

Recruitment

The news from Meeds Hospital was that the current production director, though slowly recovering, would not be able to return to work. As J Franklin, you must look for a new production director as you have decided that the current production manager could not be trained up in the time available, as he lacked experience of implementing and controlling new technology. You issue a new job description for the post which also supplies the basis for an advertisement in the national press. From the 56 applications, a short list of 4 were selected for final interview. These interviewees were given a detailed problem to prepare for presentation, and were also asked to take part in a group discussion on Japanese management techniques.

Job description of production director

Job title. Production director

Job grade. Senior manager

Job function. The main objectives for the production director will be the introduction and management of new technology and the control of projects, both within time and budget, from their receipt from the technical sales staff to their despatch to the warehouse.

Reporting structure. Line responsibility (senior) reporting to the managing director. Line responsibility (junior) the production director will have reporting three sections technical development, design, and integrated production. Functional responsibility (continuous) maintaining contact with the marketing and sales department, for forthcoming contracts and raw material stock position, maintaining contact with the finance department for cash requirements and budgetary control. Functional responsibility (intermittent) the production director would liaise with the distribution department concerning shipment dates for particular orders. The production director would be involved from time to time directly with customers when either the size of the order or its complexity demands the involvement of senior management.

Responsibility: Actions. The production director must supervise and control the installation of new equipment, supervise the design of customer products, and ensure that production schedules are met. Geographical areas. The production director will be responsible for the quality of product throughout the world. Budgetary. The production director will be responsible, in agreement with the managing director, for setting annual budgets for all departments reporting to the production director. The production director will be responsible for controlling this budget once established and reporting performance on a monthly basis to the managing director.

Recruitment. The production director has entire responsibility for the recruitment of all the production staff.

Safety. The production director is responsible for maintaining safety standards throughout the department.

Appraisal. The production director has the entire responsibility of ensuring that appraisals are carried out in the department.

Management appraisals will be carried out with other senior managers.

Training. The production director will be responsible for establishing training programmes for all production staff. Compensation. The production director will have the responsibility of motivating all reporting staff. The director will also have the responsibility of establishing bonus pay systems within the budgetary confines and monitoring their progress.

Degree of authority. Level of discretionary expenditure.

The production director is allowed to authorise expenditure of up to 10,000. Any larger expenditure will require the authorisation of the managing director.

Disciplinary control over subordinates. The production director will have complete

disciplinary freedom within the department, subject to i) any overriding previously established agreements; ii) the standard appeals procedure available to all company employees; iii) the current legal framework in the UK.

Components of work :

Manual. No manual work is expected of the production director, though from time to time rare emergencies may demand some involvement.

Record keeping/ clerical. The production director is expected to maintain, either personally or via subordinates, sufficient records to control the department, and ensure that this is available to other managers.

Personnel. Personnel control and monitoring will be an important part of the production director's work. The production director will be responsible for achieving the personnel development targets for the department.

Planning. The production director will be expected to effectively plan the department's activities and to take part in company planning.

Client contact. The production director will not have to be involved in significant client contact. Supplier contact. The production director will liaise frequently with suppliers and established contracts with subcontractors.

Contact with equals/superiors. The production director will be required to attend full board meetings and maintain contact with other board members and the managing director.

National laws. The production director will need to be aware of the national regulations that affect manufacturing policy. Advice on these issues is available from the company solicitor.

Company regulations. The production director should be aware of company regulations laid out in booklet C5, and has the duty to ensure that all subordinate staff are aware of its contents.

Appeals procedure. The production director will take part in the appeals procedure as laid down in booklet C3, and has the duty to ensure that all subordinate staff are aware of its contents.

The Advertisement

Production director based West Midlands

Medium sized specialist engineering company, senior management position. Candidates must have a thorough grasp of new manufacturing systems and experience of managing change in large organisations. Knowledge of the chemical industry and foreign contract work an advantage. Age 32/45, though exceptionally well qualified candidates outside these age brackets will be considered. Salary negotiable, performance bonus, company car, and other usual benefits.

The four candidates

Fifty six people applied to the post office box number. You find it difficult to separate the range of talents that each have but you come to a decision that four candidates should be short listed and interviewed. These are your notes concerning them.

J Grahame

J Grahame was the youngest of the four candidates. Very well dressed, in tailor made clothes. In a top of the range, executive, company car, and currently working as a contract manager reporting to the production manager, J had driven to Meeds. J had responsibility for the completion of specific, mainly overseas contracts and was the only one of the candidates to be currently working in the West Midlands. In addition to being the youngest of the four candidates, J had the most impressive paper qualifications. As a chemical

engineering graduate J had spent 2 years as a management trainee with Rockall Petroleum before going to the BGE Business School for a 2 year MBA, specialising in advanced engineering systems.

Following the MBA, J had worked for one of the major management consultancies which advised manufacturing concerns on the planning and implementation of new technology. Here, J was mainly concerned with training employees to handle the new systems, and ensuring that they were effectively integrated. After 3 years, J left the consultancy with the claimed ambition of improving his understanding of line management. J took a job as a project manager with responsibility for 15 staff in a complex manufacturing environment, mainly manufacturing equipment for the aerospace and automotive industries, using the whole range of new manufacturing systems. Though J had experience of foreign contracts, little time had been spent overseas and J did not speak any foreign languages.

It seemed that J had, little new product expertise and was looking for a new job because the promised promotion had not materialised due to a claimed slowdown in orders. J's salary requirement was at the top end of the range that you could offer, and was particularly interested in the type of car that was on offer. The case study and group discussion session showed J to be a good communicator and very energetic. J made decisions promptly and would stick to these regardless of changes suggested by other members of the group. J dominated the discussion, and appeared very ambitious. J was unmarried though on closer discussion it appeared that his partner of 5 years worked in one of the nearby firms as a cost accountant, and had a large mortgage on a house about 30 miles from Burke Engineering.

J had for many years owned a small racing car, and this occupied spare time in competitions throughout the country. The medical history appeared to show a good record of work attendance, even though there was a record of broken legs, collar bones and arms in various accidents over the past 10 years. All these accidents occurred on the track and J still maintained a clean driving license.

A Davidson

A Davidson was the oldest of the four candidates at 45, and arrived from the West Country via train and taxi. A was overweight, and dressed in a relatively old tweed suit. A's medical record indicated blood pressure problems in the past, but there had been no medical problems over the last seven years, and his doctor considered that the problem was unlikely to occur again. A had stayed in the company joined as an apprentice, to become the head of department. This company, a subsidiary of a large multinational, had been involved in the production of equipment, especially valves, for manufacturing companies, particularly those in the chemical industry, both at the UK and overseas. The company continually updated its technology and maintained a high level of training.

A had spent 18 months during this period installing systems for the French nuclear power industry, and in consequence spoke good French and some German, which had been essential in recruiting and supervising such staff. Five years ago, the multinational decided to close down the particular manufacturing subsidiary, and A had become redundant.

Out of work for 8 months, A had been recruited as production director, by a high technology start up company, employing 100, based in the West Country. The company was producing new types of microelectronic components, mainly for the UK market. The company had run into major problems of maintaining high quality in its products and had

eventually gone bankrupt in the previous year.

A had been looking for new employment since, regardless of where this might be, and his salary expectations were the lowest of the four candidates.

In the case study and discussion session, A appeared fairly non aggressive and willing to listen to others in the group. A's analysis of the case indicated good planning skills, but hesitancy in presenting the results to the group. The least ambitious of the four candidates, A was mainly concerned with getting children aged 17, 16, 14, and 12 through school and university. A was a churchwarden, and took an active part in local community activities. Moving house did not appear to be a major problem.

D Trelford

D Trelford had graduated from Sydney, with an first class engineering degree. D had initially been a partner in a family owned shipbuilding company, but had rapidly decided that the future lay with large companies. After joining the Australian division of a German multinational, D had specialised as a production engineer in one of their chemical fibre operations. Leaving this company after an argument, D had taken a further engineering degree in Germany. D spoke both good German and French, acquired as a sales engineer for a agrochemicals company. This employment also ended when there was a disagreement over a particular contract.

For the past 5 years, D had been employed by one of Burke's major competitors in the marine engineering market as a senior project manager. Here, D had supervised the introduction of new technology into the production process, and training the workforce, even though there was no direct responsibility for their recruitment and monitoring. One of the main tasks involved in this job was the implementation and control of new products, acting as overall new products coordinator within the factory. During this period 15 new patents had been applied for, many of which were based on new materials and sophisticated designs, most of which D was directly responsible for. D had written various articles in the technical literature and some of these had been well received at international symposia. D said that he wanted to leave the current position because of poor long term prospects made a move necessary.

It appeared that relations with line managers had become slightly strained. D appeared to have little direct experience in the international valve market, even though D's current employer was an increasingly important supplier. D was aged 36, had no history of illness, and was a keen physical fitness enthusiast, playing squash and tennis. D was stylishly, if elaborately, dressed.

The case study and discussion revealed that D was articulate and forceful in expressing opinions, but weak in analysis and attention to detail. D's strongest point was the incredible enthusiasm towards both case study and discussion. D was divorced and currently occupied a small flat in the centre of Luddon close to where current employers were based. D was very sociable theatre, films and parties loomed fairly large on the personal horizon. Moving would be no major problem, and it would not be the first job based in or around a major city. His history appeared to be one of flexibility in personal circumstances, fitting in wherever employment took him.

B Sedgefield

B Sedgefield, a Scot, was 41 and had come from an engineering background, graduating

from one of the northern universities with a degree in engineering. The quietest of the four candidates, B had been noticeable in not contributing significantly to the conversation, even though B's analysis of the case study had been accurate and succinct. After graduating, B had joined a firm of international consulting engineers whose main activities were in the design, building, and manning of chemical plants, mainly in Third World countries, returning after 5 years in West Africa with fluent Swahili and reasonable French.

Following this was a long term attachment from the consultants with a French company establishing an engineering works in Denderdeen to service the North Sea oil industry. This company had gradually introduced more sophisticated equipment to manufacture the complex oil drilling heads that the oil companies required. B Sedgefield had taken the opportunity of studying for a part time degree at one of the nearby Scottish universities in advanced engineering techniques. After rejoining the consultants from this secondment, B had married a Scots Presbyterian and felt unable to recommence overseas work. B then joined one of the major manufacturers of ball bearings in the North of England, where the postgraduate expertise in advanced engineering systems was put to good use during the introduction of computer controlled lathes and casting systems.

Promoted to senior project development manager and then to senior production manager, B was now responsible to the production director for a workforce of approximately 350. The company had been recently taken over by a French company. In the ensuing management changes, the original production director had been replaced with a new production manager from France who had started to press for Sunday working. This B was unwilling to accept, had resigned and was currently working out the 6 months notice, even though the company was reluctant to accept the resignation.

B had driven down from Scotland in an ageing car, was impeccably but conservatively dressed. He had a medical history of asthma, but this was well under control. It appeared that there would be no major problems in moving there were church members locally who were looking for a new minister and this would provide an opportunity for B's partner. The case study and group discussion showed that B was a manager with very decided views about the way in which work should be organised and administered. B considered that it was the responsibility of a manager to control all the workings of the department.

Action

Which of the four candidates is most suitable for the job of production director? How should you as J Franklin analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the four candidates?