

**STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT IN THE  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF RWANDA**

**BY**

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**A MANAGEMENT RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN  
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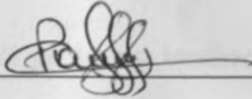


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## DECLARATION

I Pauline UWINGABIRE, hereby declare that this research project is my original work and has not been submitted in any other university or institution.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



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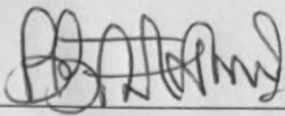
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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the  
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30.11.11

Mr. GEORGE OMONDI

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My sincere thanks go to my supervisor Mr. George Omondi for guiding and challenging me from conceptualization of the subject matter to completion of the report.

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I would like to express my gratitude to my classmates and all those who gave me the possibility to complete this project.

God be with you all.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my late parents, to my brother Dr Kabano Augustin and his Family and finally my brothers and sisters for their genuine support and encouragement. You have always believed in me.

## ABSTRACT

All organizations strive to improve their performance through delivery of quality and efficient services on a sustained basis. National University of Rwanda developed a five year strategic plan to guide its operation and future growth. The plan puts employees as key resources towards the planned objectives and the success of the institution. The objective of this study was to establish the strategies for employee performance improvement in National University of Rwanda. The research design was a case for National University of Rwanda. Primary data was collected using a researcher administered interview guide. The respondents were from the top management of National University of Rwanda comprising of Rector, Vice-Rector in charge of Administration and Finance, Vice-Rector in charge of Academic Affairs and Director of Human Resources Management. These are the key leaders in administering employee performance improvement strategies in the University. The data obtained from the interview guide was analyzed using content analysis.

National University of Rwanda was involved in training and development for more than ten years. This was confirmed by the information contained in other related documents on training and development, that most employees have had some form of training. Setting of training objectives at National University of Rwanda is a collaborative responsibility between the staff and the supervisor. Staff have as much responsibility in contributing to their work objectives and performance as the supervisor has in ensuring that work objectives are met and performance is of a high standard. Performance appraisal system

is the only tangible metric way by which an organization can know the level of performance of its diverse employees. Although most employees are aware of the type of performance appraisal system used in universities, such systems are not based on any serious formal purpose for which they were designed.

Based on the study findings and conclusion the following recommendations were given: -

The National University of Rwanda respective heads of departments should immediately identify all grievances and must take appropriate steps to eliminate the causes of such grievances to enhance employees' loyalty and committed to their work. In addition the university should identify training needs in a more professional manner in conjunction with the line manager as well as the individuals involved together with the human resources personnel. The needs identified should emanate from National University of Rwanda's strategic plan, which also cover departmental/sectional/teams and individual plans. National University of Rwanda should see learning, training and development as well as training's objectives, plan, implementation and evaluation as a continuous process for organizational development and survival. Most important it is vital for the university to evaluate training in order to assess its effectiveness in producing the learning outcomes specified when the training intervention is planned, and to indicate where improvements or changes are required to make the training even more effective. The basis upon which each category of training is to be evaluated should be determined at the planning stage while considering how the information required to evaluate learning events would be obtained and analyzed.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

A company does not need complex managerial strategies to build a high performance management system; the system performs because its design enables ordinary people to deliver extraordinary results consistently. High performance does, however, require managers who understand, use and improve the system (Stankard,2002). Most organizations already have the building blocks in the form of management approaches and capabilities; they just stop short of linking what they have into a continuous cycle, which can amplify the performance of the whole. It is this connecting the dots and getting all parts working together that permanently boosts management effectiveness and business performance (Stankard, 2002). It is generally agreed that the management of employee performance in any organization can facilitate the effective delivery of strategic and operational goals.

There is a clear and immediate correlation between using employee performance management strategies and improved business and organizational results. Some of the benefits may include; direct financial gain (grow sales, reduce costs, stop project overruns, aligns the organization directly behind the desired goals and decreases the time it takes to create strategic or operational changes by communicating the changes through a new set of goals). Motivated workforce (optimizes incentive plans to specific goals for over achievement, not just business as usual, improves employee engagement because everyone understands how they are directly contributing to the organizations high level

goals, create transparency in achievement of goals, high confidence in bonus payment process and professional development programs are better aligned directly to achieving business level goals (Pfeiffer, 2008).

### **1.1.1 Performance Management**

Performance management includes activities that ensure that goals are consistently being met in an effective and efficient manner. Performance management can focus on the performance of an organization, a department, employee, or even the processes to build a product or service, as well as many other areas. Performance assessment has a long history based on comparative judgments of human worth. In the early part of the 19th century, for example, Robert Owen used colored wooden cubes, hung above work stations, to indicate the performance of individual employees at his New Lanark cotton mills in Scotland. Various merit ratings were represented by different colored cubes which were changed to indicate improvement or decline in employee performance (Heilbroner, 1953, cited in Murphy and Cleveland, 1995). Organizations embrace performance management processes that enable employees to become their greatest asset. When managers function as performance coaches, they become trainers, confronters, mentors, and counselors, providing positive feedback and reinforcement to improve skills and competencies that ultimately enhance overall employee performance. Performance management functions as an integral part of a comprehensive development strategy, although too few organizations subscribe to this philosophy (Gilley & Maycunich 2000). Hence, the business world overflows with mediocre, stagnant, or failing organizations that stubbornly or ignorantly overlook their employees' potential. We believe that well-

designed and well-executed performance management provides an excellent vehicle for promoting continuous employee and organizational growth and development (Gilley & Maycunich 2000).

The role of performance measurement is to help keep the organization on the operating on a straight and narrow track. The measures are used primarily by business specialists, and the action taken as a result of such analysis may also be exclusively good for the business. Nevertheless, it is also clear that evidence of business problems may occur because of deficiencies in other areas of business operations. In this case, the ratios can provide the company's director with the information necessary to convince other managers that operating action needs to be taken in order to avoid any company problem. However, the primary role served by this type of performance measurement lies within the province of the business function, and is concerned with the effective and efficient use of the company's resources (Neely, 2002).

Performance management and measurement has become a vital part of an organizations operation. It came from the need of organizations to monitor how it performs certain actions and operations that aims to reach its goals. Performance management and measurement was the prime motivator for companies to focus not only on business measures. Businesses have seen the effects to the company of relying too much on business measures. It leads to downfall of the company. To check the performance level of the company it needs to use various methodologies and techniques. One method is the balanced scorecard. The balanced scorecard was introduced by (Kaplan and Norton,

2001) to measure whether the activities of the company is meeting its objectives. The balanced scorecard have become a fertile field of theories and scholastic research, as times past the balanced scorecard was altered by various individuals depending on the need of the environment. When a company implements the balance scorecard it will translate the company's vision into operating goals, the balance scorecard will communicate the vision and then link it to individual and organizational performance, the balance scorecard will also lead to a much strategized business planning process, lastly the balanced scorecard will help the company to know how to gain feedback and learn from such feedback. This in turn will help the company adjust its strategy according to the feedback and what they have learned from it.

### **1.1.2 Employee Performance Improvement Strategies**

The effective management of an organization's employee performance improvement is not something that can be ignored. Whether an organization is growing, defending its current position or divesting for improved focus, it cannot afford to find itself in a position of not having the performance level required to deploy its strategy and performance improvements plans. The challenge of doing more with less in today's business environment has placed increasing demands on the workforce to be multi-skilled, flexible and independent. As technology continues to advance breaking down traditional barriers, new production methods introduced, increasingly demanding customers, shrinking product life cycles, the criticality of an organization's talent becomes a top priority for leaders. In order to effectively support business strategies

Leaders need to conceive fashion and successfully champion explicit strategies to ensure access to sufficient talent flow and actively engage the organization's talent to achieve the business objectives (Sears, 2003).

Training and development is one of employee performance improvement strategies used by organizations and is provided to workers in order to improve performance and productivity. Lawrie (1990) defined training as changes in skills related to one's job. Training was also described as short-term learning related to an individual's present job (Nadler and Nadler, 1990). Rothwell and Sredl (2000) associated job training with learning interventions that develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes to match current or future job requirements. Rewards are any objects stimuli or events that increase the probability and intensity of behavioral actions leading to a such objects (learning, also called positive reinforcement), generate approach and consummator behavior and constitute outcomes of economic decision-making, and induce subjective feelings of pleasure and hedonic (Schultz, 2007). Rewards are of crucial importance for individual and support such elementary processes as drinking, eating and reproduction.

Stone and Porter (1975) argued that job characteristics is objective attributes about job, as environment, skills for jobs, safety, feedback, new information, interpersonal, compensation, autonomy, and challenge. Research has shown that the design of high technology professionals' work content influences the stability of the technical work force (Amabile, 1996). When high technology professionals view their tasks as challenging with opportunities for learning and information exchange they are also less

likely to leave. A performance appraisal, employee appraisal, performance review, or (career) development is a method by which the job performance of an employee is evaluated (generally in terms of quality, quantity, cost, and time) typically by the corresponding manager or supervisor. A performance appraisal is a part of guiding and managing career development. It is the process of obtaining, analyzing, and recording information about the relative worth of an employee to the organization. Performance appraisal is an analysis of an employee's recent successes and failures, personal strengths and weaknesses, and suitability for promotion or further training. It is also the judgment of an employee's performance in a job based on considerations other than productivity alone.

As coaching continues its evolution in organizations, there appears to be a trend from leaders being coached to leaders being coaches. The respondents had high value for leaders incorporating coaching into their leadership styles. Unfortunately, the respondents gave very low ratings to their organizations effectiveness in doing so. In a similar vein, engraining coaching into the company culture was also viewed as extremely important, and yet, the organizations were not effective in doing so. Integrating coaching into the organization represents one of the major challenges faced by organizations (Amabile, 1996). Mentorship refers to a personal developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. The person in receipt of mentorship may be referred to as a protégé (male), a protégée (female), an apprentice or, in recent years, a mentee." Mentoring" is a process that always involves communication and is relationship based,

but its precise definition is elusive. One definition of the many that have been proposed, as mentoring is a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé)" (Amabile, 1996).

Feedback describes the situation when output from (or information about the result of) an event or phenomenon in the past will influence an occurrence or occurrences of the same (i.e. same defined) event / phenomenon (or the continuation / development of the original phenomenon) in the present or future. When an event is part of a chain of cause-and-effect that forms a circuit or loop, then the event is said to "feed back" into itself. A key factor of the development of a learning organization and organizations in general is the creation of a well-functioning feedback system. The feedback system comprises different means to gain feedback both at the individual's and organization's level. The feedback culture may be viewed from the aspects of the feedback giver, feedback content, and of the applied means. Concepts; feedback, an appraisal interview, and a development discussion form a feedback system which is based on management by objectives. Targeted management requires setting the targets and following them, (Schultz, 2007).

### 1.1.3 National University of Rwanda

The National University of Rwanda (NUR) is a state university, founded in November 1963 as an institution of higher learning, with the mission to provide higher education, conduct research, and offer services to the community. It is the oldest and largest University in the country. The University is located in the Southern Province, 150 km south of the capital city of Kigali. It was the only publicly funded university until the 1990's. Before the 1994 genocide, it had three campuses in Butare, Kigali and Ruhengeri. After 1994, because of resource constraints, the three campuses merged into one campus in Butare. Since the reopening of NUR in 1995, 8,747 students have graduated from NUR. With over 10, 000 students registered this year, NUR has over one third of the total student population in all the higher education institutions in Rwanda. NUR is currently having 7 Faculties, 2 Schools and 6 Centers. NUR has also 10 Postgraduate Programs. The language of teaching and learning is English. The current staff in numbers 935 in academic, administrative and technical positions (NUR Performance Management Manual, 2010).

The National University of Rwanda has becoming much more market orientated, towards improving performance and targets. This has increased standards led to the development of the strategic plan to guide this direction. The strategic plan developed shows that there should be a link between an individual's performance and their pay. It did not, however, examine whether money does motivate people. Training at National University of Rwanda provides staff with strategies to improve performance and productivity. Each and every employee is entitled for at least three trainings a year. Human resource



management activities and strategic decisions making at National University of Rwanda facilitates performance evaluations are typically based on supervisor's subjective judgments rather than on objective indicators of performance a deviation from the modern human resources practices.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

All organizations strive to improve their performance through delivery of quality and efficient services on a sustained basis (Armstrong 2008; Schuler 2009). Intense competition, resource constraints and demanding customers are pushing firms in the private and public sector to style up as a strategy of coping otherwise they would be destined for failure (Armstrong and Baron, 2007). Corporate performance is dependant to a large extent on employee performance (Western and Wilson, 2009). Employee performance does not occur in a vacuum, strategies must be embedded to enhance performance. The organization must take deliberate steps to drive performance of staff. Employee conduct and resultant deliverables at work are a function of the interaction of the employees (with their person factors) and the work environment (all the organizational systems factors) (Boesen, 2004).

A new five year corporate plan has been adopted by National University of Rwanda and the emphasis has moved away from dealing with local parochial issues towards a more strategic operation. The public sector in Rwanda is undergoing transformation and the government has embarked on a policy of improving performance of public enterprises through ensuring cost efficiency and quality service delivery to citizens. In today's

knowledge industry, National University of Rwanda Management, where value is locked in the heads of the work force, best employee performance improvement strategies only can ensure continued success. According to the Rector, NUR, employee performance improvement initiatives that improve the organization outcomes will be encouraged to invest more on its employee in an innovative manner.

Several studies have been undertaken on employee performance improvement. Mudibo (2001) studied the role of managers in employee performance improvement in state corporations. He noted that yesterday's solution to the issue of employee performance was simple: "Fix the employees!" he added that focus was on the immediate problem and the solution was either training or discipline. Kamau (2009) undertook a survey the institution of employee performance program in large corporations in Kenya. He observed that as organization becomes more sophisticated they became more proactive by instituting performance management systems that often provide for goal-setting and performance appraisal processes which has given a more rational and defensible basis for training and discipline. Onyango (2010) on his part studies on contemporary performance management strategies in government departments. He noted that today, some organizations are generally doing a better job in employee performance management. They recognize and deal with most of the "hygiene factors"—fair pay, reasonable benefits, clean and safe working conditions and compensation. To the best knowledge of the researcher, no study has been done on strategies for improving employee performance in National University of Rwanda. This study indents to address this knowledge gap.

### **1.3 Research Objective**

To establish the strategies for employee performance improvement in National University of Rwanda.

### **1.4 Value of the Study**

This study will assist institutions of higher learning in identify and monitoring motivational strategies that enhances employee performance. In addition research findings will help in monitoring development and growth of human resource management being a highly dynamic field.

The policy makers can obtain knowledge of human resource management dynamics and appropriate employee performance improvement strategies and therefore they can obtain guidance from this study in designing appropriate policies that will guide human resources practitioners.

To the academicians, the study will contribute to the existing literature in the field of human resource practice in general. It should also act as a stimulus for further research to refine and extend the present studies in Kenya and Rwanda on human resource practice and management.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Performance Management

Performance management is a tool used by organizations to guide performance behavior in alignment to the organization strategy. It is a holistic process, bringing together many of the elements which go to make up the successful practice of people management, including in particular learning and development (CIPD 2010). Empirical research suggests a positive correlation between the effective use of performance management system (PMS) as a tool and business result. Armstrong and Baron (2004) defined PMS as a process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organizational performance. Wiesner and McDonald (2001) in their research regarding the prevalence of PMS practices in Australian companies revealed a high adoption of the system and a link of performance evaluation output with five different HRM activities. In relation to the extent to which this prevalence has represented change over ten years, in 2010, Wiesner and Innes (2010) measured the PMS practices again in Australian companies and revealed increments in use of PMS and significant use of performance evaluation output with more than five HRM activities. These researchers went on to stress that PMS is a strategy which relates to every activity of the organization set in the context of its human resource policies, culture, style and communications systems. The nature of the strategy depends on the organizational context and can vary from organization to organization (Armstrong & Baron 2004). Performance evaluation output must be linked with other

Human resource management activities and strategic decisions making for the organizational administrative and developmental purposes (Greer 2001; Cleveland, Murphy and Williams ,1989). Islam (2006) in his study found that, fewer than 20 percent Bangladeshi organizations hold PMS on regular basis and only 10 percent organizations link performance evaluation result with human resources decision making. Furthermore, performance evaluations were typically based on supervisor's subjective judgments rather than on objective indicators of performance (Armstrong, 2006). This has led many Bangladeshi researchers to speculate that PMS practices in Bangladeshi local private organizations are full of errors, for example, annual performance evaluation can place an excessive burden on the memory of a person who has to rate multiple employees, and thus can result in biased or wrong judgments (HR Bangladesh, 2011). Also, supervisors' judgments may be influenced by stereotypes and other personal beliefs or perceptions (Zafour ,2009; Haque and Hossain, 2009). For these reasons, dissatisfaction with PMS among the local private organizations is rampant. On the other hand, recent empirical researches conducted by Mahmood (2010) and Abdullah, Boyle and Joham (2010) showed that MNCs operating in Bangladesh are moving away from using a traditional approach of rating-scale based PMS and are focusing on more sophisticated and strategic PMS. It is also evident from their study that these MNC are using performance evaluation outputs administratively whenever they are the basis for a decision about the employee's work conditions, including promotions, terminations, remunerations and rewards. Developmental uses of performance evaluation, which are geared toward improving

employees,, performance and strengthening their job skills, include counseling employees on effective work and behaviors.

## **2.2 Performance Management in Public Sector**

Performance management is an increasingly common phenomenon in the public sector (Adcroft and Willis, 2005). All public sector organizations will be required to scrutinize the performance of the organization and its staff. Examination of the literature review traces back first steps into performance management by the public sector to the conservative government of the late 1980's and early 1990's. It was under those Governments that organizational and managerial reforms were introduced, and public sector performance management became firmly established (Boland and Fowler,2000).

The public sector was becoming much more market orientated, and successive conservative governments tried to improve accountability by developing standards and targets (Harrison and Goulding, 1997). These increased standards led to the development of the Citizen's Charter in 1991, and this were the trigger for the launch of many charters in the public sector. The Citizens Charter (1991) developed the idea that there should be a link between an individual's performance and their pay. It did not, however, examine whether money does motivate people.

In 1993, the Local Government Management Board (LGMB) published the first guidance to performance management aimed specifically at the public sector (LGMB 1993). Its clear message was that performance management links the strategy and service objectives of the organization to jobs and people. It again linked the option of relating performance

management to reward strategies. The guidance gave a clear emphasis on the fact that organizational performance is a product of what people achieve and do (Rogers 1999). The Audit Commission published papers in the mid-nineties to strengthen the case for performance management in the public sector. Three key elements emerged relevant to the individual perspective of performance management; there should be qualitative and quantitative standards for judging individual and organization performance, organization and individual feedback on performance should be provided and training and development needs should be identified to improve individual performance (Audit Commission 1995). This guidance indicated that performance appraisal was just as much about development (forward looking) as review of performance (backward looking). Rose and Lawton (1999) noted how stressful it was at that time for managers to have to introduce new management practices, whilst continuing to deliver for customers, with little or no additional resources to facilitate implementation. They further argue that this was compounded by the fact that almost all systems were top down imposed, with little participation in design by participants. This key issue will be explored further. There were further drives to improve the effectiveness of public services as New Labour came to power in 1997 (Radnor and Maguire, 2004). A report by Gershon in 2004 provided a further catalyst for the not-for-profit sector to adopt improved service delivery (Manville 2007). This report was the catalyst for the Rail Passengers Council (predecessor to Passenger Focus) to significantly improve its corporate and business planning and link to individual staff objectives. Subsequent literature, notably Wisniewski and Olafsson (2004) and Radnor and Macguire (2004) recognize the importance of performance measurement and management in the public sector. Most of those public sector

employees are labour intensive, and so they need to capitalize on the abilities and performance of staff. Following this, the goal of performance management is to achieve human capital advantage, recognizing that the individual staff member is the most important source of capital advantage (Armstrong & Baron, 2005).

### **2.3 Employee Performance Improvement Strategies**

Rogers (1999) suggests that one of the key components of performance management is solving problems – i.e. improving performance. He also suggests that whilst many managers may have the skills to identify the need to improve performance, they may need much more knowledge on employee performance improvement strategies. Employee performance improvement strategies are initiatives put in place in order to improve employee motivation, performance and enhance organization productivity.

#### **2.3.1 Training and Development**

Training is provided to workers in order to improve performance and productivity. Lawrie (1990) defined training as changes in skills related to one's job. Training was also described as short-term learning related to an individual's present job (Nadler and Nadler, 1990). Rothwell and Sredl (2000) associated job training with learning interventions that develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes to match current or future job requirements. Job training is a broad term implying all forms of training related to one's job. It can be categorized into many types, such as on-the-job training (OJT), off-job training, vestibule training, cross training, and planned and unplanned training (Rothwell and Sredl, 2000). Meanwhile, Lawrie (1990) argued that the usage of knowledge, skills, work experience,



good health, and the ability to labor are all important assets to sustaining lives and boosting learning for human beings. Although investments that cultivate these assets can exist in many forms, all forms of activities and the potential to improve people's capability and incur greater returns are considered investments in human capital.

Participation in job training, such as prior education attainment, recurring education, and acquisition of any form of job training, is probably the most important human capital investment over the life cycle. Human capital theory has long been recognized as an underlying theory that is useful in describing social and individual economic development over the life cycle. According to Becker (1993), training and education are the most important investments in human capital, in which increased skills and knowledge of individuals are positively associated with productivity that brings greater earnings. Investment in training was also found to result in increases in wages (Lengermann, 1999). Considering women's "traditional female" role as well as their labor market behaviors, investments in training and education of women may vary with different magnitude of incentive to them (Ehrenberg and Smith, 2000). The major difference in making human capital investments between males and females has been in the length of work life compared to the ability to recoup the costs of the investments (Ehrenberg and Smith, 2000). To better understand the nature of training and education for women, theoretical and empirical studies about the acquisition of women's job training and education are reviewed in the following sections.

Since 1999, employees with key information technology skills have become increasingly hard to find. Many companies have realized that proactive strategies are required for building and maintaining a high technology company's knowledge reservoir (Cataldo et al., 2000). Training that focus on continuous learning, retraining and retaining knowledge can decrease the time it takes to move the workforce from intermediate to expert competence, by bridging its technical skills gap. Current skills sets are providing to be inadequate to meet the rapidly changing, fast paced world of technical and business needs. A top priority is keeping skills fresh, and staying current with emerging technologies (Gable, 1999).

### **2.3.2 Compensation**

Rewards are any objects stimuli or events that increase the probability and intensity of behavioral actions leading to a such objects (learning, also called positive reinforcement), generate approach and consummator behavior and constitute outcomes of economic decision-making, and induce subjective feelings of pleasure and hedonic. Rewards are of crucial importance for individual and support such elementary processes as drinking, eating and reproduction. Largely similar behavioral processes are engaged for higher order rewards such as money, novelty and cognitive and social rewards. The basic reward objects are polysensory and do not engage specialized reward receptors, and the brain extracts the reward information from visual, auditory, somatosensory, olfactory and other sensory information. The identification of higher order rewards depends on additional cognitive processes. Thus rewards are not defined by the physics and chemistry of their inputs but by the behavioral reactions they induce (Schultz, 2007).

Primarily rewards include cash compensation, benefits, and other non cash forms and the work experience. Strategic reward plans go beyond cash to include training and educational opportunities, job redesign, flexible work schedules, stock options and recognition awards such as merchandise and travel. Non cash rewards, such as on-site day care, fitness centers, dry-cleaning services and automatic teller machines, add convenience to employees' daily lives and engender higher loyalty (Deci, 1971). Work-at-home and job-sharing arrangements enable employees to better balance work and family responsibilities and afford employers the necessary flexibility to respond to business needs. The total reward system is defined here to include base salary, variable pay, direct compensation, perquisites, benefits, performance management, training, career development, coaching and other employee-related policies. Combinations of variable pay, recognition and celebration and benefits are essential to providing a total reward package (Milne, 2007). Currently, many organizations are implementing or planning to implement, reward and/or recognition programs believing that these will help bring about the desired cultural change (Milne, 2007). In some organizations, large amounts of money are being invested in these types of activities and some managers are required specifically to set aside a certain amount from their budgets for this purpose. This rationale is based on the assumption that these types of incentives will encourage employee loyalty, foster teamwork and ultimately facilitate the development of the desired culture that encourages and supports knowledge sharing (Deci, 1971). According to Kanter (1987), many organizations rewards are differentiated on the basis of status (rather than contribution) and, often, the only way an individual can increase his or her

pay is to get promoted. This usually motivates them to “look out for themselves” rather than improve their overall contribution.

Meanwhile, money is still the primary incentive used to lure information technology professionals. However, most experts agree that money is not the long term answer for hiring, and especially for keeping, skilled high technology employees (Leinfuss, 1998). According to Higginbotham (1997) high salaries are not essential, but “good” and “fair” salaries showed a strong correlation with intention to stay, indicating that as long as the compensation is competitive, financial rewards are not the primary factor in retention. Kochanski and Ledford (2001) support this statement, which indicated that the actual level of pay is less important than feelings about pay raises and the process used to administer them. Employees want to understand how the pay system works, and want to know how they can earn pay increases. Once the pay level has been reached other things become important, the intangibles, e.g. career, supervisor support, work and family balance (Tomlinson, 2002).

Employee benefits and benefits in kind (fringe benefits, perquisites, and perks) are various non-wage compensations provided to employees in addition to their normal wages or salaries (Farris, 2000). Where an employee exchanges (cash) wages for some other form of benefit, this is generally referred to as a 'salary sacrifice' arrangement. In most countries, most kinds of employee benefits are taxable to at least some degree. For example: housing, group insurance (health, dental, and life), disability income protection, retirement benefit. Relatively, the purpose of the benefits is to increase the economic

security of employees. The term perks or perks is often used colloquially to refer to those benefits of a more discretionary nature (Farris, 2000). Often, perks are given to employees who are doing notably well and/or have seniority. Common perks are company cars, hotel stays, free refreshments, leisure activities on work time (golf, etc.), stationery, allowances for lunch, and when multiple choices exist first choice of such things as job assignments and vacation scheduling. They may also be given first chance at job promotions when vacancies exist.

Pfeffer (1998) argued that rewards system such as a higher salary base, gain sharing, bonuses and employee stock options, act as incentives for employees to be committed and motivated to achieve organizational goals. In a study of 250 employees of a manufacturing operation, Oliver (1990) found a positive correlation ( $r=.56$ ,  $p>.01$ ) between work rewards and commitment. Buchko (1993) suggest that benefit practices can be associated with turnover. He found that in organization in which benefits were a higher percentage of total labor costs and those organizations whose benefits packages were described to be of higher quality, tended to report lower rates of employee attrition. Buchko (2008) suggests that this may be because employees are satisfied with the benefits they received or might be because the rewards and benefits received are binding investments that would induce career commitment. These results imply that size and types of benefits provided for by organization play a significant role in reducing employee turnover.

### 2.3.3 Target Setting and Task Clarity

Stone and Porter (1975) argued that job characteristics is objective attributes about job, as environment, skills for jobs, safety, feedback, new information, interpersonal, compensation, autonomy, and challenge. Hackman and Oldham (1976) pointed that there are five dimensions to job characteristics, such as skill variety, task identity, task significance, job autonomy, and feedback. In contrast, job autonomy and skill variety are mostly considered as having a beneficial effect on career commitment since they provide individuals with opportunities to change their career (Daniels and Guppy, 1994). Thus, high technology employees want to do interesting work that challenges them and uses their skills and talents. Repetitive, narrow work experience with little individual discretion repels high technology employees (Kochanski and Ledford, 2001).

Lately, research has shown that the design of high technology professionals' work content influences the stability of the technical work force (Amabile, 1996). When high technology professionals view their tasks as challenging with opportunities for learning and information exchange they are also less likely to leave. According to Amabile (1996) and Glynn (1996), high technology professionals, for example, engineers, appeared to be more involved, more satisfied with their jobs, and more committed to the organization than non-technical employees did. High technology professionals view their tasks as challenging with opportunities for learning and information exchange they are also less likely to leave. Job characteristics, such as variety and autonomy, are well-established determinants of career commitment (Mottaz, 1988), and are known to be particularly important to management information systems employees (Cougar and Zawaski, 1980).

Job autonomy relates to increased feelings of personal responsibility. It is defined as “the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence and discretion to the individual to schedule work and determine the producers used in carrying it out” (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). Discretion in the job has typically been discussed in terms of job autonomy, which reflects the extent to which a job allows the freedom, independence, and discretion to schedule work, make decisions, and select the methods used to perform tasks (Hackman and Oldham, 1975). Increased job autonomy will allow individuals greater flexibility in how they define their role because they will have greater discretion in deciding how to perform the work (Fried, Hollenbeck, Slowik, Tieg, and Ben-David, 1999; Troyer, Mueller, and Osinsky, 2000).

Consistently, according to Hackman and Oldham (1980), individuals tend to believe that their work outcomes depend substantially on their own efforts, initiatives, and decisions when job autonomy is given. As job autonomy increases, workers are more likely to feel responsible for their jobs, and consequently “they are more willing to accept personal accountability for the outcomes of their work” (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). In addition, job autonomy may increase career commitment in practice by letting individuals design their work processes that fit their needs/schedules. For instance, Batt and Valcour (2003) suggest that job autonomy in decision making translates into the employee’s ability to control decisions, such as when, and how to integrate work and family responsibility.

Empirically, high technology professionals have a reasonable degree of autonomy in their application of that knowledge. Although high technology professionals rarely decide on the organizational policy to which their expertise contributes, there is a reasonable degree of autonomy in the process of performing their work (Bailyn and Lynch, 1983). When job autonomy is high, workers will view their work outcomes in terms of their own efforts, initiatives and decision, rather than instruction of the supervisor or procedure (Marx, 1996).

Relatively, according to Dubie (2000) high technology employees enjoy the autonomy they in their current jobs. This relates to the elusive factor that high technology employees are looking for i.e. empowerment. Agarwal and Ferrat (1999) established that successful information technology organizations are devoting resources toward empowering information technology professionals to take responsibility for their work and decision-making. Based on the above discussion the degree of freedom and independence enjoyed by employees and their participation in planning and organizing their work has an influence on career commitment (Bailyn and Lynch, 1983). According to Marsh and Mannari (1977) the higher level of autonomy that the individual possesses, correlates negatively with turnover.

#### **2.3.4 Performance appraisal**

Performance appraisal is a method by which the job performance of an employee is evaluated (generally in terms of quality, quantity, cost, and time) typically by the corresponding manager or supervisor. Performance appraisal is a part of guiding and



managing career development. It is the process of obtaining, analyzing, and recording information about the relative worth of an employee to the organization. Performance appraisal is an analysis of an employee's recent successes and failures, personal strengths and weaknesses, and suitability for promotion or further training. It is also the judgment of an employee's performance in a job based on considerations other than productivity alone.

Performance management includes activities that ensure that goals are consistently being met in an effective and efficient manner. Performance management can focus on the performance of an organization, a department, employee, or even the processes to build a product or service, as well as many other areas. Performance management as referenced on this page is a broad term coined by Daniels in the late 1970s to describe a technology (i.e. science imbedded in applications methods) for managing behavior and results, two critical elements of what is known as performance. Managing employee or system performance facilitates the effective delivery of strategic and operational goals. There is a clear and immediate correlation between using performance management programs or software and improved business and organizational results. For employee performance management, using integrated software, rather than a spreadsheet based recording system, may deliver a significant return on investment through a range of direct and indirect sales benefits, operational efficiency benefits and by unlocking the latent potential in every employees work day (i.e. the time they spend not actually doing their job).

### 2.3.5 Coaching

Coaching is a facilitative process, stimulating and challenging a coach to new perceptions about their current issues (and goals) with a clear target in focus. A facilitative process means that the coach does not provide answers and solutions, but stimulates the coach to find new and motivated thinking to meet their goals. Pure, facilitative coaching encourages independent thinking and so has a lasting developmental impact on performance. Thus, coaching is one of the most powerful tools of change in organisational culture change. The coach is not only learning new ways to tackle challenges, but learning new mental approaches that are applied to a whole range of challenges in the future. The coach also learns how to stimulate their own motivation; coaching involves significant probing of internal resources and commitment to success in establishing goals (Boesen, 2004).

There are many different forms of coaching based upon uni-dimensional models. These include Transactional Analysis Coaching, Emotional Intelligence Coaching; GROW Model coaching, NLP coaching and so on. It appears however that the tools used are not the most important criteria for successful coaching. In other words, provided the coach/mentor has accomplished ability with a range of useful interventions, it is the quality of the coach and their ability to demonstrate core competencies that are most important. According to the respondents, coaching must be more strongly linked to business outcomes. While the respondent's agreed that this was important, they felt that their organizations were not sufficiently effective in doing so. Those who manage coaching initiatives may consider explicitly linking initiative objectives to business

outcomes. The integration of coaching into leadership development and other people processes such as selection and succession management was viewed as an important next step for the evolution of coaching in organizations. How best to achieve this integration remains a strategic and logistical challenge for HR and leadership development professionals? (Boesen, 2004).

The application of coaching in the respondents' organizations is producing both intangible and tangible benefits. Teamwork and collaboration increased. People felt more engaged in their work and were less likely to leave the organization. The bench strength of leadership increased, making more leaders available for new opportunities for advancement. Turning our attention to more tangible benefits, coaching was credited by the respondents to have reduced the cost of operations, improved quality of products and services, and increased productivity and net revenue, (Schultz, 2007).

### **2.3.6 Monitoring**

Mentoring is a process of 'show and tell' but still concerned with current issues and future aspirations. Mentors are often colleagues or retired colleagues with considerable knowledge of the sector and the internal politics. In mentoring, the solutions and directions come from the mentor. These provide short-term benefits that the mentee can apply immediately to a current issue(s) with measurable gains. However, the mentee is learning little about the mental processes that lead to these new solutions. There is little scope therefore to apply the new approaches to other challenges unless very similar to the original issue. The mentoring relationship is one of dependence in which learning and

developmental growth are typically slower and less impactful than for coaching, (Schultz, 2007).

The impact of monitoring in organizations continues to evolve. Monitoring has expanded from being solely a one-on-one development tool to become an accepted and expected leadership practice. For many organizations, engraining coaching into the company culture is on the horizon. Leaders of human resources functions and those who lead coaching initiatives need do more to integrate coaching with other people processes. The challenge before the HR and other professionals who are responsible for the development and deployment of coaching initiatives is to entice business leaders to play a bigger game when it comes to monitoring, (Lengermann, 1999).

### **2.3.7 Feedback**

Employee feedback is essential for an organization's success. It will tell and keep the managers updated about the organization's strengths and weaknesses. Thus they can work upon them and try to eliminate those weaknesses. It will help them in carrying SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis in an organization, thus, contributing to organization's growth. Employee feedback should be encouraged by the managers as it tells them how motivated and satisfied the employees are in an organization. It tells the managers the reactions of employees to the company's policies. The employees should be honest enough in giving their views about a particular manager. They should be assured that their suggestions would be taken into consideration. They shouldn't be hesitant in giving their feedback, (Harrison and Goulding 1997).

Employees are a mediator between the managers and the customers. They can keep a company informed about customer satisfaction and customer's traits. They can give suggestions on improvement of goods and services, on what type of training sessions should be conducted in an organization for the employees, on how can their working environment be improved, on the perks and benefits which should be given to keep employees motivated. The employees can tell the managers about what they feel about the tasks assigned to them. They can make managers understand that lack of appreciation by managers can lead to less productivity and thus, to slow growth of organization. If the employees feel overburdened with work assigned to them, they can honestly discuss this with their superiors so that their work can be distributed and shared if required. Employee feedback can help measure the outcome of training sessions, the requirements of customers, quality improvement in an organization, etc. Thus, the managers should encourage employees to give feedback and take it into consideration for the growth and smooth running of their organization, (Harrison and Goulding 1997).

### 2.3 Data analysis

The data obtained from the customer guide was analyzed using content analysis. The subjects were broadly classified into four categories: job development, customer service, training and development, and performance appraisal. The total number of employees' performance appraisals. The responses were analyzed by analyzing the content of the appraisals in three categories: as well as those that were related to the organization's performance and

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This was a case study design. This design was found appropriate since the unit of analysis is one and a detailed investigation will be carried out to establish the desired phenomena.

### **3.2 Data Collection**

Primary data was collected using a researcher administered interview guide focusing on the following areas: training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, target setting, coaching, mentoring and employee feedback(Appendix II). The respondents were the top management of National University of Rwanda comprising of Rector, Vice-Rector in charge of Administration and Finance, Vice-Rector in charge of Academic Affairs and Director of Human Resources Management. These are the key leaders in administering employee performance improvement strategies in the University.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

The data obtained from the interview guide was analyzed using content analysis. The themes were broadly classified into four: training and development, compensation, target setting and task clarity and performance appraisal as the broad strategies for employee performance improvement. The responses were analysed by synthesis to identify those that confirm to these themes as well as those that may reveal new approaches to performance improvement.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **4.1 Training and Development**

NUR was involved in training and development for more than ten years. Information indicated that training and development helps in optimizing the utilization of human resource that further helps the employee to achieve the organizational goals as well as their individual goals. Training and development helps to provide an opportunity and broad structure for the development of human resources' technical and behavioral skills in an organization. It also helps the employees in attaining personal growth. Training and development helps in increasing the job knowledge and skills of employees at each level. It helps to expand the horizons of human intellect and an overall personality of the employees. Training and development helps in increasing the productivity of the employees that helps the organization further to achieve its long-term goal. Training and development helps in inculcating the sense of team work, team spirit, and inter-team collaborations. It helps in inculcating the zeal to learn within the employees. Training and development helps to develop and improve the organizational health culture and effectiveness. It helps in creating the learning culture within the organization.

Training and development helps building the positive perception and feeling about the organization. The employees get these feelings from leaders, subordinates, and peers. Training and development helps in improving upon the quality of work and work-life. Training and development helps in creating the healthy working environment. It helps to

build good employee, relationship so that individual goals aligns with organizational goal. Training and development helps in improving the health and safety of the organization thus preventing obsolescence. Training and development helps in improving the morale of the work force. Training and development helps in creating a better corporate image. Training and development leads to improved profitability and more positive attitudes towards profit orientation.

Setting of training objective at NUR is a collaborative responsibility between the staff and the supervisor. Staff have as much responsibility in contributing to their work objectives and performance as the supervisor has in ensuring that work objectives are met and performance is of a high standard. By doing so the university enhances loyalty. Staff loyalty and commitment stems from their involvement in the process. Thus, staff are encouraged to draft their work objectives following the Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound, aligning them with faculty/centre's operational plan and be prepared to present these to the supervisor for discussion.

The purpose of monitoring the training policy is to assist in achieving an university mission and performance goals by improving employee and organizational performance. Director of Human Resources Management is responsible for ensuring that the university staff training needs are identified, programs are established to meet those needs, lines of authority are clearly identified, and all training programs contribute to the overall efficiency and effectiveness through a continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanism.



NUR training and development projections for each employee are done through plans Staff Training and development plans (STDPs). Staff training and development plans are designed by the university to help staff identify record and monitor the training and continuing professional development of staff in a well self projected manner.

The university uses staff training and development plans to ensure best practice are adhered to and make sure that the university meets statutory requirements on training projection as contracted by the government of Rwanda.

#### **4.2 Performance Management**

The University in 2006 introduced a skill-based method of performance management that creates a work environment that allows employees to develop the skills they need to meet business goals. The skill -based management measures skills and tracks and combines them into job descriptions; identify employee specific skill gaps and then provides resources to upgrade abilities. The system uses employee satisfaction measure as a basis of performance reviews and management rewards which results in more objective performance reviews, more effective employees, more satisfied customers and better business performance.

The human resources manager's role at the university is to evaluate subordinate's performance which leads to managers making compensation recommendations for employees. Performance appraisal can be a primary source of information and feedback for employees, which is key to their future development. When supervisors identify the weak areas and the training needs of the employee, they inform the employees what skills

to develop and work out development plans. This reinforces individual behavior. The combination of administrative and development purposes of performance appraisal reflect in a specific way, human resources management's larger role of integrating the individual with the organization.

There has been a proliferation of private universities in Rwanda in the recent past and most Rwandese are finding them a cheaper alternative than sending their children abroad. Most of these institutions are relatively young. Besides there is a lot of competition amongst themselves as well as with well established National/Public Universities. To ensure they become more competitive these institutions need to retain high caliber staff both teaching and non-teaching staff through effective performance appraisals. National University of Rwanda has a comprehensive performance appraisal system which utilizes the ranking method. However, since the introduction of the performance appraisal system in 2006 the study was able to establish that the system has never been reviewed.

### **4.3 Compensation**

The university staff compensation program supports the following objectives: to attract, develop, retain, and reward high quality staff at all levels of responsibility; to promote internal equity and consistency across diverse University functions; to encourage wages, salaries and benefits which are competitive with the prevailing rates for similar employment in the labor markets; to provide consistency, while remaining flexible in meeting diverse University needs; and to provide the foundation for a performance-based pay system. The Responsible for developing, administering, and maintaining the Staff

Compensation Program is vested to Director of Human Resources Management and Vice-Rector in charge of Administration and Finance. Their joint responsibility includes developing an overall salary structure for the University, recommending changes to that structure and components thereof, and training department administrators in the use of compensation methods. The Compensation Management Department manages and evaluates pay and classification systems to allow the University to be internally equitable and externally competitive. Compensation's goal is to establish pay and classification practices that allow the University to attract and retain good employees in support of organizational goals while ensuring compliance with government regulations.

Employee compensation was an internal developed program in which the Head of Administration and Finance together with the Director of Human Resources Management departments play a critical role. Occasionally there have been complaints on the compensation by staff which are directed to Compensation Management Department for analysis and implementation. It was noted that transparency and accountability are the cornerstones of a good compensation program in the university. Effective employee compensation reduces staff turnover and hence continued employee performance and morale, and staff are proud of their organization, this enhances productivity improvement.

#### **4.4 Target Setting**

Departmental targets are informed from previous performance, new projects and government directives. The head of the department institutes a meeting, where staff will

agree upon set indicators. From the performance indicator individual are assigned task that constitutes targets. Documents like the university strategic plan, policies and procedures, government circulars and donor guideline form an important ground for target formulation. All targets are participatory in nature where individual must own them up for proper implementation. Individuals at the university tend to believe that their work outcomes depend substantially on their own efforts, initiatives, and decisions when job autonomy is given. As job autonomy increases, staffs at the university are more likely to feel responsible for their jobs, and consequently job autonomy in decision making translates into the employee's ability to control decisions, such as when, and how to integrate work and family responsibility which is arrived at participatory approach in target setting. Target setting and task clarity impacted on staff performance significantly at the university.

#### **4.5 Coaching**

Working with people in a coaching context is all about building a supportive and effective relationship to enable individuals or groups to make positive changes as part of either personal or professional development. The University offers a variety of developmental support to employees. Quite often many of the skills and behaviors used are very similar although the purpose of the intervention is significantly different. There are various definitions of all of these approaches. Rather than get into a debate about these definitions, what matters is that all those involved understand 'what is the purpose of the relationship' and are sure that the coach, mentor, counselor or mediator has the

appropriate mix of skills to support the goals, well-being and change that the individual is wanting.

Coaching is one of the most powerful developmental approaches available to individuals and organizations and is one of the many tools available to managers to help empower and develop their teams. The coaching program is one component of an integrated Leadership strategy to support and develop all people employed within NUR. Within these overall strategies, the coaching program aims at: Enabling individuals and the University to develop, contributing to a culture of continuous development and learning; Creating personal growth opportunities; Enabling the University to share knowledge, resources and institutional wisdom; Encouraging diversity, flexibility, creativity and innovative thinking within existing standards; Contributing to meeting the development needs of talented people; Contributing to increased employee retention and job satisfaction; developing the coaching skills of managers, leaders and other people developers; To help empower managers to manage their teams to achieve high performance and To improve and sustain the leadership capability within the University.

Coaching has the following impacts on staff: - improving knowledge and awareness, improving confidence and self-esteem, gaining clarity and focus for their own development, influencing more positive mindset, increasing motivating to take positive action, increasing personal awareness and reflective practice to facilitate enhanced self-directed learning and self-regulation and increasing own understanding of the University and its process and procedures

At the university level coaching increases staff retention, demonstration of people investment, encourages a nurturing transformational approach to people development, builds a learning culture, increase continuous evaluation and improvement of performance, improves communication and breaks down barriers, increases awareness of business needs and objectives, empowers staff to contribute effectively to organisational development, cost effective way to develop staff and improves customer service and satisfaction through more positive interactions with its staff.

The coaching program is open to all University staff who will benefit from it and the Program will actively seek to recruit a diverse range of coach and coaches. Coachees will be able to apply to the program on a rolling basis. The criteria for the selection of coach and coachees are as follows: Their application meets the aims of the program; they are supported by their line manager in their application to the program; they agree to uphold the best practice guidelines for meeting and participation and there is a suitable match available in the program.

In addition to individuals requesting to be part of the program, there may be occasions in an employee life cycle that naturally lend themselves to coaching. This may result in individuals other than line managers suggesting this as a possible intervention. The role of the line manager is crucial in this relationship, both initially when identifying expected outcomes of the program with the individual but also to enable any appropriate new learning to be applied in the workplace. As a result the line manager is required to confirm support of the individual applying to the program and their role in this process,

on the application form, potential coachees will complete a standard application form, which is used as the basis for matching coaches and coachees.

#### **4.6 Mentoring**

It was noted that the terminology of mentoring is often interchanged with coaching. At the NUR there are a number of existing mentoring approaches. The University is involved in a cross organizational mentoring program called NUR Accord. The aims of the program include: To broaden perspective and approaches to issues, increasing organizational creativity and innovation and supporting change; For individuals to maximize their own potential, leading to a positive impact on organizational performance; To widen opportunities for employee development across the partnership and to develop partnership working in the public sector, through providing opportunities for individuals to network and learn across organizational boundaries. It was observed that the operation of coaching is similar to the one of mentoring within the university.

#### **4.7 Employee Feedback**

Policies in place to enhance employee feedback at NUR are departmental guide meeting policy, email communication guidelines, staff memo generation and circulation guide and public relation guidelines. Advantages of employee feedback in the organization includes: an effective medium for improving customer service and the inputs quality to the internal customers; it encourages participation of all and thus makes HR decisions more qualitative; it pinpoints the favoritism and biases of the supervisors present in conventional appraisal systems; the employees find 360 degree feedback more acceptable

than the traditional feedback approaches; it concentrates and stresses upon internal customer satisfaction; it broadens the scope for employees to get various ways for enhancing their job role, performance, and views; it can act as a supplement and not replacement to the conventional appraisal system; it can be motivating for the employees who undervalue themselves; it encourages teamwork; it is more credible as various people give almost same feedback from various sources; it brings into limelight the areas of employee development as it confirms the employee strengths and identifies his weaknesses on which he can work upon; it creates an environment of trust and loyalty in an organization.

Lack of employee feedback system results to: improper working conditions such as strict production standards, unsafe workplace, bad relation with managers, irrational management policies such as overtime, transfers, demotions, inappropriate salary structure and violation of organizational rules and practices. The defined feedback infrastructure explained in the policies enumerated in the study for NUR under the feedback guidelines.



## CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Summary of Findings

It is the obligation of the top management in any organization to establish strategies for employee performance improvement. The need for performance improvement cannot be over emphasized in a complex organization like a university because modern management is today run on a result-based management approach.

First, the institution was aware of the employee performance improvement strategies. Secondly, the two major factors that contribute to an effective performance improvement at the university, namely the provision of training to the employees involved in the appraising and an effective performance appraisal system should multi-rating, that is, there should be input from all the supervisors on the employee's performance.

The University offers a variety of developmental support to employees. Quite often many of the skills and behaviors used are very similar although the purpose of the intervention is significantly different. The university strategic plan, policies and procedures, government circulars and donor guideline form an important ground for target formulation. The university staff compensation program supports the following objectives; to attract, develops, retain, and reward high quality staff at all levels of responsibility and to promote internal equity and consistency across diverse University functions. The University in 2006 introduced a skill-based method of performance

management that creates a work environment that allows employees to develop the skills they need to meet business goals.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Performance appraisal system is the only tangible metric way by which an organization can know the level of performance of its diverse employees. Although most employees are aware of the type of performance appraisal system used in universities, such systems are not based on any serious formal purpose for which they were designed.

The effectiveness of performance appraisal systems in the private universities are only based on training to the employees involved in the rating/appraising process and are multi-rating systems. Conclusively, because the performance appraisal systems used in Rwandan universities are not effective and that they exist just as a matter of formalities, the private universities cannot measure employees' performance hence making it difficult to achieve the intended human resource management objectives. Employee development is something that most people imagine as intrusive all-day group training sessions. Unfortunately, this dreaded approach to employee development is just the opposite of how employee development should occur and feel to employees. Employee development can manifest itself in many forms of training, evaluations, educational programs, and even feedback. If executed correctly, the effects of training on employee performance can often encourage growth within the worker and the organization itself.

Employees who receive training in line with their individual or organizational goals will become more efficient in what they do. Organizations should look at the positive effects of training on employee performance, and consider employee development as a targeted investment into making the front line worker stronger. More importantly, development plans that include “train-the-trainer” (training that trains employees to become trainers of a skill) can provide exponential benefits to the organization.

This training can be anything from how employees can do their own jobs better to these employees being groomed to replace their supervisor. In addition, employees who are invested as a trainer might be further inclined to stay with the organization, and possibly reduce employee turnover. Beyond employee training and certification courses, evaluations and counseling sessions are another form of employee development. They provide performance feedback and allow employees to be apprised of changes to both their work goals and the overall objectives of the organization. Employees who do not receive feedback on a regular basis usually end up feeling as though they might be forgotten by their supervisor, and this pattern may even lead to feelings of dissent among the workforce.

Going back to the Pygmalion Effect, employees who have consistent knowledge of their levels of performance, and who feel that their supervisors are placing expectations on them, generally perform better on an individual basis. Another positive effect of consistent employee feedback is that it helps limit organizational liability in case that the employee needs to be discharged.

Employee development should be tailored to the individual employee and address all aspects of their job position. Training should be focused on developing current and future skill sets as they apply to the individual's basic job requirements. The training should also allow for the widening of the skill set to include the possibility of cross functional training.

As a follow up, employee reviews should be scheduled and done as needed. Documentation and clear communication are vital when providing professional feedback to employees. Performance appraisals should include both assessments of the employee's abilities, as well as plans for the employee to increase their performance if it is found lacking. Employee development plans, when tailored correctly and executed in accordance with the individual and organizational needs, can significantly increase the efficiency of the worker, and dramatically decrease any associated costs that may be generated by the employee.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

In recent times many organizations have come to the realization of the importance of enhancing performance improvement strategies to increase the organization's staff efficiency, skills and productivity. In order to reap the full benefits of a performance of employee improvement strategies, NUR ensure that the following are instituted at the work place.

Identification of training needs should be done more professionally in conjunction with the line manager as well as the individuals involved together with the HR personnel. Everyone involved should agree exactly to what the trainees are lacking, for instance what skill is needed, and what attitudes need to be changed toward work performance. The needs identified should emanate from NUR's strategic plan, which also cover departmental/sectional/teams and individual plans. NUR should see learning, training and development as well as training's objectives, plan, implementation and evaluation as a continuous process for organizational development and survival.

It is vital to evaluate training in order to assess its effectiveness in producing the learning outcomes specified when the training intervention is planned, and to indicate where improvements or changes are required to make the training even more effective. The basis upon which each category of training is to be evaluated should be determined at the planning stage while considering how the information required to evaluate learning events would be obtained and analyzed.

Most employee development occurs through job experiences. Development is most likely to occur when there is a mismatch between the employee's skills and past experiences, and the skills required for the job. To be successful in their job, employees in NUR must stretch their skills. There are several ways that job experiences can be used for employee development in NUR and these include the enlargement of current job, job rotation, transfers and promotion to positions with greater challenge.

The manager should immediately identify all grievances and must take appropriate steps to eliminate the causes of such grievances so that the employees remain loyal and committed to their work. Effective grievance management is an essential part of personnel management. The managers should adopt the following approach to manage grievance effectively: Quick action- As soon as the grievance arises, it should be identified and resolved. Training must be given to the managers to effectively and timely manage a grievance. This will lower the detrimental effects of grievance on the employees and their performance. Acknowledging grievance- The manager must acknowledge the grievance put forward by the employee as manifestation of true and real feelings of the employees. Acknowledgement by the manager implies that the manager is eager to look into the complaint impartially and without any bias. This will create a conducive work environment with instances of grievance reduced. Gathering facts- The managers should gather appropriate and sufficient facts explaining the grievance's nature. A record of such facts must be maintained so that these can be used in later stage of grievance redressal. Examining the causes of grievance- The actual cause of grievance should be identified. Accordingly remedial actions should be taken to prevent repetition of the grievance. Decisioning - After identifying the causes of grievance, alternative course of actions should be thought of to manage the grievance. The effect of each course of action on the existing and future management policies and procedure should be analyzed and accordingly decision should be taken by the manager. Execution and review- The manager should execute the decision quickly, ignoring the fact, that it may or may not hurt the employees concerned. After implementing the decision, a follow-up must be there to ensure that the grievance has been resolved completely and adequately.

#### 5.4 Suggestion for Further Research

The following related areas can be researched on to add up to the knowledge of what this study has achieved. First, there is a need to carry out a comparative evaluation of the effectiveness of performance appraisal system in both public and private universities in Rwanda. Secondly, a research should be done evaluate the impact of instituting employee performance improvement strategies both in public and private universities. This will help non human resource managers understand the role of employee performance towards organization productivity. Lastly, a study should be done to establish integration of performance appraisal system with other sub-systems financial management systems in the organization. Such a study will help organizations learn and understand the integration of all the systems meant to run their activities.

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## **APPENDIX I: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **RE: AUTHORITY TO ADMINISTER INTERVIEW**

I am a post graduate student at the University of Nairobi undertaking a Master of Business Administration degree research project titled "Strategies for employee performance improvement in National University of Rwanda."

The purpose of this letter is to request kindly you to allow me carry out interview in your institution. The information obtained is to be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with at most confidentiality.

Your kind consideration will be appreciated.

Yours faithfully

**Pauline Uwingabire**

## **APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

- What are the major purposes of training and what key internal and external influences impact on training?
- How are training objectives determined?
- Is the implementation of the training policy monitored to ensure that it is practiced as prescribed? What is the monitoring mechanism used?
- In your assessment, has training impacted on staff performance? Could you please specify in terms of contribution
- Do you have training and development projections for each employee?

### **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

- Does NUR have a performance appraisal system?
- Briefly describe the performance appraisal system?  
Has the system been reviewed? If yes why was it reviewed? In your assessment, has performance appraisal impacted on staff performance? Could you please specify in terms of contribution

## **COMPENSATION**

- Describe how compensation is managed at NUR?
- In designing the compensation in the university did you carry out a benchmark within the industry or outside?
- Have there been complaints on the compensation by staff?
- In your assessment, has compensation impacted on staff performance? Could you please specify in terms of contribution
- **TARGET SETTING AND TASK CLARITY**
- How are targets set in you department?
- What documents do you use to draw target from?
- Is target setting a participatory approach? briefly explain
- What measures are put to ensure targets are met and that they enhance staff performance?
- In your assessment, has target setting and task clarity impacted on staff performance? Could you please specify in terms of contribution

## **COACHING**

- Who is doing the coaching?
- What strategic outcomes are expected from coaching?
- What impact did coaching have on intangibles?
- Explain the coaching program in your organization

## **MENTORING**

- How did mentorship program start in your organization
- What benefits has this program brought so far?
- Has mentoring enhanced productivity?
- How are the mentorship program measured?

## **EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK**

- What policies have been put in place to enhance employee feedback?
- What advantages has employee feedback brought in the organization?
- In case of lack of employee feed back what challenges have the organization faced in the past or currently?
- Are there feedback infrastructures in the organization?

**END**