

## Case Study: Who'S Most Qualified to be Minority Recruitment Director?

### Background

You have recently been appointed Personnel Director of the state police. The organization consists of about 1,000 uniformed officers and 200 civilian employees. Its primary mission is to promote highway safety through enforcement of traffic laws and assistance to motorists. In recent years, the state police agency has come under increasing public criticism. The major complaint: too much attention is being paid to writing traffic tickets; a more appropriate focus would be on attacking the organized crime and drug trafficking that increasingly overwhelm urban police departments. In addition, many community activists believe that the state police routinely discriminate against African Americans and Hispanics in both employment and enforcement of traffic laws, and in antidrug and antigang operations.

Morale is low among younger officers, who see themselves as victims of societal conflicts. Turnover among recruits averages 25 percent during the first year after they complete a three-month training course required of all state-certified law enforcement officers. Reasons most often given for leaving the state police are working conditions, lack of immediate promotion opportunities, and the feeling the advancement is based on "whom you know, not what you know." Many observers consider the state police to be a highly political organization because the governor appoints its top administrative positions. Some observers believe that, as a result, top management lacks experience in law enforcement or management, and that this reduces the organization's morale and effectiveness.

As Director of Personnel, your task is to select an assistant who will be responsible for developing, administering, and evaluating a minority recruitment program for the agency. An outside consulting firm has selected three candidates as being the most qualified of several hundred applicants who

responded to nationwide advertising for the position. You and your panel have interviewed each applicant. Now it is time to pick the one most qualified for the position.

### Process

Divide into discussion groups with four or five people in each group. The instructor should designate the groups as A, B, C, etc. Within twenty-five minutes, place all three candidates in rank order, based on their relative qualifications for the position. The résumés of the candidates are given in Figures 5-5, 5-6, and 5-7. Before you do so, be prepared to defend your selection by writing a brief performance-oriented job description for the position. This means you will need to answer each of the following questions:

1. What job duties are most important to the position?
2. What competencies will successful applicants need to perform these essential job duties?
3. What objective performance standards could you use to assess whether the minority recruitment director is doing a good job?
4. What conditions make the job particularly easy or hard to perform? (Hint: think of laws, resources, organizational conditions, etc.) How do these conditions affect the performance standards that should be established, or the competencies that should be required?
5. What minimum qualifications will successful applicants need to ensure that they have these competencies? Specify education (type, level, and length), experience (type, level, and length), and any other qualifications you consider essential.
6. In what rank order should the three candidates be placed? In your group's column, write a "1," "2," or "3" opposite each candidate's name. (See Figure 5-4.)

| CANDIDATE      | GROUP A | GROUP B | GROUP C | GROUP D | GROUP E |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Harold Murphy  |         |         |         |         |         |
| John Lewis     |         |         |         |         |         |
| Norma Sikorsky |         |         |         |         |         |

FIGURE 5-4 Rank the Applicants



7. Why is the applicant you chose the most qualified for the job?
8. What selection criterion was most important in making the choice? Place a check beside it.
9. Which value (political responsiveness, efficiency, or social equity) is most enhanced by your selection decision and criteria?
10. How confident are you that your selection criteria are job related?
11. How would you validate the criteria if asked to do so by a federal court or by an affirmative action compliance agency?
12. What is the appropriate definition of *merit* in this situation?
13. Was your group ever tempted to pick the "best" candidate first, and then identify the desired competencies and minimum qualifications based on that candidate's resume (rather than identifying the desired competencies and qualifications first, and then ranking the candidates against them)? If so, what does this show about merit-based selection procedures?

### Postscript

The State Police Agency hired John Lewis for the position of minority recruitment director. The selection panel comprised several senior state police officers and one of the book's authors as an outside observer. There were no women or racial minorities on the selection panel, but they were unanimously in favor of hiring Jones because his military background and demeanor led them to view him as the most likely candidate. Moreover, he was an African American, and recruitment of African American male police officers was considered a higher priority than recruitment of women or other minority groups.

For almost two years after his appointment, John Lewis gained nationwide attention for his ability to recruit African American state police officers. As the only one of the three candidates with first-hand recruitment experience, he did an excellent job recruiting through schools, community organizations, and minority newspapers and radio stations. State police agencies throughout the region studied his methods and results as the example they were trying to emulate in their own agencies.

Nevertheless, as strong and successful as his recruitment efforts were, within two years of his appointment it became evident that there were

problems with his overall job performance. First, turnover among new recruits and trainees continued to be high. The personnel director concluded that it was because the John Lewis lacked experience with other key personnel functions (like orientation and training, performance evaluation, and career development) that related to retention. Once out of the academy, new recruits were still being assigned as trainee troopers with senior officers who were quite likely to be white males. Their view of the organization, and of the role of minorities in it, was not always consistent with the John Lewis' mission and vision for minority recruitment. Therefore, the state police personnel director ended up hiring someone with a background similar to Harold Murphy who could help John Lewis institutionalize his successful minority recruitment program by designing and evaluating similar changes in other functions. These included diversity training for all officers, development of mentoring programs for new minority recruits, and increased attention to racial harassment or informal discrimination in the agency. In addition, police supervisors received training in performance appraisal, promotional assessment, and other functions needed to advance minorities along a career trajectory once they had joined the state police.

Second, John Lewis was a good minority recruitment program director, well liked and respected by state police officers regardless of race. He communicated forcefully and effectively with recruits, state police officers, and the hierarchy of uniformed command. However, he was not a politically adept speaker who could be trusted to deal smoothly or comfortably with the media or with federal compliance agencies. He was not an accomplished report writer or program evaluator. Therefore, the state police personnel director and media relations representative needed to cover many of these aspects of the job.

In short, the ideal candidate would have had the composite competencies of all three finalists: John Lewis' minority recruitment experience, Harold Murphy's overall HRM expertise, and Norma Sikorsky's media relations, program evaluation, and political networking skills. In fact, the nature of the job, and the requisite competencies, did evolve over time. Initially, the critical need was to hire someone with John Lewis' background to plan and manage a successful minority recruitment effort. Next, to prevent minority recruitment problems from continuing as minority retention problems, the state police needed to hire



someone with Harold Murphy's background. As the program matured, it needed continual positive communication with compliance agencies, the state legislature, and the Governor's office to maintain good political relations.

### Questions

After reviewing the outcome of the case, please answer the following discussion questions.

1. How does the outcome show that jobs and organizations change over time?
2. How does the outcome show that definitions of "merit" change over time, even for the same job?
3. How would you recommend that job descriptions be revised to accommodate these changes? How would you "sell" these recommendations to managers and employees, given their varied concerns and priorities?

John Lewis  
1327 W. Addison Street  
Minneapolis, MN

Job Objective: A responsible professional position in minority recruitment, higher education administration, or personnel management.

Employment History:

2006–Present Assistant Director of Admissions, Northern Minnesota State College. Responsible for minority recruitment, minority financial aid, and internship programs for a 25,000 student state university system institution. Since 2006, the percentage of minority students has increased from 7% to 11%, despite cuts in Federal loans and other financial aid programs.

2000–2006 1st Lieutenant to Captain, U.S. Army. Responsible for a variety of combat assignments in the United States and overseas. Rifle Platoon Leader responsible for the health, morale, welfare and safety of 43 men (2000–2004). Company executive officer (2004–2005). Battalion Air Operations Officer (2005–2006).

Awards and Decorations:

2007: "Who's Who" (Outstanding Young Men in America)

2000–2006: Silver Star, Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device for Valor (Two Oak Leaf Clusters), Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal with "V" Device for Valor, and Purple Heart (Two Oak Leaf Clusters)

1997–1998: Medgar Evers Memorial Scholarship, Jackson State University

Education:

1999: BA in Psychology, Jackson State University, Mississippi.

**FIGURE 5-5** John Lewis' Résumé (African American Male)



benefit costs associated with pay rates inflated by merit or time-in-grade increases or cost-of-living adjustments.

Depending on the personnel system, employee benefits are regarded as an important motivator of employee retention as well as an increasing cost to employers. Some benefits are mandated by law in the United States:

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Social Security (or its equivalent), workers' compensation, and unemployment compensation. At least for civil service systems that define employees as a public resource, the emphasis is on providing a range of flexible and "family friendly" benefits that enhance the performance of an increasingly diverse workforce.<sup>66</sup>

## Key Terms

- base pay 136
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- broad-banding 134
- child care 146
- comparable worth 140
- Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) 145
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- "comp time" 129
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- total compensation 126
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- variable pay 137
- vesting 143
- workers' compensation 142

## Discussion Questions

1. What are the characteristics of the contemporary pay and benefits environment?
2. What is new about "new pay"? How does it reflect a departure from the way pay has traditionally been viewed in civil service systems?
3. What elements are included in a total compensation package?
4. What are the three laws governing public agency compensation policy and practices?
5. Describe the two competing systems—job evaluation and market models—used to determine pay, and discuss their comparative advantages and disadvantages.
6. What are the differences between merit pay, pay based on seniority, and cost-of-living allowances?
7. Identify the conditions necessary for a pay-for-performance system to work.
8. Describe the benefits to which employees in the United States are legally entitled.
9. What are some of the managerial and public policy issues associated with public pension and health benefits? If you were a benefits