

Integration and Socialization of New Employees in the Bank Sector

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Abstract - The objective of this research was to investigate the growing importance of integration and socialization of new employees, to determine the benefit that the integration and socialization model has brought to the commercial banks at an African State - São Tomé and Príncipe (STP), and also to assess the appreciation of employees on the model of integration of new employees.

The empirical research is based on an interview and a survey. The target of the interview are the 8 human resources managers of the all commercial banks that operate in the African State - São Tomé and Príncipe (STP). The survey sample are 82 employees of the 8 commercial banks.

The main results show that employees and managers of commercial banks of STP agree with the integration plan, and older employees are collaborative in the integration and socialization of their new colleagues.

This work is innovative in STP, since the authors did not find any research concerning this theme. This work allows to understand the importance to have an initial program of integration and socialization for new collaborators in STP banks, which will contribute, from the beginning, for increasing the motivation, satisfaction and performance of the employees resulting in productivity improvement and cost savings.

Keywords - *Employees Integration, Employees Socialization, Organizational Culture, Bank Organization, New employee's reception, Training.*

Introduction

Currently, integration and socialization of new employees have been practiced in several organizations (Aguilera *et al.*, 2006; Saeed *et al.*, 2012).

In recent decades, the changes that took place within organizations showed clearly the crucial role that human resources have in the development of a solid

competitiveness and quality assurance, (Reis, 2010) in order that organizations can pursue their objectives in a world increasingly competitive and globalized, where markets are more and more difficult (Feldman; Brett, 1983; Nelson, 1987; Saks, 1994; Carvalho *et al.*, 2012).

The organizations to face the market challenges adopted new measures to answer the consumer demands (Cooper-Thomas *et al.*, 2004; Kammeyer-Mueller *et al.*, 2011; Saks, 1995; Cooper-Thomas and Wilson, 2011).

Thus, organizations started paying attention to their human resources, since they are the most important factor of competitiveness in organizations (Taylor and Collins, 2000; Gomes *et al.*, 2008). With this new vision, a variety of human resource management practices are essential for the development of businesses.

Among the practices of the human resources management more relevant today, there is the integration and socialization of new member in the organization (Marcellos, 2012).

This practice has been gaining interest because of its importance not only in the strategy, but also in the costs that they entail for the organizations (Louis, 1980; Hsiung and Hsieh, 2003).

However, many organizations want the new employees start working soon and produce what is expected from them, not wasting time with the employee integration process. This is the case of some organizations at São Tomé and Príncipe (STP), which have not given importance to integration and socialization of new employees. They have not properly followed the various steps of the integration and socialization process of new members.

This failure is due to several aspects, being relevant the fact that many organizations still see the integration of new employees as a cost rather than an investment. On one hand the organizations think that the integration and socialization process is slow and cumbersome, and it is a waste of time.

The organizations used to hire a new employee to fill the vacancy without integrate and socialize the new member effectively and efficiently, and without betting on an ongoing training to enable the new member in order to better perform the duties.

However, other organizations of STP have changed their mind regarding the integration and socialization of new employees and some of them have heavily invested in the integration and socialization of new employees.

Increased competition has forced organizations to bet more and better in the integration and socialization program of new employees. The commercial banks, which is the fastest growing sector in the country with about five commercial banks operating in the country within five years, have heavily invested in the integration and socialization of their new members.

The objective of this research was to investigate the growing importance of integration and socialization of new employees, to determine the benefit that the integration and socialization model has brought to the commercial banks at an African State - São Tomé and Príncipe (STP), and also to assess the appreciation of employees on the model of integration of new employees.

This work is innovative in STP, since the authors did not find any research concerning this theme and the study allows to understand the importance to have an initial program of integration and socialization for new collaborators in STP banks, which will contribute, since the beginning, for their higher motivation, satisfaction and performance resulting in productivity improvement and cost savings.

The methodology is based on interviews to directors, managers, and employees about the integration and socialization program, and considers whether integration program has been implemented effectively and efficiently.

The paper is structured into five main parts. After the introduction the next section outlines the literature review concerning integration and socialization in organizations. The third section provides the methodology and specifies the sample. The fourth section presents some brief concluding remarks and in section five some recommendations are mentioned.

1. Literature review

In implementing the integration and socialization program, it is certain that organizations will have more

effective, efficient, and flexible employees. Integration and socialization program has been the main issue in several organizations of STP. However, despite the growing importance of organizational integration, the organizations have not bet properly in this important practice of human resource management. A strong focus on integration and socialization of new employees can be costly for organizations.

There are organizations that prefer not to spend money to integrate and socialize new employees, and do not bet on the continuous training of new employees. Pike (2004) shows that a person's fit within his environment is directly related to turnover.

Employability should lead to good health, if an employee perceives his importance and contribution to the organization (Vaart, Linde, De Beer and Cockeran, 2014). Opinions, knowledge and experience of the employees should be used and acknowledged, so that they feel important and appreciated (Muzumdar, 2011; Coetzee, 2014).

An important aspect of newcomer adjustment at different position levels is to gain confidence and personal control over the situation. To achieve this, effective on boarding or orientation programs enable new employees to learn the organizational culture and behaviour.

These programs also help facilitating the broader socialization process, which not only involves newcomers and Human Resource practitioners, but also hinges on the support from immediate supervisors and co-workers. Social networks have proved, that provide information to welcome the newcomer as an integral part of the organization (Lockwood and Tai, 2006).

Unsuccessful socialization in job results in dissatisfaction, and negative socio-psychological climate in an organization, which reduces work efficiency, and on the contrary – successful socialization brings mutual benefits (Grazulis, 2011; Câmara, 2012).

It is beneficial for both, employees and organizations be able to identify appropriate tactics for socializing new employees. For example, research suggests tactics that are more collective, formal, sequential, and supportive will enhance newcomer loyalty and reduce turnover (Griffeth and Hom, 2001; Lockwood and Tai, 2006).

It is important for new hires to understand the fundamental culture and values of the organization. This helps new employees connect with the broader purpose of the organization and gives them a better sense of fit within the company as a whole. This component also outlines clear performance expectations, social norms, and “unspoken habits of thought and behaviour” (Stein and Christiansen, 2010; Pike, 2014).

While realizing his expectations, the employee experiences job satisfaction and commits with the organization, tries to achieve common goals with the organization. So, the organization can form a committed and competent team necessary under the conditions of competitive economy (Robbins, 2003; Grazulis and Baziene, 2009; Grazulis, 2011).

1.1 Integration

Integration is the quality that exists among departments that is required to achieve unity of efforts by the demands of the stakeholders (Teixeira *et al.*, 2012).

Organizational integration plans a series of actions that will allow the new employee to become autonomous in his job. It is from this moment that the new employees can start managing their skills (Reis, 2010).

Integration is the process of assimilation of a person into the work environment, the adaptation to the work demands and to the collective behaviour in which he/she will work, the accommodation and the suitability of his/her personality to the group. Integration makes the individual adaptation easy to the professional standards and to the work life, assimilation of the rules of conduct, specific to the group and the labour discipline requirements. Successful organizations will take care that these processes be treated as important activities and allocate them sufficient resources, such as financial, human, energy or time (Florea, 2014).

It is through an individual integration program in the organization that values and behaviours are transmitted and incorporated by the new members. The main idea is persuading people to adopt certain attitudes and beliefs, through examples and social pressures, as well as positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviour or even negative reinforcement on inappropriate behaviour (Reis, 2010).

Organizational structure can be understood as the way how responsibility and power are allocated inside the organization and work procedures are carried out by organizational members (Blau, 1970; Dewar and Werbel, 1979; Germain, 1996; Gerwin and Kolodny, 1992; Ruekert *et al.*, 1985; Walton, 1985; Teixeira *et al.*, 2012). A good organizational structure will provide excellent conditions for the integration of the new hires.

Professional integration is the familiarization with the new place and working conditions, facilitation of the new employee accommodation, creating an atmosphere of safety, privacy and belonging, so that the new employees gain confidence in their ability to perform the job (Omir, 2003; Florea, 2014).

The admission of a new employee in the organization is very important, both for the organization and for the employee. The new employee integration process should

be conducted in a fair, clear and objective manner so that the organization can have a satisfactory performance of the newly admitted. If the new employee integration process is well managed, the organization and the new employee will be the biggest beneficiaries of the successful integration.

1.2 Socialization

Socialization is broadly defined as “a process in which an individual acquires the attitudes, behaviours and knowledge needed to successfully participate as an organizational member” (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Socialization is an ongoing process that sometimes lasts for a year. It represents a sense-making process that helps new hires adapt, form work relationships and find their place in the organization. According Lockwood and Tai (2006), Noe (2005) and Van Maanen and Schein (1979), a typical socialization process includes three phases: Anticipatory socialization, Encounter, Settling in.

Organizations employ a variety of tactics or techniques to socialize newcomers during the encounter stage. Specifically, socialization tactics help to facilitate the socialization process by reducing uncertainty and anxiety associated with entry experience and helping newcomers adapt and acquire the necessary attitudes and behaviours (Allen, 2006; Lockwood and Tai, 2006).

There are some important tactics of socialization of new employees such as: Collective-individual, Formal-informal, Sequential-random, Fixed-variable, Serial-disjunctive, Investiture-divestiture (Allen, 2006; Lockwood and Tai, 2006; Van Maanen, and Schein, 1979).

Socialization of new members in an organization or company is one of human resource management practices of major importance. This practice has proven to be extremely important for organizations operating in a globalized world where competition among organizations has been increasing and the consolidation in the market has become one of their main objectives.

Several authors have particularly emphasised the importance of organizational culture in creating an institutional context in which creativity flourishes (Pheysey, 1993; Ahmed, 1998; Martins and Terblanche, 2003; Kessel *et al.*, 2014).

In the course of this work the process of integrating new members in the leading commercial banks of STP will be analysed. With the growth of the banking sector in STP, many commercial banks have admitted new employees and changed in recent years their integration programs of new members.

2. Methodology and Empirical Research

The study intended to implement interviews and develop questionnaires, in order to collect their opinions

on the integration and socialization program of new members.

The respondents were employees of eight commercial banks of STP, International Bank of Sao Tome and Principe (BISTP), Equador Bank (EB), Commercial Bank of Sao Tome and Principe (COBSTP), Ecobank Sao Tome (EST), BGF I Bank São Tomé, Island Bank, Energy Bank, and Afriland First Bank Sao Tome and Principe.

The human resources managers of the eight commercial banks of STP that are directly linked to the preparation of the new members' integration program were also interviewed. The interviews were conducted personally and the study occurred between 2014, December and 2015, March.

The starting research question is: "what is the importance of the integration and socialization program in the bank, according to the perception of employees and managers?"

The hypotheses that were set for this research are:

- Hypothesis 1: The integration plan is effective in integrating new employees.
- Hypothesis 2: The integration plan is effective in socializing the new employees.
- Hypothesis 3: The employees agree with the integration program.
- Hypothesis 4: Older employees have played a key role in the integration and socialization of new members.

2.1 Discussion of the research findings of the surveys

Population of the survey: all the banks that exist in STP, namely International Bank of Sao Tome and Principe (BISTP), Equador Bank, Commercial Bank of Sao Tome and Principe (COBSTP), Ecobank Sao Tome (EST), BGF I Bank São Tomé, Island Bank, Energy Bank, and Afriland First Bank Sao Tome and Principe.

Sample: Eighty-two employees belonging to all the banks that exist in STP.

Socio demographic characterization of the sample:

- Gender: forty are women and forty-two are men.

- Integration program: 100% of the employees followed the integration program, despite the programs have undergone some changes over time.

- Age level: varies between 19 and 58 years old.

- Academic qualifications: 80% of respondents have undergraduate degree. The rest of the employees are attending high school.

Table 1 shows the values of mean by decreasing order, standard deviation, mode, of the survey' responses on the "integration and organizational socialization at commercial banks in STP". The Likert scale was used: 1 - Totally disagree; 2 - Strongly disagree, 3 - Disagree, 4 - Neutral, 5 - Agree, 6 - Strongly agree, 7 - Totally agree.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the survey's answers

Survey responses	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Mode
1. Initial training allowed me to acquire the skills needed to perform the function.	5.59	0.94	5.00
23. The colleagues were collaborative at the beginning of my functions.	5.37	0.85	5.00
5. The integration plan allowed me to meet the responsibilities and tasks of my job.	5.29	0.83	5.00
16. The integration plan allowed me to more easily develop the relationship with my colleagues.	5.24	0.88	5.00
8. The training supervisor contributed to my technical development.	5.23	1.13	5.00
14. Initial training prepared me for my role.	5.15	1.00	5.00
15. The integration plan has a correct sequence that allowed my learning.	5.10	0.76	5.00
24. Previous experience in another organization helped my integration into the organization where I work now.	5.10	1.35	5.00
9. My work team contributed to my integration to provide me with the mission and values of the organization.	5.07	0.75	5.00
2. The leadership contributed to my integration to provide me with the mission and values of the organization.	5.05	1.10	5.00
10. The duration of the integration program allowed me a better function performance.	5.05	0.85	5.00
22. The integration program allowed me to have regular information on important events in the company's life.	4.98	0.81	5.00

4. The integration program made me identify with the organization where I work.	4.95	0.76	5.00
19. The integration program allowed me to have opportunities to progress in my career.	4.95	0.94	5.00
6. The objectives of integration plan are explicit.	4.90	0.85	5.00
17. The integration plan allowed me to develop the relationship with my manager.	4.85	0.84	5.00
18. Information given about the organization was satisfactory.	4.83	0.85	5.00
7. The integration plan facilitated my integration in the organization.	4.80	0.63	5.00
12. The integration plan allowed a better performance of the function.	4.80	0.71	5.00
13. The initial training focused on the crucial aspects of my job.	4.80	1.25	5.00
20. The integration program allowed me to participate in the definition of my work objectives.	4.80	0.67	5.00
3. The leadership contributed to my integration to provide me the function characteristics.	4.78	0.84	5.00
11. The integration plan is adapted to the characteristics of each person and function.	4.51	0.86	4.00
21. The integration program allows me to access the conversion of actions in the event of restructuring of the sector in which I work.	4.51	0.74	4.00
25. I found many barriers in the initial phase.	4.39	1.19	5.00

Table 1 shows that the highest mean value is "initial training allowed me to acquire necessary skills to perform the function" with 5.59, and standard deviation of 0.94, and mode 5. The lowest mean value is "I found many barriers in the initial phase" with 4.39, and standard deviation of 1.19, and mode 5. "Previous experience in another organization helped my integration into the organization where I work now" has the most heterogeneous responses, with standard deviation of 1.35.

On the contrary, the homogeneous responses were in "The integration plan facilitated my integration in the organization" with standard deviation of 0.63.

Table 2 shows the percentage of responses to survey questions about the integration and socialization of new employees in commercial banks of STP.

The Likert scale was used from 1 - Totally disagree to 7 - Totally agree.

Table 2. Percentage of the survey's responses

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Initial training allowed me to acquire the skills needed to perform the function.	0	0	0	7.3	51.2	17.1	24.4
2. The leadership contributed to my integration to provide me with the mission and values of the organization.	0	0	12.2	12.2	43.9	22.0	9.7
3. The leadership contributed to my integration to provide me the function characteristics.	0	0	7.3	26.8	46.4	19.5	0
4. The integration program made me identify with the organization where I work.	0	0	2.4	22.0	56.1	17.1	2.4
5. The integration plan allowed me to meet the responsibilities and tasks of my job.	0	0	2.4	9.8	51.2	29.3	7.3
6. The objectives of integration plan are explicit.	0	0	7.3	17.1	56.1	17.1	2.4
7. The integration plan facilitated my integration in the organization.	0	0	2.4	24.4	69.4	9.8	0
8. The training supervisor contributed to my technical development.	0	0	4.8	24.3	34.1	19.8	17.0
9. My work team contributed to my integration to provide me with the mission and values of the organization.	0	0	0	17.1	65.9	9.7	7.3
10. The duration of the integration program allowed me a better function performance.	0	0	7.3	7.3	63.3	17.3	4.8
11. The integration plan is adapted to the characteristics of each person and function.	0	0	9.8	41.5	39.0	7.3	2.4
12. The integration plan allowed a better performance of the function.	0	0	4.8	22.0	61.0	12.2	0
13. The initial training focused on the crucial aspects of my job.	2.4	0	12.2	22.0	34.1	22.0	7.3
14. Initial training prepared me for my role.	0	0	4.8	22.0	34.2	31.7	7.3
15. The integration plan has a correct sequence that allowed my learning.	0	0	0	22.0	48.8	26.8	2.4

16. The integration plan allowed me to more easily develop the relationship with my colleagues.	0	0	2.4	14.6	46.4	29.3	7.3
17. The integration plan allowed me to develop the relationship with my manager.	0	0	7.3	19.5	56.1	14.7	2.4
18. Information given about the organization was satisfactory.	0	0	7.3	24.4	46.3	22.0	0
19. The integration program allowed me to have opportunities to progress in my career.	0	0	7.3	22.0	41.5	26.8	2.4
20. The integration program allowed me to participate in the definition of my work objectives.	0	0	2.4	26.8	58.6	12.2	0
21. The integration program allows me to access the conversion of actions in the event of restructuring of the sector in which I work.	0	0	4.9	48.8	36.6	9.7	0
22. The integration program allowed me to have regular information on important events in the company's life.	0	0	2.4	24.4	48.8	22.0	2.4
23. The colleagues were collaborative at the beginning of functions.	0	0	0	9.8	58.5	17.1	14.6
24. Previous experience in another organization helped my integration into the organization where I work now.	0	0	9.8	24.4	31.7	14.6	19.5
25. I found many barriers in the initial phase.	0	2.4	24.4	26.8	29.3	12.2	4.9

Table 2 shows that 92.7% of the employees believe that the initial training enabled them to acquire necessary skills for the performance of their duties, while 0% of respondents disagreed.

90.2% of the employees think that colleagues were collaborative at the beginning of their functions.

87.8% of the employees believe that the integration plan allowed them to meet the responsibilities and tasks of their duties, while 2.4% disagree that the integration plan has allowed them to meet the responsibilities and tasks of their duties.

83% of employees have the opinion that the integration plan allowed them to more easily develop the relationship with their colleagues, while 2.4% do not have the same opinion.

With regard to teamwork, 82.9% of respondents believe that their work teams contributed to their integration to give them the mission and values of the company, while no respondent disagreed.

2.2 Discussion of the research findings of the interviews

To further deepen the knowledge about socialization and integration of new employees in the organization, eight interviews were conducted with the human resources directors of the banks whose employees answered to the survey and have integration programs currently in effect.

The interviews were conducted in person in organizations where the respondents work. The human resources managers that were interviewed are directly linked to the company's strategy. The interview questions were made in order to have a better understanding of the integration program in these financial institutions that

have recruiting new employees, because of their rapid growth in both STP and in other countries where they are represented.

All human resources managers that were interviewed say that the integration program has been effective and efficient in its mission of socializing new employees. One of interviewees states "the integration program has been effective." A total of 80% of the interviewees admit that the integration program has been improved and perfected whenever possible, that is, whenever there is need to do so or if there is something wrong with it.

60% of interviewees affirm that employees are sent abroad to work in other commercial banks that are in the same group or subsidiaries, in order to gain more experience and better understand the organizational culture of the banking group in which they work for.

All human resources managers acknowledge the importance of the integration of new employees program, stating that the integration program has been important for the integration of new employees in an effective and efficient way in their commercial banks.

All interviewees ensure that the integration program has been very important for increasing productivity. One of the interviewees ensures that "the integration program has contributed significantly to the increase in productivity."

Less than half of the interviewees, 40%, point to the failure of working hours, which are more than 8 hours per day, as one of the resistances identified by the newly hired employees.

All interviewees say, that they faced with little resistance in the process of integration and socialization of new employees.

Less than half of interviewees, 40% says that knowledge, compliance and respect with the standards and banking procedures is very important, and that every bank clerk should be aware of it. One of interviewees states that "the banking world is a world where respect for procedures is essential."

It was also found that teamwork is crucial for the integration of newcomers. The interviews allow making a relation between the values attributed by both parties, the leadership and employees, to the integration program of new employees. According to the interviewees, the commercial banks of STP give much importance to the integration and socialization program of new members so that they feel members of the organization as soon as possible.

All the interviewees argue that the integration program has been effective and efficient in its mission of socializing new employees. The interviewees also ensure that the integration program has been very important for increasing productivity.

Resignation and admission of new employees entail huge costs for organizations. Therefore organizations should endeavour to integrate and socialize their employees the best possible way so that they remain in the organization for many years and identify themselves with the organization's values. In this way organizations will not have high costs with employees, that is, dismissal and hiring new employees.

3. Conclusions

Both survey and interviews provide very important information for understanding the integration and organizational socialization and its process within organizations, in particular, commercial banks of STP. Through all that has been investigated throughout this research study, it can be stated that the integration and organizational socialization is an important practice of human resource management for the success of companies.

According to the answer given by the employees to the survey and by the managers to the interviews, the integration program has played a key role in the development of the newcomers relationships with their colleagues and with the leadership. The employees admit that the oldest employees, the leadership and the trainee advisor helped them very much in the process of integration in the bank.

The **first hypothesis** is about the effectiveness of integration plan of new employees. The results of the interviews indicated that all human resources managers that were interviewed admit that the integration program

has been effective and efficient in its mission of integrating and socializing the new employees. The survey shows that 79.2% of the employees say that the integration plan facilitates their integration in the organization.

The **second hypothesis**, is confirmed because 83% of the employees consider that the integration plan allowed them to more easily develop the relationship with their colleagues, while 73.2% of employees emphasize their good relationship with their boss.

The **hypotheses 3 and 4** were supported. Both the managers and the employees agree with the integration plan. For 90.2% of the employees, their colleagues were collaborative, at the beginning of their functions. 87.5% of the interviewees agreed with the integration program in their commercial banks. 70.8% of the employees consider that the integration program allowed them to participate in the definition of their work objectives.

Integration and socialization of new employees are the human resources management practices more important nowadays. Organizations have given increasing importance to the practice of human resource management. Organizations have developed integration plans for welcoming and integrating new employees the best possible way. The successes of organizations go through an effective and efficient integration of its new members.

Commercial banks of STP have developed integration programs to integrate and socialize as well as possible their new members. According to the managers of the commercial banks of STP a bad new employees' integration program will entail considerable costs for their commercial banks because they will always have to hire new employees to fill the vacancy.

Employees are more satisfied when they know that the organization for which they work will have an effective and efficient integration program with the involvement of all members of the company, that is, from top to bottom. The organizational integration program allows the new employee socialize quickly and produce what is expected from him (Ahmed, 1998). Organizations have more to gain than to lose from integration program. Although they represent a cost for organizations, integration and acceptance program is currently essential for organizations and companies that want to compete in an increasingly globalized world with a more open economy and a range of consumers increasingly demanding. Organizations should provide their people with employability but also commitment (Vaart *et al.*, 2014; Baruch, 2001).

If organizations do not bet on integration and socialization program claiming it is costly for them, they may have higher cost when they do not integrate effectively and efficiently new members, which can lead to dismissal of employee or his stay in organization, but producing far below what would be expected of him.

However, in the institutions concerned, commercial banks of STP, the programs have been praised by the employees, including the initial training of new members and the integration and socialization process of employees.

As a potential result of successful socialization, employee adjustment is indicated by outcomes such as organizational attachment and commitment, job satisfaction, social integration, role clarity, task mastery, and values congruence (Allen, 2006; Lockwood and Tai, 2006).

In addition, the research is in accordance with Chao *et al.* (1994) that emphasises that people who are well socialized in their organizational roles tend to have higher incomes, be more satisfied, more involved with their careers and more adaptable, and have a better sense of personal identity than those who are less well socialized.

4. Recommendations

The organizations should formulate and implement a formal written strategy, communicate their strategies to the employees, formulate a manual for integration necessary for integration of new employees, and appoint a tutor who will sustain and facilitate the integration of new employees.

This research is in accordance with Florea (2014) that states that the organizations should implement best practices of integration and socialization of new employees, because they will lead them to obtain better results. Having new employees better and faster integrated and adapted, the organizations will obtain competitive advantages and better performance.

Human resource managers should see new employees' integration program as an investment and not as a cost, since organization outlines integration program of new members it avoids a high turnover of employees. More studies on this subject could be performed to prove that integration and socialization programs are beneficial and are not a cost for organizations. As it can be seen, better integration practices will lead the organizations through better results. So, the organizations must take into account the integration and socialization practices.

A promising route for future research would be to explore the importance on integration and socialization of

new temporary employees in the organization. Future research can also focus on the relationship between the older employees and the new hires, and between the temporary workers with the permanent employees.

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