

Case Study

Baby Time

Background

- You recently took the position as the Vice President of HR for Baby Time, a chain of childcare providers across the state. There are 240 employees on staff, and about 80% of them are childcare providers. The company has been growing since its inception three years ago but it has stagnated of late. After some research you have determined two potential causes:
- Performance among your childcare workers has been deemed “so-so” (in spite of a lack of an actual evaluation system) by supervisors though the company has positioned itself as having some of the best providers in the market. This gap in performance vs. expectations is a key customer concern. In addition, there have been instances of customers needing a sitter but not getting one in time, which drives customers to competing providers.
- Not being able to meet demand has damaged the company’s reputation, and when combined with the lack of superior performance it is easy to see how the competition has been steadily gaining ground on Baby Time over the past year.

Discussion Questions

Take five minutes and consider the following questions. I encourage you to make notes on a sheet of paper or on a notepad app so you can match your suggestions with those on the following pages.

- What specifically do you need to do to address the performance issue?
- What should you do, if anything, about the availability of skilled sitters on demand?
- Should you be looking into workforce planning, talent acquisition, employer branding, or performance management?

Possible Considerations

Addressing Performance

- As noted, the company does not currently have a performance management system in place. This is extremely overdue to the point that a lack of performance management is costing the company valuable customers. You should analyze the need, identify requirements, and implement a system to help address the performance issues.
- The ideal type of evaluation could be a graphic rating scale (easily scalable for many employees) or a behaviorally anchored rating scale (due to the large number of employees with a very similar type of job).
- Supervisors openly admit that there are problems with the employees' performance, but they don't seem to be taking any responsibility for improving it. This would be an opportunity to coach the managers on their roles and helping them to understand what is expected of them in terms of managing employee performance.

Possible Considerations

Sitter Availability

- You should begin recruiting immediately to develop a pipeline of qualified candidates available at short notice.
- A possibility for quick response would be to create multiple part time/on call positions to help with flexibility and speed to secure openings.
- Due to the type of work sitters perform, these new employees would most likely require background checks and possibly even drug screens. You should be aware of the laws surrounding these types of pre-employment “hurdles” and what your responsibilities are (for instance, Fair Credit Reporting Act requirements)
- The company projects a brand of highly qualified employees. This would be the ideal time to create an employer branding campaign to align with that brand image and to help attract qualified applicants.

Possible Considerations

Workforce Planning

- While talent acquisition will take care of immediate staff needs, workforce planning would help to solve the long-term problem of having qualified staff ready when necessary.
- A simple way to begin for this type of role is to determine on average how many sitters are required per customer. If the ratio is 1:8 for childcare providers to customers, then you know for every 8 customers acquired, you would need to have at least one new staff member ready to work.
- Look at this as proactive recruiting instead of reactive recruiting.

About

This case study was developed as a tool for students preparing for the PHR and SPHR exams as a way to demonstrate the various scenarios that HR professionals face in their daily work. The suggestions are not the only “correct” answers and are provided to help guide further exploration into the concepts covered by the case study.