
Introduction to the Human Resource System

The Goals

This system is designed to help the management of a company, whether the owner or a production manager, to effectively manage the field staff. The idea is simple, specify the tasks each person is responsible for, test them, set goals and then promote when ready.

This system will enable the owner or Production Manager of a company to:

1. Establish responsibilities for each position of employment.
2. Interview potential employees to determine if they fit in the position.
3. Evaluate potential employees with written and skills tests to determine if they qualify for the position.
4. From the evaluation, hire into the position that best fits their skills.
5. Provide training to new employees before they go out in the field.
6. Set appropriate pay ranges for each position in the company
7. Set goals for the employee to achieve in order to earn a pay increase within a position and to be promoted to a new position.
8. Evaluate employees using the Job Description as the standard for fair, objective and accurate evaluations.
9. Provide skills training on the site.
10. Place responsibility for learning and increasing earning power on the employee.

The Need

For anyone that is in the business of running a remodeling company or a small building company knows that the biggest challenge is hiring, training, maintaining, and perhaps firing employees. This is also the area that we have the least amount of information about with regards to training seminars. The seminars that do exist are usually focused on the need and the how to's but little is done because of the need to tend to the everyday burdens of this kind of business.

Here are a few of the typical problems in personnel management that these businesses face.

1. You need to hire right away.
 - a. How do you know they will work out?
 - b. What can they really do?
 - c. How much will you pay them to start?
2. You have employees that have been around for years. They are good people but are not contributing to the company any more than when they started. Yet they want a raise every year.
3. You have trouble getting your employees motivated to increase their knowledge.
4. You have an employee on the site that is just not working out and yet there always seems to be a reason why it is beyond their control.

Systems to handle these kinds of problems help to take the guesswork out of the process and establish understood guidelines for advancement and pay scales.

For example, if you have an interview and testing process for each position it eliminates some of the guesswork and fear that an individual will work well in that position. It will also help to establish what they know and don't know so that you and your staff will not assume they know all they should. Those assumptions have led to more mistakes and money losses than can be described here. Once the problem areas have been brought to light, they can be addressed in training to bring an employee up to speed for your company.

Another benefit of an organized hiring system is after finding out what the applicant really knows and does not know, you can set pay and benefits in a realistic fashion. When each position in a company has pay ranges attached, applicants know where they stand and the employer can be firmer with initial hiring wages.

A system of this kind creates other benefits as well. By identifying positions and pay ranges, the employer can also designate learning goals for advancement. This creates motivation for growth and places the responsibility on the shoulders of the employee. In other words if the employee is going to rise in position and earn more it will be because they have achieved certain goals not because they have been around another year. The employee is given the learning goals, the resources materials to learn the information or skill, and is tested for each goal to see if it is learned. If they pass they are promoted, if not they continue in the position they are in until the goals are learned. By being set up in an objective way the system provide employers the ability to separate discussions of wages from perceptions and personal feelings.

The Positions

In this system there are 5 positions. This section will describe briefly how each position is defined and who would most likely fit in that position.

- **Entry Level** – This position involves the typical laborer type work. Moving lumber, digging, cleaning up and some limited carpentry exposure as needed by the company. Position requires the ability to read and write, as well as use a tape properly. This position will always be supervised.

This is an individual that has little or no construction experience. They have come from another field and want to learn construction or are beginning the work time of their lives and believe that construction is what they want to do.

- **Carpenter I** – This position involves the use of primary tools on the job site. Assembling walls, roofs, installation of doors, windows, roofing etc. This position is a supervised position and requires little or no ability to work alone or be responsible for the progress of the job. The position requires the ability to know what the major components of a project are so they can respond to instructions properly.

This is an individual that has been around some construction, know a variety of information and has some skills. They are not able to work unsupervised yet and need help in seeing the big picture.

- **Carpenter II** – This position involves the ability to complete all the technical work required by the company on a project. Being able to use all common tools involved in construction safely and with efficiency. A complete knowledge of how things go together, safety, water infiltration issues, etc is required.

This is an individual that has construction experience. They have tools and have demonstrated and ability to work unsupervised and at times supervise others on the site.

Lead Carpenter – This position involves all the qualities of the Carpenter II plus the ability to manage the job site. This involves supervision of the client, subs, employee, paperwork, and materials. It requires the ability to look ahead, know how to get things done, and know how to get the best out of others. This position requires an ability to organize the work so that it is done efficiently. It also requires an ability to understand the job budget, set a schedule, and keep the job on both.

This person will be someone who has demonstrated carpentry skills and management skill but wants to continue working in the field.

Production Manager – This position involves the management of the people and the process. They are responsible for the production system. It involves hiring, supervision, scheduling, evaluating all the employees working in the field. It also involves working with the owner of the company, the client, and perhaps outside design professionals. It requires the ability to manage the system not the individual job site. A working knowledge of the building process is helpful although not required.

This person is someone that has demonstrated ability to work with people, has strong organizational skills, and pays attention to detail.

The Pieces

- **Job Description** – This defines the job of the person in this position. It includes specific responsibilities and general responsibilities. It is designed to be as concise as possible and still explain the job, as clearly as possible for that position, doable by the person who has learned all the skills of that position, and controllable by the employee. This is the guide that will dictate the other parts of the System. If you are customizing this system for your company each part will need to be customized to match the Job Description.
- **Interview Questions** – This section gives the employer specific questions designed to solicit answers that will tell you whether the applicant knows about the topic. These are multiple answer questions, meaning that the questioner needs to have thought through what he/she thinks the answer should be and that they listen carefully. Because the questions are designed to not be simple answers the system allows for a space with each question so that the interviewer can make notes about the answers. Care should be given to note whether the answer was correct or not at the time of the interview not simply to note the answer given.
- **Skills Evaluation** – The second part of the interview process is a skills evaluation. Part is written and part is technical. This section provides the interviewer with a list of what must be assembled before some one is interviewed. This will enable you to do all of the process at one time. In general this will include a written evaluation from the System Book and a list of building materials and tools.
- **Applicant Evaluation** – This section provides a written evaluation and instructions for a technical evaluation. The written evaluation will be keyed for answer. The technical evaluation will have to be assessed by the interviewer.
- **Employee Training** – Once it has been determined to hire an individual into a position, the interview can provide information on what the employee needs to learn to be effective in the company. Some of the information needs to be trained before the employee even goes out in the field. Some information needs to be trained simply because the employee is new to the company. This section will provide information on the materials and process for training before the employee goes into the field to work. In each position some of this information will be the same such as safety, policies, and Time cards.

Evaluations – Each position will have a Job Description. This is the backbone of the Evaluation. The Evaluation will be used on a six-month basis to evaluate the employee against the job description. A review of the skills learned and need to be learned will be included. If the employee has demonstrated the acquisition of all the skills needed to advance then the employee will advance and goals for the next position will be established. If not goals for the current position will be established.

- **Learning Goals** – Each position has Learning Goals that are assigned in order to advance. These learning goals are listed so that the employee can see what has to be learned for pay increases and advancement in position.

Field Sign Off Cards – These pages give a break down of the Learning Goals into measurable goals. In order to advance or receive a pay increase the employee must get a signature from a Certified Company Trainer, typically any of the Lead Carpenters. These skills are the skills that are to be tested or demonstrated in the field.

- **Advancement Evaluating** – Each set of Learning Goals has a component that must be evaluated by a written evaluation. This section will have that evaluation and an answer sheet. This section will also set guidelines for promotion vs. not.
- **Resource Guide** – This section will list resources for each position. This will enable the employee to find information on their own and progress at their pace. This will also put the responsibility of the employee to invest in resources that will help them for a long time.