

Law Office Management Chapter 3

Chapter 3

Tab Text

Personnel Relations

OBJECTIVES

After completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain the objectives of law office management.
 - Discuss employee motivation.
 - Describe the management role.
 - Identify the necessary skills and functions for effective management.
 - List the various considerations in hiring the right employee.
 - Identify appropriate interview questions.
 - Outline the evaluation process.
 - Discuss paralegal compensation and the laws affecting compensation.
 - Explain the difference between an exempt employee and a nonexempt employee and how a paralegal qualifies for exempt status
 - Discuss the elements of the team approach and working as a team to benefit a client.
-

Key Terms

Tab Text

1. Attrition: A reduction in workforce due to death, termination, retirement, or resignation.
 2. Buddy system: A system of putting two employees together for training purposes.
 3. CEMEC principle: An acronym to describe employee expectations; stands for communication, education, motivation, evaluation, and compensation.
 4. Constructive criticism: A negative performance evaluation that is given for the purpose of providing instruction and direction.
 5. Consumer price index: An index that determines the annual increase in the cost of living.
 6. Ergonomics: An area of science concerned with health issues in the workplace.
 7. Exempt: A professional status that exempts an employee from overtime compensation.
 8. FLSA: Fair Labor Standards Act.
 9. Forecasting: Planning for the future by anticipating future events.
 10. Formal evaluation: A procedure by which an employee's work performance is evaluated and rated in writing. It occurs annually or biannually.
 11. Hiring specification: The requirements for a position.
 12. Human resource audit: A determination of the strengths and weaknesses of current employees.
 13. Informal evaluation: A procedure by which an employee's work is evaluated verbally. It occurs in an informal manner.
-

14. Nonexempt: A nonprofessional status that requires payment of overtime.

15. Open question: A question that requires a narrative answer and cannot be answered yes or no.

16. Ouch formula: An acronym for proper interview questions. "Ouch" stands for objective, uniform, consistent, and have job relatedness.

17. Position description: A document that describes the duties and responsibilities of a position.

18. Team approach: A management theory in which management and employees work together for the benefit of the organization.

19. Win-lose management: A form of personnel control in which the policies of management are directed totally to profits and disregard employee needs.

Internet Projects

Tab Text

The Cybersites sidebar on page 103 of the text lists Web sites to aid in the job search. Visit the Web sites and observe the resources available.

Answers to Chapter Review Questions

Tab Text

Following are answers to the Chapter Review Questions found in the text.

1. External conditions are economic conditions or government regulations and laws. Internal conditions are the nature and structure of a firm, nature of the work, and nature of the employees (p. 74).

2. The five functions of a personnel manager are planning, controlling, organizing, leading, and staffing; the most important of which is staffing (p. 74).

3. The four areas of human resource planning are:

- A. Establishing human resource objectives;
- B. Assessing current human resource conditions;
- C. Designing and evaluating human resource activities; and
- D. Monitoring and evaluating the results of activities (p. 74).

4. The three main elements of control are:

- A. Establishing standards of performance;
- B. Measuring current performance and comparing it against established standards;
- C. Taking action to correct performance that does not meet established standards (p. 75).

5. The three roles of a leader are interpersonal role, informational role, and decisional role (p. 76).

6. The four steps of the hiring process are planning, recruitment, selection, and training (p. 78).

7. The OUCH formula is an acronym for proper interview questions. All questions must be objective, uniform, consistent, and have job relatedness (p. 82).

8. The danger signals managers look for in an interview are:

- A. Job hopping;
- B. Distance from home;
- C. Health;
- D. Proper termination notice to previous employer;
- E. Reasons for leaving; and
- F. Relationship with previous employer (pp. 83-84).

9. The CEMEC principle is an acronym for employee expectations, which include communication, education, motivation, evaluation, and compensation (p. 87).

10. The reasons for conducting a performance evaluation are to:

- A. Discuss openly and candidly how the employee's performance meets the attorney's requirements;
- B. Make suggestions on how to correct weaknesses;
- C. Follow up after a time period to report on the progress being made, giving any additional suggestions that might help;
- D. Discuss the employee's professional development;
- E. Set goals for the following year;
- F. Assess the employee's professional goals;
- G. Give the employee suggestions on how to enhance professional development (p. 91).

The areas considered in a performance evaluation are:

- A. Courtesy to clients;
- B. Punctuality;
- C. Dependability;
- D. Communication skills;
- E. Leadership capabilities;
- F. Initiative;
- G. Work habits;
- H. Willingness to work overtime;
- I. Skills rating; and
- J. Job performance (p. 93).

11. Firms consider the following four things when establishing a compensation plan:

- A. The marketplace-what other firms in the area pay their employees;
 - B. Job analysis-a study of the job activities, duties, and responsibilities of each job;
 - C. Job description-a detailed description of
-

the job and the skills required to perform the job; and

D. Job evaluation-establishes the value of the job and puts a monetary value on the job (p. 94).

12. The difference between an exempt employee and a nonexempt employee is that exempt employees are paid a salary and are not entitled to overtime compensation; nonexempt employees are paid by the hour and are entitled to overtime compensation (pp. 97-98).

13. The team approach is a theory to maximize productivity of employees. The organization aligns its need with the needs of the employees. By doing so, the organization will benefit from the employees' motivation, energy, and drive, as well as benefit the employees by being a vehicle for achieving their personal goals (pp. 98-99).

14. The five Cs of the team approach are commitment, competency, constructive feedback, creativity, and cooperation (p. 100).

Examples for Discussion

Tab Text

1. Iron Fist Management Style

Discuss with the students how they would feel working for this law office. Some students may have experience with a manager of this type and may be willing to share their experience.

This manager is overlooking firm goal number 3: provide growth and satisfaction for firm employees. This manager is exhibiting win-lose management and is not a good leader. She is not performing any of the three leadership roles.

2. Carolyn's Bad Day

Students will empathize with Carolyn and be able to feel the frustration she must have felt.

Discuss the situation with the class and ask them what they would do if they were Carolyn.

Michael's lack of communication not only caused Carolyn distress, it also cost the firm money and disrupted the team spirit of the firm. The scenario does not state how much unnecessary time Carolyn worked on the project, but one can assume it was 7 hours on Thursday, 7 hours on Friday, 7 hours on Saturday, and 7 hours on Sunday (since she was finished on Sunday evening). A conservative estimate of the extra time is 28 hours at \$50, which equals \$1,400. Constructive feedback and communication are obviously missing here, as well as cooperation.

3. The Big Bonus

The problem over merit bonuses is common among firms who offer employees a bonus based on merit. The cause of this problem could be as follows:

A. Perhaps Larry was given wrong information. Rumors are prevalent among law firms and students should be cautioned against believing all the rumors unless they discover the absolute truth about a subject. Elizabeth may not have received a large bonus.

B. If the rumor is true, Elizabeth may be cheating on her time sheets, a grave ethical violation.

C. Elizabeth may have received a large bonus because of her excellent work rather than the number of overtime hours she worked.

D. Elizabeth may be working overtime, and Larry was not aware of it.

Whatever the reason for Elizabeth's bonus, Larry is feeling slighted. He should discuss the problem with the firm administrator.

4. Evaluation, Please!

This scenario illustrates a lack of constructive feedback. The consequences of Mary's lack of feedback are:

A. Adam was upset to learn from someone other than Mary that his work was unsatisfactory. This embarrassment results in a lack of motivation.

B. Adam's relationship with Mary suffered because Adam felt he could not trust Mary to be honest with him.

C. Adam missed an opportunity to learn the reasons for his mistakes in the memo. Adam could have benefited from this information and increased his knowledge of contributory negligence.

D. Adam's relationship with Stuart suffered because Adam thought that Stuart thought that he did inferior work.

Giving constructive criticism is not easy for some people. Ask the class for suggestions on how to phrase the feedback so Adam could derive the best benefit from the feedback.

5. The Deposition Dilemma

Mike's lack of cooperation, an essential ingredient of the team approach, is the obvious problem here. The consequences of Mike's lack of cooperation are:

A. Polly's anger at Mike resulted in a weakening of their friendship, which affects the atmosphere of the entire office.

B. Mike's goals and objectives were not the

same as those of other members of the team:
providing quality legal service to the client.

C. Polly worked late each night to complete the project, which resulted in increased overtime costs for the firm and an exhausted employee.

D. Because of the magnitude of the project, Polly was not able to devote adequate time to the project, which resulted in substandard service to the client.

6. The Demise of Shea & Gould

There are many problems with this firm. The decentralized management contributed to the chaos and dissention among the partners. Shea, the retired managing partner, had the necessary leadership skills to guide the firm. However, when he retired, the firm was left without leadership. The firm's goals were not balanced. It concentrated on growth and profit for the firm and disregarded the other two goals. A number of the CEMEC principles are missing:

A. Communication: The management had no communication with employees.

B. Motivation: The employees were not motivated because of the dissention and mismanagement of the firm.

C. Compensation: The employees were dissatisfied with the compensation plan of the company. A compensation policy was neither developed nor created.

Possible Answers to Assignments

Law Office Management Chapter 3



Key Terms

Internet Projects

Answers to Chapter Review Questions

Examples for Discussion

Possible Answers to Assignments

Quiz

Possible Answers to Assignments

Following are possible answers to Assignments provided in the text. The responses below are a guide to what an instructor would look for within the student's response. Some assignments are based solely on individual experience and/or opinion, and a general response for such questions is not provided.

1. The answers to the situations are as follows:
Situation 1:
 1. The five Cs of the Team Approach: None
 2. Individual response
 3. Management function: PlanningSituation 2:
 1. The five Cs of the Team Approach: Communication
 2. Individual response
 3. Management function: LeadingSituation 3:

Tab Text

Following are possible answers to Assignments provided in the text. The responses below are a guide to what an instructor would look for within the student's response. Some assignments are based solely on individual experience and/or opinion, and a general response for such questions is not provided.

1. The answers to the situations are as follows:

Situation 1:

1. The five Cs of the Team Approach: None
2. Individual response
3. Management function: Planning

Situation 2:

1. The five Cs of the Team Approach: Communication
2. Individual response

3. Management function: Leading

Situation 3:

1. The five Cs of the Team Approach: None
2. Individual response
3. Management function: Leading

Situation 4:

1. The five Cs of the Team Approach: Constructive feedback, creativity, competency
2. Individual response
3. Management function: Leading and planning

Situation 5:

1. The five Cs of the Team Approach: None
2. Individual response
3. Management function: Organizing

Situation 6:

1. The five Cs of the Team Approach: Creativity, commitment, competence
2. Individual response
3. Management function: Leading, controlling

Situation 7:

1. The five Cs of the Team Approach: None
2. Individual response
3. Management function: Leading

Situation 8:

1. The five Cs of the Team Approach: Commitment
2. Individual response
3. Management function: Leading, staffing

Situation 9:

1. The five Cs of the Team Approach: Constructive feedback, communication
2. Individual response
3. Management function: Leading

2. Individual student response.

3. Individual student response.

4. Individual student response.

5. Individual student response.



Quiz

Tab Text

[Click here to take the Chapter Quiz.](#)
