategic plan and its HR programs?

Question 4

Christy, one of your close friends, has always dreamed of owning her own ski shop. She would like to open a ski shop in Aspen. As a long time member of the pro circuit, she thinks her expertise, name recognition, and personal charisma will draw customers to the shop. She would like her ski shop to be known for excellent customer service and an extensive inventory of ski gear. She imagines her store to be "the Nordstroms of ski shops."

Luckily, Christy has plenty of money from her pro days to finance such a venture. Unfortunately, she's never really worked at a "real job" in her life. She has no idea how to

manage the people side of the business. She has come to you for advice on putting together a simple HR “system” for her new business. Help Christy’s new business succeed by:

- a. explaining what elements of the external environment will have the greatest influence on her business;
- b. outlining the main HR functions (or subsystems) that she will need to put into place;
- c. designing a few simple “outcome” measures to help Christy determine if her HR system is helping her business to be more effective.

Question 5

Included in the January 1996 issue of Fortune magazine was a short article entitled “Taking on the Last Bureaucracy ... People need people - but do they need Personnel?” It’s time for human resources departments to put up or shut up.” The basic premise of this article was that HR departments contribute very little to organizations beyond “paper pushing”. Furthermore, the author argues that these activities are more efficiently performed if they are outsourced.

Assume that the president of your organization read this article, thought it had some valid points, and was thinking about doing away with your company’s HR department!

- a.) Outline for your president the main HR functions that your department provides.
- b.) Describe the nature of these functions and explain why they are critical to an organization.
- c.) Argue how HR (if done correctly) can have an impact on both HR effectiveness (as typically measured by satisfaction, performance, and turnover) and organizational effectiveness (as typically measured by profits, market share, and survival).

HRCU 646 Training and Development

Question 1

Your organization is a medium sized manufacturing company that produces and manufactures electrical productions for retail sales throughout the United States. It is six years old. The new CEO and senior managers are finalizing the organizational strategic management plan with goals and objectives.

You report to the Vice President of Human Resources as the newly appointed Training Director. You have been in your position for the last two months. You have a staff of three training managers who have just recently joined your staff to develop and coordinate training courses to meet the future training needs of the organization. This organization previously had a very small Training Office with not much training being provided in the past.

Training disincentives have somewhat minimized. However, there still are some managers who have other attitudes about training and employee development and are somewhat vocal about it. Yet they do have an impact. You find that about 30 percent of the managers do not understand the benefits resulting from training. Also some of the more “hardliners” indicate that training times takes their employees away from the job. Overall you feel that the organization can overcome these few with time. This is partially due to you working directly with the organizational managers concerning roles and responsibilities about training and employee development. The organizational training system is moving faster from infancy stage toward adolescent stage. Your office staff feels that they could soon work towards the maturity stage.

You have developed a “systems approach” to training for your organization based on Human Resources Training models. You are sure that with the implementation of the model you could move towards the maturity stage of training.

The Executive Management team just completed the organizational strategic management plan after an executive retreat. They seem very excited about the plan.

During a meeting with your Vice President, you discussed the idea of making a presentation on the organizational approach for the implementation of the systems approach training model. You indicate that the first step would be a three stage training needs analysis step. As part of the implementation plan you and your staff would work with the Executive Management team. Also you and your VP agree suggesting a presentation to the CEO on your implementation strategy in two weeks.

You now have to decide what to do:

1. List and define what actions steps you will take to achieve your objective>
2. How do you see your staff assisting within this process?
3. What do you feel should be the major outcomes of your presentation to the Executive Management Team and what would they expect from you and your staff.
4. Is there any particular priority to your actions that have to be accomplished? If so what?
5. What do you consider to be the role of the CEO?

Question 2

You have developed and implemented your “systems approach” to training for your organization. The first step was your implementation of the three-stage training needs analysis for the organization. At the present time you are reviewing potential steps with the middle managers in each of the organizational divisions concerning the implementation of the three forms of training needs analysis.

During your discussions with managers on the training needs analysis, you pick up on the concerns for a better organizational climate. Each of the five mid-management division seems to have differing work environments. This lack of cultural uniformity concerns you with both the motivation of trainees to participate in training and the ability to transfer training back to the work environment. This leaves you with a major concern at the present time and what action to take. Your analysis of the strategic management plan you obtain the following findings:

- a. The Manufacturing Division has a strategic objective to increase its share of the West coast market by an additional 25 percent over the next two years. The company currently has 25 percent of the market share. The products are well received in the market, and sales are up about 5 percent.
- b. To help implement the 25 percent market share increase, the Marketing and Sales Division will be recruiting 250 additional sales representatives. Recruitment is scheduled to start during January. All sales representatives should be hired by the middle of March. The company currently has 50 sales representatives employed. You have a concern for the training of new hires and the current organizational culture and the potential transfer of training to the work environment.
- c. It has been two years since any company employees have received any formal training that would provide them with better communication skills, or customer service training. You also have noticed that numerous employees tend to be in conflict with each other. Also this behavior is visible throughout work environments within the organization. You have a concern for the company maintaining its technical competitiveness with its competition while this internal conflict tends to go on.
- d. You identify some major conflict between middle managers on how to approach the achievement of the strategic objectives for the organization within the given time.

You consider the following actions and you start your outline for the design of the training for the company. Please answer the following very important questions:

1. What priorities should I coordinate and set with the management concerning training with the strategic management plan. What are the various roles to be played?
2. Is training a solution to reduce the conflict between the managers? If so, why?

3. What four training objectives should I write for a training course on Conflict Management?
4. How can you influence a more productive supervisor/trainee environment? How can training facilitate the transfer of training back in the work environment?

Question 3

You report to the Vice President of Human Resources as a Training Director. You have been with the company for four months. Your organization is a medium sized manufacturing company that produces and manufacturer's electrical products for retail sales throughout the United States. The company has demonstrated a fairly good growth rate since it came into existence four years ago.

Executive management, including the Vice President of Human Resources, has completed strategic management plan for the organization for the next five years. There is a strategic objective for worldwide expansion within the plan over the next three years. The company is currently considering becoming multi-national and desires global growth. This objective seems to have the major attention of executive and middle management and has become the high priority action item within the organization.

You and numerous other managers have reviewed the organizational strategic management plan very carefully as part of the organizational training needs analysis management quality of the organization's managers have a concern for the leadership and management quality of the organizations managers. Your analysis has further discovered that company management has received some fundamental management and supervisory training about three years ago. However, the local university provided this "training" as courses within the undergraduate business management program. Further analysis discovers that only 20 percent of the company's managers attended the evening courses paid for by the company. Some managers completed two or less courses. Some never attended their first course.

As you spend your time with some of the company managers in meetings and conversations, you notice their sense of insecurity in "moving up the ladder" into other management positions requiring more management skills and knowledge. Turnover within the company is starting to increase. It was very small, less than 5 percent six months ago and now has risen to 8 percent. Now the issue seems to be more concern within the management ranks about being able to achieve some of the strategic objectives based on the current competency of the organizations management. Some managers have verbally stated to you they cannot do their job without more management training.

You have approached your manager with the recommendation that a management development training program be designed and implemented within the organization. You also state your concern for accomplishment of not only timelines of the strategic management plan, but also concerning the current level of development of management competencies. Your manager agrees with your concern on which management competencies may require priority development for the accomplishment of the strategic management plan.

Please answer the following question based on data presented above:

Within your individual analysis list, prioritize and describe with specificity the priority steps you would take to implement a management development training program for three levels of management: Executive, Middle Managers and Entry level Managers within the company.

Question 4

Houghton Refrigeration Company builds refrigerators for large appliance companies. It employs about 300 people mostly assembly line workers, and is located in a small rural town in Indiana. The company typically builds, on contract basis, chest-type freezers and small bar-type refrigerators. On occasion, however, it's also builds standard size refrigerators. The president of the company is a former engineer, as are most of the other executives. These individuals are very knowledgeable about engineering, but have received little training in the basic principles of management.

During the summer months, volume at the factory increases significantly, and the company needs to hire about 40 new employees to handle the heavy workload. Most of these new employees are college students who attend a small private college located about 15 minutes from the plant. Some high school students are hired as well.

When a new employee is hired, the company asks him or her to complete an application blank and then to show up at the plant gate ready for work. Employees receive no orientation. The worker is shown to a work station and, after a minimum amount of on-the-job training, the new employee is expected to start performing a job. Most of the jobs are quite simple; hence, the training is typically completed within ten minutes. The first-line supervisor usually shows the employee how to do the job once, then watches while the employee does the job once, leaves, and comes back about 20 minutes later to see how the employee is progressing. Typically jobs at the plant include screwing 14 screws into the sides of a freezer, placing a piece of insulation into the freezer lid, and handing out supplies from the tool room.

The company has had excellent experience with college students over the years. Much of the success can be attributed to the older workers coming to the aid of the new employees when difficulties arise. Most new employees are able to perform their jobs reasonably well after their on-the-job training is completed. However, when unexpected difficulties arise, they are usually not prepared for them and therefore need assistance from others.

The older workers have been especially helpful to students working in the "press room". However, Joe Gleason, the first-line supervisor there, finds it's amusing to belittle the college students whenever they make mistakes. He relishes showing a student once how to use a press to bend a small piece of metal, then exclaims, "You're a hot-shot college student; now let's see you do it." He then watches impatiently while the student invariably makes a mistake and then jokingly announces for all to hear, "That's wrong! How did you ever get into college anyway? Try it again, dummy."

One summer, the company experienced a rash of injuries to its employees. Although most of the injuries were minor, the company felt it's imperative to conduct a series of short training programs on safe material handling techniques. The company president was at a loss as to who should conduct the training. The Human Resource Director was a 64-year old former engineer who was about to retire and was a poor speaker. The only other employee in the Human Resource Department was a new 19 year-old secretary who knows nothing about proper handling techniques. Out of desperation, the president finally decided to ask Bill Young, the first-line supervisor of the "lid-line," to conduct the training. Bill had recently attended a training program himself on safety and was active in the Red Cross. Bill reluctantly agreed to conduct the training. It was to be done on the departmental basis with small groups of 10 to 15 employees attending each session.

At the first of these training sessions, Bill Young nervously stood up on front of 14 employees, many of whom where college students, and read his presentation in a monotone voice. His entire speech lasted abut one minute and consisted of the following text:

Statistics show that an average of 30 persons injures their backs on the job each day in this state. None of us wants to become a "statistic."

The first thing that should be done before lifting an object is to look it over and decide whether you can handle it alone or if help is needed. Get help if there is any doubt as to whether the load is safely within your capacity.

Next, look over the area where you're going to be carrying the object. Make sure it's clear of obstacles. You may have to do a little housekeeping before moving your load. After you have checked out the load and route you're going to travel, the following steps should be taken for your safety in lifting:

- 1. Get a good footing close to the load.*
- 2. Place your feet 8 to 12 inches apart.*
- 3. Bend your knees to grasp the load.*
- 4. Bend your knees outward, straddling the load.*
- 5. Get a firm grip.*
- 6. Keep the load close to your body.*
- 7. Lift gradually.*

Once you've lifted the load, you'll eventually have to set it down- so bend your legs again-and follow the lifting procedures in reverse. Make sure that your fingers clear the pinch points. And, finally, it's a good idea to set one corner down first.

After Bill's speech ended, the employees immediately returned to work. By the end of the day, however, everyone in the plant had heard about the training fiasco, and all, except the president, were laughing about it.

Questions to answer:

1. Evaluate the company's on-the-job training program. Should it be changed?
2. Should the company install an employee orientation program for new factory workers, or isn't one necessary?
3. What changes should be made in the company's safety training program?
4. What other ways might a firm emphasize safety and curtail accidents, other than training?

HR 650: Strategic Human Resources

Question 1

You are a senior manager working for a fast-growing US computer software company. Your product allows users to play interactive role-playing games over the Internet (World Wide Web). In the last three years your company has gone from being a start-up enterprise with 10 employees and no revenues, to a company with 250 employees and revenues of \$60 million. The company has been growing so rapidly that you have not had time to create a strategic plan. Now, members of your board are telling you that they want to see a plan, and they want it to drive decision making and resource allocation at the company. Describe the steps you will go through to create a strategic plan. Be as specific as possible regarding this company. For each step, include as much specific information about this company as possible. Utilize your own knowledge of the industry and environment. For example, IBM and Microsoft would be competitors.

Question 2

Pick an organization for which you will create a strategic plan. The company may be one you work for, or one you are familiar with (McDonald's and Disney are two examples of firms with which you might be familiar enough to answer the following questions). Feel free to use Chapman University if you are not familiar with any companies.

- a) Perform a SWOT analysis for this firm (be sure to use Porter's 5 forces model).
- b) Discuss the process of strategy formulation based on the SWOT analysis. (Make sure to include several strategies you would recommend based on the SWOT analysis).
- c) Pick one of your recommended strategies and discuss the strategic implementation of this strategy.

Question 3

Respond to the following statement. "Organizations should always behave in an ethical manner, whatever the economic cost."

1. Do you believe that statement to be true? Can you site any instances where it would not be the best policy?
2. How would that statement best be applied in the Human Resources function?
3. Please site an example of a company that has a reputation for behaving in an ethical manner and site an example of a company that has a reputation for not practicing sound ethics.
4. What role should HR play in ensuring a sound ethics policy is being applied?
5. Is social responsibility closely tied to an organization's ethical values? Can HR do anything to enhance an organizations commitment to social responsibility?

Question 4

Employee productivity is one of the key determinants of an enterprise's efficiency and effectiveness. The more productive the employees, the lower will be the unit costs. Often, the challenge of devising ways to improve productivity will be given to the HR Department as part of their role of being a strategic partner. Describe at least three processes that an HR function might implement to enhance productivity and assist the organization in meeting its strategic goals.

Group 3 Remuneration

HR 647: Compensation

Question 1

Your HR consulting firm has been hired by Excel LTD, a British software firm to develop and implement a comprehensive strategic compensation plan. Excel is locating in Dallas and will be essentially “starting up” a new company. Excel develops security/surveillance software for an international market and is moving to be closer to the prospective workforce and the market.

You are to develop a strategic compensation model for the firm and deliver a presentation to their leadership. Please include the following points.

- a. Provide a brief explanation of total compensation and its components.
- b. Identify and discuss the key steps involved in formulating a total compensation strategy.
- c. Summarize by identifying the focus or objective of a strategic compensation plan.

Question 2

You are a Compensation Analyst at a rapidly growing company. The company has recently acquired a number of smaller companies in various industries. You discover that there is little consistency in job descriptions across the company, in fact, some positions have no job description. The company needs to update its job descriptions, and you are asked to prepare an outline of the process and the major decisions that need to be considered.

Your outline should address:

- a) The general procedure to collect and document job information.
- b) What types of information should be obtained from the various types of positions, and would it vary by position?
- c) What are the various ways to obtain the information, and should the methods differ by position?
- d) What role should supervisors and upper management play in the process?

Question 3

You are a Compensation Consultant. A client calls you to discuss doing a survey project. They are concerned that their pay practices are not competitive. The client is a large manufacturer in southern California. They have a broad range of jobs from blue-collar manufacturing positions to very high-priced executives with extensive compensation plans. The client asks you to prepare a proposal for the survey project.

Your proposal should address:

- a) Should various groups of jobs be surveyed separately?
- b) Should you survey different geographical regions?
- c) What kinds of companies would you survey?
- d) What types of data would you try to collect?

Question 4

A medical equipment sales company has retained your services as a Compensation Consultant. The company has experienced high turnover, loss of market share, and concludes that its compensation plans must be paying too low. During your initial conversations, you are told that the regional sales managers lack the necessary skills to manage their regions profitably; and that there are constant departmental conflicts, as well as confusion over responsibilities, between the in-house customer service staff (who are paid only base pay) and the field sales reps (who receive incentive pay).

Your answer should include:

- a) What pay and non-pay information would you gather within the company to further determine any problems and why?
- b) What information would you gather from the marketplace to determine how your client compares and why?
- c) If you feel some pay changes are necessary, discuss the various types of positions which may be considered for incentive pay and why, what types of measurements would you consider for each?
- d) What are the critical factors to consider in designing the incentive plans?

Question 5

You have been offered a temporary assignment at a high tech company. The company has recently completed several mergers and now has almost 2,000 employees working in various areas of manufacturing, sales and marketing, and computer design. The positions are diverse; with some positions requiring little or no experience to perform routine assemblies to some positions which are designing the newest generations of computer hardware and software. Because the company has grown so rapidly and combined so many different functions, management has decided to develop all new job descriptions for every position in the company. The Human Resources vice president has asked you to prepare an outline of the process and the major decisions that need to be considered to develop the job descriptions.

Your outline should include:

- a) The importance of collecting and documenting job information.
- b) The steps of the collection and documentation process; explain each.
- c) The types of information that should be obtained from the various types of positions and why.
- d) The various ways to obtain the information and whether the methods should differ by position.
- e) The types of positions involved in the process and their roles.

Question 6

You are a Compensation Consultant. A client wishes to hire you to set up a job evaluation system(s). The company is a conglomerate that has recently bought and merged several different companies. To integrate the various positions in the different entities, the client would like you develop a job evaluation system(s) in which they can accurately compare different jobs in different lines of work. They would like you to explain two different types of systems, ranking and point factor.

Your explanation should:

- a) Give a brief explanation of how each system works.
- b) Compare the advantages and disadvantages of each system in evaluating various types of jobs.
- c) Explain how each system would integrate with external market data.
- d) Give examples of why certain jobs may be more appropriate for one system than the other.

Question 7

You are a Compensation Manager at a pharmaceutical company. The president is very concerned about losing some of her direct reports. Further, the board of directors is pressuring her to improve company results. The president believes that an improved total compensation package might solve both problems. She requests that you outline the considerations for a new executive compensation package.

Your answer should:

- a) Define various forms of compensation that could be included in a total compensation package.
- b) Explain the various types of incentive programs that could be implemented.
- c) Give examples of different performance measures that could be used in each of the incentive programs. (You may wish to give examples using different types of positions.)

HR 653: Benefits

Question 1

Mr. Frank Sears was a blue-collar worker for a large chemical company in the Northeast for his entire career and retired in 1983 at age 60. Sears felt quite secure about his situation at the time of retirement. The union had negotiated a very generous health insurance and pension benefits for its retirees. His home mortgage had been paid in 1982, so his only household expenses were property taxes, repairs, and routine maintenance.

While their health and pension benefits have failed to keep up with inflation since 1983, Sears and his wife have adapted by eating out less often and postponing some needed home repairs. Since their pension benefits were not indexed to inflation, they had reconciled themselves to learning to live on less.

But their retiree health insurance premiums, purchased through Sear's former company, were a particular concern. Their premiums had increased 21 percent and 26 percent, respectively, for each of the past two years. Mrs. Sears called a number of other health insurance companies to determine how much it would cost to purchase their insurance on their own directly from another insurer. To her amazement, she learned that direct purchase would cost them less.

After checking with two other retired couples who were insured with the original company, she learned they had switched a year ago when they found out that the original company had viewed retiree health insurance as a profit center and had charged accordingly. She promptly switched to a new insurer and felt their problem had been solved.

Yesterday, she received a letter from an executive of a company she had never heard of indicating that their company had purchased the original company. The letter went on to say that, effective immediately, no more health or pension benefits would be paid by them or any other firm. She was no longer concerned about the health insurance benefits, since these were paid directly out-of-pocket anyway. However, their ability to pay for the health insurance was dependent upon continued lifetime pension benefits as the union contract stipulated at the time of Sear retirement.

Questions

1. Do companies have either a moral or legal obligation to honor all terms and conditions associated with an employee's retirement which were in effect at the time of that retirement? Why or why not?
2. Does the purchase of the original company by another company, or changing economic circumstances, obviate the employer's obligation concerning retiree benefits? Why or why not?
3. Could Mr. and Mrs. Sears expect to receive any retirement benefits as a result of ERISA?

Question 2

Maura Currier has been working for Computer Tech for four years as a Lead Supervisor. During the past two years, Maura's mother has needed frequent medical attention for her diabetes. Being the only child, Maura has helped her mother, Jane, as often as her work schedule would allow. Unfortunately, during the past two years, Jane's condition has worsened.

With the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act, Maura asked the firm for, and was granted, an unpaid leave to care for her mother in accordance with company policy. The agreement stated that Maura could miss work every Friday for 60 weeks rather than take off 12 straight weeks. At the end of 60 weeks, Maura returned to work full time and immediately began missing work to care for her mother until all of her allotted vacation and sick leave days were exhausted. She then asked that her Friday leave be extended indefinitely, because her mother's condition remained serious and she required ongoing assistance.

The firm's Human Resources Director was uncertain what her response should be. The firm needed Maura to be at work regularly because of the increasingly heavy workload, the fact that her job duties were critical, and because other supervisors and employees preferred not to have to cover for her. On the other hand, Maura was an excellent supervisor and had worked four years for Computer Tech. In addition, everyone was concerned about Maura's, and her mother's, welfare and wanted to be supportive of them.

Questions

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of extending Maura's leave?
2. If you were the Human Resources Director, would you grant Maura's request? Explain your answer in detail and reference all applicable laws.

Question 3

Ships, Inc. is a large shipbuilding company located in one of the eastern states. One September afternoon, the firm made the decision to shut down operations due to an approaching hurricane. This was based on the forecasted arrival of tropical storm force winds to the local area as early as noon on Wednesday. They made that decision at approximately 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday afternoon and some employees were told Tuesday by supervisors that the shutdown would occur beginning with the next morning's shift and that the shutdown would occur beginning with the next morning's shift and that they were not to report to work. They were also told that the time they lost would be excused with pay.

By Tuesday evening, it was very clear that the hurricane would not be in the area until Thursday at the earliest. Nonetheless, the shipyard decided to maintain the decision to shut down on Wednesday. The emergency hotline message confirmed this information but also said that missed time for salaried personnel would be charged against each employee's vacation bank.

By Wednesday evening, the emergency hotline message was updated to state that the shutdown would be continued through the first shift on Thursday with normal operations commencing on the second shift. The hurricane subsequently hit the area Thursday night (during the second shift), leaving many roads littered with branches and debris.

On Friday morning, when all personnel reported for work again (many of them without electricity), they were hit with the fact that they had just lost two days of vacation—two days gone with the wind. Hourly personnel had the option of charging the two days off to their vacation bank or taking time off without pay, but salaried personnel did not have a choice; they were required to charge the leave to their accrued vacation bank. This action was in line with the company's policy for complete shutdowns despite what some personnel were told prior to the shutdown.

Within a few days, many people became very upset with the way the company handled the situation and the fact that they just lost two vacation days for no good reason. Why did the firm close down operations so soon instead of waiting for the storm to hit? Why didn't it close down operations on Thursday, the day the storm actually did arrive? Some had already scheduled vacation for over Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays and now realized that they had insufficient vacation days left. Those who had already paid for their airline and cruise tickets were particularly upset. Others were offended by the fact that they would now need to work uncompensated overtime to make up for the work missed, an action expected of all salaried employees.

The company's vacation policy states that salaried employees accrue vacation time based on length of service. Employees with less than five years seniority receive one day per month, those with five to ten years' experience earn one and one half days per month, and those with more than ten years earn two days per month. Employees have the right to carry over unused vacation time to the next year. The policy also states that, if the shipyard is shut down for any reason, the time lost by salaried employees will be charged to each person's vacation bank. Furthermore, the policy states that, in the event of a partial shutdown, salaried employees who report to work

and are then sent home will be paid for any time missed and will not be required to charge lost time to their vacation banks.

Questions:

1. What, if anything, should the company do with regard to salaried personnel who have vacations planned later this year and now don't have enough vacation time?
2. What, if anything, should the firm do regarding the lost vacation time for all of the other employees, both salaried and hourly?
3. Should the firm change its current policy that requires salaried employees to charge their vacation bank whenever a shutdown occurs?

Question 4

Campbell Soup Co. and Health-Care Costs. Health-care costs for Campbell's rural operations were exceeding those for its urban areas. John C. Hague, Campbell's corporate benefits director, stated, "Although our medical costs weren't completely out of sight, they clearly were rising at an alarming rate. What surprised us was that the costs weren't high where we expected them to be." For example, health-care costs in its Paris, Texas, and Omaha, Nebraska, divisions greatly exceeded the medical costs per employee in the larger cities, such as Philadelphia. After investigating the situation, they discovered a phenomenon known as outmigration. People were leaving their own communities to seek health care in the larger cities for hospital care. With the help of the consulting firm of Burgett & Dietrich, Inc., Campbell set up a managed care program.

The program was run by Campbell instead of an insurance company or HMO (HMOs are typically not available in small towns). Campbell, which is self-insured, has a direct say in how its health-care dollars are spent. Campbell provides a monthly forum in which community employers and health-care providers can discuss such topics as medical trends, frequency of diagnoses, per-diem costs of hospitals, average lengths of stay, referral patterns, and costs-per-visit.

Campbell trained local personnel and operations managers about how to manage the plan. The plan was gradually implemented in five divisions. The program is unique in that employees agree not to self-refer (i.e., select hospitals and doctors on their own). They choose a primary-care physician from a participating panel.

Campbell pays 100 percent of the costs (no payment is required by the employee; it is made directly through the network) for PCN (primary-care network) physicians and specialist visits. Network physicians agree to casemanage each patient's care and must be involved in a monthly board meeting in the community. If a specialist believes further treatment is necessary after a visit, he or she must obtain the approval of the primary-care physician. This saves a lot of money in repeated tests.

Campbell has determined that it saves 10 to 20 percent of the healthcare costs for employees who are in a network. The process creates heightened awareness of medical costs for all concerned. The focus is on ensuring that the medical system is appropriately utilized and that it is not abused

by the patient or the provider. Employees are attracted by the lower cost; they now have good reasons to obtain health care locally. It is a paperless system; the employee does not have to file any claims. Employees still have choices regarding health care. The system appears to represent a win-win situation for Campbell and its employees.

Questions

- a. Can you see any potential disadvantages of Campbell's plan?
- b. Would this type of plan be an appropriate choice for all organizations?