



**Unit:
Human Resources in Business**

**Assignment title:
How Cordial**

June 2016

Important notes

- Please refer to the *Assignment Presentation Requirements* for advice on how to set out your assignment. These can be found on the NCC Education website. Click on 'Policies & Advice' on the main menu and then click on 'Student Support'.
- You must read the NCC Education documents *What is Academic Misconduct? Guidance for Candidates* and *Avoiding Plagiarism and Collusion: Guidance for Candidates* and ensure that you acknowledge all the sources that you use in your work. These documents are available on the NCC Education website. Click on 'Policies & Advice' on the main menu and then click on 'Student Support'.
- You **must** complete the *Statement and Confirmation of Own Work*. The form is available on the NCC Education website. Click on 'Policies & Advice' on the main menu and then click on 'Student Support'.
- Please make a note of the recommended word count. You could lose marks if you write 10% more or less than this.
- You must submit a paper copy and digital copy (on disk or similarly acceptable medium). Media containing viruses, or media that cannot be run directly, will result in a fail grade being awarded for this assessment.
- All electronic media will be checked for plagiarism.

Introduction

This assignment is based on an organisational scenario containing various components. In the scenario and the following tasks you will need to address these components. Your role and background is that of an HRM generalist consultant who has been called in to provide observations and suggestions on the current situation. Therefore, this assignment requires knowledge of:

- human resource management as a discipline
- organisational development as a process.

Scenario

How Cordial is a small family-run business located in and around Wethersfield in north-west England. It aims to help its customers produce their own fruit cordial (a sweet fruit-flavoured drink) at home to professional standards by selling the equipment they need and by providing advice and guidance. When Roger Curley opened the business over forty years ago as a hobby, there was lots of competition from larger businesses. But despite this, the business grew steadily and, until last year, ran smoothly. The business currently has five shops and a small warehouse and is still run by Roger along with other family members and five employees who manage and run the shops. Roger has won many national awards for his own wines and beers and it is this, and his enthusiasm and skills that customers have valued. As one said in an article in the local paper: 'For those of us who want to turn wild and domestic fruits and vegetables into delicious drinks, the shop carries all the necessary things to do this. But most importantly, you can get lots of advice and tips on the best way to make them!'

Three years ago Roger started to spend more time away from the day-to-day running of the business to establish his own small vineyard in south-west France. He wanted to be able to provide grape juice and whole grapes to sell in *How Cordial*. This has meant long periods of absence and the turnover has fallen in three of the stores and, in one, significantly. In fact the business recently had to dismiss Jim, the manager of this shop, as there had been a number of incidents that Roger believed constituted gross misconduct. Roger had to return from France to manage this and, with the help of a solicitor, eventually reached a settlement with the former manager. Roger's stepdaughter, Bridget, manages the warehouse and she had urged Roger not to appoint Jim as full-time manager, believing that he did not have the necessary organisational and technical skills.

One of the things that emerged from this incident is that *How Cordial* does not have any structured human resource management (HRM) policies or procedures. Indeed Roger really has no idea what HRM is about and how it is relevant! Whilst he regularly reviews the financial performance of the shops, he does not formally review the performance of the individual managers. Furthermore, there is little training for the shop managers in cordial-making, and they have complained about both this and feeling isolated and not really having a stake in the business' performance. They are all paid the same salary.

The performance of the business is beginning to improve again and Roger is keen to build on this. Bridget is covering the shop formerly managed by Jim. He wants to use the warehouse as a base from which to sell some products and provide advice on-line. He recognises that this will also need specialist skills, which he wants to keep in-house, but

he is worried about how to approach the recruitment. He is also thinking about how he can make his skills and knowledge more readily available across the business.

Aim

You are a HRM consultant to whom Roger Curley has turned to for advice to help him to protect and grow his business. You will be asked to prepare a report on your views to Roger.

Task 1 – 14 Marks

Roger Curley has little understanding of human resource management (HRM) or how it might help his business. Using an appropriate definition and framework, explain what is meant by HRM and how it might help a business such as *How Cordial* to achieve its strategic objectives.

Task 2 – 18 Marks

The case study suggests that some of *How Cordial's* problems may have arisen due to rather unstructured resourcing practices and, in particular, recruiting inappropriate people. You need to advise Roger on how *How Cordial* might ensure appropriate decisions when selecting new employees. Your report should include:

- A description of *selection*
- An explanation of the importance of having a systematic approach to the whole process of recruitment and selection
- A description and evaluation of the most appropriate selection methods for Roger to adopt.

Task 3 – 18 Marks

Whilst Roger Curley believes that he involves the employees at *How Cordial* in the business, some have reported that they feel rather excluded. Using appropriate theories of motivation, explain why that might be the case and clarify to Roger the implications for the way jobs are designed.

Task 4 – 14 Marks

Given the problem he experienced this year, Roger Curley is thinking about taking a more structured approach to managing employee performance. Advise Roger on the key elements in an appropriate performance management system, using an appropriate framework.

Task 5 – 16 Marks

How Cordial's managers are paid a basic salary. Roger Curley has heard about *variable pay* and asked you to look at the option of paying managers according to their performance as part of the firm's reward system. Evaluate that proposal and make a recommendation.

Task 6 – 15 Marks

Roger wants to put together a development plan for his managers. Discuss the key stages in a systematic approach to training and evaluate its usefulness. Explain why investing in the development of employees can be beneficial to *How Cordial*.

Task 7 – 5 Marks

Combine your findings into a single, written report to Roger Curley that is properly structured and contains:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Main body of the report
- References and bibliography
- Appendices (if necessary)

Guidance

Consult with your tutor if you are uncertain about any aspect of this assignment.

Submission requirements

You must submit a word-processed report from you to Roger Curley, as indicated in Task 7.

Your report should answer Tasks 1 to 6. The word count for your report is **5000 words**.

Candidate checklist

Please use the following checklist to ensure that your work is ready for submission.

Have you read the NCC Education documents *What is Academic Misconduct? Guidance for Candidates* and *Avoiding Plagiarism and Collusion: Guidance for Candidates* and ensured that you have acknowledged all the sources that you have used in your work?

Have you completed the *Statement and Confirmation of Own Work* form and attached it to your assignment? **You must do this.**

Have you ensured that your work has not gone over or under the recommended word count by more than 10%?

Have you ensured that your work does not contain viruses and can be run directly?