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SEPTEMBER 2006

Price: R39.92 Incl. VAT

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captain - in this regard, Greyling was a captain - from the date of appointment of Nel to the position to the date that Greyling ceased to be employed by the SAPS (see paragraphs [1] and [2] of the judgment and principle 1).

In the review application, the following two issues, of crucial importance in unfair labour practice disputes, arose for consideration:

- (a) the issue of the requirement that there be a causal connection between the specific unfair conduct of the employer complained of and the harm suffered by the victim of such unfair conduct; and
- (b) the issue of the requirement that, in certain instances, persons other than the employer would have to be joined, or at least heard, in unfair labour practice proceedings.

Each of the above two issues was considered, in turn, below.

CAUSAL CONNECTION REQUIREMENT

In the present matter, Greyling, together with other police officers, including one Nel, had applied for promotion to the position of Area Head: Crime Intelligence (see paragraph [1] of the judgment and principle 1(b)). A selection panel had been appointed to consider the applicants for this post (see paragraph [6] of the judgment and principle 1(m)). One of the panellists, area commissioner Moloi - referred to as the principles - had informed the other panellists that Nel was the best candidate for a number of reasons (see paragraph [6] of the judgment and principle 1(n)). The other panellists had accepted what Moloi had stated and, on that basis alone, had appointed Nel to the promotional post without considering, at all, the applications of the other candidates, including Greyling (see paragraph [6] of the judgment and principle 1(a)).

The arbitrator had found that the above stated conduct of the selection panel constituted a gross irregularity and, on that basis alone, had found in favour of Greyling to the effect that Greyling had, in fact, been the victim of a promotion unfair labour practice (see

paragraph [6] of the judgment and principle 1(p)).

In the present review proceedings before the labour court, the applicant employer did not dispute the correctness of the arbitrator's finding that the conduct of the selection panel in casu was grossly irregular (see paragraph [7] of the judgment and principle 1(q)). However, the applicant employer contended that the arbitrator had not been entitled to find, purely on the basis of the existence of the aforesaid grossly irregular conduct of the selection panel, that Greyling had, in fact, been the victim of a promotion unfair labour practice (see paragraph [7] of the judgment and principle 1(r)(i)) and that, for such a finding to be made, it had to be established that a causal connection existed between the aforesaid unfair conduct, on the part of the employer, that is, the irregular conduct of the selection panel, and the harm complained of by Greyling, namely, the failure to appoint Greyling to the promotional position in question (see paragraph [7] of the judgment and principle 1(r)(iii)).

The labour court in casu upheld the above contention of the applicant employer, stating the following in this regard at paragraph [12] of the judgment (and see principles 12-14):

"But they were not the only candidates and it has not been shown that but for the irregularity the respondent would have been preferred over and above the rest of the candidates. In that sense there is no causal connection between the irregularity and the fact that the respondent was not appointed. The conduct of the applicant was in that context not an unfair labour practice. In this respect, the second respondent committed a serious error of law and the award stands to be reviewed on that basis." **HR:** Carol Rudd is a director of law firm Van Zyl Rudd and Associates (Pty) Ltd (www.vanzylrudd.co.za).

The complete version of this article, including what precisely was meant by this finding of the labour court and the precise implications thereof is available to HR Future NETWORK members on the HR Future web site. Visit www.hrfuture.net.

INCREASED 360° A

Use 360° assessments in your company to get more value for the company as well as the employee.

THERE APPEARS TO BE A TREND IN SOUTH AFRICA TO UTILISE 360° ASSESSMENT MORE FREQUENTLY. THIS IS IN LINE WITH THE INCREASED POPULARITY, FOR INSTANCE IN THE USA WHERE 25% OF ALL COMPANIES USE SOME TYPE OF UPWARD FEEDBACK AND 90% OF THE FORTUNE 100 FIRMS USE SOME TYPE OF MULTI-RATER FEEDBACK SYSTEM AS PART OF APPRAISAL OR DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS.

USE OF 360° ASSESSMENTS

360 degree assessment and feedback are typically used for the following:

- > executive coaching;
- > leadership development;
- > performance evaluation;
- > succession planning; and
- > talent management.

A 360° feedback is a process in which direct reports, peers, team members, managers and customers provide anonymous feedback to managers for coaching, development and performance evaluation.

DEVELOPMENT OF 360° INSTRUMENTS

As with other assessment instruments it is vital to develop a reliable and valid instrument. According to research done by Walsh and Rose (2003) most instruments are internally developed (51%) while 23% are purchased "off the shelf", and 26% are developed by a consultant/vendor. It is also interesting to note that most survey items are developed from competency models, utilising interviews and focus groups.

VALUE OF ASSESSMENTS

BY PROF. NICO MARTINS AND MRS ELLEN MARTINS

Most 360° survey instruments use different rater categories, for instance:

- > self;
- > manager/supervisor;
- > peer;
- > subordinate;
- > customer; and
- > internal partner.

An important aspect of the 360° assessment is the decision on who should be the raters. Although the decision will be affected by the type of assessment, research shows that most raters are chosen by the immediate manager and self in collaboration with each other (42%) while in 36% of cases the self selects the raters.

LEARNING POINTS

It is not always easy to implement a 360° process in an organisation as aspects such as the climate, levels of trust, and experience with previous assessments might influence the success of such a project.

There are luckily a number of learning points that can be used to ensure the success of such a process, for instance:

- > Managers' reactions are more positive if they perceive the other raters as credible and having adequate opportunity to observe their behaviour;
- > Expert feedback is related to more positively than peer feedback;
- > Managers' reactions are positive to the feedback process and ratings if follow-up actions are taken;
- > Managers react more favourably to the feedback process and rating when the boss and peers rated the manager higher than the manager rated him/herself;
- > Managers react more favourably when they attribute the cause of their

performance to internal causes such as ability and effort;

- > Written comments in the 360° feedback report are the most helpful;
- > Participants prefer numeric scores and narrative feedback; and
- > Providing feedback with an external or internal coach appears to be helpful.

ADMINISTERING 360 DEGREE ASSESSMENTS

With the increased utilisation of computer assessments more and more organisations are using electronic assessments via the intranet/Internet. Depending on the confidentiality of the assessments most software packages allow respondents to be unidentifiable to retain their confidentiality.

It is important, in the designing of the instrument on the web, to ensure that it is designed in such a way as to ensure raters' easy participation. Some tips are:

- > clear instructions;
- > easy layout;
- > soft colours; and
- > questionnaire not too long.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEST PRACTICES

It is always helpful to use some guidelines when implementing a new process. The following are a number of helpful best practices that can help to ensure successful implementation:

- > Hold participants' managers accountable for meeting with their direct reports to discuss and finalize a professional development action plan;
- > Repeat a 360° feedback process in 12 to 14 months following the first to create a mechanism to track and monitor progress targeted on the professional development plan;

- > Attempt to focus the professional development plan on measurable behaviours and activities that enhance learning;
- > Utilise either an internal or external consultant to facilitate the interpretation of the 360 degree feedback report;
- > Utilise a 360° feedback process that allows for both quantitative results (numeric data in the forms of graphs and tables) and qualitative feedback (e.g. inclusion of open-ended questions);
- > Ensure that an adequate number and different types of raters (peers, subordinates, customers, etc) are invited to provide feedback to the program participant and that this final rater group is discussed with their manager and/or consultant on the program; and
- > When developing a feedback process source, credibility and observational opportunity should be taken into consideration.

The 360° assessment process has proven to be of great value to both individual and organisational development when the above learning points and best practices are taken into consideration and implemented as part of the entire process. **Mr Prof. Nico Martins is with the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, Unisa (www.unisa.ac.za) and Mrs Ellen Martins is a Director of Organisational Diagnostics. (www.orgdia.co.za).**

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