

HRM AT WORK EXERCISE

HIRING A CULTURAL MISFIT CAN BE A COSTLY MISTAKE

REFERENCE: 'Hiring a cultural misfit can be a costly mistake', Brad Hatch, *Australian Financial Review*, 29 March 2005, p.53.

CHAPTERS RELEVANT TO THIS EXERCISE:

1, 7 and 19.

Summary

According to research by recruitment consultancy Development Dimensions Australia, while most HR managers believe that selecting candidates who 'fit' the organisation's culture is important, in the climate of the current skill shortage, in order to fill vacancies, many would consider hiring people who were not quite the right cultural fit. Indeed, according to the Development Dimensions research, only 36 per cent of 200 firms surveyed always recruit for cultural fit. However, HR managers surveyed by the *Australian Financial Review* have quite the opposite view: firms would be willing to compromise on technical skills for the sake of hiring people with the right cultural fit. Skills can be taught, but it is difficult to change someone's work values, attitudes and beliefs. Even so, selection for cultural fit remains largely a hit and miss affair, with over 70 per cent of survey respondents saying that they didn't know how to evaluate candidates' selection process responses to recognise good fit, relying instead on 'gut feeling'. Of the selection tools used to evaluate fit, behavioural interviews targeting a person's values are the most common, while personality inventories were used by less than one-quarter. Almost half of respondents also used informal selection methods like pre-employment dinners and work-experience programs.

Questions

1. What is organisational culture, why is it important, and who or what is responsible for creating it?
2. What are the arguments for basing staff selection on the 'culture fit' model?
3. What may account for the different results produced by the two surveys?