MANAGING TALENT AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

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Executive summary

This article explores the role of Human Resource functions and Talent Management strategy in organisations. It presents detailed analysis for developing talent management strategy and specifically talent acquisition process for the Dream Chocolate Factory.

Dream Chocolate Factory is a small manufacturing company producing 300 tons of luxury chocolates a year. Currently, there are 100 employees in the company. Developing an effective and comprehensive talent acquisition strategy is crucial, since opening a new line will require more talents for the future. Followings will be discussed in this report:

- Connection between talent management and Human Resource functions
- Human Resource planning, job analysis and job design
- Importance of employer branding and Employer Value Proposition (EVP)
- Key job positions, competencies and job description
- Talent acquisition strategy. Recruitment and selection

Effective recruiting and attracting top talents, decreasing employee turnover and enhancing staff performance are the main management functions for both small family businesses and big international companies (Taylor, 2002).

According to HR planning outcomes, the company will need to recruit 9 new employees, who will be recruited via the Internet. The recruitment and selection process will contain 6 stages: vacancy announcement, screening, shortlisting, interview, reference check and job offer.

The employer brand will be established, and the Employer Value Proposition (EVP) will be communicated to the stakeholders using different channels to attract top talents.

By developing a strong talent management strategy, the Dream Chocolate Factory will retain positive workplace culture, training and development opportunities, successful recruiting and lower employee retention rate, which will positively impact the business performance of the company.

Keywords: Talent management, HR planning, EVP, recruitment, employee retention.

Introduction

Today, the success of any organization is closely linked to the availability of the high-quality candidates it can acquire. Increasing competition and the lack of proficient employees in a fast-paced, global business environment put priority for businesses on hiring and retaining highly talented people. Talent Management is a set of Human Resources functions, such as recruitment, selection, training and performance evaluation, which aims to raise the capacity of organization (SHRM, 2006). Although, the initial aim of this practice was to enhance the recruitment process and staff development, time-by-time, talent management has broadened, along with the expanding responsibilities of the HR profession, to be incorporated into the objectives and strategy of the company. (Fegley, 2006).

Any HR function (e.g. recruitment, selection, training and development) is interlinked with Talent Management. And both of them as a set (together) stimulate organizational growth and goal attainment.

Even though Talent Management and HR functions are inseparable and indispensable for an organisation's success, line managers' role creates a difference between TM and HR. In organisations engaging with Talent Management strategy, line managers throughout the organization are responsible for employees, not only HR departments (HR Exchange Network Guides, 2019).

According to Patterson (1997), HR activities have an impact on business profitability and productivity. In this regard, HR activities represent talent acquisition, skill development and job design. Talent Management contributes positively to company's sustainable competitive advantage by means of identifying key positions and developing the list of talents with high performance. Later, these key positions are filled by these talents who positively contribute to the success of the business. Organizations can achieve competitive advantage by hiring right people to the right positions as well creating opportunities for their skills development (Patterson et al, 1997).

Employees show a positive attitude towards talent management programs, where several factors such as organizational culture, professional development, recruitment and retention are present in organizations. (Fegley, 2006).

Dream Chocolate Factory is a small chocolate manufacturing company, which produces 300 tons of luxury chocolates a year. Currently, there are 100 employees in the company.

The following functions should be reinforced in a Dream Chocolate Factory to reach the highest point in business performance: recruitment, talent acquisition, training and development, employer branding and others. As we are opening a new line, effective talent acquisition process should be developed since the company will face a need for more talents. Training and development function is also essential since the business is to be expanded in an innovative way. As the main goal is to grow in an innovative way, attention should be paid in existence of jobs that allow workers to develop skills that can be used in other job positions, creative and innovative behavior in positions, performance appraisal programs, compensation schemes and others. Moreover, to perform innovatively, staff should be engaged in training opportunities.

By developing a strong talent management strategy, the Dream Chocolate Factory will maintain positive workplace culture, training and development opportunities, successful hiring and lower employee retention rate, which in general, will positively impact the business performance of the company.

HR Planning, Job Analysis and Job Design
HR planning
Considerable attention was paid to HRP as means of associating strategic and organizational objectives to human resource programs. Large number of scholarly articles have been written to discuss the use of formal and comprehensive approaches in HR within companies (Walker, 1980).

HR planning is the foremost point to deal with, since the factory's new line will create a need for new talents.

HR planning will help the Dream Chocolate Factory to identify how easily it can recruit new talents it needs using different sources.

Human resource planning is about (1) assessing the current workforce, (2) discovering future workforce needs, (3) defining the gap between the present and the future, and (4) implementing solutions so that an organisation can achieve its strategic objectives (CIPD, 2020).

Workforce forecasting includes for stages:
1.   Determining the future need for personnel
2.   Analysing the internal supply of the workforce
3.   Forecasting external supply of personnel
4.   Developing an action plan for the forecasts

The chocolate company already has got 100 employees, whom particular duties and responsibilities were assigned. Now, there is a need to determine the demand for new employees.

Forecasting future demand for human resources
According to CIPD (2020), there are two approaches to workforce planning: soft or hard.

A soft (strategic) workforce planning approach requires defining and developing a strategy. This is an effective approach that gives managers a chance to consider different possibilities. Using **hard workforce planning** means to predict how many people with what skills the company will need. Calculations and statistical data is important in HR planning, however, the data needs to be analysed and understood in context.

Number of vacancies expected in the coming year can be calculated using following formula:

D= [(A*C) +A]*B

Job title	A	B	C	D
Management	10	3%	5%	0.315
Manufacturing	50	10%	20%	6
Marketing	12	6%	8%	0.7776
Sales	15	8%	15%	1.38
IT	5	4%	4%	0.208
Finance	8	3%	5%	0.252
TOTAL	100			8.9326

Table 1. Forecast of future demand for human resources

Key:

A: Total number of whole-time equivalents in post at January 1st

B: Turnover rate based on past trend

C: Increased demand expected during the coming year

D. Number of vacancies expected in the coming year

The outcome shows that for the new product line, the company will need to attract about 9 employees, which are mainly for the manufacturing section.

Forecasting future internal supply of human resources

The input of internal supply (of human resources) will not be very significant, as there are only 100 employees in the company. Internal promotion has several advantages for businesses such as saving on hiring costs and better quality of performance (Marinescu, 2017). Promoting the middle level worker to top level and train him/her will benefit the company from perspective of hiring costs, since recruiting the middle level roles is easier and cheaper than attracting high level managers. According to the calculations, the company may need one top level manager in the future (e.g. brand manager). By promoting current qualified senior specialist on branding to managerial role, and hiring a new senior specialist, we can reduce the cost. The same method can be used for other vacancies as well.

Or rather than hiring new IT staff, additional workload and payment can be offered to current IT staff for their overtime work. This option is critical, since, extra workload may lead to decrease in effectiveness of employee's performance.

But, for manufacturing posts (as there is a higher demand), more effective strategies will be used (will be discussed later).

Forecasting future external supply of human resources

While discussing an external supply, statistics about labour market in Uzbekistan should be taken into account. According to the statistics (see Appendix 1), 75% of Uzbekistan population is economically active, 9 % out of 75% is unemployed. It means that there are 1 335 300 people, who are unemployed, but capable to work (The State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, 2019). Besides that, the situation of pandemic (COVID-19) is worsening, more and more people are losing their jobs. Potential in labour market is not bad, however, it is hard to identify whether those unemployed people have the right skills that the chocolate company requires or not. Additionally, in order to get more accurate information,

approaching the Employment agencies would be a more effective.

With a help of well-thought-out recruitment strategy, the company will meet the future recruitment demands.

Formulating responses to the forecasts

Except for internal promotion and additional workload, other responses for the forecast results can be made:

- Organizing the internship program for Universities' last-year students

In collaboration with Universities, contract for Internship (practical training) programme can be made, where last year students can be offered a job or awarded with certificates after completing the internship programme at the factory (for example, in Finance department).

- Hiring seasonal or temporary workers

After forecasting and studying the future workload, temporary or seasonal employees can be recruited for some sections.

- Contract employees

Hourly based contracts can be made for new IT staff, if the workload grows after opening a new line.

- Employee Referral Program

Launching the employee referral program will positively contribute to the recruitment of right talents. Policy of Employer Referral Program was developed for the chocolate company (see Appendix 2).

Job analysis

After planning the workforce, next important step is to understand what jobs need to be filled, which duties and responsibilities they include, the qualifications necessary for performance of the roles and the work conditions. Information gained by analyzing jobs, is used for creating job descriptions and job specifications (Dessler, 2016).

Data collected by job analysis can be used for performance management, recruitment and selection, compensation administration, training and development, employee relations and so on.

Job analysis will aid the HR team to collect following information on characteristics that differentiate jobs:

- Skills, knowledge and abilities are required
- Work behaviors
- Interactions with internal and external parties
- Performance norms
- Financial planning and its influence
- Machinery and tools utilised
- Working conditions
- Supervision

There are various methods of collecting information for job analysis. The most common job analysis methods are open-ended questionnaires, interview and observation.

Questionnaire method requires employees, supervisors, and managers to fill out forms - questionnaires. As this method is inexpensive and easy to collect data, it is one of the most widely used method. Questionnaires can contain different question forms including open-ended, multiple choice and checklists. However, surveying is not enough to collect reliable and useful information, since questionnaires have several disadvantages such as question misinterpretation, high-nonresponse rates and inaccurate information given by employees. As this is important for job analysis to deal with reliable information, combining questionnaire with other job analysis methods is the best choice. As a result, it enables the company to create better opportunities and work conditions for current employees and leads to formulation of job description that attract best performing candidates for prospective vacancies. (Markovska, 2020).

Questionnaire and **interview** methods will be used for the job analysis of Dream Chocolate Factory for the maximum efficiency. Because, the questionnaire will help to gather basic information quickly, and by interviewing employees, answers with a high level of reliability and validity will be obtained for the most important open-ended questions. Sample job analysis form (adapted from the form presented in the article by Agricultural Innovation & Commercialization Center, Purdue University) can be found in Appendix 3.

Job design

Job design is the process of creating a job, which supports the company to achieve organizational goals by

motivating and rewarding staff members (MBA Skool Team, 2020). Well-designed job will result in high motivation, high quality, high job satisfaction, lower employee turnover and lower absence.
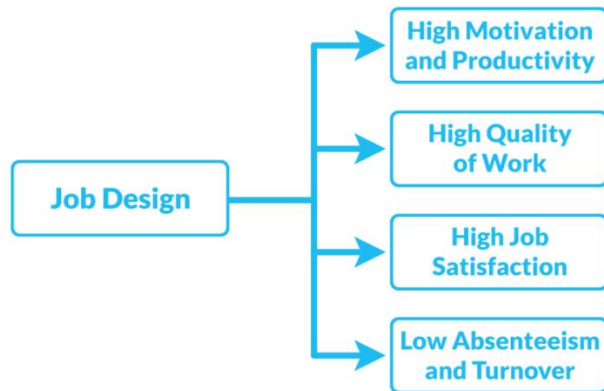

Figure 1. Job design

Source: https://www.digitalhrtech.com/job-design/

To succeed after establishing a new chocolate line, jobs should be properly designed. There are various approaches for work design including the Mechanistic, Biological, Perceptual-Motor and Motivational approach. A motivational approach will be used for designing jobs at Dream Chocolate Factory. This approach deals with job features that impact the employees' psychology and affect their motivation, and it also deals with attitudinal variables including job satisfaction, motivation, attendance and performance.

To use this approach, high attention should be paid to job enlargement, job rotation and job enrichment.

Job enlargement means charging workers with additional same-level duties (Dessler, 2016). By this, the chocolate company will utilize human resources more effectively since this method reduces boredom and monotony of jobs. For example, packaging technician at the factory, will be responsible not only for proper packing, performing quality check and recording quantity, but also suggesting and sketching new and more efficient designs of packing. This kind of task variety will motivate workers.

Job rotation is about transferring workers from one job to another (Dessler, 2016). It is usually used for top and middle-level management. For example, brand manager of the new line will collaborate with the employer branding and communications specialist at Human Resources department.

According to Frederick Herzberg, job enrichment is the best way to motivate employees. Job enrichment is giving the employee the opportunity to feel more responsibility, growth and achievement. Empowered employees do their jobs well, because they are motivated and the employee's performance quality and productive will grow. For instance, public relations officer will be responsible for controlling quality of all publications on social media.

Flexibility in working schedule also increased job motivation of workers. For example, web designers of the company may choose 2 days to work from home in a week.

Employer Branding Strategy and Employer Value Proposition

Employer Brand and Employer Value Proposition (EVP) is formulated for Dream Chocolate Factory as a part of its Talent Management Strategy. Precisely, Employer Branding represents the image of the company as an Employer to its stakeholder. In other words, it explains why people would like to work for the company.

Employer branding helps companies to be different from their rivals by focusing on the organizations distinct working environment (Backhasu and Tikoo, 2004). Employee branding creates value for an organization by attracting, developing and retaining best performing employees. According to Michington (2007) employer brand promotion is essential in increasing loyalty of employees whereas positive brand promotion outside of organization is critical in attracting best performing candidates to the organization

It is important for Dream Chocolate Factory to build Employer Branding and Employer Value Proposition (EVP). According to Ansari (Linkhumans.com), developing the employer branding will bring the

following benefits for the company:

Benefits		Facts
Recruitment	Decrease in cost per hire	Organizations with strong employer branding observed 43% decrease in the cost per candidate compared to those without employer branding (Linkedin, 2020)
	Attracting the right talent, more qualified candidates	79% of employees prefer using social media for finding their next job.
Corporate reputation as an employer	Reputation carries more weight than money	According to CareerBuilder, 67% of candidates are ready to accept job offers with lower payment, if the company has positive online reviews. 75% of candidates pay considerable attention to the brand of organization before applying for the job (Anja Zojčeska, 2020).
Retention	Decrease in employee turnover	There is negative relationship between positive employer brand and turnover, precisely, strong employer brand decreases turnover by 28% (Anja Zojčeska, 2020).

Table 2. Benefits of having an Employer Brand

Establishing an employer brand requires to complete following steps:
1. Understanding the company
2. Creating attractive EVP
3. Developing standards to measure
4. Align HR practices with EVP
5. Execute and measure

In order to understand the organization, it is necessary to identify satisfaction level of its staff, explore why they prefer working for Dream Chocolate Factory and what (benefits) motivates them to stay here. Staff survey will be conducted among all employees of the chocolate company (see Appendix 4). Together with the survey, we can organize a competition for the best brand promise (EVP) among the staff members and award the best one (if exists).

After identifying benefits, distinctive features and basic attributes of the company that attract and retain the employees, the next important step is defining brand identity and developing a compelling EVP. It is important to make sure that the company EVP is unique, relevant and compelling.

Recommended EVP for Dream Chocolate Factory:

"This is where some of the globe's smartest, most passionate and innovative people create the world's most delicious chocolates and valuable experiences. Join us, if you want to do the best work of your life and share a happiness in other people's lives. We offer you continuous growth and development"

This EVP is designed to attract and retain smart, passionate and innovative people who want to grow in the future.

To establish truly cohesive employment, it is crucial to communicate branding messages in multiple places (Glassdoor Team, 2014). For example:

• **Career page** of company website. Being the main representation of HR department on the Internet, the career page should provide potential candidates with necessary information. Job seekers should easily be able to figure out the benefits and advantages of working for the chocolate company through EVP, videos (e.g. employee testimonials), photos (e.g. company culture, the employee of the year), and other content on the website.

• **Social media sites.** Social network is now the most comfortable platform for candidates to search vacancies and get more information about organisations. Social media campaigns posted on Glassdoor,

Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram play a great role in company's employer branding strategy. Using paid promoting functions for employer branding contents truly raise the brand awareness of the company among the target audience.

• **Induction process.** Newly hired employees should be informed and become expert in the company employer brand and the induction is the best time for communicating them the values, culture and promises of Dream Chocolate Factory. In fact, face-to-face communication is the most effective method.

• **Career fairs.** In career days, there will be the best chance to present company employer brand to the audience, who are jobseekers, potential candidates. Showing videos on big screens, describing the company culture and atmosphere or delivering handouts (pocket handbooks) with the main and interesting information about Dream Chocolate Factory would be compelling.

• **Job Ads.** Job advertisements of the chocolate company should convey the workplace culture and the promises of the employer brand. The employer brand should be clear from the content of the ad.

• **Others.** As Telegram channels are popular in our country. Any content that is aimed to present information for external audience, can be posted on the company's channel on Telegram messenger and shared with others.

After dealing with EVP formulation and employer branding communication, it is crucial to measure the results of our actions. Several HR metrics can be used for identifies the efficiency of the Employer branding actions: number of job applications, time-to-hire, ratio of job offers to acceptance, number of employee referrals, staff retention levels, number of visits in career webpage (website traffic), quality of candidates and so on. For instance, website traffic, number of clicks (Apply button) can be easily detected using Google Analytics or similar platforms.

Key job positions and competencies. Job description

Growth and success of any organization depends on capability and skills of its employees. The capability of human resources can be measured if the company has specified job competencies for different job positions. Competency is a set of skills and abilities required to complete a job effectively.

New product line of the Dream Chocolate Factory will require to recruit about 9 new employees (see Table 1). Defining specific job competencies for each functions is important for the clear and detailed job description as well. Competencies for one of the key positions will be presented below:

1. **Product Line Manager**

Strategic Thinking: to develop strategies and come up with ideas that handle changing business environment and to consider future challenges.

Communication skills: to establish clear written and oral communication with stakeholders.

Analytical skills: to research and analyze the right data to make decisions on product with profit in mind.

Occupational skills: to be able to use Product Management and analytics related tools and software such as Microsoft Office Suite, Visio, Google Analytics and others.

Management: to grow and manage people and organizations successfully.

Product line manager was chosen from upper level position. Strategic thinking should be one of the main skills of the candidate since being a manager, the post-holder will align daily work with the organizational strategy, develop a mission of the new line. Communicating different information to variety of audience in any format, for example, communicating the mission of the team to employees properly, making contracts and agreements with partners and analyzing the data to create solutions for business strategy and product development, are also important features for Product line manager's effective performance. Next important skills are managing and growing a team with different personalities, having technical skills - using Microsoft Office Suite, Visio, Google Analytics and similar tools.

Talent Acquisition strategy. Recruitment and Selection.

After having prepared accurate and detailed job descriptions, it is time to come up with a talent acquisition strategy, which is about finding, attracting, hiring and retaining top talents. Hiring and retaining high-

qualified talents with a help of proper recruitment process is critical for the image of business (Bouton, 2015).

Recruitment is one of the main parts of talent acquisition. Unlike recruitment, talent acquisition is about searching for the most talented employees irrespective of job positions making it a long-term HR strategy. Dream Chocolate Factory shouldn't only rely on short-term, traditional strategies of recruitment like attracting candidates with LinkedIn message or visiting career fairs. To ensure high-qualified talents and retention, strategic long-term plan of talent acquisition is required.

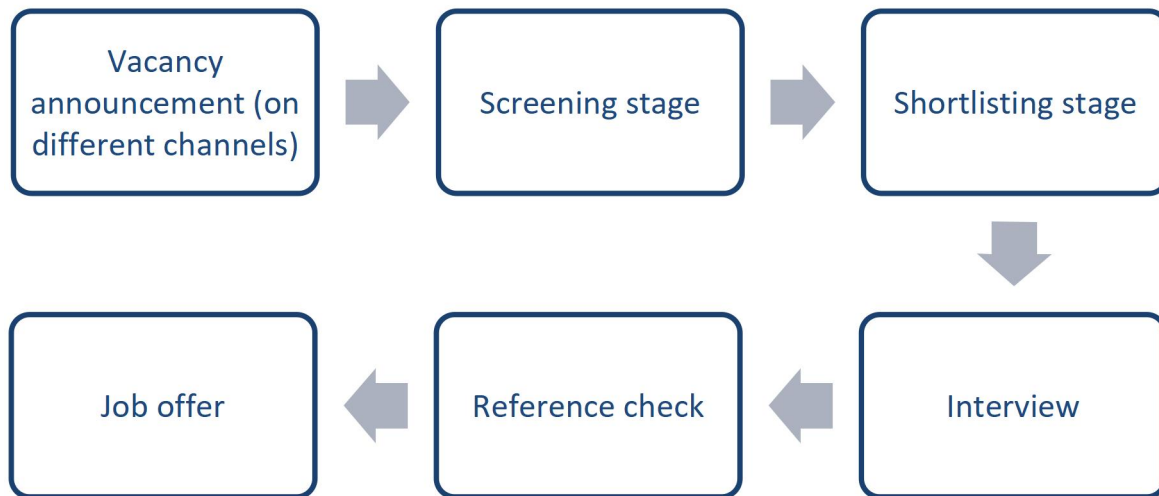The recruitment and selection process at the chocolate company involves 6 stages:

Figure 2. Recruitment and selection process.

a.   Vacancy announcement. After identifying a need for a new employee, job vacancy is posted on company career webpage first. After, on social media, on career sites or shared with company staff as an internal announcement. Interested jobseekers visit the website and submit an online application form for any available vacancy. Different sources of candidates will be used for different positions (will be discussed later).

b.   Screening. After having completed applications on the system, screening is done. It is checking the job applications against the minimum requirements mentioned in the job description and (job posting on website).

c.   Shortlisting. Applications successfully passed screening stage, are considered for shortlisting stage, which is usually conducted online, using Google forms. All screened applications are added to the form and the link of the form is sent to selection panel members, which consists of a person from top management, a head of the department, where the candidate is applying, neutral manager from other department and a recruitment specialist (as an observer).

d.   Interview. As soon as the shortlisting is finished, successful candidates are invited for the job interview (in online or face-to-face format). During the pandemic period, it is preferred to conduct interviews using Zoom platform. The structured interview is held by the same selection panel board. Candidates are asked several questions relevant to the company and position.

e.   Reference check. Unsuccessful candidates are informed about the interview outcomes via email. And successful candidates will be informed that they are now on 'reference check' stage. Referees of candidates are contacted by phone or email and asked several (prepared) questions.

f.   Job offer. After reviewing the answers by referees, final decision sending a job offer is made. After receiving the job offer, which indicates all terms and conditions of the job in details, successful candidate informs HR about his/her decision.

Sometimes, Interview stage may come after 'Test' stage. For example, it is preferred to test abilities of a

graphic designer before conducting the interview.

It should be noted that, in order to attract high-qualified candidates, text of job advertisement, the way we communicate with applicants or candidates, the format of emails and treatment should be in a high professional level. Because these all shows organizational culture to prospective employees.

Attracting the right talent for the right job is primarily linked to candidate sourcing. There are internal and external sources of candidates. Internal recruiting (hiring-from-within) has several advantages (Dessler, 2016):

- Current staff members are more committed to the company
- Internal candidates require less orientation that external ones
- Internal promotion can be a good example/motivation for other workers
- The candidate's strengths and weaknesses are familiar.

However, it is not always good to recruit internally. Employees who apply and do not pass the recruitment stages may get dissatisfied or demotivated. In such case, it is necessary to give feedback to the employee and suggest remedial actions to succeed in the future.

Besides internal recruitment, some companies prefer to consider outside candidates.

The chocolate company recruits via Internet, as each and every vacancy is posted on the website first and applications are also accepted online. There is no hidden or informal recruiting methods for the company. Jones (2015) reported that hiring applicants through online significantly reduces the hiring costs compared to traditional offline hiring processes. Additionally, online recruitment decreases hiring costs by 87% in comparison to recruiting via newspapers. Better applicants and larger applicant pool are another characteristic that differentiate online recruitment from traditional recruiting channels (Holm, 2012).

However, there are some disadvantages of e-recruitment: fraudulent applicants, difficult to measure effectiveness, too many candidates (Babatunde, 2019).

According to the WeProject (2020) research outcomes, following recruitment platforms are the most popular in Tashkent for 2020: rabota.uz, hh.uz, superjob.uz, uzjobs.uz. If international professionals are needed, popular international career sites can be used such as glassdoor.com or indeed.com.

Apart from career websites, social media or popular Telegram messenger groups/channels are effective ways of attracting candidates in Uzbekistan. Sharing a job posting (attractive and informative picture with a link to application) on Telegram channels like HR ANGELS, rabota.uz, mehnat.uz, ishbor_rabota_vakansiya lead to qualified candidates.

Companies and their social networks can be considered to be in a connected business relationship (Boyd and Elliston, 2007). Lately, the usage of LinkedIn and Facebook has grown as tool for recruiting. For instance, UPS hired 19 employees through social networks whereas in 2014 this figure reached 24,475 employees (SHRM, 2016).

Along with the company website, job advertisements of Dream Chocolate Factory will be posted on recruitment sites and on social network as well. For example, upper level positions will be advertised on LinkedIn, while middle and entry level jobs can be posted on Facebook or Instagram.

Using social media for recruitment will increase job visibility, attract higher quality candidates, increase employer brand awareness, reduce cost and time for hire at the chocolate company (Matson, zippia.com).

Conclusion

Having a comprehensive talent management strategy is important for Dream Chocolate Factory. Together with HR functions, talent management stimulates organisational growth and goal attainment.

By reinforcing recruitment, talent acquisition, training and development and employer branding, the company will reach the highest point in business performance. Establishing employer branding and promoting the EVP will positively influence on attracting right talents to the vacancies available in the company. Attracted candidates will pass 5 stages of recruitment procedure including filling the application, screening, shortlisting, interview and reference check. With a help of strong talent management strategy, the Dream Chocolate Factory will retain positive workplace culture, training and development

opportunities, successful recruiting and lower employee retention rate, which will positively impact the business performance of the company.

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