

## **The Promotion's Policy**

Promotion is described as an upward movement of an employee from his present job to another that carries with it higher job responsibilities and pay. Promotion elevates the individual within the organizational structure from his current job, but that does not necessarily mean that the individual assumes a management position. What the promotion is intended to do, is to cement the loyalty of the employee to management.

Promotion can sometimes be the genesis of a contentious issue amongst members of staff or the applicants for a vacant position. At the level of an internal promotion, the problem starts when the criteria for the promotion to a management position or an upgrade in work status, is questioned. This immediately calls attention to the promotional policy which is being followed.

In developing a promotional policy, it is recommended that the first step is that of developing a criteria which qualifies one for promotion. The criteria identifies with job experience, job performance, skills sets that match the minimum requirements for the new role, the attributes which the individual possess to enable him to fit into the role and the ability to meet the demands of the job. It should not be taken for granted that individual has the drive to take on the role and to execute the responsibilities of the job. As a general practice, most organizations, institutions and business enterprises, have in the past adopted a promotion policy that was based on length of service, seniority, merit and competence. While this in its intent allows for a level of fairness, it comes up short where merit and competence are not seen as the critical determinants.

The point is to be underscored that merit should be of primary importance alongside competence and seniority. The application of the merit system is to be sold as an integral part of the hiring and promotion policy for public officers. The individual's

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ability to perform the job should be the bench mark, rather than that of any political affiliation.

The recruitment, hiring and promotion of employees is meant to be a function of the Human Resources Department (HRD). The failure of the HRD to function effectively, efficiently and to be transparent in its operations, will always lead to problems in the management process. It is the responsibility of the HRD to support the Executive / Senior Management by having a written promotions policy. The process is to commence with consultation between the senior management and the workers' representatives. This is necessary prior to the signing off by the Board of Directors. It is at this level that the discussion ought to focus on the shaping of the policy. It is recommended that the discussions address the types of promotion that will apply under the policy.

As it stands, there are three types of promotions which can be embraced. These are horizontal promotion, vertical promotion and dry promotion. Horizontal and vertical promotions are the two that are generally used. Vertical promotion is the most commonly used. This involves upward movement with senior job titles, higher salaries, and more responsibilities. With this type of promotion, there is the possibility of a change in the nature of the job, as new responsibilities are added. Horizontal promotion is seen as cosmetic in nature, as it involves a change to the job title and an adjustment in pay, with little or no significant change to the job responsibilities.

Apart from the horizontal and vertical promotions, there are dry promotions. Dry promotions involve having all the responsibility under a new title but without the benefits that come with it. This is where more is required of an employee without any compensation, benefits or recognition to be had in return.

In developing a promotions policy, there are some key points that ought to be considered as part of the established criteria. These are attendance and punctuality, work attitude, job performance, communication skills, personal attributes, interest

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shown in the job, job commitment, ability to do the job / skills sets, team work skills, length of service / seniority and exposure to training.

In the final analysis, the promotion policy is meant to be a guide for the purpose of informing the transitioning and upgrading of personnel within the organization. It therefore becomes important to have a clear understanding of the benefits of promoting an employee. The number one benefit should be that of motivating other employees. It is important to show that the contributions of employees are valued and rewarded. The offering of promotional opportunities will go a long way to the building of staff morale, motivation, and to give encouragement to employees that the intention of the organization is promote career growth and pathways.

Employers should take on board the fact that by having a promotions policy in place, it sends a positive signal of the intention towards retaining the best talent. This in turn could preserve the stability of the organization. It is therefore left to employers to establish a promotion procedure in which the guiding factors include, determining if and when someone is eligible for a promotion, knowing when to promote an employee and determining what type of promotion to give.

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