**Communication is the KEY!  A Team Exercise to Promote Person-Organizational Fit During Selection**

**Abstract**

Person-organization (P.O.) fit develops compatibility between people and organizations, which occurs when at least one entity provides what the other needs, and they share similar fundamental characteristics. We designed an engaging team activity to teach students about hiring staff for an organization focusing on person-organization (P.O.) fit. This activity contributes to understanding the importance of communication between hiring managers, their team members, and the HR department when hiring staff.

**Keywords**; communication, teamwork, selection, person-organization (P.O.) fit

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Selection is one of the main processes in recruiting the right person for the right position at the right time for the right team. Selecting the right person or employee requires careful consideration of the candidate's past performance, background information, including legal obligations, and the employee's cost. It is also important to obtain information on candidates' work ethic, characteristics, personal and career values, and goals (Sekiguchi & Huber, 2011). Hiring managers need to screen candidates and choose the best fit for the best role at the right time in the right team

**Theoretical Foundation**

Companies make various hiring mistakes that sometimes lead to choosing the wrong candidate for the job (Barrick & Parks-Leduc, 2019)). Most managers focus on education qualifications, work experience, and talent, which they view as fixed instead of considering it contextually. Selecting the best candidate goes beyond screening resumes, qualifications, and work experience. Managers must also consider the candidate's ability to work in teams and fit into the organization`s culture (Ellis et al., 2017; Hu et al., 2021). For example, managers must consider mutual need fulfillment, value congruence between individuals and organizations, personality similarity between individuals and other members, and shared individual and organizational goals.

Along with other factors, assessing and evaluating P.O. benefits individual and team performance by ensuring the team members have adaptable characteristics and capabilities not only with each other but with their roles, department, and organization. Therefore, during

selection, organizations must factor in evaluations of adaptability, feasibility, and fitness of the employee to build intra-team trust, build a culture that stirs respect for all people, and overall team benefit. These three aspects are essential to achieve P.O. and organizational success. Assessment of these aspects' evaluations must be done through strong communication between team members, their managers, and the HR department. This article emphasizes the importance of communication between team members, the hiring manager, and the HR department. We emphasize how each unit in this hierarchy has a different understanding of the open position the company is looking to fill.

### Learning objective

The main objective of this activity is to help students appreciate the need for teamwork in terms of communication during the process of hiring and selection between different units in an organization: team members, managers, and the HR department. There are several skills we hope students will acquire during this exercise. Specifically, this exercise is focused on the following objectives:

1. Recognize the role of communication in choosing the right person for the right position on the right team; in order words P.O.
2. Discuss successful selection strategies to improve PO fit.
3. Identify the challenges associated with hiring the person with the right PO fit. Explore how various unit in the organization communicate with each other to hire the best candidate with PO fit.

### Exercise overview

his activity takes approximately approximately45 to 60 minutes. This activity can be adjusted to 30 to 45 minutes if the class's length is less than or equivalent to an hour. We divide participants to five groups for this activity, departments A, B, C, D, and the Human Resource department. Departments A, B, C, and D select one group member as the hiring manager, and the rest of the group members act as team members of the department. HR department members work as a unit and play more of an active role in later parts of the activity, as they will make the final decision in the hiring process.

1. To emphasize the importance of communication to achieve P.O. and intra-departmental fitness, each department will be given different directions in terms of communication. Overall there will be four different scenarios of the communication chain between hierarchical units.

   a. In each department, team members are given 2 pieces of information: An In-depth, personal understanding of the needs of the role and team, in addition to instructions on whether they can share this specific, in-depth understanding of the role and department with their hiring manager when instructed (aiming to emphasize the manager's communication with the team).

   b. The hiring managers are also given 2 pieces of information: A higher level of understanding of the department that does not include team dynamics, a basic understanding of team or solo work needs, etc., and whether they communicate with the HR department or not when instructed (aiming to emphasize hiring manager and HR department communication).

c. The HR department is only given a very generic overview of the role that's even less in-depth than the hiring manager's point of view. Only a basic description of the role and qualification requirements like education and work experience.

2. In the next phase of the activity, the HR department and each of the hiring managers from the teams is provided with four candidate resumes (each candidate is designed specifically to result in a good/bad fit depending on the communication conditions of the overall team units).

   a. HR department and hiring managers are instructed to select candidates and write their name on a piece of paper (host may prep this paper beforehand, including space for initial selection and final selection) with the information they have in their hands (No communication during decision making or reveal of the selection to other units). Once allowed time is up (allowed time may vary depending on class session/ allowed activity time). All 5 write down their initial selections, host(s) announces that team members may communicate with their hiring managers if they are allowed to do so (this instruction is found on the 2nd piece of info paper they received at phase 1).

   b. There will be 2 teams that are allowed to communicate with their hiring managers, and they should share their in-depth team dynamics, all information on hand, and even their opinion on who should get hired with the manager. After the allowed time is up, hiring manager is asked to re-evaluate the candidates and re-make a selection (they are not required to make a change, but ideally, they should have more in-depth information regarding the role, team dynamic, etc.), and record it as their final decision. In the meantime, the other hiring managers, who

were not allowed to communicate with the team members, asked to re-write their initial selection as final selection (no change allowed, they just copy down selection).

c.  Next, the host(s) announces that the hiring managers may communicate with the HR department if they are allowed to do so (this instruction is found on the 2$^{nd}$ piece of info paper they received at phase 1). There should be 2 hiring managers allowed to communicate with the HR department. During their communication, the hiring managers should share more in-depth information on their hands, communicate with team members (if they could do so), and make final decisions with the HR team.

d.  Once time is up, the HR team is asked to re-evaluate the candidates and re-select them as their final selection (they are not required to make a change, but ideally, they should have more in-depth information regarding the role, team dynamic, etc.) For the 2 departments, the hiring manager was not allowed to communicate with the HR department, and the HR department should copy down their initial selection to the final selection.

e.  Once the HR makes the final decision for all four departments, hosts one-by-one talks to departments, asking the following questions:

  i.  Department X hiring manager, you were/were not allowed to communicate with your team members. What was your initial selection, and why did you make this selection (encourage to share the information on hand (each unit will have a different level of info, ex., More in-depth or more superficial, etc.)) How did your final decision get affected after

communication with team members? (encourage what in-depth information team members share with the hiring managers). Team members, did your team if you were able to communicate with your manager? Do you think they knew your team dynamic and work dynamic fully?

    ii. HR department, who was your initial selection for Department X, and how did your final decision change after communicating with the hiring manager? Encourage them to share their information on hand (each unit will have a different level of info, ex, more in-depth or superficial, etc.) The HR department, who was your final decision for department X (select a department that did not communicate with the hiring manager), the hiring manager of this department X, who was your final decision? At what aspects it differed from HR's selection (compare information on hand and how it caused HR to hire a different candidate)

3. As a closing note, the host(s) summarizes the communication pathways in each department and emphasizes how HR selections differed based on communication between units.

**Human resource management**

The recruitment team in the HR department has a list of candidates who have been interviewed and screened and now shares the candidates with hiring managers of each department to help make decisions on who best fits the team and the organizational culture. Both team members and hiring managers are told what to do in the activity.

**Team A**

Team A in department A gets along so well and has good communication during working hours, and engages in informal and outside-of-work communication. However, each member gets work done individually. **The hiring manager will communicate with the team to know their choice of preferred candidate after going through the listed candidates**. **The hiring manager is allowed to communicate with the HR department.**

**Team B**

Team B in apartment B also gets along so well and has good communication during working hours, and engages in informal and outside-of-work communication. Each member gets work done individually, but it is essential to do individual work by consulting each other for a good result. **The hiring manager of this team does not communicate with team members.  The hiring manager is allowed to communicate with the HR department.**

**Team C**

Team C in apartment C also gets along so well and has good communication during working hours, and engages in informal and outside-of-work communication. Each member gets work done individually, but it is essential to do individual work by consulting each other for a good result. **The hiring manager will also communicate with the team to know what choice of preferred candidate is after going through the listed candidates**.  **The hiring manager is not allowed to communicate with the HR department.**

**Team D**

Team C in apartment C also gets along so well and has good communication during working hours, and engages in informal and outside-of-work communication. Each member gets work done individually, but it is essential to do individual work by consulting each other for a good

result. No member does anything individually; all work is done in sequence by passing through stages until the final state, which is still finalized by y the team. **The hiring manager does not communicate with the team. The hiring manager is not allowed to communicate with the HR department.**

## Session Description

During this session, we aim to provide a brief overview of the selection process in the organization and the challenges associated to hiring for PO fit. Next, we will explain how our proposed exercise helps students learn about this topic. We will also share our experience with performing this class in an MBA class. Below is a general timeline of what we aim to do:

I.      5 minutes – Greeting and introduction.

II.     10 minutes - Provide an overview of the topic: selection with PO fit, the importance of selecting employees for PO fit, and the challenges associated with it.

III.    25 minutes – Dividing participants into 5 groups and performing the exercise.

IV.     20 minutes - Discussion, reflection on the exercise, and brainstorming about the best ways to conduct this exercise in the class.

# References

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Appendix