

Human Resources Recommendations

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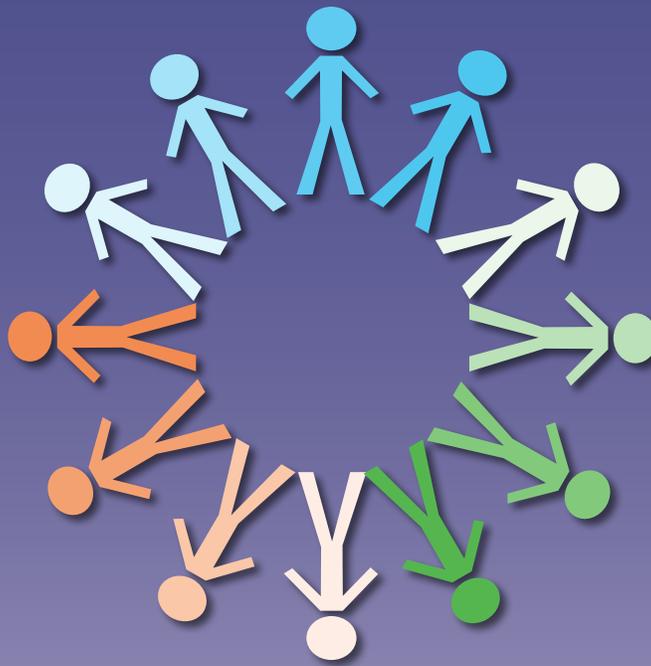


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Executive Summary

The future trajectory of Three Wheels United will be determined by its people. If employees can approach new problems on a unified front, the company will be able to weather any number of challenges.

Hiring, training, and managing employees is one of the most challenging parts of running any company, especially a lean social enterprise. To make matters more difficult, Three Wheels United is in a period of transition when new electric vehicle partnerships or initiatives could define the company's future staffing needs.

If these projects are to succeed, all employees will need to be aligned around a common mission, empowered to contribute ideas, and connected to their co-workers.

In the hustle and bustle of daily activities, it's easy to neglect investing time into documenting processes, checking in with employees, hiring, and training. However, these big-picture activities save time and increase effectiveness in the long run.

These recommendations were developed from our observational research and interviews with Three Wheels United employees during summer 2019 and supplemented with selected best practices from reports.

This guide provides concrete recommendations that Three Wheels United management can use in both hiring new employees and effectively training, empowering, and managing current employees. Several recommendations touch on large-scale initiatives while others can be implemented in a single conversation. By keeping human resources issues front-of-mind as it scales, Three Wheels United can position itself for future success.



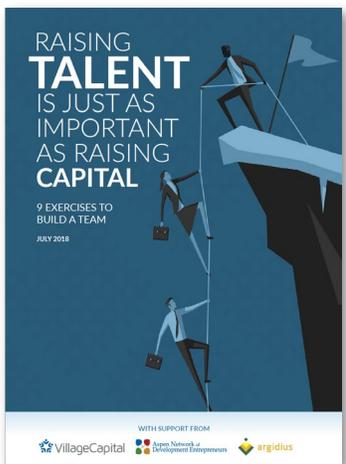
Background

This guide incorporates human resources best practices with our observation of Three Wheels United's (TWU's) management structure and office culture. In the course of meetings with management, operational staff, loan agents and engineers, we made observations about the organizational structure and operating procedures of the company.

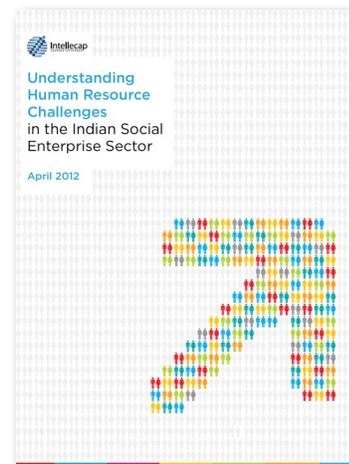
We then compared our ideas with current research and best practices in social entrepreneurship human resources. Finally, we developed this set of recommendations to provide TWU management with tools to proactively tackle critical areas like hiring, intra-company communications, organizational structure and training.

Our report incorporates quotes and suggestions from two documents.

"Raising Talent is Just as Important as Raising Capital" is by social-sector accelerator Village Capital, and provides a comprehensive playbook based on over 400 interviews with social entrepreneurs. The full guide includes exercises and workshops in nine key areas of human resources. [You can download the guide here.](#)



"Understanding Human Resource Challenges in the Indian Social Enterprise Sector" is by Intellecip, a sustainable development advisory organization. Intellecip conducted focus groups and a survey of Indian social enterprise leaders to understand how organizations find, train, and retain talent. [You can download the report here.](#)



Loan Agents

Empathetic and effective loan agents are at the center of TWU's success and function as a key differentiator between TWU and competition. As TWU expands into new markets and hires new loan agents, capturing best practices and training new staff will be crucial. Implementing the following recommendations can help TWU receive the most value from their loan agents.

Utilize the knowledge of effective loan agents to create a training program

Several of TWU's loan agents (e.g. Chandini and Savithri) have multiple years of experience performing at a high level. These employees should help TWU build a simple training program (or conduct live trainings themselves) to onboard new employees and spread best practices among current employees. This program could be an in-person workshop, online document, or series of short videos.

If current loan agents need to take on new responsibilities (moving to a new city, doing market research, or working with electric vehicles), TWU should hold training workshops to teach and practice skills. Particularly as TWU switches to solely electric vehicles, it will be vital that loan agents are skilled at communicating why electric vehicles are worth the higher investment. Arming loan agents with information about the cost savings and intangible benefits of switching to electric can help them communicate the value to skeptical drivers.



One TWU loan agent mentioned that the most difficult part of their job was visiting homes of drivers who refused to pay. A conflict-mediation workshop tailored for this scenario could help loan agents feel more comfortable in potentially tense environments.

Loan agents should be able to clearly articulate the value of switching to electric vehicles and prepared to address drivers' skepticism.

Loan Agents Recommendations

Clear communication with managers

Loan agents have insightful ideas that can help TWU improve their customer experience, but these ideas need to reach management. Although the social Indian work culture facilitates moments of connection between team members, adding structure (like a list of questions) and consistency (weekly or bi-weekly meetings) can ensure loan agents are being heard and developing professionally.

Structuring communication channels within the company can help bridge the divide between front-office strategic employees and loan agents who spend their time with customers in the field.

Teach sales, outreach, and market research skills

Depending on whether TWU acquires customers organically or through partnerships, future loan agents may need to do grassroots market research and community organizing. This strategy succeeded in Chitradurga, and further testing will show whether the ground-up approach can succeed in larger city or with electric vehicles.

Marketing TWU's service to new customers is a different skill than managing repayment with existing customers, so TWU should make sure to train employees in these skill sets. A combination of spreading best practices between the Chitradurga team and bringing in an outside consultant could combine TWU-specific knowledge with industry best practices.



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Operations

Summer 2019 has been a transition time for TWU as it adapts its processes, considers new markets, and pivots to solely focusing on electric vehicles. Decisions made and momentum built in the coming months will largely impact the future direction of the organization.

Additionally, TWU employs people with a wide range of unique skill sets and backgrounds: empathetic loan agents, technical developers, and strategic business development leaders. Despite these differences, all staff should be united around a common mission and feel empowered to help innovate around that mission.

We have several recommendations to balance current operations with future opportunities.

Consistently update all staff on new developments/opportunities

As TWU grows, new communication methods will be needed to effectively share information. WhatsApp only works for so long. The simple step of sending out a weekly email with updates on front-office activity would help bridge the divide between loan agents in the Bangalore office and other employees in different regions.

Maintaining a high level of transparency will help employees understand their role in TWU's future, and focus their efforts in the right places. Although loan agents and software engineers have quite different responsibilities, they should both be on the same page about TWU's strategic direction and new opportunities.



Operations Recommendations

Offer opportunities for advancement and professional development

TWU employs many incredible people, but any job can become stagnant without dedicated opportunities to grow and develop. One of the main benefits of working for a fast-growing startup is the chance to quickly learn and take on more decision-making authority.

TWU management should consider ways to promote high-performing employees to leadership positions. By hosting workshops, bringing in a consultant, or meeting other companies in the social impact space, employees could feel like TWU is a place where they can grow along with the company and build a career path. For example, successful sales agents like Chandini could be promoted into a lead sales agent position, where they would train and manage new employees.

The Intellect survey of Indian social enterprise employees found that “Over 75% of respondents indicated that the opportunity to take on leadership roles and a belief in the company’s mission were the most common motivations for joining a social enterprise.”

Hire a Chief Operations Officer

The COO role is extremely important because it would free up time and energy for Cedrick and Rosemary to focus on strategic priorities. The company is currently transitioning from financing 4-stroke to electric vehicles, and new operational and loan process policies will be required to make the shift.

Village Capital wrote that “Startups need clarity and structure while retaining their agility. Teams often feel a need for greater clarity with regards to decision making, role authority, and responsibilities.” A COO can provide this clarity while allowing other staff to do better at their jobs.

The opportunity to take on leadership roles and a belief in the company’s mission were the most common motivations for joining a social enterprise.



Operations Recommendations

Be intentional about manager-employee 1-on-1's and feedback

Great companies offer supportive but challenging environments where employees receive frequent feedback about their work. It's easy to disregard "big-picture" conversations when employees discuss career goals, job-specific goals, and past performance with managers. The daily bustle of tasks and geographical distance make consistent performance reviews difficult. But the rewards are worth the risk.

Village Capital recommended that companies "Embed development discussions into day-to-day work. Increase feedback opportunities. Employees should have frequent check-ins to review progress towards short and long-term goals."

Employees should have frequent check-ins to review progress towards short and long-term goals.



Formalize new processes

As TWU adopts a new fast-track loan process and funds electric vehicles, the company should document their new processes and share these processes with the team. While the loan application process is already structured, other processes around hiring, management, marketing, and operations should also be widely available to employees.

Scaling into new cities requires TWU to already have a proven formula for what works. The most successful scaling efforts involve implementing and tweaking existing processes in new locations, rather than starting from scratch each time. If TWU acquires a large number of drivers in a partnership, efficient systems will allow current staff to handle more drivers.

Processes around hiring, management, marketing, and operations should also be widely available to employees.

Hiring

Any organization's growth potential depends on the people they hire. Village Capital wrote that "The #1 mistake we see CEO's make is hiring for the stage they are at, not the one they want to reach." Financial and time constraints make sourcing, hiring and training new talent difficult, but it remains a key ingredient for scaling. Here are a few tips, mostly taken from [this Village Capital report](#). In addition to providing an approach for attracting new hires, these tips can help current employees have more clarity and structure within their current roles.

Create an Employee Value Proposition

An Employee Value Proposition (EVP) is what makes people want to work at your company and why they love to keep working there. How can you create an EVP?

1. Understand what your current employees see as valuable in your company
2. Define your core values
3. Highlight what programs, opportunities, or benefits you offer to build on those values
4. Address the 5 elements of a strong EVP: exciting growth opportunities, compelling rewards, meaningful work, energizing people, and a strong organizational culture

The EVP can be worked into job descriptions, a "careers" website page, and your conversations with prospective hires. If other employees and hiring managers are able to clearly articulate the value of TWU to employees, they can more effectively recruit new talent. The EVP may also reveal opportunities to enhance the employee experience by providing non-financial benefits, programs or incentives to retain employees.

"The #1 mistake we see CEO's make is hiring for the stage they are at, not the one they want to reach."

- Village Capital

5 Elements of an EVP



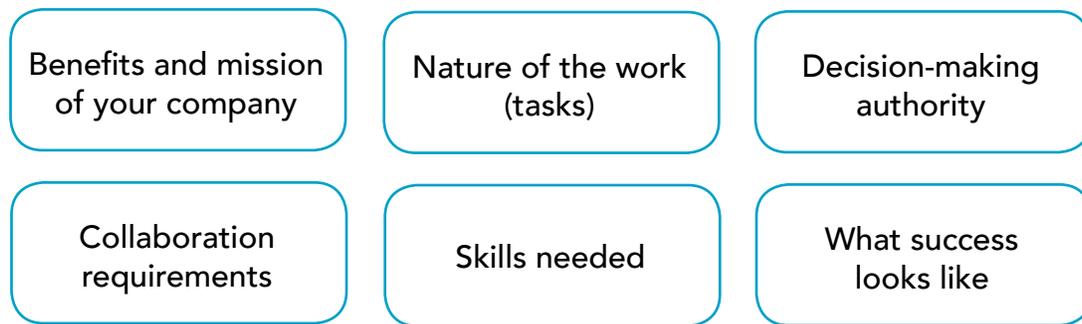
Graphic from the article ["4 Ways to Create a Compelling Employee Value Proposition"](#)

Hiring Recommendations

Clarify job descriptions

Both incoming and current employees should know their responsibilities and where they have ownership. Village Capital advises companies to “Put major and regular effort into clarifying everyone’s authority in delivering the activities and the purpose of processes and structures.” As TWU transitions to new products, processes, and cities, reevaluating roles will be especially crucial.

Here are the key elements for a successful job description:



Action Steps

The following actions are quick first steps that TWU management can implement immediately to begin creating a more comprehensive HR strategy.

1. Hold a meeting with all top management to discuss TWU's HR strategy

Someone should take notes to send to the whole team. Here are some guiding questions:

- What is our employee value proposition? What do current employees value about our company and how are we communicating these values to potential employees?
- How can we ensure all employees feel connected to TWU's mission and empowered to contribute new ideas? How can we be one unified team across geographies?
- How can we give employees the opportunity for professional development and taking on new roles and responsibilities?
- What are areas of our current roles that we could delegate to existing employees or create new roles around?

2. Create process documents and share internally with the team

- Hiring process (Where are jobs posted? What's the interview process? Who is responsible?)
- Market research process (deciding on where to expand)
- Community organizing process (how to create a customer base in a new city)
- Electric vehicle communication strategy (how can loan agents effectively share the benefits of electric vehicles and long-term cost savings?)



3. Have successful loan agents create training resources or host trainings

Videos, documents or live trainings that capture best practices can be used to onboard new loan agents and upskill current ones. Sample guiding questions could include:

- What are the most important traits of successful loan agents?
- What are the best ways to build trust and share about TWU with potential drivers?
- How should loan agents deal with drivers who won't pay?