HRM AT WORK EXERCISE

Now it's bully time for the workers

REFERENCE: Joanne Gray, 'Now it's bully time for workers', *Australian Financial Review*, 8th December 2006, p.80.

CHAPTERS RELEVANT TO THIS EXERCISE: 2, 6, 8 and 15.

Summary

The numbers released by National Australia Bank are compelling. With two-thirds growth in high skilled occupations over the last five years, this set of numbers bears testimony of the labour shortage and as suggested in this piece, symptomatic of a labour market in which skilled labour are getting the higher hand. In this piece, Joanne Gray describes the myriad of strategies adopted by companies to manage this growing concern. On the one hand, in some industries such as mining when the labour shortage is particularly pronounced, employers are looking beyond the shores of Australia and have started to hire engineers from India and China. Other employers that have continued their recruitment within Australia have had to modify their recruitment methods and strategies. Older employers are increasingly hired back into the work force to meet these acute labour needs. For employers who are willing to spend money on training, they have recruited graduates from other disciplines and train them to carry out the professional roles. Yet others have relaxed performance expectations in a bid to retain these staff. However, there are other employers who are less perturbed by this trend and have argued that the problem lies with the recruitment pool that other employers may be looking at or the selection criteria may restrict the organisation from considering non-traditional pools such as women and older employees for certain jobs.

Questions

1. Overseas workers (from India and China) are recruited to alleviate labour shortage in many professions, particularly mining and engineering. Are there any major differences between the management of local and overseas employees?

2. In what ways can organisations modify their recruitment methods to increase the chances of seeking and attracting a poll of qualified candidates?

3. Should performance targets be lowered in a bid to retain staff?