

# HUMAN RESOURCES EMBRACING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

## SERVICES & PRODUCTS

- ▶ Expressway coach services linking cities and towns
- ▶ Bus Éireann/Eurolines coach services to Britain & Europe
- ▶ Local and rural bus services throughout the country
- ▶ City bus services in Cork, Galway, Limerick & Waterford
- ▶ Town services in Athlone, Drogheda, Dundalk, Navan & Sligo
- ▶ School bus services on behalf of the Department of Education & Science
- ▶ Day tours from Dublin, Cork, Galway and Sligo
- ▶ Commuter bus services radiating from Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford
- ▶ **Ancillary services** - coach and bus hire, vehicle testing, contract maintenance, parcels delivery, etc.

## THE SCHOOLS TRANSPORT SCHEME

Bus Éireann operates a fleet of more than 1,300 vehicles of which 630 are allocated to the School Transport Scheme. In addition, more than 2,300 contractors' buses are used every school day.

The School Transport Scheme provides a service each day of the school year to 140,000 pupils on 5,000 routes, to primary and post primary schools, and to schools for children with special needs. More than 160 specially adapted buses are used to carry children who are wheelchair users. Services for children with special needs are mainly on a door-to-door basis.

Bus Éireann operates the scheme on behalf of the Department of Education and Science.

Bus Éireann is responsible for planning and supervising all routes, employing bus drivers, collecting fares, ticketing, invoicing families, contracting services, and ensuring compliance with regulations on matters such as safety and insurance.

An application for school transport for a new pupil should be made to Bus Éireann through the pupil's school. Eligibility requirements are outlined in the School Transport Scheme guidelines.

## ABOUT BUS ÉIREANN

Bus Éireann was formed in 1987 in accordance with the terms of the Transport (Reorganization of Coras Iompair Éireann) Act, 1986 and is a subsidiary of CIE. The company provides bus services throughout Ireland (with the exception of Dublin City).

Bus Éireann employs more than 2,500 staff and a further 1,100 are sub-contracted in the School Transport Scheme.

## INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) is central to the success of companies in an ever-changing and increasingly competitive environment. A meaningful and effective HRM function can give an organisation the competitive advantage by placing people effectively within a company and drawing on their skills. HRM is aimed at recruiting and retaining capable and motivated people, managing and rewarding their performance and developing key competencies. This study will look at the importance of HRM in a large organisation – Bus Éireann – with an increasingly diverse workforce.

## HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

A key concept of Human Resource Management (HRM) is that a contented, motivated and purposeful workforce is vital to sustained business success. Key areas of HRM include:

- ▶ Recruitment and selection
- ▶ Training and development
- ▶ Employee relations
- ▶ Compensation and benefits
- ▶ Performance management
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Human resource policies and practices
- ▶ Administration.

This case study will discuss the area of recruitment and selection and the role of equality and diversity in Bus Éireann.

## HRM AT BUS ÉIREANN

An effective HRM strategy should be closely aligned to the company's **Business Plan**. This ensures that the company's employment policies and practices are aligned with the company's business strategy. Bus Éireann is currently evolving toward a competency-based approach to HRM. This approach recognises that employees are a company's most valuable asset and focuses on developing employees' skills, knowledge and behaviours in order to maximise their contribution to the success of the company. This, in return, enhances Bus Éireann's ability to retain valuable staff.

Bus Éireann's **mission statement** reflects this approach: *'To succeed by providing excellent service to our customers through a committed team.'*

HRM is a key strategic function in Bus Éireann and is represented at senior management level by the Manager, Human Resources.

## RECRUITMENT & SELECTION PROCESS

Recruitment and selection is a key HRM function. The overall aim of the recruitment and selection process is to obtain the number and quality of employees required by a company, in order for the company to function successfully.

The three main stages of recruitment and selection are:

- 1 Defining requirements
- 2 Attracting candidates
- 3 Selecting candidates.

## DEFINING REQUIREMENTS

Any recruitment and selection process must be fair, objective, transparent and focused on selecting the most suitable candidate for the job.

To achieve these goals the Bus Éireann recruitment and selection process is built around competencies. Competencies are the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for a job. Competencies are concerned with 'how' a job is done and can be described as the skills or abilities needed to complete a job successfully.

The first step in the recruitment process is to identify the requirements of a job. This is done through the development of a role profile. A role profile describes the overall objectives of the job, the main activities and tasks carried out in the job, and the competencies required for the job. The identification of the competencies provides the interviewer/selection panel with an understanding of the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for a job and enables the recruitment and selection process to be structured so that the candidates are assessed against the competencies required for the job.

For example the overall objectives of a bus driver in Bus Éireann are to carry passengers safely and to provide an efficient and effective service to customers. This involves dealing with customers, issuing tickets, handling cash, completing incident and other written reports while adhering to the company's timetable.

The required competencies for a bus driver; that is the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed for the job, are:

- ▶ Bus driving skills
- ▶ Interpersonal skills
- ▶ Numeracy
- ▶ Literacy.

As a minimum requirement all applicants must have a class 'D' driving licence plus 2 years minimum bus/coach/HGV driving experience.



## ATTRACTING CANDIDATES

Attracting candidates focuses on obtaining applicants for the job. For most jobs in Bus Éireann consideration is first given to internal candidates. Notification of the vacancy is posted throughout Bus Éireann. For a bus driver applicants are sourced externally using a number of methods:

- ▶ Advertising in local and/or national newspapers
- ▶ Advertising on local and/or national radio or television
- ▶ Advertising on the internet
- ▶ Contact with training colleges.

## SELECTING CANDIDATES

The first step in the selection process is to compare the applications against the role profile, in order to assess the applicants' suitability for the role. In the case of a bus driver applicants must demonstrate that they have a Class 'D' driving licence and 2 years minimum bus/coach/HGV driving experience.

Applicants with the minimum requirements are invited to the next stage in the selection process. The selection process for a bus driver consists of the following:

- ▶ The Wilson Driver Selection Test which is a written test which assesses visual attention, depth visualisation and eye-hand coordination
- ▶ A personality questionnaire
- ▶ A literacy and arithmetic test
- ▶ An interview
- ▶ A driving test in a bus.

All these tests have been designed to ensure that the applicants are assessed against the competencies required for the job.

In order to be successful an applicant must perform to a required standard in all the tests and the interview.



## CHANGES IN EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Recently fundamental changes have occurred in the make-up of the workforce in Ireland, reflecting changes in Irish society as a whole. The workforce today is made up of people of all ages, people from different ethnic backgrounds and religions, and people with disabilities. There are also many more women in the workforce today than there were in the past.

The Government, conscious of these changes, introduced the Employment Equality Acts, 1998 and 2004, which provides protection against discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace.

## EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Equality and diversity make good business sense and go hand-in-hand with enhancing the dignity and self-esteem of all employees.

The business environment is becoming increasingly competitive. Change, innovation and the ability to respond rapidly are now the norm. Organisations

that can identify and respond quickly and creatively to customer needs and demands will have an advantage over their competitors. The wider the range of diversity and talent within an organisation, the greater the range of thinking and experience from which to draw, then the more successful the company.

A work environment that promotes equality and diversity adopts employment policies and procedures that are fair, objective and transparent and that focus on ability and merit. Everyone then has the basic right to compete for jobs, subject only to the limits of their ability or competencies. Such practices open the doors to a wide range of people leading to a work environment that is considerably enriched.

## BUS ÉIREANN'S EQUALITY & DIVERSITY OBJECTIVES

Bus Éireann is committed to creating an inclusive workplace where different ideas, experiences and skills are welcome. People differ in many ways, from variations in age, gender, physical ability, nationality, ethnic background and socio-economic background to other differences such as intellectual ability, sexual orientation, marital status and family status. Bus Éireann understands that embracing these differences enriches the workplace and contributes towards creating a dynamic work environment.

Within and across this diversity Bus Éireann is committed to equality of opportunity whereby all its employment practices, policies and procedures ensure equal, objective and fair treatment of all staff. It aims to create a work environment free from discrimination, that positively nurtures and develops the full potential of all its staff. Bus Éireann's treatment of all employees is on the basis of their abilities and merits and according to the requirements of the job.

### EMBEDDING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN BUS ÉIREANN

In 2001-2002, Bus Éireann conducted an Equality Review among its staff. Fifty-five recommendations were made across six areas (Diversity, Training, Career Development & Progression, Bullying & Sexual Harassment, Equality, Flexible/Family-Friendly Working Arrangements). The following are a sample of those recommendations:

#### Diversity

- ▶ An Equality/Diversity Officer will be appointed and he/she will be provided with the necessary staff and resources to function effectively.
- ▶ Equality and Diversity is to be included as part of the company's Business Plan and Annual Report.

#### Training

- ▶ Discrimination Awareness training is to be introduced for employees.
- ▶ Bus Éireann is to continue to encourage staff who wish to pursue formal study by providing information on financial and non-financial supports.

#### Career Progression and Development

- ▶ There is to be a written Diversity Policy and a Recruitment and Selection Policy that lays out the company's commitment to fair, objective and transparent recruitment practices.

- ▶ All interviewers will receive formal training in interview procedures with particular attention to the requirements of equality legislation.

#### Equality

- ▶ Awareness Training is to be made available to managers, supervisors and staff.
- ▶ A working group is to be established to draw up a Code of Practice for People with Disabilities.

#### Flexible/Family-Friendly Working Arrangements

- ▶ Family-friendly work arrangements to be actively promoted and published.
- ▶ Other alternative types of work arrangements to be explored by a joint management-trade union working group.

Through these actions Bus Éireann will embed equality and diversity in the workplace.

## EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY ACTS, 1998 AND 2004

Bus Éireann's employment policy fully conforms to the Employment Equality Acts, 1998 and 2004, and accordingly the company ensures that no job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment due to any of the nine grounds contained in the Acts (i.e. age, gender, marital status, family status, religion, race, sexual orientation, membership of the Traveller community and disability).

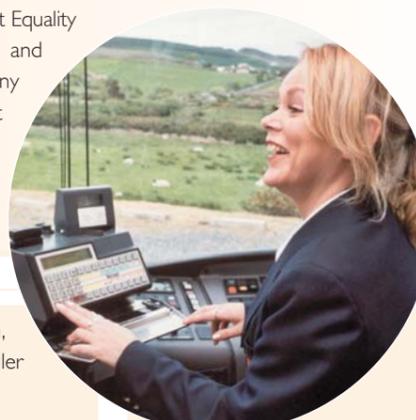
Bus Éireann's treatment of all employees is on the basis of their abilities and merits and according to the requirements of the job.

### HARASSMENT & SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Harassment is described in the Acts as unwanted conduct related to any of the nine discriminatory grounds, that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. The nine discriminatory grounds are age, gender, marital status, family status, religion, race, sexual orientation, membership of the Traveller community and disability.

Harassment can be by a fellow worker, someone in a superior position such as a supervisor or a manager, a client, a customer, or any other business contact.

Special provisions are added for sexual harassment.



## CONCLUSION

This study has shown that Bus Éireann is a progressive company with an effective Human Resource Management strategy in place that both facilitates and capitalises on equality and diversity in the workplace. The study has outlined how Bus Éireann recruits and selects employees on the basis of their competencies and according to the requirements of the job. It has demonstrated how it values equality and diversity and how accommodating that diversity can benefit the business through the development of a dynamic work environment.

## GLOSSARY

**Ancillary services:** Related or secondary services.

**Business Plan:** A business plan is a statement issued by the owners or managers of a business outlining how they expect the business to develop over the years. It should cover the following areas: management, HRM, finance, production and marketing.

**Mission Statement:** This is a written statement of the organisation's long-term aims and objectives. It is written to support the purposes of an organisation and provide employees with an indication of what the organisation is trying to achieve.

## TASKS & ACTIVITIES

### Business

- 1 Explain the terms:
  - a) Human Resource Management
  - b) Competency.
- 2 Outline the competencies required and the procedure involved in the recruitment and selection of a bus driver.
- 3 List the nine grounds referred to in the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and 2004.
- 4 In 2003, Bus Éireann published its Equality Review which made recommendations across six areas. Identify those six areas, and one recommendation for each.
- 5 In your opinion, is HRM important?
  - a) List the key areas of HRM.
  - b) Explain why Bus Éireann adopted HRM.
  - c) As a class exercise discuss the merits and implications of diversity and equality in the workplace



[www.buseireann.ie](http://www.buseireann.ie)

[www.business2000.ie](http://www.business2000.ie)