

**THE EFFECTS OF JOB PREVIEWS ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN NAIROBI
PRIVATE CLUBS**

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ABSTRACT

High staff turnover is one of the major problems in golf course management which can generate costs and inefficiencies and can impact the quality of services provided. The main purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of job previews on employee retention in private clubs in Nairobi. The aim of carrying out this study was to determine how job previews affect employee commitment and to establish the influence of job previews on employee expectations. The departments targeted included the finance, HR & admin, housekeeping, fitness, F&B and kitchen department. The study embraced descriptive research design and focused only on private clubs in Nairobi where purposive and convenience sampling methods were used. Data was collected using questionnaires and interviews and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings indicated that the organizations have not fully invested in providing job previews for their employees during the interview process, thus, it is important to provide such information as this enables employees to know what is expected of them as they start the job.

Key Words: *Job previews, Employee retention, Private Clubs*

Introduction

Literature suggests that working in the hospitality industry can be stressful and has raised a number of concerns. Typically, these concerns are associated with shift work and fatigue as a result of working long hours, unpredictable shifts, few breaks, heavy physical demands, mental and emotional demands (Wallace, 2003).

The private club industry is a business best known for its turnover. This high staff turnover is one of the major problems in golf course management which can generate costs and inefficiencies and can impact the quality of services provided. Turnover at private clubs is complicated by the fact that they are complicated workplaces, for example managerial capacity will require 50 to 60 hours per week, one has to work on holidays, also work really early in the morning and often later into the evening when there special events such as golf tournaments or functions in the club house and also dealing with difficult and complex members can be quite frustrating and can lead to job stress (Sibbald, 1998).

This may lead to staff turnover within a year or two of being hired frequently because applicants did not understand the nature of the work when they first applied. This study aimed to describe how job previews can be used as an employee retention tool that can help the membership clubs and applicants avoid misunderstanding and screen out candidates whose interests and preferences lie elsewhere and also introduce job applicants to the realities of the job, both good and bad because the ability to deal with the issue of retention could be the difference between whether a business or club succeeds or fails.

A job preview refers to providing recruits with realistic information that describes both the attractions and also the possible pitfalls of the job which can help minimize reality shock and improve long term performance (Dessler, 1999). This facilitates socialization by adjusting any unrealistic expectations employees might have thus giving the recruit an opportunity to join an organization or decline to join with a clear idea of what to expect (Werner and DeSimone, 2009).

Job previews can be developed in a number of ways. The most common method is to interview current employees, asking them to state actual experiences both good and bad, and attitudes toward the job. Another way is to film or videotape employees at work and asks them for comments. One can also use Brochures these reinforce information provided in the job ad or video. These give applicants portable versions of the job previews and they can be provided to prospective applicants at job fairs, career expos and industry conferences (Werner and DeSimone, 2009).

Most managers when conducting employment interviews almost exclusively focus on positive aspects. They talk about interesting work assignments, the camaraderie among co-workers, opportunities for advancement, great benefits and the like. Even though managers typically know the downside of the job and the organization they carefully avoid those topics. Managers who focus only on the positive aspects are making a mistake. They are setting themselves up for the disappointment of a sudden and surprising resignation. All those hours spent reviewing candidate applications and conducting interviews prove wasted when after only a few weeks or month into the job the new employee abruptly quits (Robbins, 2008). Phillips, (1998) indicates that job previews can be beneficial because they are relatively inexpensive to develop and implement, and even when the effects of job previews on performance, turnover, and job satisfaction are relatively small, the economic savings in selection and turnover costs can be quite large.

Based on survey results, it is estimated that employee turnover costs for a healthcare system range from 14 to 27 million dollars annually (Hansen, 2001). Another example of how costly turnover can be, is for a hotel with thirty employees and a 50% turnover rate, turnover costs were figured to be \$150,000 per year (Simmons & Hinkin, 2001). These two examples illustrate how costly high turnover is. Further, looking at these examples it is easy to see how beneficial even small reductions in turnover can be.

Previous job previews research has examined numerous outcomes such as turnover, job satisfaction, and performance, and to a much lesser extent, pre-hire outcomes such as attraction. However, the effects of job previews on attraction are perhaps most important because maintaining an applicant's attraction to the job is crucial to selecting a qualified employee. The presentation of realistic information to job candidate should reduce the level of voluntary turnover among candidates who ultimately join the organization.

Several arguments have been advanced to support this position. First, job previews lower candidate expectations to more appropriate level expectations that are more likely to be met on the job. Employees whose expectations have been met tend to be satisfied with their jobs and satisfied employees are less likely to quit than are dissatisfied employees. According to this met expectations views job previews function by deflating initial expectations so that new employees experience little disappointment, disillusionment and dissatisfaction when they confront reality (Greenhaus, Callanan and Godshalk, 2010).

Second, job previews is viewed as presenting a dose of reality about the job which allows for the development of coping strategies that can help the new employees deal with the potentially disappointing and dissatisfying aspects of the job. For example candidates who learn during recruitment that a job requires a great deal of supervision may prepare by convincing themselves that close supervision may not be so bad at all. Job previews should help new employees develop successful coping activities

Job previews enable candidates to determine whether a job will meet their significant values. Faced with an accurate balanced portrayal of a prospective job some candidates might choose to reject a job offer because they do not perceive a match between their needs and the organization's rewards and opportunities. Job previews have been historically proven to help give newcomers have a better, honest understanding of their duties and help reduce potential stress and job dissatisfaction. Job previews have a number of beneficial effects in bringing newcomers into the company and their jobs, including setting clear expectations, providing role definition and clarity, and helping reduce the likelihood for turnover and increase job satisfaction (Greenhaus, et al., 2010).

Job previews advocates argue that previews will create more positive job attitudes and contribute to reduced turnover. From a cost benefit standpoint, it is advantageous for employers to provide applicants with realistic job previews as early in the employment process as possible. If

applicants have a realistic perception of the job they are applying for, they are in a better position to determine if they are a good match for the job. An organization can save selection, hiring, and start-up costs if an applicant discovers that a poor match exists early in the process.

Literature Review

Research has shown that job applicants frequently lack important information about positions for which they are applying. It has also been found that applicants often have inaccurate impressions concerning what these positions are like. Both of these conditions can result in applicants accepting job offers from employers for positions that are not a good fit in terms of individual's needs or abilities. This lack of fit can result in undesirable outcomes for both employers' employee turnover and new employees' job dissatisfaction (Watkins and Leigh, 2009).

Unlike traditional recruitment practice which involves an organization presenting an overly positive view of what working for it would be like the use of a realistic job preview involves an employer presenting both favorable and unfavorable position related information about both the job and the organization to job applicants. The relative balance of favorable to unfavorable information should be determined by the true nature of the position to be filled. If designed and administered appropriately a job preview should result in job candidates having a more accurate view of what a position entails (Watkins and Leigh, 2009).

Robbins, (2008) argues that applicants who have been given a job preview hold lower and more realistic expectations about the job they will be doing and are better prepared for coping with the job and its frustrating elements. This results in fewer unexpected resignations by new employees. In a tight labor market retaining people is critical as hiring them in the first place. Presenting only the positive aspects of a job to a recruit may initially entice him or her to join the organization but it may be a marriage that both parties will quickly regret.

One of the foremost industrial psychologists who have studied the impact of job previews extensively suggests that two match-ups occur when a new person is hired. The employer matches the job requirements with the individual's qualifications and the individual matches his/her human needs with the organizational culture and the specific job's requirements. The first match probably has the greatest impact on performance while the second match has the greatest effect on satisfaction and tenure (Wanous, 1992).

In a review of realistic job previews, Breaugh, (1983) cited four competing but not mutually exclusive mechanisms underlying the success of a realistic job previews on increasing performance and reducing turnover. These are met expectations, development of coping strategies, perceptions of honesty, and self-selection. Each of these mechanisms contributes to the overall positive effect of a realistic job preview. First, met expectations involve aligning

one's actions to those of the organization's explicit expectations, bringing the individual in line with the organization's values and goals. In fact, people will be more satisfied in situations where they hold an accurate representation of their environment because the accuracy allows them to cope better with forthcoming situations (Parker, 1997).

Coleman and Irving, (1997) examined the effects of message source and positive and negative job information on job attractiveness and job choice. Each participant previewed a traditional job preview which contained only positive information and a job preview which contained some negative and some positive information from either a trained recruiter or a job incumbent. Significantly more participants chose the job with both negative and positive information, regardless of the source from which they received the preview. More than half of the participants who chose the job indicated that the honesty of the preview source was the reason for their choice. Eighty-five percent of the participants who selected the traditional job preview job indicated that specific job attributes were the reason for their choice. Thus, it appears that the honesty of the preview source can affect participants' level of attraction and job choice.

While realistic job previews create more accurate expectations; they do not decrease the difference between expectations and experience (Parker, 1997). Instead, job previews aid in the development of coping strategies for the employees subjected to them. Although information in a realistic job preview may make applicants aware of challenges that lead them to reconsider their commitment to obtaining a given position, in general, it appears that applicants prefer a realistic message about their job choice compared to an overly positive message (Thorsteinson et al., 2004).

One study surveyed private club financial managers and identified three attributes related to job satisfaction (Schmidgall and DeFranco, 2004). Job security, feeling of self-esteem, and working conditions were the three most important attributes contributing to job satisfaction. Gustafson, (2002) examined employee turnover rates in private club and reported that club managers cited compensation, number of hours worked, and conflict with supervisor as three issues directly linked with increased turnover.

Employee Commitment

Employee commitment as the degree to which an employee identifies with the organization and wants to continue actively participating in it. Like a strong magnetic force attracting one metallic object to another, it is a measure of the employees' willingness to remain with a firm in the future. It often reflects the employees' belief in the mission and goals of the firm, willingness to expend effort in their accomplishment, and intentions to continue working there (Newstrom and Davies, 2002).

Committed employees would work diligently, conscientiously, provide value, promote the organizations services or products and seek continuous improvement. In exchange, they expect a work environment that fosters growth and empowerment, allows for a better balance of personal and work life, provides the necessary resources to satisfy the needs of customers and provides for their education and training as well as that of their co-workers (Madigan, Norton and Testa, 1999).

The commitment of employees is an important issue because it may be used to predict employee's performance, absenteeism and other behaviors. Organizational commitment is the subset of employee commitment, which comprised to work commitment, career commitment and organizational commitment and also added greater the organizational commitment can aid higher productivity (Rajendran Muthurveloo and Raduan Che Rose, 2005).

Organizational commitment is the relative strength of the individual's identification with, and involvement in, a particular organization. It consists of three factors: A strong desire to remain a member of the organization; a strong belief in, and acceptance of, the values and goals of the organization and a readiness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization (Armstrong, 2006).

The relationship between career commitment, organizational commitment and turnover intention among Korean researchers and found that the role of career commitment was stronger in predicting turnover intentions. When individuals are committed to the organization they are less willing to leave the company. This was found to be stronger for those highly committed to their careers. The author also found that employees with low career and organizational commitment had the highest turnover intentions because they did not care either about the company or their current careers. Individuals with high career commitment and low organizational commitment also tend to leave because they do not believe that the organization can satisfy their career needs or goals (Chang, 1999).

This is consistent with previous research that high career committers consider leaving the company if development opportunities are not provided by the organization. However, this group is not apt to leave and is likely to contribute to the company if their organizational commitment is increased. Chang found that individuals become affectively committed to the organization when they perceive that the organization is pursuing internal promotion opportunities, providing proper training and that supervisors do a good job in providing information and advice about careers (Chang, 1999).

In another theory, job previews fortify job incumbency by strengthening assurance to the original choice of the organization. Newcomers who are completely well-versed while deciding the job experience that they have free will in building their selections and thus they believe more accountable and committed to the decision (Meglino et al., 1988). With job satisfaction, the

sources of organizational commitment may vary from person to person. Employees' initial commitment to an organization is determined largely by their individual characteristics for example personality and attitudes and how well their early job experiences match their expectations (Hellriegel, 2001).

Later, organizational commitment continues to be influenced by job experiences, with many of the same factors that lead to job satisfaction also contributing to organizational commitment or lack of commitment: pay, relationships with supervisors and coworkers, working conditions, and opportunities for advancement. Over time, organizational commitment tends to become stronger because individuals develop deeper ties with the organization and their co-workers as they spend more time with them; seniority often brings advantages that tend to develop more positive attitudes; and opportunities in the job market may decrease with age, causing workers to become more strongly attached to their current job (Hellriegel, Slocum and Woodman 2001).

Also by providing job previews it may lead to the following:

a. Perceived Employer Concern and Honest

Job previews may also encourage attitudes that the organization is reliable and fretful about the fresh employee's interests, which would result more attraction in job. This awareness of kindness may also promote thoughts of commitments to give in return with constant association (Meglino, DeNisi, Ravlin, 2000).

In turn, employees who view the company as honest will have higher organizational commitment (Hom et al., 1999). That is, employees who believe that the organization will act in their personal best interests will, in turn, be more likely to operate in the organization's best interest. The realistic job preview gives people more accurate information about the expectations they should have, rather than give them an overly positive expectation. Therefore, employees may feel that they are being informed and do not have to distrust or question the organizational information they receive.

b. Coping Efficiency

Job previews may guide new employees to handle with their new employment because caution of possible pressure will relieve unrest and allow practice of methods for managing it. Coping strategies can take the form of emotion-focused coping or problem-focused coping (Hom et al., 1999). Emotional or personal coping strategies might include such behaviors as fostering sources of social support or engaging in stress management techniques, while problem-focus coping strategies include work-related actions such as engaging in more rigorous scheduling or organization techniques to minimize confusion. Ideally, any type of successful coping will lead to increased performance and satisfaction because employees have found ways to create organization fit between the organization and themselves. While realistic job previews create more accurate expectations, they do not decrease the difference between expectations and

experience (Parker, 1997). Instead, job previews aid in the development of coping strategies for the employees subjected to them.

Research Methodology

This study used descriptive research design. It focused on private clubs in Nairobi and thus it targeted the departments of these private clubs. Three private clubs were used for this study where a total of 45 employees were sampled. Purposive and convenient sampling methods were used. To collect data, questionnaires and interviews were used, which were then analysed using descriptive statistics and presented using frequency tables and bar graphs.

Results

According to the analysis in table 1 below 44.4% disagreed to having a strong desire to remain with the organization, implying that they are not fully committed to the organization and given the chance they would leave it. While 20% were undecided implying they were not sure if they wanted to stay with the organization or leave it while 35.6% agreed with the statement which implies they are committed to stay with the organization.

51.1% disagreed with the statement while 48.9% agreed although not a very significant differences it still shows that most of the respondents were not willing to exert their efforts on behalf of the organization. For the statement an identification with the goals and values of the organization a majority of the respondents that is 66.7% agreed with it implying that they value and understand the goals of the organization while 33.3% of the respondents disagreed with it implying they did not identify with the goals and values of the organization.

57.8% of the respondents agreed with the statement that they would accept any type of job assignment in order to keep working for the organization indicating that they were open to any kind of assignment in order to keep their job while 31.1% disagreed and 11.1% strongly disagreed implying they were not open to any job assignment in order to keep working for the organization. A majority of the respondents 64.4% care about the fate of the organization indicating that employees would not want anything bad to happen to the organization as it is their source of livelihood while 35.6% disagreed with the statement implying they are not fully committed to the organization.

A majority of the respondents 55.6% and 22.2% indicated that the organization was the best to work for implying that they were proud to be associated with the organization. A majority of the respondents 66.7% do not agree with organization's policies on matters relating to employees implying that given the option they might leave the organization to find another which has more favorable policies. 48.9% of the respondents disagreed with the statement implying that at the time that they joined the organization they had made a good decision to join the organization while 28.9% agreed with the statement implying that they are not fully committed to the organization and may leave the organization at any time.

According to the analysis it shows that 55.6% of the respondents agreed with statement that not too much can be gained by sticking around in the organization, implying that these employees are not fully committed to the organization and can leave any time. While 24.4% and 20% were both undecided and disagreed with the statement respectively implying they were not sure if they wanted to stay in the organization or not. A very high percentage of the respondents 71.1% agreed with the statement which can be translated to mean that they are not fully committed to their current employer. While 17.8% disagreed with the statement which can be translated to mean that only a few of the respondents are fully committed to their current employer.

64.4% agree with the statement that they plan on looking for a new job during the next 12 months implying that they are not fully committed to the current employer as they are actively looking for a new job while 17.8% disagreed implying they are committed to stay with the organization and 17.8% were undecided implying they were not sure of what they want to do in the next 12 months. 77.8% were of the opinion that it was very important to be honest during the interview process implying employers should ensure they provide all the relevant information during the interview process to help establish trust and honesty at the onset while 22.2% were of the opinion that it was important.

Table 1: Employee identification and perception about the organization

Statements	Frequency/Percent				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
A strong desire to remain with the organization	0	20	9	16	0
	0	44.4%	20%	35.6%	0
A willingness to exert high efforts on behalf of the organization	0	23	0	22	0
	0	51.1%	0	48.9%	0
Identification with the goals and values of the organization	0	15	0	30	0
	0	33.3%	0	66.7%	0
Acceptance of any type of job assignment in order to keep working for the organization	5	14	0	26	0
	11.1%	31.1%	0	57.8%	0
I really care about the fate of the organization	0	16	0	29	0
	0	35.6%	0	64.4%	0

For me this is the best of all organization to work for which to work for	0	10	0	25	10
	0	22.2%	0	55.6%	22.2%
I often find it difficult to agree with this organization policies on matters relating to its employees	0	15	0	30	0
	0	33.3%	0	66.7%	0
Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake	0	22	10	13	0
	0	48.9%	22.2%	28.9%	0
Not too much can be gained by sticking around in the organization	0	9	11	25	0
	0	20%	24.4%	55.6%	0
I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work is similar	0	8	5	32	0
	0	17.8%	11.1%	71.1%	0
I plan on looking for a new job during the next 12 months	0	8	8	29	0
	0	17.8%	17.8%	64.4%	0
Importance of being honest during the interview process	0	0	10	0	35
	0	0	22.2%	0	77.8%

Discussion

When employees were asked certain statements about their organization in order to assess how they identify themselves with the organization they highly disagreed with the following statements: they have a strong desire to remain with the organization at 44.4%, a willingness to exert high efforts on behalf of the organization at 51.1% implying that they were not fully committed to the organization. When respondents were asked to agree or disagree about various statements about the organization 66.7% agreed that they found it difficult to agree with the organization's policies on matters relating to its employees which this can translate to mean that if these policies had been explained at the time that they joined the organization respondents would have been in a better position to understand them and be more committed to the organization. 55.6% agree not too much can be gained by sticking around in the organization, 71.1% agree they could just as well be working for a different organization so long as the type of work is similar and 64.4% plan on looking for a new job in the next 12 months. 77.8% the

respondents indicated that it was important for the organization to be honest with them during the interview process implying that employees who believe that the organization will act in their personal best interests will, in turn, be more likely to operate in the organization's best interest.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Job previews fortify employee commitment by strengthening assurance to the original choice of the organization. Newcomers who are completely well-versed with all information while deciding to take the job believe that they have free will in making their selections and thus they become more accountable and committed to the decision to remain with the organization. Therefore the organization should ensure that it provides job previews during the interview process so that the candidates are aware of both the positive and the negative aspects of the job they are applying for. The research results have shown that it is important to provide such information as this enables employees to know what is expected of them as they start the job and this can go a long way in setting clear expectations, providing role definition and clarity, and helping reduce the likelihood for turnover and increase employee retention.

It is important for organizations to determine where the job previews fits within the application process. A realistic job preview may be used at various points in the hiring process. An organization should consider presenting a job preview early to enable some applicants to self-select out of the process, thus minimizing organizational costs.

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