Candidate Interviewing and Selection

New York University has a useful toolkit for recruiting and interviewing applicants for positions. This is a detailed resource that outlines the purposes for different phases of the selection process and how to conduct them. It begins by discussing the use of telephone interviews, how to conduct face-to-face interviews, getting a second opinion, checking references, and making an offer. This is a useful resource to someone with little or no experience in making hiring decisions, as knowing how to interview and hire is an important part of being in a position of staff management.

This resource was included in the tool kit because of the level of detail provided. For someone who has never conducted an interview, it is important to know how to prepare for the interview, what kinds of questions to ask, the difference between open- and closed-ended questions, the importance of answering behavioral questions, how to handle silence and awkward responses, and how to end an interview. There is information on each of these aspects of interviewing in this resource, as well as similarly detailed information on other aspects of the selection process.

These guidelines might need to be adapted in different cultural contexts, as interviewing and selection norms might be different in different countries. For example, in the United States, an interviewee is expected to make contact with the interviewer, and can seem uninterested or overly nervous if he/she does not. However, in some other cultures, it would be considered rude to make direct eye contact with an interviewer. These considerations would need to be taken into account in international contexts. In addition, there might be different expectations regarding when various aspects of the selection process occur, how references are checked, and what kinds of questions are acceptable to ask in an interview.

Performance Management and Evaluation

The University of Chicago has effective resources for performance management and evaluation of staff, including in-depth information on goal setting and developing individual growth and development plans, feedback and coaching, midyear review, and performance appraisals. This resource describes the cycle of performance management, which is integrated into the annual compensation cycle of the university, which is very logical. This model of performance management ensures that employees have clear goals, receive ongoing coaching and feedback, make use of development plans to foster professional and career growth and receive documented annual performance appraisal.

The goal setting section has guiding questions for determining goals and describes what SMART goals are and why this is an important concept. It also gives a timeline for the goal-setting process. This is a great resource in that the ability to assist employees in setting and working toward goals is not something that comes naturally to every manager, but shows great investment in employees. The University of Chicago resource also describes coaching strategies for managers to use with their employees. This is something that is useful
to have in a staff management toolkit, as someone new to a management role may understand the importance of coaching employees, but may not know how to go about it. The best practices and coaching types outline on this webpage go a long way toward explaining this process.

This is a resource that could be adapted to international contexts, but may need to have some changes based on feedback and coaching norms in different cultures. Cultural norms of employee coaching could be applied to this resource and would still be a valuable resource for an international manager. One of the key elements of successful management is trust, and giving feedback effectively and coaching employees toward professional development goals shows trust in employees which in turn instill trust in the manager.

Fostering a Team/Organizational Culture

University of Minnesota Guidelines on Work Group Development:
http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/toolkit/workgroup/index.html

The University of Minnesota has developed a useful tool for fostering effective team culture, in which they identify four stages of work group development: forming, storming, norming, and performing. It describes the characteristics of each stage and what can be accomplished in each stage in terms of working toward an effective team culture. This tool also has links to additional resources within it for dealing with team development in each of the four stages. This resource is useful to a manager in that it explains that some of the tensions that arise during the development of a working group and how those are normal.

This tool is especially useful to an international manager, as much of the conflict that arises in working in international groups may come from cultural differences. It is important for a manager to understand the stages of team development and how to foster an effective working culture within a team, keeping in mind cultural and personality differences.

 Discipline and Conflict Management

“Making Conflict Work for You” PowerPoint presentation taken from the University of Texas Medical Branch Health website. See Appendix A.

This presentation is a useful tool for thinking about conflict management within a team. It starts by addressing the positive and negative effects of conflict, and the contributing factors to conflict within the workplace. These are good ideas for framing the way a manager sees conflict. This presentation then goes into tips on how to reduce the negative effects of conflict and constructive ways to view conflict. Some of these tips are to consider underlying interests that lead to conflict and that it does not need to be a win/lose situation. It also points out that particular ways of discussing the conflict can make it worse, such as saying things like, “you always...” and instead using “I” statements.

This is a very useful tool for a manager’s toolkit in that it has some tips that are very important to think about when encountering conflict, such as avoiding value judgments and focusing on the behavior instead of the person. These are also useful when it comes to cross-cultural conflicts, as it is always important to remember to avoid value judgments of other cultures and to think about the values underlying the behaviors one might find difficult to understand. Therefore, this tool is also extremely useful and applicable in international staff
management contexts. This tool also has ideas for moving past an impasse and how to resolve conflicts among team members. There are also important statements that help a manager think about conflict in a different way, such as pointing out that resistance reflects fear of an unmet need.

Managing Diverse Teams

“Top 10 Tips: How to Manage Diverse Teams” from Management Today
http://www.managementtoday.co.uk/news/1181428/top-ten-tips-manage-diverse-teams/

This article is an excellent tool for a manager working with an international and/or intercultural team. The 10 tips are as follows: Don’t have favorites, give feedback, just because you’ve gone on holiday there once doesn’t mean you know the culture, use social tools to communicate better, have an open-door policy, tackle conflict and build a common workplace culture, communicate regularly to unify the team, email is easily misunderstood, treat others as you would like to be treated, and set an example. These are all tips that echo readings and exercises we have discussed in class, such as setting up a virtual water cooler for international teams so that team members can communicate about things other than work and therefore get to know each other in a manner that is similar to the way people who share a workspace get to know each other.

A lot of these tips seems like no-brainers, like not having favorites or giving feedback, but numerous stories and case studies show that these seemingly basic things are often forgotten, overlooked, or not done well, and this severely damages trust among the team. Everyone knows that email is easily misunderstood, and yet people have issues with this on a daily basis. This is especially true of culturally diverse teams where misunderstandings may be amplified by cultural differences. This article is an excellent tool for an international manager’s toolkit in that it makes interesting and important points about what is important to keep in mind when managing diverse teams.
Cloke & Goldsmith. (2000). *Making conflict work for you* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from Employee Assistance Program at the University of Texas Medical Branch.


Appendix A

“Making Conflict Work for You”

Mary Parker Follett

We have thought of peace as passive and war as the active way of living.
The opposite is true.
War is not the most strenuous life. It is a kind of rest cure compared to the task of reconciling our differences.
From War to Peace is not from the strenuous to the easy existence.
It is from the futile to the effective, from the stagnant to the active, from the destructive to the creative form of life.

Mary Parker Follett cont.

The world will be regenerated by the people who rise above these passive ways and heroically seek by whatever hardship, by whatever toil the methods by which people can agree.

Positive Effects of Conflict

- Growth can occur
- Identify the true issues
- Progress towards goal

Negative Effects of Conflict

- Personal stress
- Decreased morale
- Decreased productivity
- Strained relationships

Factors Contributing to Conflict

- Personality Style
- Stress
- Unmet needs
- Role confusion
- Pride
- Taking a position
- Power struggles
- Miscommunication
Other Contributing Factors
- Drug or alcohol impairment
- Mental health impairment
- History
- Expectations
- Illness
- Fear

Constructive ways to view conflict
- It's not personal
- Consider underlying interests
- It doesn't have to be win/lose
- You can find mutual gain and value
- Future focused
  **Remember people react from their own perspective**

Ways to reduce negative consequences of conflict
- Know when to walk away
- Be assertive not aggressive
- Avoid the following comments
  ***You always......
  ***You never.........

Cont. reducing negative consequences of conflict
- Don’t react
  - Avoid value judgments
  - Don’t blame
  - Focus on the behavior not the person
  - Don’t reward the problem behavior
  - Use I statements

Strategies for moving beyond an impasse
- Understand the other side’s priorities, and look for common interests
- Break the issue down into smaller parts
- Ask the other side why your alternative is unacceptable, then look for solutions that address their concerns
- Start with easier/smaller issues first
- Explore hidden agendas and compromise

Moving beyond impasse cont.
- Split the difference
- Look for trade-offs or exchanges
- Recognize and acknowledge other side’s feelings, points of view, and accomplishments
- Ask the other side for ideas
- Discuss the benefits and/or consequences if a solution is obtained
  - Resistence reflects fear of an unmet need

Moving beyond impasse cont.
- Remind one another of the consequences if a settlement is not reached
- Take breaks, focus and reflect about the original goal
- Resistance reflects fear of an unmet need

If you’re still at an impasse
- Ask more questions
- Brainstorm freely
- Seek mediation
  - Resistance reflects fear of an unmet need
Summary
- Separate people from their position
- Focus on interests, not positions
- Focus on goals
- Create win/win options for mutual gain
- Seek to understand

Summary cont.
*Whenever you encounter conflicts, you basically have only two choices. You can either tighten up, pull back, and prepare for battle, or you can relax, move toward your opponent, and prepare for peace* (Cooke and Goldsmith, Resolving conflicts at work, 2000).
Which do you prefer?