
KALISTER BANKS

Organizational Analysis Leads to Dissection of Recurrent Training Issues

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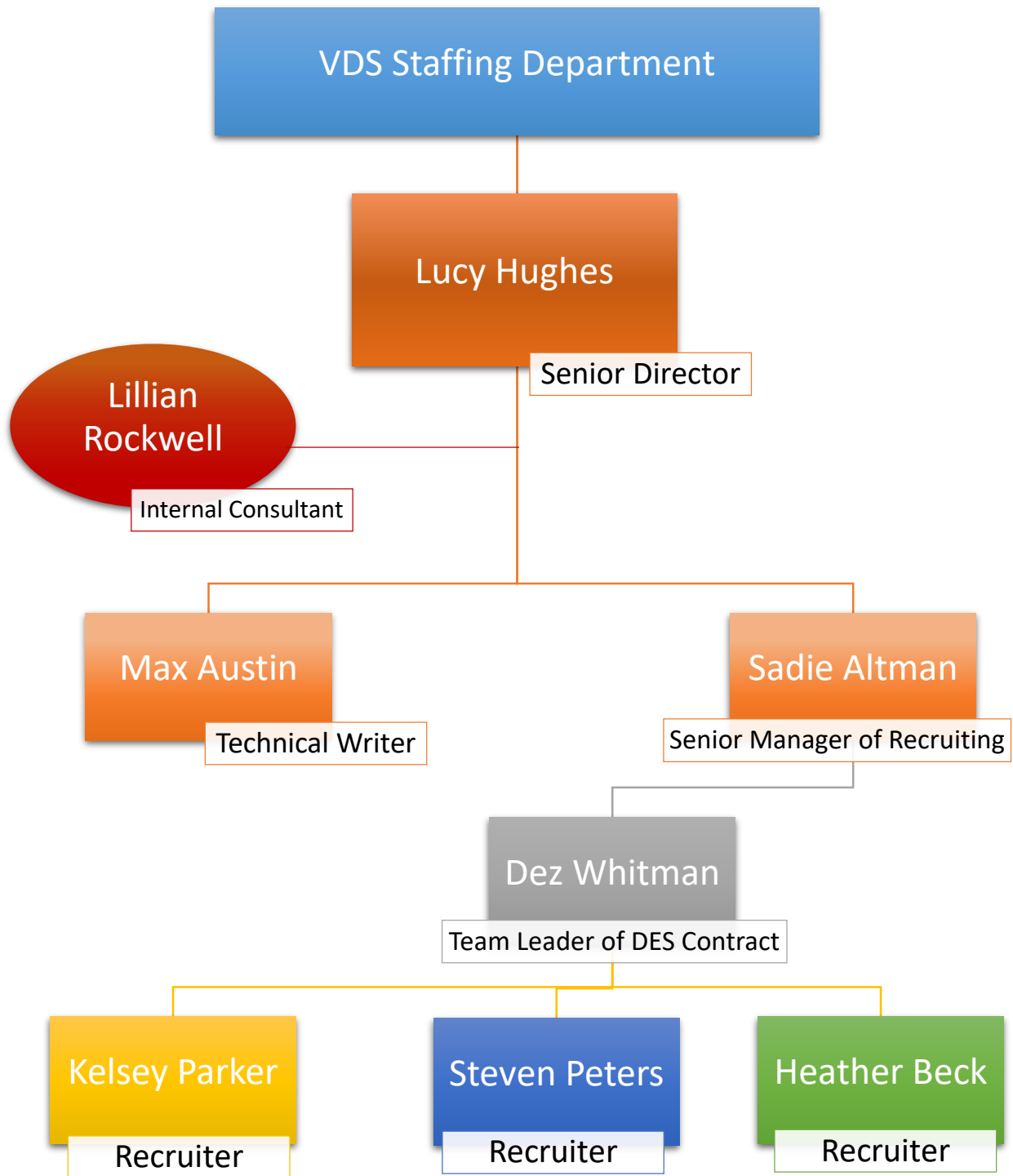
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The Problem

The Staffing Department at Variant Data Systems, Inc. (VDS) is having internal issues, between the recruiters and the technical writer, surrounding incomplete biography submissions.

The Characters



Variant Data System, Inc. – Serves as an independent organization that supports many external customers utilizing full-time and intermittent employees in domestic and overseas locations

Lucy Hughes – Senior Director of Staffing. Governs the Staffing department

Sadie Altman – Senior Manager of Recruiting, serves as a direct report to the senior director of staffing and is responsible for managing the Team Leaders

Lillian Rockwell – Internal Consultant. Brought in to assist the senior director and senior manager of recruiting to create an instructional unit and knowledge management database that would focus on the skills needed to improve performance of the recruiters

Dez Whitman – Team Leader of the Data Encryption Services (DES) contract. Oversees recruiters

Recruiters – responsible for submitting the biography packets on behalf of the candidate to the technical writer for review prior to being sent to the customer for approval or disapproval

- **Kelsey Parker** – Recruiter for the DES contract. Seasoned recruiter who was let go and then rehired. (Let go for poor performance). Employed for over three years.
- **Steven Peters** – Recruiter for the DES contract. Employed with the company for three years, but has only been serving in the recruiting position for six months
- **Heather Beck** – Recruiter for the DES contract. Employed with the company for two and a half years

Max Austin – Technical Writer. Handles all biography packets for the entire DES contract, including those who are currently on contract seeking position advancements, those who need to serve as instructors at the training facility and all new hires that the recruiters submit.

The Facts

Variant Data Systems, Inc. (VDS)-

- Based out of Denver, CO
- One of the US's leading information technology company's providing information technology infrastructure in austere locations worldwide
- Structure
 - o Views its departments and employees through a combination of the traditional vertical view and the windowless silos view of an organization (The senior director employs managers that manage several sub-departments independently of one another, year are interdependent among one another
- Reorganization
 - o In 2013, half of the department's recruiters were let go, reducing the numbers of recruiters.
- Training Program
 - o VDS considered implementing a training program to address recruiter training within the staffing department

Data Encryption Services (DES)

- Contract is located in Iraq
- Has a four-month long process for onboarding candidates and deploying them to the specific location

- Biography Packet
 - Candidates who wish to be considered for a position on the DES contract must have an approved biography packet candidate. Each position requires its own biography packet approval. This serves as the customer's interview with the candidate to determine qualifications and eligibility to serve on the contract.

The Issues

Performance Issues – the following performance problems have continued to occur causing a delay in organizational productivity

- **Incomplete Biography Packet submissions** –
 - The technical writer has noted that many biography packets are missing important documents and pertinent details needed to satisfy the position requirements set forth in the DES contract
 - Incomplete packets cause the technical writer to have to compile a thorough email to the recruiter of all missing items and/or corrections. This task becomes very time-consuming and slows down the technical writer's process and creates more work when he has to do this several times for the same biography packet submitted by a recruiter

Recruiter Training/Orientation

- There is a lack of a formal training process to bring new recruiters up to par with the vast systems, process, methods of operations and procedures, and position requirements recruiters need to be successful in sourcing qualified personnel
 - Recruiters who are hired sit through the mandatory benefits orientation and then are brought to their respective workplace. They are then given a current recruiter to 'shadow' for one to two days maximum before being on their own

- No annual training for experienced recruiters as processes, procedures, methods of operations and systems change
- Recruiting handbook is outdated, does not include job expectations and contains obsolete forms and processes
- **Accountability**
 - Recruiters are not reviewing the documents and information they are receiving from their candidates, and are not being reprimanded

The Feelings

After reading this case study, I am highly impressed with the actions of VDS, Inc. They have taken the necessary beginning steps to initiate change within the staffing department, which will have a direct impact on the company, overall.

The staffing department was having issues that was affecting contracts, efficiency, and even office relationships. There seemed to have been a major disconnect between the employees of the staffing department, and I truly feel as if the proposed interventions are implemented, then the department will see an increase in productivity and morale. “Research has shown that effective performance management behaviors positively affect employee engagement and bottom-line results.” (Pulakos, 2013)

The Angles

There are several different perspectives and viewpoints that should be taken into consideration when analyzing this case study

Max Austin – Technical Writer. He seems to be the most adversely affected by the poor performance of the recruiters. He is having to do extra work to compensate for the lack of efficiency in biography packets submitted. He feels that there is no reason for such inadequacy. He has given presentations and has offered himself as a resource to aid in increasing productivity. However, he recognizes that he is an enabler, and regardless of how many times he has spoken to Dez, he is still willing to complete his tasks, as assigned. He is most likely frustrated with the actions of everyone in the recruiting hierarchy that has let the poor performance continue without repercussions.

Dez Whitman – Team Leader for the DES Contract. He is supervisor over the recruiters and feels as if there is no problem with the recruiters and their productivity. He is willing to stand up for his recruiters! Dez insists that the recruiters are well aware of their job expectations and the need for a completed biography packet, however, he feels as if Max is lazy and does not want to do his job of evaluating the packets. Because of this dysfunctional relationship with Max, Dez does not discipline his recruiters for poor performance.

Recruiters – have no inclination to change. They have not received adequate training. The recruiters have been doing their job this way for years and have not received any negative feedback or repercussions, so will only begin to submit complete biography packets when they begin to receive repercussions from their immediate supervisor, Dez.

Lillian Rockwell – Internal Consultant. She is able to see the department from every perspective. She has given herself the opportunity to observe and interview everyone in the staffing department related to the DES contract, so she has developed an intervention plan that best fits the needs of the department.

VDS, Inc. – a highly respected and recognized, innovative company. The company strives for improving efficiency and effectiveness. With the staffing department in such disarray, it was expedient to call in an Internal Consultant. Their reputation as being a reliable outsourcing company was at stake.

DES – contracted company with VDS, Inc. Are not receiving highly qualified individuals as position candidates due to the lack of efficiency of the recruiters. Could possibly consider utilizing another company for its staffing needs.

Lucy Hughes – Senior Director of the Staffing Department. The responsibility essentially falls on her because she is charged with governing the entire department. Is a bit apprehensive about cooperating with Lillian, but knows her efforts will make the staffing department better.

Candidates – applying for job positions with DES. Have become frustrated with having to produce documents sporadically throughout the submission process. Would like to be told all the required documents beforehand, so that they have a better chance of being selected for a job position.

The Resources

Project for Initiating Change

- VDS brought in an internal consultant (Lillian Rockwell) to help the organization to improve performance. The project consisted of instructional and non-instructional methods to improve the recruiter's qualifications to recruit qualified candidates for the DES contract.

Organizational Analysis Tools

- Lillian suggested conducting a multi-level organizational analysis to determine whether the root cause of the poor performance was due to a personnel issue or infrastructure issue. By taking a closer look and examining the organization at multiple levels, perhaps the previously mentioned issues could be identified and corrected.
- In order to capture the current state, Lillian decided to take a holistic approach and utilize Geary Rummler and Alan Brache's nine variables of performance framework. Using this matrix, allowed Lillian to view the organization through multiple lenses to ensure each of the three performance needs including goals, design and management is met at each of the three performance levels including the organization process and job/performer. It also allowed for a better understanding of the organization in addition to the individual parts that contribute to the system as a whole.

Needs Assessment

- Lillian conducted her needs assessment using the chart below. She met with each recruiter for 20-30 minutes to explain the purpose of the interview, the different kinds of questions and gain informal insight into their perspective on the overall situation. She then emailed the questions to each recruiter as she met with them and gave them a deadline to return it within two weeks. Lillian followed this process for meetings with Dez Whitman, and Sadie Altman, Recruiting Team Leader and Senior Manager of Recruiting, respectively. In addition, she conducted direct and indirect observations of the recruiters in the work place.

	GOALS	DESIGN	MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION	Strategy, operating plans and metrics (recruiters)	Organizational structure and overall business mode. (Senior VPs of functional areas, then Senior recruiting Manager and Recruiting Team Leader) Relationship Map	Performance review practices and management culture. (Senior VPs of functional areas- specifically global staffing)
PROCESS	Customer and business requirements (Process owners, then recruiters)	Process design, systems designs. (Process owners in recruiting) Process Map	Process ownership, process management, and continuous improvement. (Process owners- specifically senior recruiting manager and recruiting team leader)
PERFORMER	Job specifications, performance metrics, and individual development plans (recruiters, individually)	Job roles and responsibilities, skill requirements, procedures, tool, and training. (Senior Recruiting Manager, then recruiters individually after matric develop) Role/Responsibility matrix	Performance feedback, consequences, coaching and support. (Senior Recruiting Manager and Recruiting Team Leader)

Results from Needs Assessment

Results from the survey questions, informal interviews and observations concluded that:

- There was a lack of clarity of position expectations for the recruiters
- Communication methods were often unclear and unpredictable. Some recruiters said important information was disseminated in meetings and others said it was disseminated in emails or passing conversations. There was no standard method
- Lack of knowledge and training units for the recruiters
- Lack of accountability measures in place to measure recruiter performance

Without clear expectation of duties, accountability metrics, clear communication, and knowledge of the requirements, processes, procedures, methods of operations, and systems, it would be difficult to promote change.

Lillian's Suggestions for Performance Improvement

- Expectations of Position – All recruiters reported that they never received a copy of their job description, nor did they have one readily available.
 - **Recruiters must be provided clear and concise expectations that can be measured before being expected to perform in a certain manner**
- Communication – There was no standard method for disseminating information from leaders to recruiters.
 - **A consistent communication strategy would need to be presented to streamline communication among leadership and all staffing department members, specifically the recruiters. Discussions for clarity should also be enabled to clarify any confusion**

- Knowledge Management/Training – Recruiters still fail to learn how to submit a completed packet, which expends unnecessary resources and slows down Max’s process. It has been found that recruiters have access to old forms. In addition, the staffing department still does not have a separate recruiting onboarding orientation or training modules to complete prior to working on their own
 - **Implementation of training modules would need to incorporate all aspects of the recruiting position, including submitting a completed biography packet. All training modules should promote interactivity to provide ample opportunities for practice and assess learner outcomes**

- Accountability – The recruiting team leader states the he reads all reasons for returned biography packets from Max, but nothing has been done to remedy the issue. There is nothing in place to penalize a recruiter for having returned biography packets
 - **Implementation of accountability metrics would need to identify all aspects of the biography packet submission including how many are received per day per recruiter as well as reasons for returns. The senior director, senior manager of recruiting, and the recruiting team leader should enforce all accountability metrics with weekly or bi-weekly meetings, including Max**

The Recommendation

I feel that Lillian Rockwell did an excellent job in her analysis and suggested interventions.

There are only three additional intervention measures that I would recommend for VDS's staffing department:

1. Training Program – in addition to the measures outlined by Lillian, I would suggest that Max Austin, the technical writer, facilitate the training modules. Prior to the reorganization, Max developed a one-hour, lecture based instructional presentation highlighting the many important aspects of the contract with an emphasis on what to include in the biography packet due to the robust requirements of the DES contract. Since it needs to be interactive for the recruiters, role playing and scenarios could be utilized
2. Accountability – in addition to the measures outlined by Lillian:
 1. Employee Recognition Programs - “A meaningful, thoughtful employee appreciation program is about valuing employees' efforts and having respect for who they are and what they do. Having an employee recognition program not only can keep your company from capsizing, it can increase productivity and raise revenues” (Hart, 2011). By implementing recognition programs, the staffing department can build morale, while increasing productivity and efficiency. (Ex. Employee of the Month)
 2. Progressive Discipline Policies- “Commonly referred to as corrective action or disciplinary procedures, progressive discipline policies are established with the objective of increasing the severity of penalties resulting from repeat occurrences that violate

company policies. Most disciplinary policies are organized in a sequence such as below:

1. * Verbal warning
2. * Written warning
3. * Final written warning
4. * Termination

Progressive discipline encourages consistent practice with regard to workplace policy violations and it provides employees with a concise policy that clearly communicates the employer's disciplinary actions with regard to serial policy infractions. (HR, 2015) Recruiters can begin to be tracked for incomplete biography packets. This could drastically decrease the amount of work for Max, the technical writer, and increase productivity.

3. Implement Conflict Resolution Strategies – Ideally, utilizing the aforementioned interventions will eliminate any type of conflict; however, that notion is unrealistic. While conducting her needs assessment, Lillian noticed the tension between Max, the technical writer, and Dez Whitman, the team leader of the recruiters. “The ability to manage conflict effectively represents a strategic business advantage.

- **Reduce costs**

- Make better business decision
- Implement initiatives more effectively
- Get substantial return on investment

- **Increase productivity**

- Reduce absenteeism and "presenters"

- Improve the quality of decision making under stress
- Foster an environment of creative innovation
- **Retain your top performers**
 - Strengthen supervisory relationships
 - Keep your teams engaged and openly communicating
 - Give your people the power to make a positive difference
- **Manage risk**
 - Prevent violence, sabotage, and vandalism
 - Mitigate legal risks
 - Better manage public perception of your organization's brand
- **Workplace conflict drains energy, time and money**
 - Conflict can cost your company money, inhibit action and hamper innovation. Creditable surveys indicate that managers spend 20 to 40 percent of their time dealing with conflict in the workplace. Conflict can sap your organization's energy and diminish profits - and no one is immune. Whether you are a team leader, a manager or a member of your organization's leadership team, the ability to handle difficult situations constructively is critical to business success." (Talent, 2012)

The Lessons Learned

What can be learned from this case?

While reading about the staffing department, I was reminded of how easy it can be to become complacent in the workplace. The recruiters and their supervisors had no problem with their current state of productivity. They felt as if they were doing their jobs to the best of their ability, but did not struggle for more training. This complacency could have ignited another reorganization, and they all could have become unemployed, as a result.

How does this case tie to HPT and IDD and Prior Experiences?

HPT – Lillian, the internal consultant, did a great job conducting her needs assessment and creating interventions specifically catered to the staffing department of VDS, Inc.

IDD – The process and patience that Lillian exhibited demonstrates the time needed to effectively design interventions for clients. She spent at least 6 weeks with the company interviewing and observing the employees of the staffing department. The process takes time and patience.

Prior Experiences – I have worked with co-workers who became complacent in the work place. It was difficult to navigate staying motivated with their presence and lack of effort. I feel this is how Max felt dealing with the recruiters. It can be mentally draining to have to do twice as much work to compensate for errors submitted by co-workers!

Resources

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