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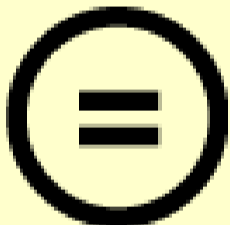
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**The Development of a  
Strategic Employee Resourcing Framework  
(SERF)  
for Construction Organisations**

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**A Doctoral Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award  
of Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University**

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# Abstract

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The construction industry is one of the most challenging industrial environments within which to develop effective people management practices. The industry is characterised by geographically dispersed projects, production-oriented management styles, long working weeks, high levels of staff turnover and employment practices grounded in the traditional 'personnel' paradigm. One of the most challenging aspects of adopting strategic human resource management (SHRM) in the industry is employee resourcing, which comprises the staffing, performance, human resource administration and change management functions within contemporary organisations.

This thesis investigates resourcing practices within large construction companies and develops a framework to inform SHRM-style decision-making in the future. Within an overall interpretative framework, case study methodology was employed for the research, supported by a range of qualitative and quantitative data sets. Fifty in-depth interviews were conducted within a major contracting organisation in order to establish both employer and employee perspectives on the resourcing process. These were supported by further interviews with several other leading contractors in order to explore whether such practices were typical and to identify alternative approaches. A range of secondary data informed both the wider understanding of existing approaches and the development of a more effective resourcing methodology. This included an analytic hierarchy method questionnaire to rank employee priorities, management and leadership style assessments of those with responsibility for managing the resourcing function, employee satisfaction questionnaires and an evaluation of commercially available human resource (HR) software.

The results show that, although the intention with regard to resourcing was clearly positive, managerial practices did not effectively deliver the strategic intent at a project level. Organisational priorities and project requirements were found to dominate what was a largely reactive and incoherent employee resourcing process. Individual employee needs and preferences were often neglected, which led to a demotivated workforce and hence, high levels of staff turnover. This presented a need to integrate key SHRM activities such as human resource planning (HRP), team deployment, employee involvement (EI), performance and career management and human resource development (HRD). Accordingly, a strategic employee resourcing framework (SERF) was developed which balances these activities in order to inform effective resourcing decision-making. The SERF has shown potential to support the effective integration of strategic business and HR objectives with operational requirements. There remains a need however, for construction organisations to develop their human resource information systems in order that such a framework is supported by appropriate organisational and employee data. This provides a longer-term challenge for the industry's larger employers, but is essential if the benefits of SHRM-oriented resourcing practices are to be realised.

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## List of abbreviations

BPR	Business Process Re-engineering
CERP	Construction Enterprise Resource Planning System
CIB	Construction Industry Board
CIC	Construction Industry Council
CIOB	Chartered Institute of Building
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (previously IPD, see below)
CITB	Construction Industry Training Board
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EI	Employee Involvement
EPSRC	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning Application/ System
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross National Product
HR	Human Resources
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRIS	Human Resource Information System
HRM	Human Resource Management
HRP	Human Resource Planning
ICE	Institution of Civil Engineers
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IiP	Investors in People
IoE	Institute of Education (University of London)
IPD	Institute of Personnel and Development (now CIPD, see above)
IR	Industrial Relations
IT	Information Technology
KM	Knowledge Management
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KWS	Knowledge Worker System
LO	Learning Organisation
M <sup>4</sup> I	Movement for Innovation
OL	Organisational Learning
PDP	Personal/ Professional Development Plan
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PPP	Public-Private Partnership

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QA	Quality Assurance
QS	Quantity Surveyor
RICS	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
SAP	System Application Protocol
SERF	Strategic Employee Resourcing Framework
SHRF	Strategic Human Resource Forecast
SHRM	Strategic Human Resource Management
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
TQM	Total Quality Management
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States

# Chapter One

## Introduction

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Over the past decade the Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) paradigm has developed as an effective and profitable approach to people management. It is a widely accepted and adopted approach to personnel recruitment, retention and performance improvement within many public and private sector organisations (Guest, 1987; Pfeffer, 1994; Huselid, 1995; Mabey *et al*, 1998; Reed, 2001; CIPD, 2001; Taylor, 2002a; Armstrong and Baron, 2002). However, despite the labour-intensive, “people oriented” nature of the construction industry (Druker and White, 1995: 80; Smithers and Walker, 2000: 833) little attention has been paid to SHRM within the sector (Loosemore *et al*, 2003).

In response to the current and forecasted future staff shortages, increasing client demands and requirements for greater overall efficiency, productivity and cost

effectiveness within the industry, recruitment and retention have been raised to the forefront of the industry's performance improvement agenda (Egan, 1998; Strategic Forum for Construction, 2002; The Housing Forum, 2002; CITB, 2003). Recruitment and retention form aspects of a central employee resourcing function within SHRM (Taylor, 2002b). Several studies have suggested a need for construction organisations to move toward SHRM-style employee resourcing practices (Druker and White, 1995; Druker *et al*, 1996; Maloney, 1997; Dainty *et al*, 2000a), but few have considered how to implement this change effectively (Tansley, 2001; Loosemore *et al*, 2003). This thesis argues that by developing a structured and comprehensive understanding of the current employee resourcing practices within large construction contractors a framework to inform the strategic SHRM decision-making can be developed to support the effective recruitment and retention of knowledge workers in the industry. A large contractor is defined as employing 600 or more employees (DTI, 2003).

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This chapter discusses the general background for the thesis, justifies the rationale for the research and establishes the research aims, objectives and hypothesis. It also introduces the research approach, industrial collaboration and relevance to beneficiaries. The chapter concludes with an outline of the structure for the thesis.

## 1.1. RESEARCH CONTEXT

### 1.1.1. The nature of the UK construction industry

The construction sector is one of the most dynamic and complex industrial environments. It is a large, labour-intensive industry within the UK that accounts for 8% of the GDP (Strategic Forum for Construction, 2002: 5) and provides employment for approximately 1.5 million people (DTI, 2002a: 145). It is also a project-based industry within which individual projects are usually custom-built to client specifications (Bresnen, 1990; Loosemore *et al*, 2003). These projects constitute the construction organisations' workload. Fluctuations in the economic markets are reflected in considerable variations in the number, size and type of projects undertaken by construction organisations over time. The variations in the organisations' workloads cause significant alterations in their staffing needs, both in terms of volume and professional skill profiles.

A key characteristic of the industry's output is that the finished product is largely non-transportable and must therefore be assembled at a point of use, usually outside, and geographically dispersed (Bresnen, 1990; Fellows *et al*, 2002). This requires construction organisations to set up temporary organisational structures at dispersed geographical locations, frequently at a distance from central management. Thus, the project team forms the focus of working life in construction, operating with a significant and necessary degree of independence. Thus, delegation and empowerment become essential aspects of the management of construction work (Dainty *et al*, 2002a; Nesan and Holt, 2002). Clearly the characteristics of staff

allocated to project teams also has a crucial effect. The changing requirements of construction work necessitates the formation of bespoke teams each time a new project is awarded. However, the time available between contract award and the mobilisation of the project is usually extremely limited (Druker *et al*, 1996: 407). This renders planning for such deployment difficult and requires construction contractors to maintain a highly mobile and flexible workforce with significant professional and managerial capabilities.

These characteristics make the employee resourcing decision-making extremely difficult. The short-term timescales force quick decisions on fundamental aspects of organisations' working life and operations. Traditionally, managers from a craft or engineering background naturally attempted to achieve "the best" technical/ financial business outcome and took appropriate steps to implement this (De Feis, 1987). Many construction managers still operate in this fashion, focusing on the achievement of financial, programme and quality outcomes over other project performance criteria (Dainty *et al*, 2003a). Thus, much of the current project allocation decision-making tends to be ad hoc and based on the implicit knowledge of senior managers (Raiden *et al*, 2002a, 2002b). The skills and knowledge requirements of the project dominate the decision-making, at the expense of individual needs and aspirations. Employee resourcing decision-making is at an imbalance, which leads to employee dissatisfaction, staff turnover and consequently a recurrent demand to recruit. The impact of these factors is particularly apparent within the larger contractors, whose focus is on managing the construction process with a few directly employed managers leading teams of outsourced trades contractors (Druker and White, 1995: 80). Whilst the increasing use of

subcontractors has allowed contractors to pass on risk and achieve greater flexibility, it has also made project co-ordination more complex, with a requirement for more highly skilled and experienced management (Druker and White, 1995; Fellows *et al*, 2002; Loosemore *et al*, 2003).

### *1.1.2. The people challenge: poor image, low commitment and skills shortages*

In addition to the transient, project-based nature of construction work and operationally focused management style, several industry characteristics contribute to its people management challenge.

The image of the industry is a significant challenge for the industry. Construction work is perceived as being dirty and low skilled (Strategic Forum for Construction, 2002: 29). Its site-based itinerant work patterns and poor health and safety records project a view of a much less attractive working environment than that presented by sectors which are seen as offering good wages and career prospects (CITB, 2003; Loosemore *et al*, 2003: 7). The industry has a low take-up of the Investors in People (IiP) initiative (Strategic Forum for Construction, 2002: 31), which reflects the industry's low commitment to human resource development (HRD) (Dainty *et al*, 2000b). In addition, a male-dominated, discriminatory, 'macho' culture is commonly described as the way the industry operates (Druker and White, 1995). Such a poor image of the industry has a fundamentally negative impact on the construction organisations' ability to attract and retain a suitable workforce. For example, the brightest project management graduates and experienced high-achievers are highly



likely to explore potential opportunities beyond the construction sector, such as in IT and consultancy services, in search for a more comfortable working environment, geographical stability and improved career/ developmental prospects.

Long working hours are also commonly seen as an inherent characteristic of construction work (Smithers and Walker, 2000; Lingard and Sublet, 2002: 507; Strategic Forum for Construction, 2002: 31; Cochrane, 2002). Tight project deadlines and seasonal changes in weather conditions require significant flexibility on the employees' availability for work. This results in many juggling to balance their work and family commitments, since few construction organisations offer employee assistance on work-life balance issues (Lingard and Sublet, 2002; Cochrane, 2002; Driscoll, 2003: 2). Research evidence suggests that long working hours together with the increasing demands of family commitments contribute toward burnout, a syndrome of chronic stress, job dissatisfaction and loss of organisational commitment (Lingard, 2003; Loosemore, 2003: 201). Long hours create a high stress environment, which can even result in suicide (Lingard, 2003). The suicide rate in construction is the highest among all professions (*ibid.*). This underscores the need for construction organisations to recognise the demands of family and other personal responsibilities that their employees face, and genuinely attempt to accommodate these (Lingard and Sublet, 2002; Loosemore *et al.*, 2003).

Staff turnover is often a consequence of an organisation not supporting employee work-life balance. Other factors connected with staff turnover include limited career/ development prospects and lack of management attention to employees through feedback and provision of opportunity to influence decisions (Afifi, 1991; Dainty *et*

*al*, 2000b). The consequences of high staff turnover can be serious in terms of increased costs of recruitment and training, interruptions to work-flows and lower staff morale which in turn can affect team and organisational performance (ACAS, 2003). Some staff turnover, however, helps bring in new ideas into the organisation in balance with the continuity of existing operations. The CIPD Employee Turnover Survey (2002a) revealed that the rate of employee turnover for construction organisations was 21.9%, up by 2.3 percentage points from 19.6% in 2000 (CIPD, 2001). Every other major sector saw a significant decrease in levels of staff turnover over the same period. Furthermore, in comparison to a healthy staff turnover around 10% (*ibid.*), the figure looks decidedly unhealthy. Correspondingly, 62% of the CIPD 2003 survey respondents reported that staff turnover had a negative effect on their performance (CIPD, 2003b). Nine percent (9%) of this group stated that the effect was serious (*ibid.*). Organisations facing high levels of staff turnover reported it as negatively affecting their performance. In contrast, organisations with a staff turnover of 10% or less were likely to report it as having a positive or no effect on their performance (*ibid.*). Thus, bearing in mind the dynamic, geographically dispersed project-based characteristics of the industry, the effects of a 21.9% [high] staff turnover are likely to cause considerable disruption to the team and organisational performance within the large construction contractors (Chapman, 1999; Love *et al*, 2002). This is of particular concern at a time of acute industry-wide skills shortages (Briscoe, 1990; Oliver, 2000; MacKenzie *et al*, 2000; UK News, 1999, 2001; Haas *et al*, 2001; Strategic Forum for Construction, 2002).

The increasing demand for skilled and suitably qualified entrants to the industry has been attributed to the imbalance of ongoing economic growth, which has steadily

increased construction organisations' workloads, and the decreasing number of applicants to construction related courses (Oliver, 2000; Dainty and Edwards, 2003). This presents serious implications for organisations human resource (HR) strategies. Difficulties in recruiting new candidates must turn the emphasis towards retaining existing employees. This means providing attractive career and developmental opportunities which foster long-term commitment. In short,

*“Understanding how the industry is perceived by its workforce, and placing their concerns at the heart of the industry’s agenda is a prerequisite to change.”* (Strategic Forum for Construction, 2002: 29)

### *1.1.3. The need to promote the SHRM approach to people management*

Despite the vital importance of effective team formation and project management capabilities, construction organisations commonly support the traditional “personnel management” style people management practices, rather than those associated with the strategic human resource management (SHRM) approach (Druker and White, 1995; Druker *et al*, 1996). Under personnel management, a focus is placed on payroll administration and compliance with legislative and regulatory conditions (*ibid.*). In contrast, the concept of SHRM is that the effectiveness of an organisation largely depends on the efficient use of human resources. SHRM comprises a set of practices designed to maximise organisational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work (Guest, 1987: 503) by incorporating delegation and empowerment into the decision-making processes. In construction, the success of

such practices fundamentally depends on the effective management of the employee resourcing function. That is, allocating staff to projects by simultaneously meeting the (often competing) needs and requirements of the organisation, the project and individual employees. This requires the different components of the employee resourcing function (staffing, performance management, human resource administration and change management) to be effectively integrated to form an interconnected network of decision-making and support processes (Taylor, 2002b). Modern human resource information systems (HRISs) offer highly sophisticated facilities to assist this (Greenlaw and Valonis, 1994; Miller, 1998; Raiden *et al*, 2001a; Snowdrop Systems, 2002). However, strategic employee resourcing also requires carefully conceived and well-managed processes designed to support the organisation's business objectives.

Few studies have considered the specific context the dynamic and complex project-based industries present (Gray, 2001; Turner and Müller, 2003) or have sought to capture effective approaches to employee resourcing within the construction sector (Raiden *et al*, 2002b). This thesis begins to address this shortfall by producing a structured and comprehensive explanation of the current employee resourcing practices within large construction organisations and developing a framework to inform the strategic employee resourcing decision-making for recruitment and retention of knowledge workers.

## 1.2. THE RESEARCH AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS

As referred to above (section 1.1.3), the aims of this research were two-fold:

- 1: To produce a structured and comprehensive explanation of current employee resourcing practices within large construction contractors (large construction contractor defined as employing 600+ employees; DTI, 2003)*
- 2: To develop a framework and knowledge base to inform strategic employee resourcing decision-making for recruitment and retention of knowledge workers.*

Accordingly, the research objectives were:

- A. To establish organisational SHRM strategy, policy, practices, organisational priorities and project requirements in relation to employee resourcing
- B. To model the current resourcing decision-making processes
- C. To establish employee personal and career needs and preferences in relation to their deployment
- D. To establish the compatibility and conflicts between managerial and employee deployment objectives
- E. To verify that the findings and results have a general application to other construction firms

F. To develop a more appropriate framework to inform the employee resourcing decision-making than is currently used that reflects leading-edge practice within the industry's larger employers.

From the rationale for the research and the research aims and objectives above, a set of research hypothesis was formulated to guide the research. These were:

Hypothesis one (H1): *SHRM provides a more effective approach to employee resourcing than those grounded in the personnel management paradigm through improved organisational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work.*

Hypothesis two (H2): *The employee resourcing decision-making is currently determined by project and broader business requirements rather than employee needs and preferences.*

Hypothesis three (H3): *Employee needs and preferences from the deployment process centre around the fulfilment of personal needs and wider career ambitions rather than factors linked to their organisational role.*

Hypothesis four (H4): *The conflict evident between the competing organisational priorities, project requirements and employee needs and preferences present a challenging context for implementing*

*a SHRM approach to employee resourcing within construction organisations.*

**Hypothesis five (H5):** *The importance of the team deployment and project resourcing activities within construction organisations introduce a need for the provision of a structure and knowledge base to inform the strategic employee resourcing decision-making.*

**Hypothesis six (H6):** *Information technology (IT) systems offer potential solutions for managing the employee resourcing function effectively.*

These hypothesis are developed and refined throughout the literature review (Chapters 2 and 3) and their validity explored in the findings and results (chapter 5) and discussion (Chapter 6). Chapter 7 discusses the development of a new employee resourcing framework. Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by assessing the extent to which the research aims, objectives and hypothesis have been met. Table 1.1 shows the relationships between the research aims and objectives and the initial hypothesis.

**Table 1.1: Aims and objectives and related research hypothesis**

<b><i>Aims</i></b>	<b><i>Objectives</i></b>	<b><i>Hypothesis</i></b>
To produce a structured and comprehensive explanation of current employee resourcing practices within large construction contractors	<p>A. To establish organisational SHRM strategy, policy, practices, organisational priorities and project requirements in relation to employee resourcing</p> <p>B. To model the current resourcing decision-making processes</p> <p>C. To establish employee personal and career needs and preferences in relation to their deployment</p> <p>E. To verify that the findings and results have a general application to other construction firms</p>	<p>1: SHRM provides a more effective approach to employee resourcing than those grounded in the personnel management paradigm through improved organisational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work.</p> <p>2: The employee resourcing decision-making is currently determined by project and broader business requirements rather than employee needs and preferences.</p> <p>3: Employee needs and preferences from the deployment process centre around the fulfilment of personal needs and wider career ambitions rather than factors linked to their organisational role.</p>
	<p>D. To establish the compatibility and conflicts between managerial and employee deployment objectives</p> <p>E. To verify that the findings and results have a general application to other construction firms</p>	<p>4: The conflict evident between the competing organisational priorities, project requirements and employee needs and preferences present a challenging context for implementing a SHRM approach to employee resourcing within construction organisations.</p>
To develop a framework and knowledge base to inform strategic employee resourcing decision-making for recruitment and retention of knowledge workers	<p>E. To verify that the findings and results have a general application to other construction firms</p> <p>F. To develop a more appropriate framework to inform the employee resourcing decision-making than is currently used that reflects leading-edge practice within the industry's larger employers.</p>	<p>5: The importance of the team deployment and project resourcing activities within construction organisations introduce a need for the provision of a structure and knowledge base to inform the strategic employee resourcing decision-making.</p> <p>6: Information technology (IT) systems offer potential solutions for managing the employee resourcing function effectively.</p>

### ***1.3. THE RESEARCH APPROACH***

In accordance with the aims of the research, this work was divided into two broad phases: the first exploring and modelling the existing approaches to project deployment and allocation and the second developing the new resourcing framework. Within an overall interpretative framework, a case study methodology was adopted as an approach to the data collection. This included one in-depth primary case and six supplementary cases. The study organisations were carefully selected to be broadly representative of leading large UK-based contractors: similar in size, number



of employees and turnover. Project specific case study data were also collected within the primary case study organisation.

The primary case allowed for an in-depth examination of the issues due to its high exploratory potential (see Bryman, 1989) and holistic perspective (see Yin, 1994). The high context sensitivity of case studies also allowed for environmental factors to be evaluated and assessed (Yin, 1994; Blismas, 2001). Furthermore, the complementary theory-testing and theory-building capabilities case studies possess (Eisenhardt, 1989; Bryman, 1989; Yin, 1994) supported the verification of the general application of the findings and results as well as the development of the framework.

The first phase commenced with an in-depth investigation into the existing resourcing process. In-depth interviews were held with HRM staff and senior managers within the primary case study organisation in order to establish the organisational policy in terms of resourcing and staff development. Four project case studies were then undertaken in order to explore the efficacy of historical deployment and project allocation decisions. The composition of teams selected for a range of projects of differing size and complexity (multi-site, PFI, design and build and traditionally procured) were explored and interviews held with both the line managers responsible for the resourcing decisions and with the team members themselves. This was followed by a series of in-depth interviews with other project-based employees in order to establish their personal priorities in terms of career aims and development, project allocation and their wider life-cycle priorities. The interview data were combined using QSR NVivo qualitative data analysis package.

NVivo was also used to construct a model of the existing resourcing process from which strengths and weaknesses could be established. A range of secondary data were collected and analysed in order to inform wider understanding of the existing approaches to the deployment process. For example, the analytic hierarchy methods was use to refine a list of factors which were important to employees when making project deployment decisions and a management style questionnaire was distributed to those with responsibility for deployment decision-making in order to explore the impact of this variable on their decision-making.

The second phase comprised the development of the new resourcing model. Initially, a company-wide questionnaire survey was sent out to validate and prioritise the range of factors needing to be taken into account from the employees' perspective. Next, a range of innovative approaches to the resourcing process were explored within six leading construction firms. This widened the research perspective beyond the principal collaborating company, and these data were used to develop a benchmark of effective practice for addressing deficiencies identified within the in-depth case study model. Although no single company had developed a completely successful integrated approach to managing the resourcing process, an amalgam of individual components from each organization informed the development of the final model. An in-depth analysis of leading-edge but commercially available human resource information systems was carried out in parallel in order that an appropriate IT-based implementation mechanism could be established.

#### **1.4. INDUSTRIAL COLLABORATION AND RELEVANCE TO BENEFICIARIES**

This research was funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). In kind support was also provided by seven participating companies who allowed their managers and employees to take part in both the initial investigation into the current practices and subsequent development of the more appropriate framework. The principal research partner in particular provided extensive support for the work in terms of 50 informants and almost unlimited access to organisational and project data. Their interest in the research stemmed from a need to improve the recruitment and retention of newcomers into the organisation due to recent organisational growth and rapidly increasing workloads. Six other medium to large UK based contractors participated in the developmental phases of the study.

Care has been taken to involve the industrial partners at every stage of the research through the production of regular reports and project review meetings. These have ensured the practical utility of the outputs as well as the timely realisation of the project's outcomes. The main achievements of the work, which are revisited later in this thesis are as follows:

***A contribution to the theoretical understanding of the employee resourcing practices within large construction contractors***

This research represents the first serious attempt at developing a structured and comprehensive explanation of the current employee resourcing practices within large

construction contractors. Indeed, very little work has informed the understanding of the complex interplay of factors that shape the allocation of people within project-based organizations. The research has provided insights into the perspectives and needs of the managers and professionals whose optimum performance is vital to the industry's future development.

### *Methodological advances*

Several tools and techniques have been systematically combined to analyse the data within a particularly novel research framework. These include QSR NVivo, SPSS and MS Excel together with summary statement matrices and thematic analyses. All of the data sets and the literature review have been managed within a single analytical environment using the QSR NVivo qualitative data analysis package. The innovative use of this software facilitated the simultaneous analysis of multiple datasets.

### *The SERF model*

The SERF model represents an integrated strategic approach to resourcing decision-making which overcomes the current ad hoc and subjective approaches to project allocation. This multi-dimensional model comprises a set of interrelated and mutually reinforcing SHRM activities, which together take account of individual, project and organisational needs. The framework has generic application within

construction firms. It provides “a proof of concept” that an IT-based resourcing framework can make a real contribution to resolving these industry’s people management challenges.

### ***Industry involvement and implementation of the research outputs***

The primary case study organisation’s commitment and enthusiasm for the work is demonstrated through both their decision to utilise the outputs of the work and to purchase specialist software to facilitate its implementation across the organisation. This has already begun to have a significant impact within organisation by providing a direction for developing their resourcing and other SHRM practices. As well as being used by senior managers and HR specialists for managing their resourcing activities, it is being used as the basis for an employment handbook in which the processes behind the deployment activities are transparently explained. In addition, the six other major construction contractors that participated in the work have derived benefit from the outcomes. In particular, one company has begun to use the framework to inform its strategic allocation decisions. Others have expressed interest in further developing the model as a tool for managing the resourcing process.

The theoretical contributions of the research have been widely disseminated through conference and journal publications (Raiden *et al*, 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b, 2003a, 2003b, 2004) (see appendix A).

## 1.5. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis is organised into nine chapters. Figure 1.1 shows a schematic representation of the thesis indicating how the chapters interrelate. Explanation of the content of the thesis follows.

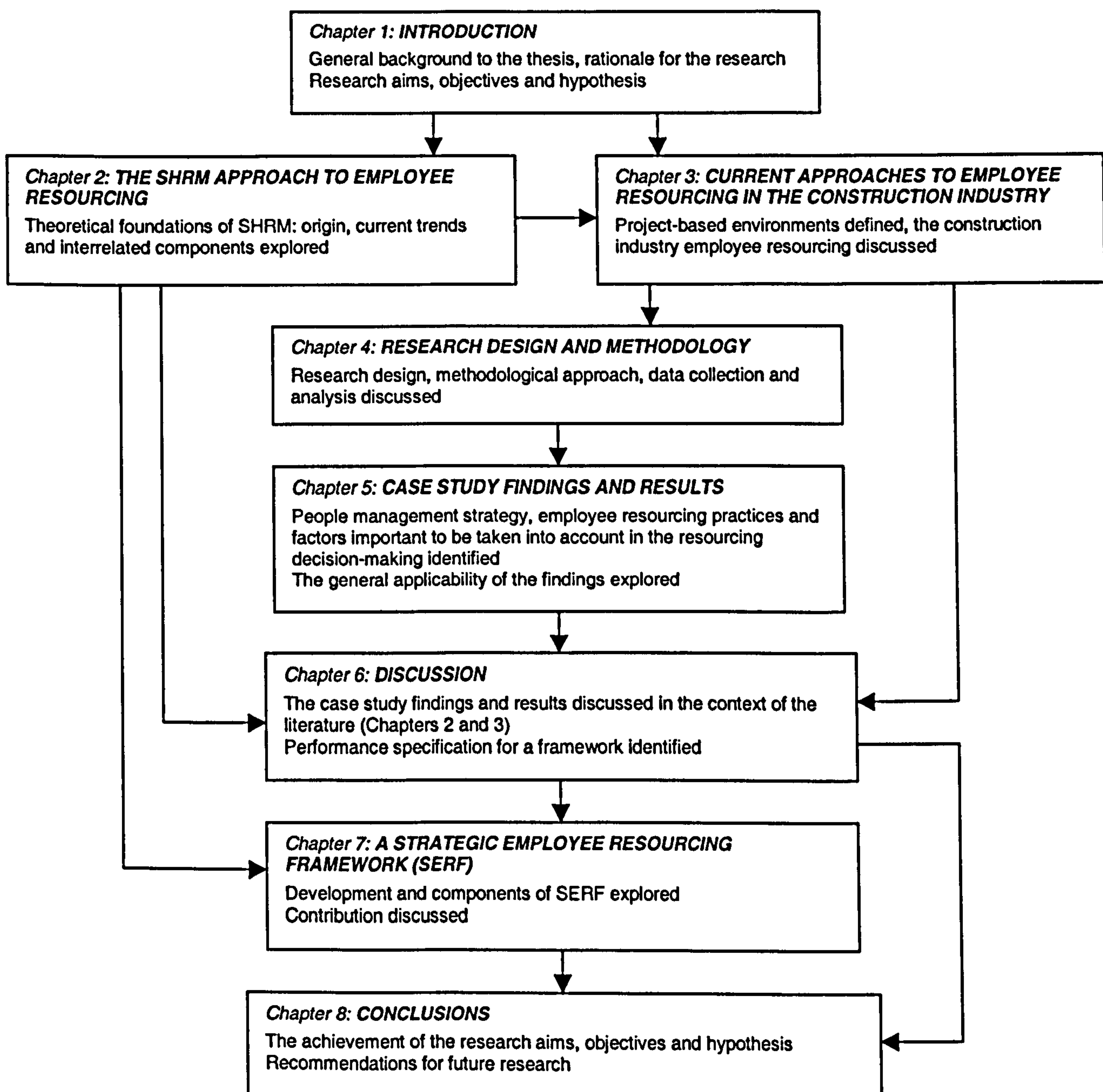


Figure 1.1: Structure of the thesis

*Chapter 1: Introduction*

This chapter (Chapter 1) has provided an introduction to the research. It has set out the general background and context for the thesis and justified the rationale for the research. The research aims, objectives and hypothesis have been outlined. Finally, this section explains the structure of the thesis.

*Chapter 2: The Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) Approach to  
Employee Resourcing*

Chapter 2 explores the theoretical foundations of SHRM. It outlines the origins of the concept from the early theories of organisational behaviour and industrial relations to the current trends in the field. The three interrelated components of the function are discussed. Focus is placed on the employee resourcing function and its role and importance to the performance of an organisation.

Due to the complex nature of the relationships between the concepts discussed a chapter structure diagram (Figure 1.2) is used to guide the reader through the chapter. This figure is reproduced throughout the chapter with relevant sections highlighted.

SHRM [Chapter 2]														
Origins [section 2.1.]				Current trends [section 2.2.]					Components [section 2.3.]					
Org. behaviour/ management [2.1.1.]	Industrial relations (IR) [2.1.2.]	Personnel and human resource management (HRM) [2.1.2.4.]	Strategic human resource management (SHRM) [2.1.2.5.]	Psychological contracts [2.2.1.]	Flexibility [2.2.2.]	Careers [2.2.3.]	Employee involvement (EI) [2.2.4.]	HR information systems (HRISs) [2.2.5.]	Employment relations [2.3.1.]	Human resource development (HRD) [2.3.2.]	Employee resourcing [2.3.3.]			
											Staffing [2.3.3.1.]	Performance [2.3.3.2.]	HR admin [2.3.3.3.]	Change [2.3.3.4.]

Figure 1.2: Chapter 2 structure

### *Chapter 3: Current Approaches to Employee Resourcing in the Construction*

#### *Industry*

The second literature chapter (Chapter 3) examines the current approaches to employee resourcing in the context of the construction industry. The nature of work within project-based environments is defined and the differences between 'operations' and 'projects' are highlighted. A discussion on management approaches for dealing with the inherent challenges of project-based environments is provided. The strategic importance of the resourcing function to construction organisations is explored and a conceptual model of the industry employee resourcing cycle developed.



#### *Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology*

Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology, strategy and approach. The research design is introduced and methods of data collection and analysis discussed. The major challenges met along the research process are evaluated.

#### *Chapter 5: Case Study Findings and Results*

Chapter 5 examines the findings and results of the primary case study research. The chapter is structured according to the research objectives. Firstly, the organisation's current SHRM strategy, policy and practices are outlined. This is followed by a description of the organisational/ project and employee needs and preferences. Results of the factor validation questionnaire and an examination of the wider context within the industry conclude the chapter.

#### *Chapter 6: Discussion*

Chapter 6 discusses the research findings and results (Chapter 5) in the context of the literature (Chapters 2 and 3). The type of people management practice in use (personnel/ SHRM) is established and the compatibility and conflicts between the managerial (organisation/ project) and employee views are discussed. The chapter concludes by drawing out the current challenges, discussing the general applicability

of the findings and results, and outlining a performance specification for required improvements.

### *Chapter 7: A Strategic Employee Resourcing Framework (SERF)*

Chapter 7 outlines the development of the more appropriate employee resourcing framework. It firstly explores the approaches of leading construction companies to addressing the challenges of the resourcing function. This provides a wider context to the primary case study material. An overview of the framework itself and practical implementation opportunities bring the chapter to an end.

### *Chapter 8: Conclusions*

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis summarising the achievement of the research aims, objectives and hypothesis and provides indications as to areas for future research flowing from the outcomes of this work.

## 1.6. SUMMARY

This chapter has provided an introduction to the research and justified the rationale for the study. The research aims, objectives and hypothesis were introduced and thesis structure outlined.

The following chapters review the relevant literature, firstly, on the strategic human resource management (SHRM) approach to employee resourcing (Chapter 2), and secondly, on the current approaches to the function in the context of the construction industry (Chapter 3).

# Chapter Two

## The strategic human resource management (SHRM) approach to employee resourcing

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The first chapter introduced the general background for this thesis, justified the rationale for the research and established the research aims, objectives and hypothesis. This chapter investigates the theoretical foundations of SHRM, personnel management and employee resourcing. It begins by exploring the origins and differing models of SHRM. The differences between the personnel management paradigm and SHRM view are discussed. Attention is drawn to the current trends in the SHRM literature: psychological contracts, flexibility, careers, employee involvement (EI) and human resource information systems (HRISs). Next, the three interrelated aspects of SHRM: employment relations, human resource development (HRD) and employee resourcing are explained. Focus is placed on the employee resourcing function.

The chapter explores this literature in light of the research hypothesis one (H1) as set out in the introduction (section 1.2):

*“SHRM provides a more effective approach to employee resourcing than those grounded in the personnel management paradigm through improved organisational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work”.*

The chapter structure map (Figure 1.2, section 1.5) is reproduced throughout the chapter highlighting the relevant sections in order to provide guidance to the reader on how the individual components of the complex network of interrelated concepts fit together.

2.1. ORIGINS OF SHRM

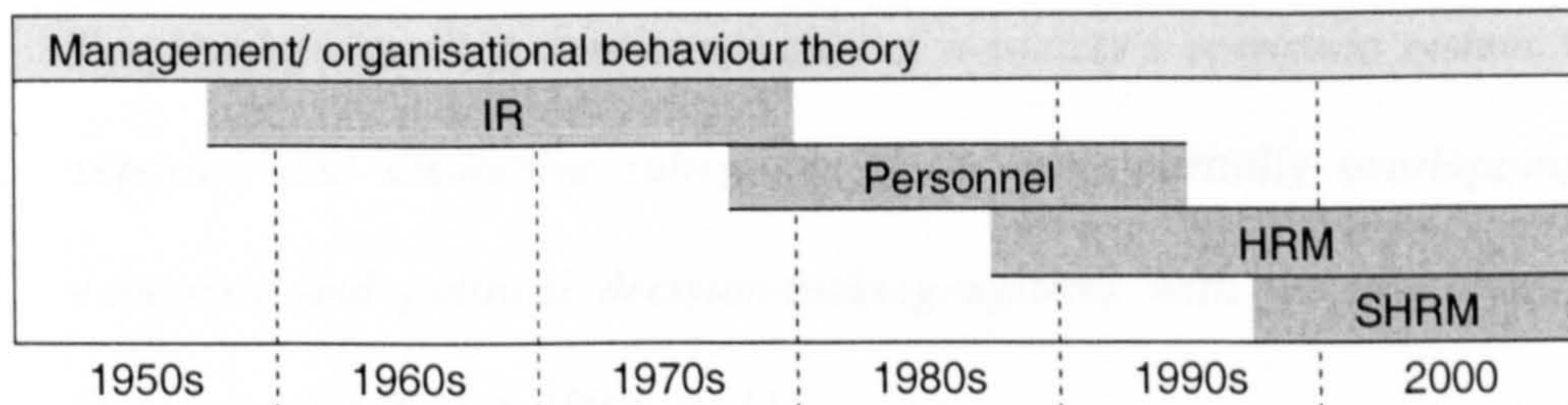
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											Staffing [2.3.3.1.]	Performance [2.3.3.2.]
											HR admin [2.3.3.3.]	Change [2.3.3.4.]

2.1.1. Organisational Behaviour

The study of organisational behaviour is concerned with, on the one hand, the behaviour of individuals in the organisation, and on the other, groups and how they form, perform, change and develop. Communication and perception, motivation, learning and personality form the key to understanding the ways in which one person interacts with another person (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2001). Central to understanding groups in organisations are issues of group formation, development, structure, control and effectiveness (ibid.). The origins of organisational behaviour can be traced back to the 1920s in the form of the human relations approach. Since then numerous theories have emerged within the field to facilitate the understanding

and analysis of individual and group behaviour within organisations. Appendix B summarises these.

As the study of organisational behaviour focuses on understanding, predicting and controlling human behaviour and the factors, which influence the performance of people as members of an organisation, a close relation with management theory and practice is evident (Mullins, 2002). The application of the theories of organisational behaviour to the context of management has led to the development of a number of narrower disciplines, such as industrial relations (IR), personnel, human resource management (HRM) and strategic HRM (SHRM). An insight into the developments within these fields is crucial to understanding the current SHRM approach to the employee resourcing function. Figure 2.1 below shows the relative chronological development of these concepts and theories.



**Figure 2.1:** From organisational behaviour to SHRM

### 2.1.2. From Industrial Relations to Strategic Human Resource Management

Industrial relations laid the foundation for effective people management since it provided the overall framework for the design and implementation of strategies,

policies and processes. The early theories in IR emerged in the late 1950s, dominating much of the people management practice and research through to the development of the concept “personnel” in the 1970s. The following provides an overview of the key theories in IR, such as Dunlop’s systems theory, the unitary theory and its neo-unitary variant, conflict-pluralist theory, social action theory, Marxist theory, and their different levels of individualism and collectivism.

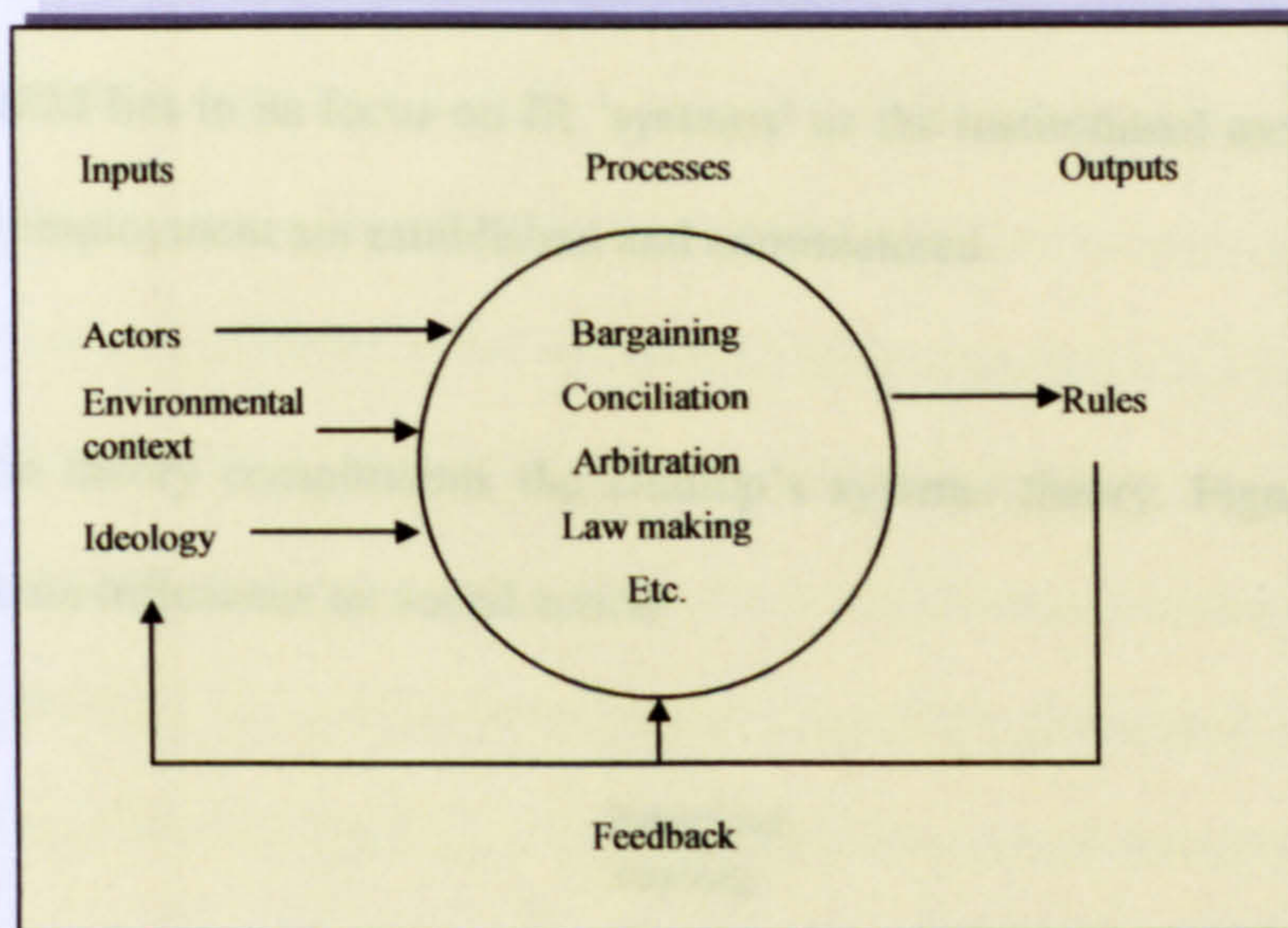
#### 2.1.2.1. Systems and social action theories

Dunlop’s simple model of an industrial relations system (Figure 2.2)

*“presents a general theory of IR and provides tools for analysis to interpret and gain understanding of the widest possible range of IR facts and practice. For Dunlop, an IR system is not part of a society’s economic system, but a separate and distinctive subsystem of its own, partially overlapping the economic and political decision-making systems with which it interacts”* (Farnham and Pimlot, 1990: 10-11).

This theory provides a useful starting point for the study being one of the early models of IR.





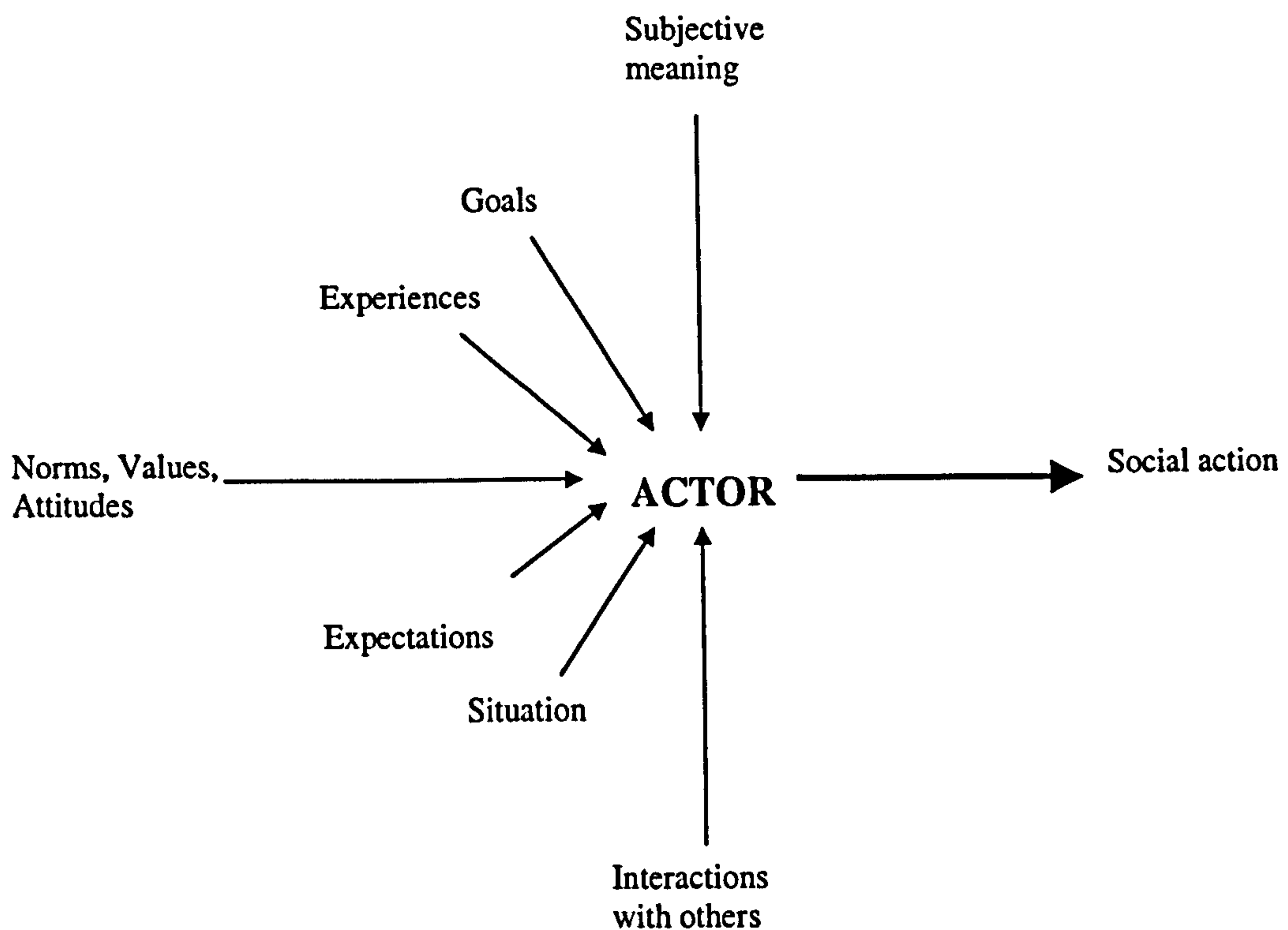
**Figure 2.2:** Dunlop's simple model of an industrial relations system (1958)

In this model, an IR system comprises three factors: the actors, the contexts and the ideology. The actors comprise of a hierarchy of managers and their representatives, a hierarchy of non-managerial employees and their representatives, and specialised third party governmental and private agencies (Farnham and Pimlot, 1990: 11-12). These actors interact with the three environmental contexts: the technological characteristics of the work place and work community, the market or budgetary constraints, and the locus and distribution of power in the larger society outside the IR system (Dunlop, 1958). The ideology held by the actors binds the system together.

Although Dunlop's model, the 'systems theory', has its critics and has been refined and developed on numerous occasions, it has never been changed radically. Rather, it has influenced British and European IR as the major American contribution in the field (Farnham and Pimlot, 1990: 10). The relevance of the systems theory to the

modern SHRM lies in its focus on IR 'systems' as the institutional means by which the rules of employment are established and administered.

Social action theory compliments the Dunlop's systems theory. Figure 2.3 below shows the main influences on social action.



**Figure 2.3:** Social action theory

The difference between social action and systems theory is that

*“the action theory assumes an existing system where action occurs but can not explain the nature of the system, while the systems approach is unable to explain satisfactorily why particular actors act as they do” (Farnham and Pimlot, 1990: 10).*

Thus, these theories are best used in combination. The action theory provides an analytical framework for assessing the factors that influence an actor's (for example a manager's or an employee's) behaviour and hence can help explain why such a behaviour occurs. The systems approach seeks to define and develop an understanding of the system and related processes within which the actor's behaviour occurs. Accordingly, the combination provides a holistic framework for analysing both the organisational system(s) as well as the behaviour of the actors within the system.

#### 2.1.2.2. Marxist theory

In contrast to the systems or social action theories, Marxist theory highlights the class nature of the employment contract and the continuous struggle between those representing capital and labour (Torrington and Hall, 1991: 4-5). Although in its basic form it is somewhat outdated, Marxist theory can contribute to the consideration of the compatibility and conflicts between the needs of the employer and employee, which lie at the heart of SHRM. Indeed, in this the Marxist theory has influenced the development of the modern 'employment relations' component of SHRM. This is discussed in section 2.3.1.

### 2.1.2.3. Classical unitary, neo-unitary, industrial conflict and pluralist theories

More recently developed theories in IR include the classical unitary and neo-unitary theories together with the industrial conflict and pluralist theories.

Classical unitary theory emphasises a stable structure and co-operative nature of work and work relations. The neo-unitary theory, on the other hand, being more sophisticated than the classical unitary theory, aims to integrate employees as individuals into the companies in which they work (Coupar and Stevens, 1998: 146). Its orientation is distinctly market centred, managerialist and individualist (Farnham and Pimlot, 1990: 6). Employers embracing this frame of reference have expectations of employee loyalty, customer satisfaction and product security in increasingly competitive market place by gaining employee commitment to quality production, customer needs and job flexibility (ibid.). The neo-unitary approach to managing people includes creating a sense of common purpose and shared corporate culture. It emphasises the primacy of customer service, setting explicit targets for employees, investing heavily in training and management development and providing employment security for their workers. This is achieved by using techniques, such as performance-related pay, profit sharing, harmonisation of terms and conditions and employee involvement to facilitate commitment, quality and flexibility (Storey, 1992).

The industrial conflict and pluralist theories focus on conflict identification and problem solving. They are concepts related to post-capitalism, within which society is viewed as an open system where political, social and economic power is dispersed

(Farnham and Pimlot, 1990: 47-48). Moreover, since these approaches view society as comprising of a variety of individuals and groups, each holding divergent values and interests, of central importance to them is the accommodation of these different values, pressures and competing interests within organisations (Torrington and Hall, 1991: 8). The industrial conflict and pluralist theories are arguably the dominant theoretical approaches to IR in Britain (Farnham and Pimlot, 1990, 1995).

Over time, as the theories in IR developed toward facilitating employee welfare, commitment and quality, “personnel” management practices begun to gain importance within people management. The boundaries between IR and personnel started to haze, IR gradually becoming part of the personnel function orientating its focus on collective bargaining and negotiations. An appreciation of the IR theory is crucial to understanding the concepts of personnel, human resource management (HRM) and strategic HRM (SHRM), since the early ideas on IR underpin these modern approaches to people management. Personnel and HRM are discussed next (section 2.1.2.4).

#### 2.1.2.4. Personnel and Human Resource Management (HRM)

The personnel management paradigm dominated the field during late 1970s and 1980s. Torrington and Hall (1991: 15) describe the function as being *workforce-centred*, directed mainly at the organisation’s employees. They explain the role of personnel specialists to include the recruitment and training of employees, arranging for them to be paid, explaining management’s expectations and justifying their

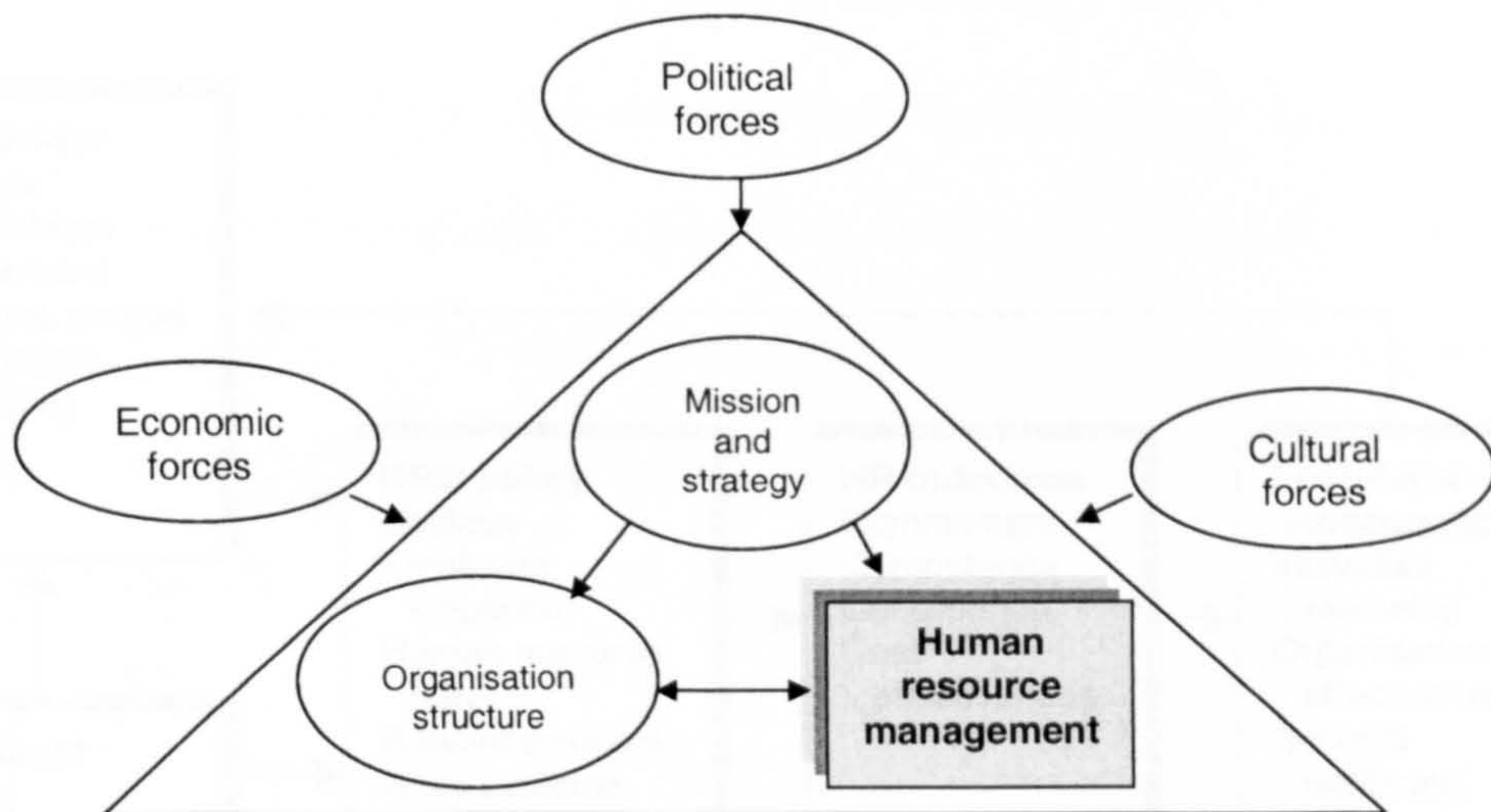
actions to the employees, satisfying the non-managerial employees' work-related needs, dealing with their problems and seeking to modify management action that could produce unwelcome employee response. Key features of this style are focus on procedures and control, administration of employment contracts and job grades and collective bargaining with little strategic involvement (Sparrow and Marchington, 1998: 10). Although unquestionably a management function, personnel never totally identified with management interests; rather it focused on understanding and articulating the aspirations and views of the workforce (Torrington and Hall, 1991). This paradoxical arrangement resulted in ineffective mediation of the needs of the organisation and those of the employees, since the personnel specialists' authority to influence change relied on implementation of personnel policy and procedures at operational level (Legge, 1989; Storey, 1992).

In the late 1980s, the concept of human resource management (HRM) made its way to Britain from the US bringing with it the strategic version, SHRM, less than a decade later. HRM shifted the focus from personnel administration toward training and development, organisational culture and performance-related reward mechanisms (Sparrow and Marchington, 1998: 10). This was achieved through emphasis on planning, monitoring and control, rather than implementation of personnel/ human resource (HR) policy and procedures or mediation. Torrington and Hall (1991: 15-16) view the function as being *resource-centred*, directed mainly at fulfilling the organisation's needs for human resources to be provided and deployed. The emphasis on human resource, rather than employees, had two major implications. Firstly, the HRM paradigm is concerned with the management and development of the management team (Storey, 1992). Secondly, it encourages

employment flexibility through non-standard forms of employment, such as part-time work, self-employment and subcontracting (Emmott and Hutchinson, 1998). This initiated changes to the way work is organised within organisations drawing attention to the tensions between the welfare-oriented industrial relations/ personnel framework and business-driven need for human resource development (Sparrow and Marchington, 1998). The strategic HRM (SHRM) moved this a step further with a focus on organisational redesign, broad set of competencies, human resource planning (HRP) and tying various people management practices, initiatives and processes together (Mabey and Salaman, 1995). This is discussed next in section 2.1.2.5.

#### 2.1.2.5. Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM)

Central to the field of SHRM lies the argument that the effectiveness of an organisation largely depends on the efficient use of human resources. It comprises a set of practices designed to maximise organisational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work (Guest, 1987: 503). The elements and values of the concept are not new, but their combination and power to influence organisational change is novel (Mabey *et al*, 1998: 36). It differs from HRM in its emphasis for relationships between structures and strategy and the environment external to an organisation (Tichy *et al*, 1982; Fombrun *et al*, 1984; Boxall, 1992). Devanna *et al*'s (1984) 'matching model' of SHRM is one of the early illustrations of this (Figure 2.4).

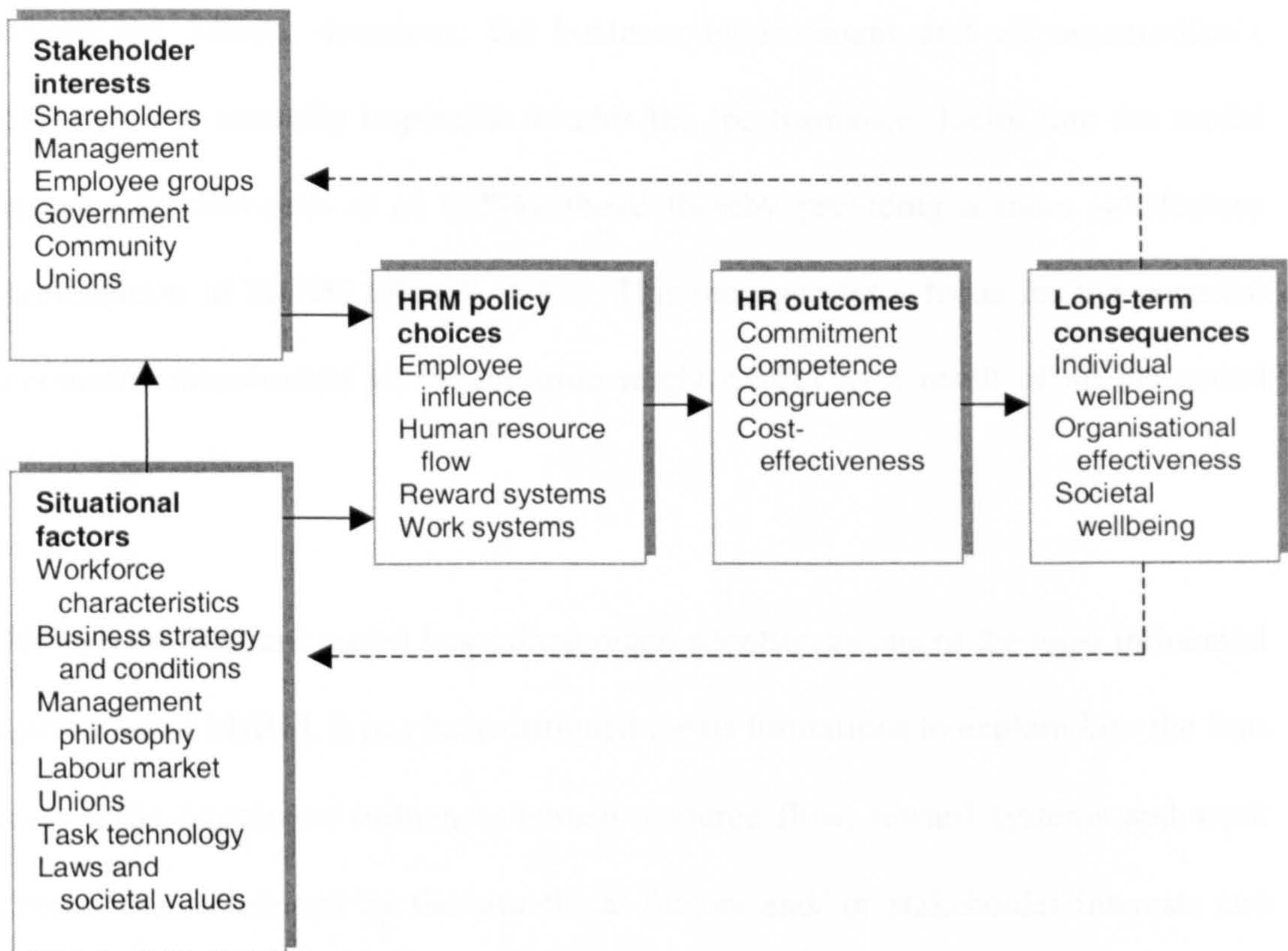


**Figure 2.4:** Matching model of SHRM (Devanna *et al*, 1984)

The matching model (Figure 2.4) clearly illustrates the SHRM emphasis on the relationships between HR, organisational structures and strategy and the environment external to an organisation. It focuses on the integration of HR policies with the organisational mission, strategy and structures as well as the [external] political, cultural and economic forces that influence the way an organisation is managed (Sisson, 1990). The model is useful in its plain and clear-cut view of the organisation in the context of the wider environment, however, this simplicity presents a drawback in that the model lacks sufficient detail for analytical purposes (Boxall, 1992).

An alternative view to the matching model is the ‘map of the HRM territory’ by Beer *et al* (1984) shown in Figure 2.5.





**Figure 2.5:** The map of the HRM territory (Beer *et al*, 1984: 16)

This 'map of the HRM territory' (Figure 2.5), or the 'Harvard model' as it is better known, is probably one of the most influential illustrations of SHRM in that it embodies the environmental influences and factors internal to an organisation together with analytical components (Figure 2.5). The model provides an open-systems model for SHRM, which shows the 'situational factors' and 'stakeholder interests' influence on HR policy, the HR policies' influences on the HR outcomes and what the long-term consequences of operating a SHRM approach to people management may be (Beer *et al*, 1984). The model also shows that the long-term consequences shape the situational factors and stakeholder interests, thereby providing a cyclical representation of the SHRM decisions, the business environment

and an organisation's performance (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2001: 678). This link between the SHRM decisions, the business environment and an organisation's performance is crucially important. It adds the 'performance' factor into the model suggested by Devanna *et al* (1984) above thereby providing a more satisfactory representation of SHRM (Boxall, 1992). This incorporates a focus for the potential outcomes/ achievements an organisation might expect as a result of an integrated SHRM approach.

Although the Harvard model has gained much attention as one of the most influential illustrations of SHRM, it has been critiqued for its limitations to explain *how* the four policy areas (employee influence, human resource flow, reward systems and work systems) are influenced by the situational factors and/ or stakeholder interests and how they might affect the HR outcomes (Loosemore *et al*, 2003: 40, emphasis added). The model does not explain how HR should be considered as a strategic function (*ibid.*).

Drawing on the prescriptive and analytical qualities of the Harvard model Guest (1987) and Hendry and Pettigrew (1990) among others have developed British approaches to SHRM. Guest's contribution is realised in a set of propositions he developed: strategic integration, high commitment, high quality and flexibility, which he considered to be amenable to testing (Guest, 1987; Beardwell and Holden, 1998: 17). The main contribution of Hendry and Pettigrew's 'strategic change and HRM', or 'Warwick', model (Figure 2.6) is in that it incorporates culture and business outputs into the framework. The model reflects European traditions and management styles with an emphasis on a full range of tasks and skills that define

HR as a strategic function. This compensates for the Harvard model's inability to explain the 'how' relationships between the different components of the HR system (see discussion on the Harvard model above).

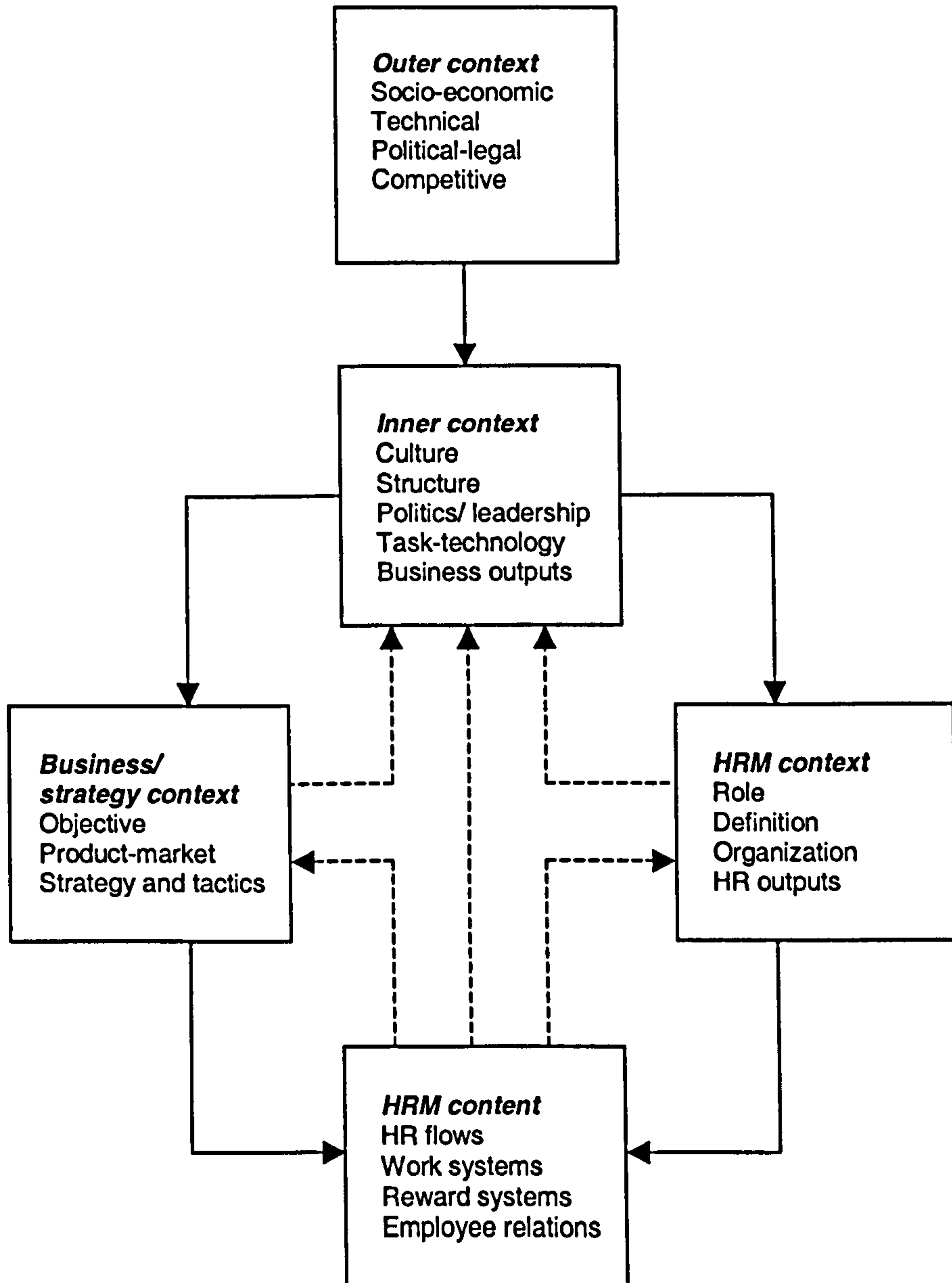


Figure 2.6: The Warwick model of strategic change and HRM (Hendry and Pettigrew, 1990)

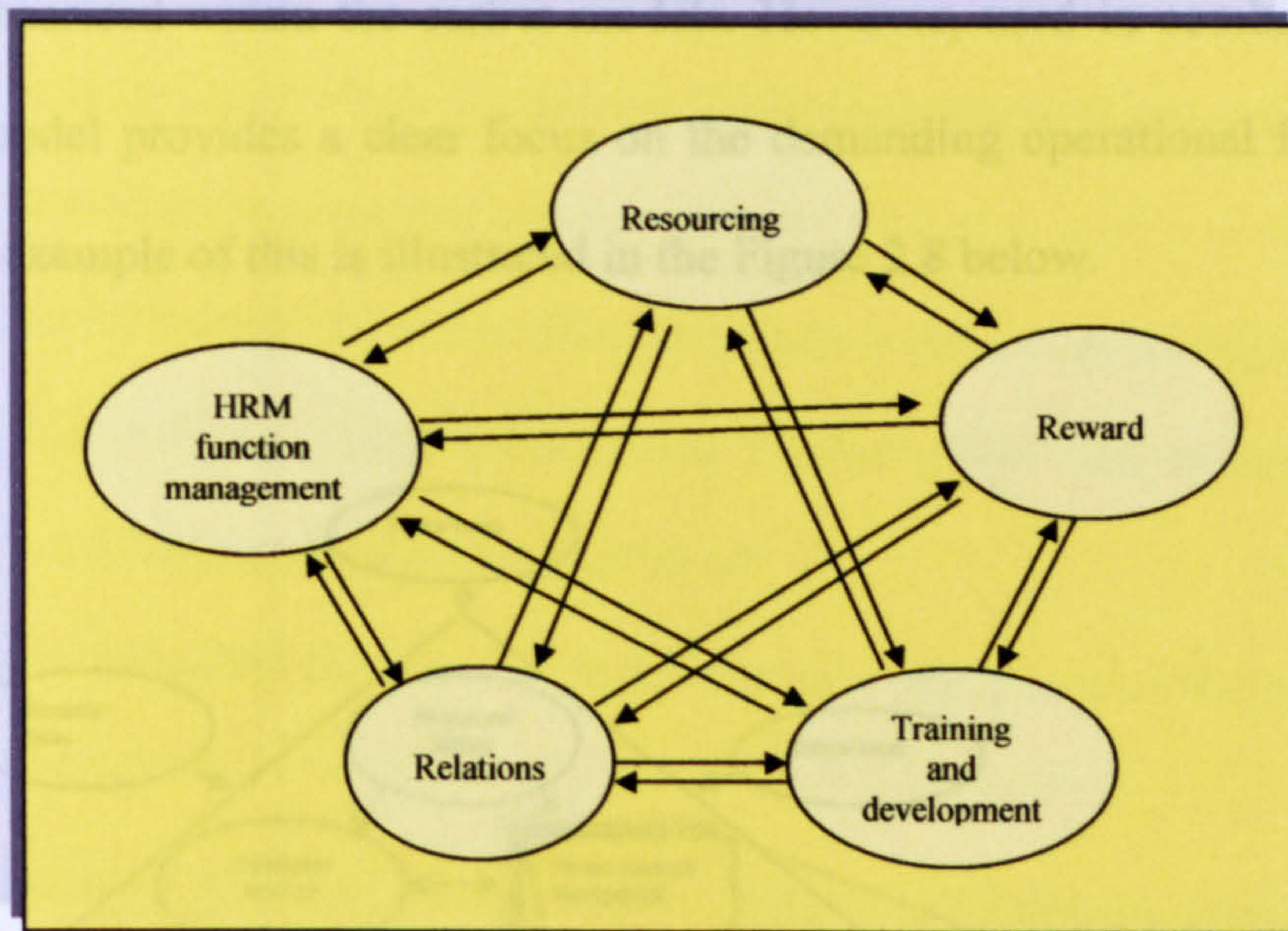
The four HR elements in the Warwick model (Figure 2.6) focus on:

- The use of planning
- A coherent approach to the design and management of HR systems
- Matching HR activities and policies to business strategy
- Seeing people of the organisation as a 'strategic resource' for achieving competitive advantage (Hendry and Pettigrew, 1990).

The fifth element incorporates external factors, the environment, into the model. This completes the model as an analytical framework for assessing the impact of change on the SHRM function. Each element of the model reflects a particular context within which an organisation operates. This allows for a comprehensive view of the organisational factors and contexts to be established with the view of achieving competitive advantage through the effective deployment of people.

A more recent model 'the integration of HRM systems' by Sparrow and Marchington (1998: 86) represents the complex relationships of the distinct but interdependent SHRM functions and processes (Figure 2.7). The five interdependent sets of SHRM systems illustrated in the model are:

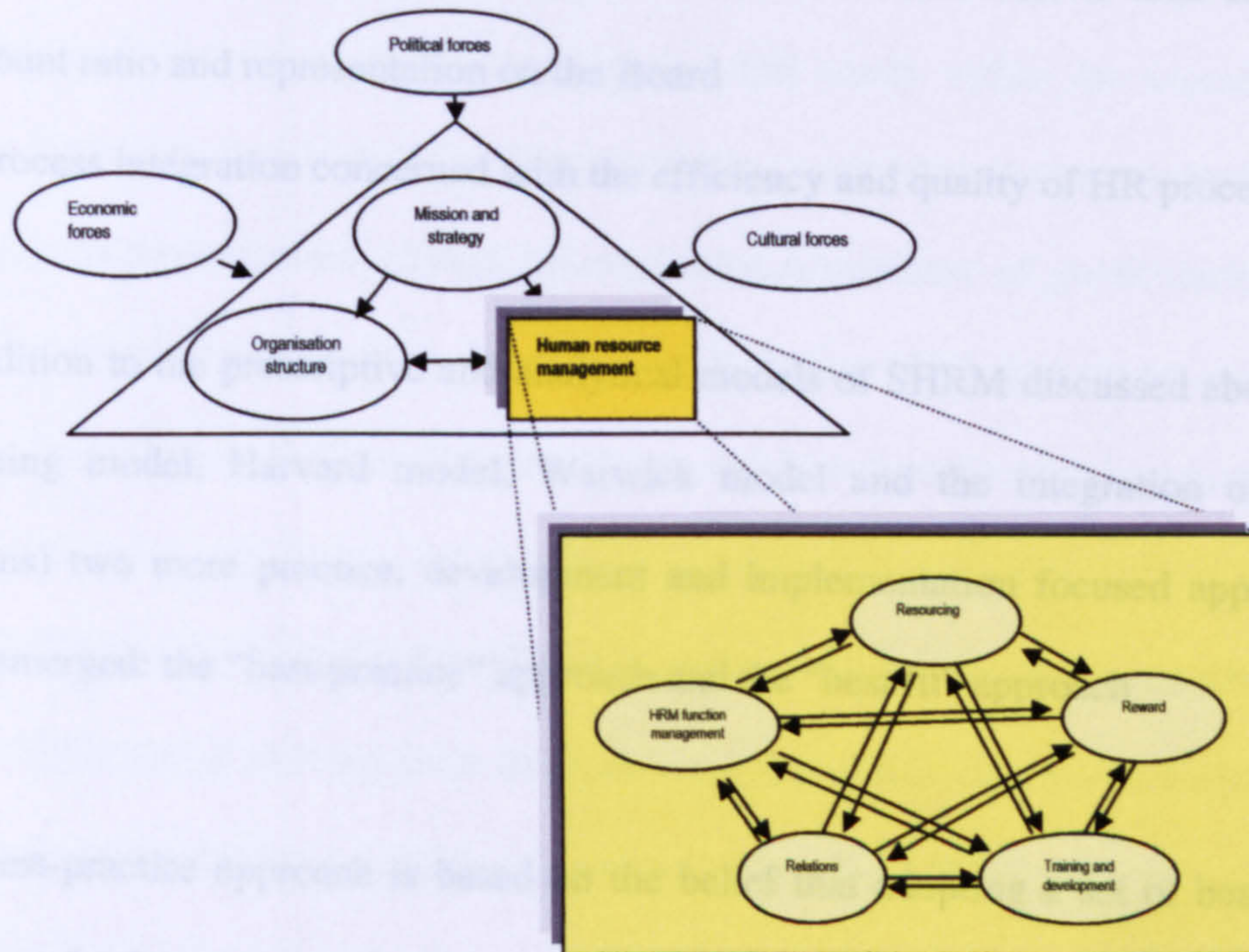
- Employee resourcing systems
- Reward systems
- Training and development/ human resource development (HRD) systems
- Employment relations systems
- Management of the HR function systems (Sparrow and Marchington, 1998: 86).



**Figure 2.7:** The integration of HRM systems (Sparrow and Marchington, 1998: 16)

In short, according to Sparrow and Marchington (1998: 86), the employee resourcing systems include role definition, resource planning, recruitment and selection, performance management and release from the organisation. The reward systems' focus is on monetary as well as non-monetary remuneration and benefits. The training and development systems provide suitable conditions for learning and the employment relations comprise of individual and collective communications systems and collective representation. The management of the HR function include team integration, organisational performance monitoring and management of the HR function. Each of these elements is discussed in more detail under section 2.3: components of SHRM.

As a stand-alone model, the 'the integration of HRM systems' lacks the external context emphasised within the earlier models. However, used in combination with these, the model provides a clear focus on the demanding operational functions of SHRM. An example of this is illustrated in the Figure 2.8 below.



**Figure 2.8:** A holistic approach to SHRM

This model incorporates the four types of integration that are necessary for effective SHRM: organisational (and environmental) integration, policy integration, functional integration and process integration. According to Mabey and Salaman (1995: 169) these consist of:

- Organisational (and environmental) integration, where a coherent HR strategy is owned by the Board and accepted by line management, and a willingness to incorporate a HR dimension in important strategic decisions

- Policy integration, which is concerned with the content of the strategy and the extent to which the resulting policies cohere
- Functional integration, within which emphasis is placed upon a high-quality HR department in terms of professionalism, number of HR staff to total employee count ratio and representation on the Board
- Process integration concerned with the efficiency and quality of HR processes.

In addition to the prescriptive and analytical models of SHRM discussed above (the matching model, Harvard model, Warwick model and the integration of HRM systems) two more practice, development and implementation focused approaches have emerged: the “best-practice” approach and the “best fit” approach.

The best-practice approach is based on the belief that adopting a set of best HRM practices leads to a superior organisational performance (Armstrong and Baron, 2002). Pfeffer (1994) lists a set of seven “best HRM practices” to include employment security, selective hiring, self-managed teams, high compensation contingent on performance, training, reduction of status differentials and sharing information. This approach has received heavy criticism on its notion of a “one size fits all” (Cappelli and Crocker-Hefter, 1996 in Armstrong and Baron, 2002; Purcell, 1999; Marchington and Grugulis, 2000;). Indeed, Becker *et al* (1997) note:

*“Organisational high-performance work systems are highly idiosyncratic and must be tailored carefully to each firm’s individual situation to achieve optimum results” (Armstrong and Baron, 2002).*

It is for this reason that best fit is seen more effective than best practice. 'Good practice' and 'leading-edge practice' are accepted as useful indicators of the type of solutions that work in certain situations, but a universal prescription of a one-right-way must be impossible (Purcell, 1999). The best fit approach encourages continuous analysis and evaluation of the business and HR needs within the organisational contexts (culture, structure, technology, processes, environment) and suggests that in response to the outcomes of such an evaluation a selection of good/ leading-edge practices should be implemented (Mabey and Salaman, 1995; Armstrong and Baron, 2002). Nevertheless, the best fit approach has also been heavily criticised in that it is

*"limited by the impossibility of modelling all the contingent variables, the difficulty of showing their interconnection, and the way in which changes in one variable have an impact on others"* (Purcell, 1999).

Indeed, Purcell (1999) argues:

*"We need to be more sensitive to the process of organisational change and avoid being trapped in the logic of rational choice"*.

Although SHRM may seem a well established field of study with its many models and theories, it has many critics and sceptical supporters. An ongoing debate on whether SHRM is just a new name for the old approach; personnel management, has faithfully stayed on the research agenda ever since the development of the early models. Answers as to the current state of this debate cannot be formulated in a simple manner, and as aspects of the SHRM approach to managing the employment



relationship contain notes of contradiction, there are no signs for the discussion coming to an end in the near future (Boxall, 1992; Beardwell and Holden, 1997: 23; Sparrow and Marchington, 1998: 12-13; Purcell, 1999; Marchington and Grugulis, 2000; Gibb, 2001).

#### 2.1.2.6. Summary: the conceptual differences between IR/ personnel and SHRM

The concept of SHRM developed from the organisational behaviour and management theories (section 2.1.1), through the industrial relations (IR) (sections 2.1.2.1 – 2.1.2.3) and personnel management (section 2.1.2.4) paradigms, as an integrated approach to people management. The fundamentals of the concept emerged, grew and tightened through these early models. However, throughout the development of the concept, several writers highlighted aspects of SHRM to contain notes of contradiction. The works of Guest (1987), Legge (1989), Sisson (1993) and Storey (1992) formed the key contributions to the on-going debate on the differences between IR/ personnel and SHRM.

Guest (1987) and Sisson (1993) argue in favour of SHRM in that it is concerned with:

- An integration of HR policies with business planning
- A shift in responsibility for HR issues from personnel specialists to line managers
- A shift from the collectivism of management (trade-union relations) to the individualism of management (employment relations)

- Emphasis on commitment, flexibility and quality.

Legge (1989), on the other hand, provides an overtly critical perspective on SHRM, finding little difference with the underlying values of personnel management. She argues that organisational constraints may well make a truly integrated approach highly impractical as SHRM concentrates on managers and emphasises the key role of line management and the responsibility of top management for managing culture.

In contrast to the approaches of Guest, Sisson and Legge, Storey's (1992) contribution to the debate was in a form of an 'ideal type' classificatory matrix of a 27-item checklist (Table 2.1) for research and analytical purposes. This instrument allows for sets of approaches be pinpointed in organisations by highlighting the main features of each, IR/ personnel and SHRM, and outlining the differences between the two in an exaggerated way.

Table 2.1: The 27-item checklist (Storey, 1992)

Dimension	IR/ personnel	SHRM
<i>Belief and assumptions</i>		
1. Contract	Careful delineation of written contracts	Aim to go 'beyond contract'
2. Rules	Importance of devising clear rules/ mutuality	'Can do' outlook: impatience with rule
3. Guide to management action	Procedures/ consistency control	'Business need'/ flexibility/ commitment
4. Behaviour referent	Norms/ custom and practice	Values/ mission
5. Managerial task vis-à-vis labour	Monitoring	Nurturing
6. Nature of relations	Pluralist	Unitarist
7. Conflict	Institutionalised	De-emphasised
<i>Strategic aspects</i>		
8. Key relations	Labour-management	Business-customer
9. Initiatives	Piecemeal	Integrated
10. Corporate plan	Marginal to	Central to
11. Speed of decisions	Slow	Fast
<i>Line management</i>		
12. Management role	Transactional	Transformational leadership
13. Key managers	IR/ personnel specialists	General/ business/ line managers
14. Communication	Indirect	Direct
15. Standardisation	High (e.g. 'parity' an issue)	Low (e.g. 'parity' not seen as relevant)
16. Prices management skills	Negotiation	Facilitation
<i>Key levers</i>		
17. Selection	Separate, marginal task	Integrated, key task
18. Pay	Job evaluation: multiple, fixed grades	Performance-related: few if any grades
19. Conditions	Separately negotiated	Harmonisation
20. Labour-management	Collective bargaining contracts	Towards individual contracts
21. Thrust of relations with stewards	Regularised through facilities and training	Marginalised (with the exception of some bargaining for change models)
22. Job categories and grades	Many	Few
23. Communication	Restricted flow/ indirect	Increased flow/ direct
24. Job design	Division of labour	Teamwork
25. Conflict handling	Reach temporary truces	Manage climate and culture
26. Training and development	Controlled access to courses	Learning companies
27. Foci of attention for interventions	Personnel procedures	Wide-ranging cultural, structural and personnel strategies

In conclusion, despite the diversity of opinion as regards to the differences between IR/ personnel and SHRM, Storey (1992: 271) points out that SHRM carries the potential to bring coherence and direction to a cluster of personnel interventions through an approach which is complete with management techniques and

underpinning philosophy. Within the modern business environment, this view suggests that the effectiveness of an organisation largely depends on the efficient use of human resources via practices designed to maximise organisational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work. This puts forward a comprehensive approach toward the management of people within organisations, which is integrated, individualistic and business focused, and incorporates flexibility. Key development from the earlier models is the concept's concern for factors external to the organisation, the environment. These qualities make the approach a more effective solution for contemporary people management than those grounded in the personnel management paradigm, which focused on procedures and control, administration of employment contracts and job grades and collective bargaining with little strategic involvement. Thus, the literature supports hypothesis one (H1) as set out in the introduction (section 1.2), which asserted that:

*“SHRM provides a more effective approach to employee resourcing than those grounded in the personnel management paradigm through improved organisational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work”.*

The next section explores the current trends dominant in the field of SHRM, with a view of establishing a focus for examining the three interrelated components of the function: employment relations (section 2.3.1), human resource development (HRD) (section 2.3.2) and employee resourcing (2.3.3).

## 2.2. CURRENT TRENDS IN SHRM

SHRM [Chapter 2]												
Origins [section 2.1.]				Current trends [section 2.2.]					Components [section 2.3.]			
Org. behaviour/ management [2.1.1.]	Industrial relations (IR) [2.1.2.]	Personnel and human resource management (HRM) [2.1.2.4.]	Strategic human resource management (SHRM) [2.1.2.5.]	Psychological contracts [2.2.1.]	Flexibility [2.2.2.]	Careers [2.2.3.]	Employee involvement (EI) [2.2.4.]	HR information systems (HRISs) [2.2.5.]	Employment relations [2.3.1.]	Human resource development (HRD) [2.3.2.]	Employee resourcing [2.3.3.]	
											Staffing [2.3.3.1.]	Performance [2.3.3.2.]
											HR admin [2.3.3.3.]	Change [2.3.3.4.]

Contemporary SHRM emphasises the individualisation of the employment contract, focusing on the individual employees' psychological contracts, flexibility, careers and employee involvement (EI). Technological advances have initiated the development of sophisticated HRISs to support the management of these and other people related issues within organisations. These current trends on SHRM are discussed below.

### 2.2.1. *Psychological contracts*

Rousseau (1994) defines the psychological contract of employment as

*“the understanding people have, whether written or unwritten, regarding the commitments made between themselves and their organisation.”*

This infers a mutual expectation of commitment from employer and employee, or a two-way exchange of perceived promises and obligations (Guest and Conway, 2000). According to Rousseau (1995), the psychological contract can be positioned anywhere along a continuum bounded by two distinct theoretical types. These are:

- *Relational contracts* – long-term, open ended relationships within unitary organisations which lead to the exchange of loyalty, trust and support
- *Transactional contracts* – short-term relationships set within pluralistic organisational contexts and characterised by mutual self-interest.

Regardless of where the psychological contracts sit within the transactional-relational continuum, they should be seen as interactive and dynamic (Herriot and Pemberton, 1996). The employer and employee continually inform, negotiate, monitor and re-negotiate (or exit) the employment relationship. Qualities central to the psychological contract include individual differences, interpersonal interaction, motivation, leadership and management style, group/team dynamics, change and empowerment (Makin *et al*, 1996).

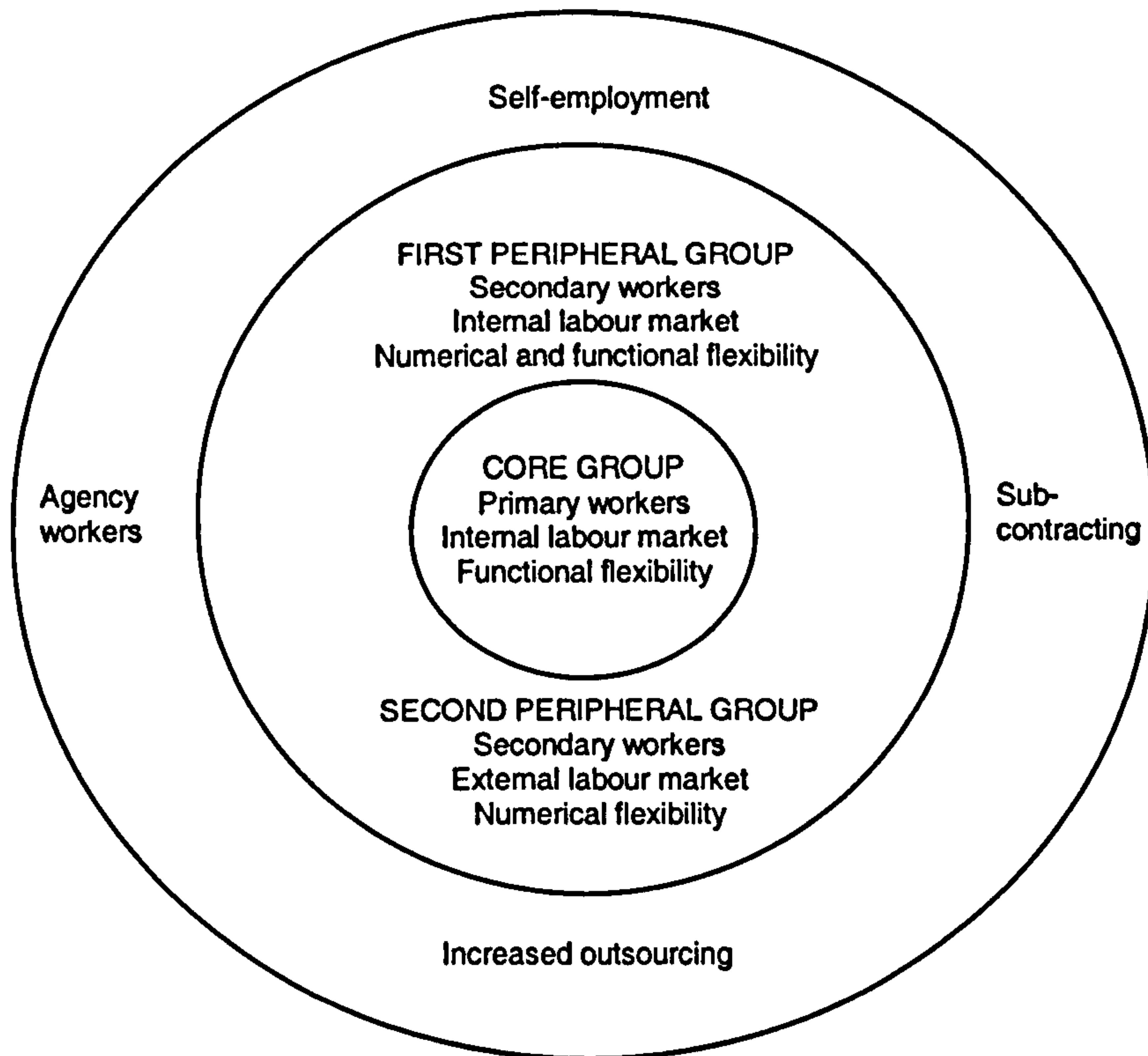
From a functional perspective, psychological contracts accomplish two tasks: they help to predict the kinds of outputs which employers will get from employees, and what kind of rewards the employee will get from investing time and effort in the organisation (Hiltrop, 1996). A breach, break or violation of the psychological contract will have negative impacts on its qualities. These may include reduced trust, job satisfaction and commitment to remaining with the organisation and the withdrawal of some types of employee obligation (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994; Hiltrop, 1996; Lester and Kickul, 2001). Consequently, understanding the content of psychological contract is key to understanding the factors which lie behind employee turnover.

### 2.2.2. *Flexibility*

Flexibility is an equal key concern for modern people management practice. It is a necessary requirement for all parties entering the employment contract, be that the employer, employee or a third party representing either one of these. Taylor (2002b: 403) highlights two important reasons:

- An organisation that is flexible is able to deploy its people and make use of their talents more effectively and efficiently than one that is not
- The more flexible an organisation becomes, the better able it is to respond to and embrace change.

Atkinson's (1981) model 'flexible firm' (Figure 2.9) is one of the most influential and widely debated illustrations of flexibility within organisations.



**Figure 2.9: Flexible firm (Atkinson, 1981)**

By the term 'flexible firm', Atkinson referred to an organisation that is competitive in the modern business environment (Taylor, 2002b: 405). He intended the model as an illustration of flexibility as a form of employment strategy (Atkinson, 1981).

The model (Figure 2.9) proposes a break up of the traditional hierarchical structure of the organisation and suggest that radically different employment policies can be pursued for the different groups of employees (Atkinson, 1984). The different groups of employees include two types within the organisation's internal labour market: the



core group and first peripheral group. External sources of labour are provided by the second peripheral group and sub-contracting, outsourcing, agency temporaries and self-employed. The internal labour markets exercise mainly functional and numerical flexibility. The core group consists of stable, key staff which conduct the organisation's central activities. At this core, only tasks and responsibilities change (functional flexibility) and so the employees are protected from the fluctuations in the economic markets (ibid.). The first peripheral group is less stable but the employees are often full-time as those within the core group. This group however have less opportunities for career development or long-term job security; numerical flexibility is often sought in response to market fluctuations.

The second peripheral group and other external source of labour (sub-contracting, outsourcing, agency temporaries and self-employed) seek to "*maximise [numerical] flexibility while minimising the organisation's commitment to the worker*" (Atkinson, 1984: 29). Jobs within this category are often highly specialised and therefore carried out by specialist contractors (outsourcing) or mundane, such as office cleaning (part-time).

Although Atkinson's model has been extremely influential in initiating wide reaching debate internationally (OECD, 1986, 1989; Brewster, 1998) it has also received heavy criticism on its limited utility and lack of theoretical robustness (Pollert, 1988). In addition, the model is rather restricted in its sole focus on flexibility as a strategy employed by the organisation to achieve competitive advantage.

As modern business organisations now commonly adopt multiple and parallel forms of flexibility in response to pressures (such as the changing nature of work, increased use of technology and the need for improved operations) the traditional forms of flexibility incorporated within the flexible firm model (functional, financial and time flexibility) have been replaced by a more complex set of flexibilities (Sparrow and Marchington, 1998: 18-19):

- *Numerical flexibility* (does the job need to be one within the internal labour market or can it be sufficiently controlled through outsourcing or other type of peripheral form of employment?)
- *Functional flexibility* (what are the roles and competencies deemed appropriate for the job, does the job need to be staffed by a multiskilled individual, are there core competencies that must be delivered, or important business process skills that need to be acquired?)
- *Financial flexibility* (what is the best balance between the type and nature of reward and the delivery of performance?)
- *Temporal flexibility* (what time patterns should the job be fitted into, will the employees be able to deliver the highest level of customer service and business performance through these time patterns?)
- *Geographical flexibility* (does the job need to be carried out in specific locations or is there latitude for teleworking/ virtual teams?)
- *Organisational flexibility* (does the organisation operate as adhocracy/ a loose network of suppliers, purchasers and providers/ temporary alliance/ joint venture?)

- Cognitive flexibility (does the job require people with a particular type of psychological contract, what sorts of strategic and cognitive assumptions cannot be tolerated?).

These broaden the focus of flexibility from the organisational strategy for competitive advantage to include the employee perspective and accommodation of their needs and preferences. Indeed, flexibility has received increasing attention within the SHRM literature as an organisational tool for retaining staff (this is discussed in more detail in section 2.3.1 under employment relations). Thus, the Sparrow and Marchington's set of flexibilities provide a more accurate assumption of the use of flexibility within modern organisations than that introduced by Atkinson's flexible firm.

Volberda (1997) and Englehardt and Simmons (2002) expand on the Sparrow and Marchington's view of flexibility, particularly so within the organisational flexibility. Volberda highlights specific examples of different types of internal and external flexibility. He categorises these under 'routine', 'adaptive' and 'strategic' levels, as shown in Table 2.2.

This usefully provides the wider context for discussing flexibility, simultaneously incorporating elements of SHRM, such as use of temporary labour (external operational flexibility) and creating multifunctional teams and changing managerial roles (internal structural flexibility), into the approach.

Table 2.2: Examples of internal and external flexibility (Volberda, 1997: 171)

Capacity for manoeuver	Type of flexibility	
	Internal	External
<i>Routine</i>	<i>Internal operational flexibility</i> Variation of production volume Building up inventories Use of crash teams	<i>External operational flexibility</i> Use of temporary labour Multisourcing Reserving capacity with suppliers
<i>Adaptive</i>	<i>Internal structural flexibility</i> Creating multifunctional teams  Changing managerial roles  Alterations in control systems	<i>External structural flexibility</i> Purchasing components from suppliers with a short delivery time (JIT) Purchasing subassemblies from suppliers (co-makship) Developing subcomponents together with suppliers (co-design)
<i>Strategic</i>	<i>Internal strategic flexibility</i> Dismantling current strategy  Applying new technologies  Fundamentally renewing products	<i>External strategic flexibility</i> Creating new product market combinations Using market power to deter entry and control competitors Engaging in political activities to counteract trade regulations

Englehardt and Simmons (2002) suggest that a two-tier organisational structure exists, within which the operational structure of an organisation is complemented by a loosely bounded developmental layer. The operational structure provides a focus for the organisation and its key activities. Flexibility within this structure is achieved by the use of horizontal communication and teamwork. The developmental layer encourages experimentation and self-development within the organisational values and incentives. This supports the organisation's ability to respond to change. The combination of the two offers a framework for both control of execution and flexibility for change (ibid.).

The increased need for organisational flexibility has contributed to a growing sense of job insecurity amongst employees as companies have undergone radical restructuring, delayering or downsizing (Sparrow and Marchington, 1998: 16). These changes in organisational structures have led to flatter managerial hierarchies with

few opportunities for vertical progression. Jobs have been rationalised, communication links streamlined and functional barriers brought down (ibid.). Hence, careers have emerged as another key theme in contemporary SHRM.

### 2.2.3. Careers

Environmental pressures, the individualisation of the employment contract, changing nature of SHRM and increased demand for flexibility have contributed toward fundamental changes in careers (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Thite, 2001; Baruch 2003). The traditional hierarchical structures have been replaced by more open systems within which an individual is required to navigate his/ her way with only minimal support from the organisation (Watts *et al*, 1981; Hall, 1986; Arthur *et al*, 1989; Woodd, 2000). Thite (2001: 313) usefully summarises this (see Table 2.3).

Traditionally the organisational personnel policies and structures clearly directed their employees through almost pre-defined careers. Under the contemporary framework many organisations have responded to the challenging context by abandoning practically all responsibility for career management (Thite, 2001). According to Schein (1996) this is due to the fact that

*“Both the organisation and the individual are gradually adjusting to the notion that they have to look out for themselves, meaning that organisations will become more paternalistic and individuals more self-reliant.”*

**Table 2.3: Traditional and contemporary framework of career management (Thite, 2001: 313)**

	<b>Traditional framework</b>	<b>Contemporary framework</b>
<b>Environmental context</b>	Production driven Protected markets Stable technology Familiarity with domestic political, legal and cultural framework	Era of discontinuity and hyper competition at a global level Service driven Technology intensive Global markets with unpredictable economic, political and cultural scenarios
<b>Organisational response</b>	Growth at any cost business strategy Mechanistic, product, functional, divisional structures Hierarchical, multiple management levels Supervisor-based, time-bound promotions Command and control management style Responsible for individual career planning and development Uni-dimensional career movements (ladder)	Knowledge and information technology driven learning organisation Strategic collaboration with competitors Network, cellular structures Small component of core employees and big component of part-time, casual and contract staff Empowerment of people 360-degree feedback Competency based outsourcing Self-directed teams Delaying Multi-dimensional career movements (jungle gym)
<b>Individual response</b>	Loyalty to organisation in return for lifelong and steady growing employment Minimal responsibility for career management Emphasis on specialisation of skills Collective bargaining of employment issues	Diminishing loyalty for organisation Focus on employability rather than job Portfolio of jobs and skills Increasing emphasis on life-style issues Acceptance of near-total responsibility for career management Life-long learning

Nevertheless, others argue that careers are still to an extent “property” of the organisation and hence should be managed by them (Baruch, 2003). It is recognised that the traditional bureaucratic framework is no longer feasible. Instead, a normative model for organisational career management may be more appropriate. Baruch (2003) identifies this type of an approach to incorporate a portfolio of organisational career practices and analytical dimensions. The organisational practices are (ibid.):

- *Posting (advertising) internal job openings*
- *Formal education/ tuition reimbursement*

- *Counselling by manager/ HR* (two-way communication between manager/ HR representative and employee on career issues)
- *Lateral moves/ job rotations* (job transitions/ moves at the same hierarchy level within the organisation aimed at creating cross-functional experience, particularly relevant where fewer hierarchy levels exist and horizontal communication is a key to success)
- *Pre-retirement programmes* (directed at a target population approaching retirement, aims to ease the transition from full working life to retirement)
- *Succession planning, formal mentoring and common career paths*
- *Dual ladder* (a parallel hierarchy created for professional/ technical staff which enables them upward mobility and recognition without a move to a managerial role particularly suitable for professionals without managerial skills or no intention of becoming managers)
- *Career booklets/ pamphlets and written individual career plans*
- *Assessment centres* (a reliable and valid tool used to evaluate people in an extended rigorous work sample process, usually specifically designed for evaluating the potential of present or future managers) and *development centres* (directed toward general development and enhancement of particularly managers, preparing them for future roles)
- *Use of performance appraisal or 360° feedback for career planning* (performance appraisal assesses and measures employee performance against agreed objectives, 360° feedback is a multi-rater appraisal mechanism which incorporates the views of peers, subordinates, internal and external customers and the manager)

- *Induction/ orientation programmes* (“socialising” new employees into the organisation) and *career workshops* (short-term workshops focusing on specific aspects of career management, such as identifying future opportunities or improving employability, with the aim of providing managers (and employees) the relevant knowledge, skills and experience)
- *Special attention* (e.g. high-flyers, dual-careers couples) and *equal opportunities/ managing diversity population* (e.g. age, gender, minorities – practices not necessarily concerned with discrimination, but providing support)
- *Creating (and maintaining) balanced psychological contracts* (from provision of realistic job previews, through fair and open communication, to open discussion on exit)
- *Secondments* (temporary assignment to another area within the organisation, or externally, aimed at generating different/ holistic perspective of the organisation).

The analytical dimensions include strategic orientation, developmental focus, decision-making and innovative approach (ibid.). The strategic orientation means that SHRM (and its individual components) are managed as an integrated comprehensive strategy, which is applied within the organisation’s overall strategic management. Developmental focus promotes investment in the development of people, the organisation’s core asset and source for competitive advantage, with the presumed reward of improved performance, effectiveness and efficiency. Decision-making seeks to identify and align the appropriate SHRM practices with the organisational strategic decision-making. The innovative approach incorporates novel ideas and concepts, such as the intelligent career (basic investment and development of know-how), the boundaryless career (managing careers outside the



organisational boundaries), the post-corporate career (the need to rethink the type of relationship the organisation has with its employees, i.e. is it based on a traditional contract of employment/ subcontracted/ etc.), the protean career (major role of career management on the individual) and career resilience (the need for organisations to “educate” their employees and incorporate them into the realm of instability where employability rather than long-term employment is the norm).

This type of approach formulates a broad comprehensive career system, which can help balance the responsibility of career management between the individual employee and organisation and support both sides in this crucial area (Baruch, 2003: 244). This is in line with the suggestions by Brightman and Moran (2001), whom highlight the importance of aligning individual employees’ personal needs and priorities with the requirements of the organisation. They identify eight management techniques (leadership, coaching, corporate citizenship, change management, efficiency, team working, customer focus and decision-making) that can help people to successfully achieve their performance and career goals, thus simultaneously satisfying the organisational requirements. As with Burach’s model, employee involvement forms a central element in their approach. This is discussed below (section 2.2.4).

#### *2.2.4. Employee Involvement (EI)*

Employee involvement (EI), or empowerment as the concept is often termed, is aimed at achieving staff commitment and participation through increasing employee

voice and decision-making power (Mabey *et al*, 1998; Taylor, 2002b). In essence, it is about increasing organisational effectiveness through manager and employee collaboration and through sharing power and control (Honold, 1997). Peters and Waterman (1982: 238) put this:

*“Treat people as adults. Threat them as partners; treat them with dignity; treat them with respect. [...] if you want productivity and financial reward that goes with it, you must treat your workers as your most important asset.”*

Kochan *et al*'s (1986) early work suggested that employee voice be addressed in two ways:

- By providing opportunities for employees or their representatives to be engaged in decisions affecting their jobs and terms and conditions
- By actively resolving disputes of interest.

Through the growing importance and extending scope of EI this progressed toward a variety of more informal practices (Millward *et al*, 1992 in Corbridge and Pilbeam 1998: 332; Taylor, 2002b: 191). However, while in practice EI now takes a variety of forms, Marchington (1995) argues that these can be categorised into five groups (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4: Five types of EI (Marchington, 1995; Corbridge and Pilbeam, 1998: 332-334)

<b>Type of EI</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Techniques</b>
<i>Downward communication</i>	Managers to provide information to employees in order to develop their understanding of organisational plans and objectives	Formal and informal communications: reports, newspapers, videos, presentations, team briefings
<i>Upward problem-solving</i>	Utilise the knowledge and opinions of employees to, for example, increase the stock of ideas within the organisation, encourage co-operative relationships and legitimise change	Suggestion schemes, total quality management (TQM) and quality circles, attitude surveys
<i>Task participation</i>	Encourage employees to expand the range of tasks they undertake	Job rotation, job enrichment, teamworking, empowerment, semi-autonomous work groups
<i>Consultation and representative participation</i>	An indirect form of EI, aiming to support effective decision-making, air grievances, 'sound out' employee views on organisational plans	Joint consultation, discussions between managers and employees/ their representatives
<i>Financial participation</i>	Relate the employees' overall pay to the success of the organisation with the assumption that employees will work harder if they receive a personal financial reward from the organisation's success	Profit-sharing schemes, employee share ownership plans

Different types of EI are often found to co-exist, particularly within organisations where EI is a central element of the overall management style. Perhaps the most common types are downward communication, consultation and representative participation, and financial participation. These have been found a particularly effective way to managing change (Mabey *et al*, 1998), improving performance (Cruise O'Brien, 1995), ensuring customer satisfaction and encouraging innovation (Wickisier, 1997).

In summary, employee involvement can help organisations to ensure employee commitment through balanced psychological contracts, flexibility and career management by incorporating the individual employees' varying needs and preferences into their planning and policy making processes. Sophisticated technology applications offer significant potential to support this.

### 2.2.5. Human Resource Information Systems

Information Technology (IT) is often seen as an effective stimulus for achieving transformational change. For example Davenport (1993) argues its role as

*“both an enabler and an implementer of process change”.*

‘Human resource information systems’ (HRISs) is the term used to refer to a particular type of software that is aimed at supporting the SHRM function within organisations. Broderick and Boudreau (1992: 17) define HRISs as

*“composite of databases, computer applications and hardware and software that are used to collect/record, store, manage, deliver, present and manipulate data for human resources”.*

In short, HRISs provide an electronic database for the storage and retrieval of employee data that offers the potential for flexible and imaginative use of this data (Tansley *et al*, 2001: 354). Two main types of IT applications suitable to HR needs are:

1. Transaction processing/ reporting/ tracking applications best suited to support routine high volume HR decisions
2. Expert systems which seek to improve decisions through rules derived from careful analysis of expert decisions over time, and decision-support systems that seek to improve decisions for which the rules are changing or are not well

defined, and the right outcomes are unknown (Broderick and Boudreau, 1992: 11-14).

While some of the HRISs available are simply sophisticated database applications, an expert system incorporates artificial intelligence into the system, thereby increasing the system's learning capabilities. An expert system is defined as:

*“a computer program that represents and reasons with knowledge of some specialist subject with a view to solving problems or giving advice”* (Jackson, 1999: 2).

It solves problems by heuristic or approximate methods, which do not require perfect data. Thus, expert systems have the benefit of being able to propose solutions with varying degrees of certainty (Jackson, 1999: 3). Other significant benefit of an expert system is that its workings are transparent: the system is capable of explaining and justifying solutions or recommendations in order to convince the user that its reasoning is correct (ibid.).

The uses of HRISs range from automating the very basic data management tasks, through to enabling managers to integrate their business objectives with the employee resourcing priorities and providing employees with self-service functionality (Tansley *et al*, 2001). Table 2.5 differentiates between the two, automating and informing.

**Table 2.5: Uses and benefits of HRISs (after Tansley *et al*, 2001)**

Automate	Inform
<i>Use of the system</i>	
Electronic filing cabinet	Sophisticated database/ expert system
Enables storing and analysis of employee data	Enables managers to act on HR information
Support more effectively direct control – employee activities and productivity transparent to managers	Assumes a philosophy that the system itself and appropriate managers can make decisions – provides access to comprehensive range of information
Facilitate close supervision and monitoring	Facilitates empowerment and indirect control
HR access	Employee self-service
<i>Benefits</i>	
Task mechanisation – can save mental and/ or physical labour in data management	Can transform HR practices
Process automation – can enable greater efficiency of HR practices	Can enable managers to integrate their business objectives with HRM priorities
Cost reduction (in reduced overheads)	Cost reduction (in reduced overheads)
Improved HR service: faster service, improved quality and consistency of information	Availability and accessibility of wide range of information

This table highlights only few of the key functionalities of HRISs and their associated benefits. Many writers and professional practitioners have recognised the substantial benefits that HRISs can bring to the efficient management of the HR function (see for example: Broderick and Boudreau, 1992; Ettorre, 1993; Greenlaw and Valonis, 1994; Kossek *et al*, 1994; Hosie, 1995; Kinnie and Arthurs, 1996; Edward, 1997; Eddy *et al*, 1999; Ball, 2002). The systems have particular capabilities for managing staffing, HRD, performance, reward and HR administration (Burack, 1985; Carter, 2000; Sokol, 2000; McLeod, 2001; Ball, 2002). They can help HR professionals to improve productivity, control employee benefits, streamline compliance with HR legislation, manage the payroll function, and lower the costs of employee resourcing (CIPD, 2004). As outlined in Table 2.5, in essence they automate daily administrative HR tasks, integrate cross-departmental activities and ensure the accuracy and consistency of employee records.

Recent developments have led to HRISs having the potential to hold comprehensive, almost endless, databases of employee skills and qualities, including their future aspirations, and produce complex reports mapping the employee abilities and preferences against forthcoming vacancies/projects (Snowdrop Systems, 2002). The latest generation of web-enabled HRISs now also allow employees to update their own personnel records, submit timesheet data, review benefits, request holidays and enrol on training courses (Glover, 2004). This integration of so many key SHRM activities can facilitate both the recruitment and retention of staff by delivering automated recruitment features and quantifying the value of total compensation packages (Carter, 2000; Sokol, 2000; McLeod, 2001). However, the key espoused benefit of automating SHRM processes is that it leaves HR professionals and line managers more time to focus on strategic activities, and provides information for them to be able to turn their employee assets to a source of competitive advantage (Cabrera and Boneche, 1999: 51; CIPD, 2004). Thus, HRISs are revolutionising the SHRM function by providing up-to-date information, services to employees, return on investment, and strategic analysis and partnership (Greenlaw and Valonis, 1994; Miller, 1998; CIPD, 2004). Tansley *et al* (2001: 364) concluded:

*“...introduction of the HR system could potentially provide the stimulus to actually effect the required change in employee management practices...”*

This supports hypothesis six (H6) which projected that

*“Information technology (IT) systems offer potential solutions for managing the employee resourcing function effectively”.*

Nevertheless, despite the numerous benefits HRISs can offer, extensive debate exists in relation to the profitable implementation and application of HRISs in practice. According to Tansley *et al* (2001), much of the success depends on nine key factors:

1. Senior management support and commitment;
2. Involvement of representatives from all potential user groups in the project team (e.g. senior managers, HR, IT, line management, employees);
3. Provision of comprehensive range of information on both on the potential system(s) and their potential benefits;
4. Suitability of the potential system to the industry/ sector of work and the specific challenges its environment places;
5. Suitability of the system to the organisational culture(s) and management style;
6. Differences of operating systems/ approaches within different organisational divisions – need for integration/ business process review and redesign;
7. Benefits vs costs;
8. Potential uses of the system (automate/ inform); and,
9. Relationship between HR and HRIS strategy and policies.

Accordingly, the implementation of hypothesis six (*H6: Information technology (IT) systems offer potential solutions for managing the employee resourcing function effectively*) must take into account the factors listed above if maximum benefits of HRISs are to be achieved.

The next section explains the three interrelated components of SHRM: employment relations, human resource development (HRD) and employee resourcing. In light of



the research aims, objectives and hypothesis (section 1.2) focus is placed on the employee resourcing function. Discussion on the four central objectives of resourcing (staffing, performance, HR administration and change) reflect the current trends in SHRM.

### 2.3. COMPONENTS OF SHRM

SHRM [Chapter 2]												
Origins [section 2.1.]				Current trends [section 2.2.]					Components [section 2.3.]			
Org. behaviour/ management [2.1.1.]	Industrial relations (IR) [2.1.2.]	Personnel and human resource management (HRM) [2.1.2.4.]	Strategic human resource management (SHRM) [2.1.2.5.]	Psychological contracts [2.2.1.]	Flexibility [2.2.2.]	Careers [2.2.3.]	Employee involvement (EI) [2.2.4.]	HR information systems (HRISs) [2.2.5.]	Employment relations [2.3.1.]	Human resource development (HRD) [2.3.2.]	Employee resourcing [2.3.3.]	
											Staffing [2.3.3.1.]	Performance [2.3.3.2.]
											HR admin [2.3.3.3.]	Change [2.3.3.4.]

SHRM comprises of the three distinct but interrelated functions referred to above: employment relations, human resource development (HRD) and employee resourcing. Each has its definite focus, however the boundaries between the functions can overlap significantly. In short, employment relations provide an overarching management philosophy for the management of people within an

organisation. HRD centres on training and development of people and organisations. Employee resourcing seeks to bring appropriate people in to the organisation, manage their performance, look after the related HR administration, handle their exit from the organisation and reflect change through the various processes the function involves. Each of these areas is discussed in detail below.

### 2.3.1. *Employment Relations*

Employment relations provide an overarching management philosophy, or style, for the management of human resources within an organisation. The traditional industrial relations issue of dealing with trades unions, together with more recent considerations of equal opportunities and managing diversity, all form aspects of this function. Gennard and Judge (2002: 9) state the purpose being

*“to reconcile the different interests of the buyers of labour services [employers] and the sellers of labour services [employees].”*

At present, much of the employment relations agenda is concerned with

- Employment legislation
- Pay
- Working hours
- Work-life balance
- Equality of opportunity and managing diversity

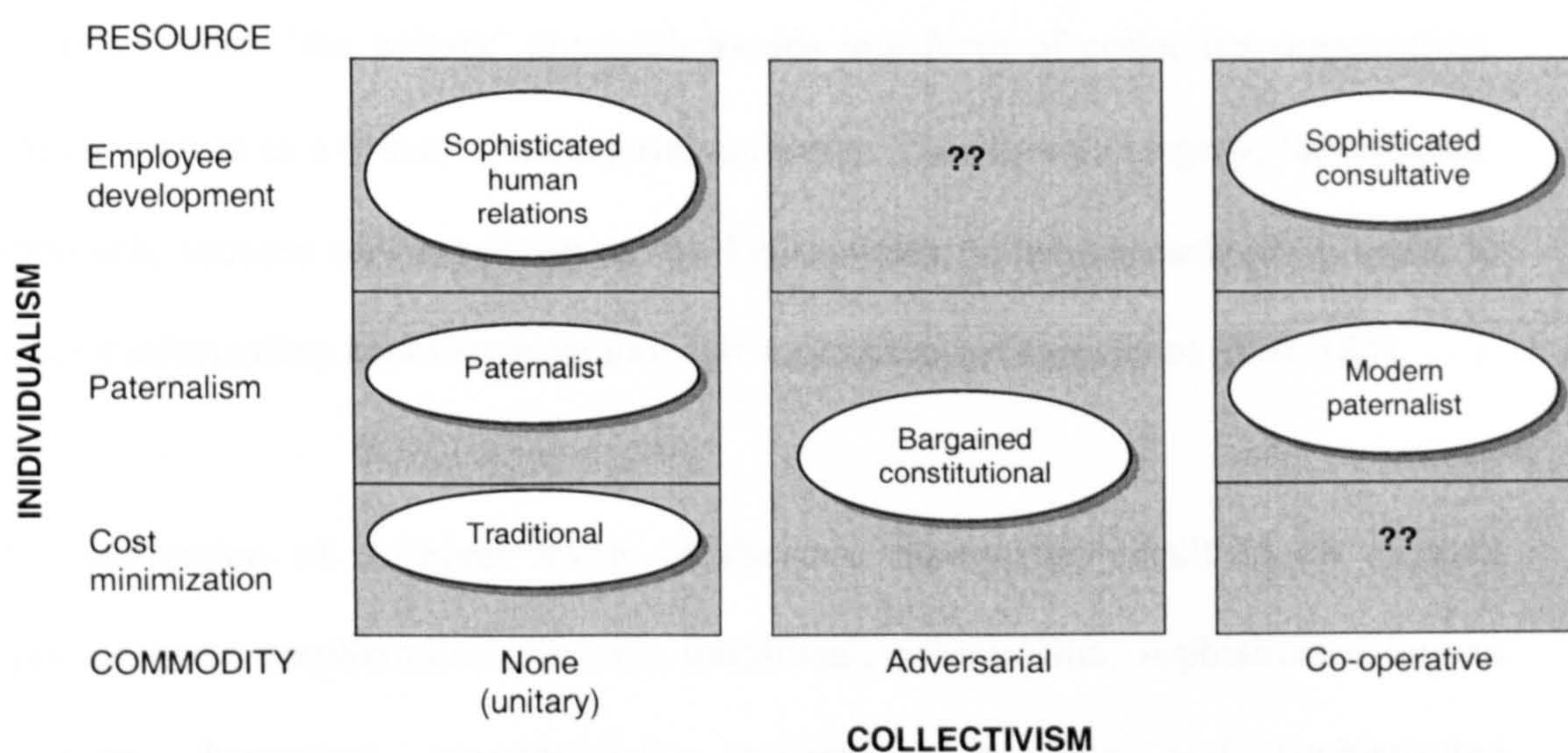
- Management style.

Within these the two major issues for modern business organisations are work-life balance and management style (Morton *et al*, 2001; Taylor, 2002a, 2002b; Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2002; Gennard and Judge, 2002).

The issue of work-life balance has become increasingly important over the last few years. The escalating pressures for high performance have resulted in many employees to work increasingly long hours, which often conflict with their family or other outside work commitments (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2002: 168; see also section 1.1.2). This, together with the intensification of work, has often led to stress related problems (Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2002). In order to combat the absence resulting from stress related problems and shortages in availability of suitably qualified candidates for recruitment and selection, many organisations have recognised their responsibility to assist their employees in achieving work-life balance (Hogarth *et al*, 2001 in Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2002). Family-friendly policies and flexible forms of working are common initiatives organisations have adopted in attempts to accommodate the employee needs and thereby facilitate staff retention. These include childcare arrangements and/ or assistance, special leave arrangements (maternity/ paternity/ parental/ emergency leave), home- or teleworking, part-time and/ or term-time working, annual hours and flexitime. Although powerful retention tools, such arrangements have implications for staff deployment, a central employee resourcing activity. This is discussed further in section 2.3.3.

Management style is of significant importance since a key feature of SHRM is to devolve much of the HR responsibility to the operational line management (Sparrow and Marchington, 1998; Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2002). This requires careful management of the HR-line interface if organisations are to maintain a healthy balance of interests in line with the purpose of the function as stated above. Thus, the HR professionals' role in advising the operational managers particularly on the increasingly complex web of national and EU legislation remains crucial (Gennard and Judge, 2002: 92). The extent of this task is dependent on the management style held within an organisation, since it influences the organisational culture, determines the approach adopted toward conflict resolution and dictates the kind of strategies and practices that are likely to succeed within an organisation.

Gennard and Judge (2002: 208-210) summarise different management styles falling under the broad categories of unitary or pluralist, and within these authoritarian, paternalistic, consultative, constitutional or opportunist approaches. Each combination has two additional dimensions: individualism and collectivism (*ibid.*). Purcell and Ahlstrand (1994) developed a useful model for classifying management styles along the individualist-collectivist dimensions. This is shown in Figure 2.10.



**Figure 2.10:** The management style matrix (Purcell and Ahlstrand, 1994: 178)

This model identifies the two dimensions, individualism and collectivism, as not mutually exclusive. Hence, they are incorporated within a matrix structure. The individualistic dimension (on the vertical axis) places the management styles on a continuum where on the 'resource' end employees are viewed as individuals with needs, aspirations, competencies and particular skills of their own and the 'cost minimization' approach treats them as homogeneous blocks of people with personnel policies unable to distinguish between individuals and individual performance (Purcell and Ahlstrand, 1994: 179). Between the two extremes falls paternalism, which refers to use of personnel policies that emphasise employee loyalty achieved via generous pay and benefits packages (ibid: 180).

On the horizontal axis the collectivistic dimension focuses around employee groups and teams. On the one hand, 'the co-operative', it recognises that employees have the right to form themselves into independent or quasi-independent organisations and actively encourages employee participation (Purcell and Ahlstrand, 1994: 183). On

the other hand, 'the unitary' approach avoids any form of collective organisation. This is viewed as a threat to managerial authority. The central category, 'adversarial' approach, focuses on bargaining as the key activity, in which each party seeks to restrict information flows in order to reach a compromise agreement (ibid: 184).

A combination of different levels of the two dimensions result in six distinct approaches to employment relations: traditional, paternalistic, sophisticated human relations, bargained constitutional, modern paternalistic and sophisticated consultative. Purcell and Alhstrand (1994: 188-201) describe these as follows:

- *Traditional* – aim to minimise costs of employee remuneration, recruitment and training, no mechanism for recognising employee views, “command-and-control” management, common result high staff turnover
- *Paternalistic* – stability and order, caring image, reasonable pay, little expectations or opportunities for promotion, training provision centred on matching the skill requirements of the current task/ job
- *Sophisticated human relations* – commitment to employee involvement (EI) and teamwork, aim to generate employee loyalty and commitment and thereby maximise productivity and responsiveness to change, carefully formulated and conducted HRM procedures, above average pay rates, recognition for each individual employees contribution to the organisation, expectation for employees to work ‘beyond their contract’
- *Bargained constitutional* – employees managed much in the style of ‘traditionalists’ or ‘paternalists’ but with the difference that employee organisations (such as trades unions or works councils) are recognised,

management is unlikely to value union presence, policies developed around the need to achieve stability and control

- *Modern paternalistic* – welfare-orientation, employee organisations recognised and valued, focus on establishing constructive relationships, management of change
- *Sophisticated consultative* – almost identical to the ‘sophisticated human relations’ approach in its heavy investment on employees in order to maximise their contribution to the organisation, but with the difference that employee representation through collective means is actively encouraged, aim to create constructive relationships.

The ‘??’ boxes in the figure represent inherently unstable conditions which are unlikely to last (Purcell and Ahlstrand, 1994: 186). For example, it is unrealistic to assume that ‘cost minimization’ characterised by lowest possible wage levels and organisational reluctance to engage in training and developmental activities would be met by highly co-operative behaviour on the part of an employee welfare organisation (such as trades union or works council).

The type of management style adopted within an organisation influences the approach taken in relation to the other components of SHRM: the human resource development (HRD) and employee resourcing functions. The next section discusses approaches to HRD.

2.3.2. *Human Resource Development (HRD)*

Human resource development (HRD) is a vehicle for facilitating organisational and individual learning through training and development (Beardwell and Holden, 1997; Sisson and Storey, 2000). Systematic as well as ad-hoc development programmes help to ensure staff have the skills required for their current roles and can develop those required for future posts. It can also work as a motivating factor: significant training indicates commitment to people and the recipients are more likely to feel valued (Sisson and Storey, 2000). From a business point of view HRD can be seen as a tool for creating sustainable competitive advantage (Burden and Proctor, 2000).

El-Sawad (2002: 286) identifies 'soft' and 'hard' elements to HRD (Table 2.6). The soft implies investment in people, the hard suggests cost and expendability. These frequently operate simultaneously, and indeed El-Sawad (1998a: 225) suggests that this may be the most beneficial way of managing HRD.

**Table 2.6:** The dualistic dimension of HRD (El-Sawad, 1998a: 224)

'Soft'	'Hard'
Strategic	Operational
Organisation	Individual
Cultural	Structural
Change	Maintenance
Long-term	Short-term
Organic	Packaged
Proactive	Reactive
Future needs	Present needs
Human resource development	Human resource development
Indirectly managed	Directly managed
Employee-driven	Employer-driven
Continuous development	Ad hoc development
Organisational learning	(No/dis-)organised learning
Double loop learning	Single loop learning
Investment	Cost
Enabled	Controlled
Structured	Unstructured
Facilitated	Directed



Put simply, the hard element of HRD relate to mandatory training courses, such as health and safety updates. The soft dimension on the other hand takes a more holistic view within the concepts of organisational learning, continuous development and learning organisation. The following sections expand on these two areas.

### **2.3.2.1. Training and Development**

Training and development includes a range of formal and informal activities that are aimed at providing employees with the skills required to carry out their job. This includes the maintenance and further development of their existing capabilities as well as the learning of new competencies. Training activities (the 'hard' element of HRD) usually refer to employer-driven, short-term courses focused on the present needs, as alluded to in Table 2.6 above. Developmental activities are often more unstructured and incorporate learning undertaken outside the organisational boundaries. Organisational development is the result of collective learning within the members of the organisation, whom deliver their development into the organisational practice (Harvey and Butcher, 1998; Massey and Walker, 1999).

The training cycle (Figure 2.11) presents a planned, systematic and cyclical process for identifying and suitably responding to individual and organisational training and development needs (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2002: 394). The current and future business needs act as the 'driving force' for the four-stage process (Wills, 1994; Lee and Chon, 2000).



**Figure 2.11:** The systematic training model (El-Sawad, 2002: 291)

- 1 *The training needs analysis (TNA) can be carried out at an organisational, job/ occupational and/ or individual level. Comprehensive TNA requires a broad range of internal and external data available for analysis, for example,*
- Internal: the organisational strategy, structure, technology, managerial style, culture, working conditions, employees' aspirations and skills.
  - External: political, economic, social, technological, legal and competitive environmental information (El-Sawad, 1998a: 229).

The assessment of this data ideally leads to measures of (i) current and future business performance needs and (ii) current performance and capability levels; and by comparing the two (iii) to the identification of the current and potential future capability gaps and (iv) which training and development interventions might effectively address them within the (v) target population (McClelland, 1993).

2 – 3 *Training design and delivery* should focus on what is to be learned and how people learn (Harrison, 1997). These influence the choice of appropriate training methods, for example, whether traditional packaged classroom learning experiences are to be offered, computer-based e-learning encouraged or informal, ‘organic’, on-the-job learning facilitated via mentoring/coaching. Kolb’s (1996) learning cycle and Honey and Mumford’s (1982) learning styles inventory provide useful frameworks for the design and delivery of training and development solutions that support the achievement of the desired learning outcomes. The traditional ‘reinforcing theory with examples’ does not work with every individual, group, situation or even topic, therefore different “learning modes” and “learning styles” should be accommodated (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2002). Kolb’s (1996) learning modes support development via a four stage process which begins with concrete experience, leads to reflective observation and abstract conceptualisation before closing with active experimentation. He argues such a process promotes both active and passive, concrete and abstract, learning and thus delivers quicker and easier learning outcomes. Honey and Mumford (1982) also focus on four learning styles. Their instrument comprises of activists who learn best by active involvement, reflectors who learn best by reviewing and reflecting, theorists who learn best when new information can be located within the context and concepts and theories, and pragmatists who learn best when they see a link between new information and real-life problems and issues (Harrison, 1997).

- 4 A major objective of the *training and learning evaluation* is to demonstrate the impact of HRD investment (Sheenan and Kearns, 1995; El-Sawad, 1998a: 234; Bee and Bee, 2003). Reid *et al* (1992) suggest five levels at which the evaluation may be useful:
- Reactions of trainees to the training programme
  - Whether trainees learned what was intended
  - Learning transfer back to the work environment
  - Whether the training has enhanced departmental performance
  - The extent to which the training has benefited the organisation (the ultimate level).

This operational/ mechanistic view of HRD falls under the 'hard' category. The more developmental 'soft' side clearly highlights the attitudinal aspects of HRD, as demonstrated within Organisational Learning (OL) next.

#### 2.3.2.2. Organisational Learning (OL)

Organisational learning (OL) forms the 'ideal'-type HRD within the four models-in-practice (El-Sawad, 1998a: 227) illustrated in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7: HRD models-in-practice (El-Sawad, 1998a: 225-226)

	<b>Intermittent pattern</b>	<b>Institutionalised pattern</b>	<b>Investor pattern</b>	<b>Internalised pattern</b>
<b>Managerial commitment to HRD</b>	Low	Apparent	High	<i>Very high</i>
<b>HRD activity</b>	Little visible activity	High level of visible activity	Systematic, cyclical, organisationally-managed approaches to identifying and responding to development needs	<i>Acceptance of a strong developmental ethos (but quietly so), HRD activity more visible</i>
<b>Training and development interventions</b>	Infrequent, ad hoc, reactive, often in response to a crisis	Large budgets invested in extensive off-the-job, fixed menu training on the basis of assumed needs	Substantial expenditure carefully managed, prioritised and targeted at actual business-defined development needs	<i>Developmental philosophy strongly embedded within the organisational culture, learning a day-to-day business-as-usual activity</i>
<b>Learning</b>	No organised learning	Disorganised learning	Organised learning	<i>Organisational learning</i>

OL fosters organisational change and renewal on a continuous basis, and encourages creativity and innovation (O’Keefe, 2002). It seeks to continuously question the norms, which define effective performance (Collin, 1994). Thus, continuous development is a central element of OL. It emphasises the attitudinal dimension of OL, which is clearly reflected in the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) statement on continuous professional development (CPD):

*“CPD is an attitude as well as a process – the continual and conscious search for, and recognition of, learning in almost every activity and situation.”* (El-Sawad, 2002: 295)

The OL approach to HRD recognises, values and positively encourages people to take advantage of learning opportunities on-the-job, off-the-job (e.g. on formal training courses) and outside of work. Ultimately, this leads to a climate of self-

development, which in turn links in with the concept of Learning Organisation (LO). LO is discussed in section 3.3.5.

The approach taken to HRD has significant impact on staff retention. High levels of managerial commitment to training and development are frequently reported to encourage staff retention (Glover, 2002; Pickard, 2002; Watkins, 2003; Persaud, 2003). Staff retention is also one of the central aims of the employee resourcing function. The resourcing function is introduced and discussed in the context of the current trends in SHRM next.

### *2.3.3. Employee Resourcing*

The major components of employee resourcing are: staffing, performance, HR administration and change management (Taylor, 2002b: 3). These main functions consist of several individual, but interrelated management activities, as summarised in Table 2.8 and discussed below under headings extracted from this table.

In short, the staffing and performance objectives aim to ensure that the right numbers of employees with the right skills and competencies are in the right place at the right time. This is a balancing act in which managers are faced with taking into account the longer-term strategic considerations of HRP while providing immediate solutions for the shorter-term operational issues, such as recruitment and selection, team deployment, dismissal and redundancy (Rothwell, 1995; Beardwell and Holden, 1997). Ideally, management of staffing and performance are simultaneously

concerned with ensuring the best possible performance is achieved whilst facilitating employees' career progression and offering them appropriate reward for their efforts. HR administration focuses on the collection, storage and use of employee data supporting the monitoring and analysis of HR information (Torrington *et al*, 1991: 22). The change aspect of the function aims to achieve appropriate recognition for the significance of change and facilitate the continuous evolution of the organisational strategies and practices through the interrelated aspects of staffing, performance and HR administration.

**Table 2.8: Employee resourcing tasks with related HRM activities and objectives**

<b>SHRM objective</b>	<b>SHRM activity</b>	<b>Tasks involved</b>
Staffing	Human resource planning (HRP)	Strategic human resource forecast (SHRF) – an input; development of a human resource plan – an output
	Recruitment and selection	Identification and analysis of recruitment needs; drawing of job descriptions and person specifications; advertisement of the vacancy; shortlisting candidates; selection process utilising appropriate selection techniques (i.e. interviewing, assessment centres, etc.); selection of the 'right' candidate; induction
	Team deployment	Formation and building of effective teams; deconstruction and redeployment of teams
	Exit	Redundancy, retirement, dismissal, voluntary exit
Performance	Performance management	Continuous evaluation and performance appraisal; feedback and reward
	Career management	Promotion; personal and professional development planning (PDP)
HR admin.	Collection, storage and use of employee data	Utilisation of appropriate HR administration system, e.g. manual filing system or a computerised human resource information system (HRIS)
Change management	"Change agent"	Ensuring proper recognition is given to significance of change; management of business and SHRM processes via which organisational culture and structure continually evolve

### 2.3.3.1. Human resource planning (HRP)

The primary concern of human resource planning (HRP) is to integrate the strategic and operational requirements of the business with a workforce equipped to provide the services and products that customers demand (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2002). Some doubts exist as to whether HRP is a worthwhile activity given the turbulence of modern business environment (*ibid.*). However, Laufer *et al* (1999) argue for the crucial importance of planning, especially within the dynamic project-based sectors, in that it can help reduce uncertainty, introduce structure and create order and action. Turner (2002), in support of this view, distinguishes two fundamental components to effective HRP: establishing a strategic human resource forecast (SHRF) and preparing a human resource plan. The SHRF is a key input to the direction of an organisation. A human resource plan is developed to act as a means to achieve strategic HRM targets, and thus forms the output (Turner, 2002).

### 2.3.3.2. Recruitment and selection

The reconciliation of the HRP outcomes with the shorter-term operational conditions of the business indicates the levels of recruitment required. Larraine and Cornelius (2001) highlight the importance of:

- Analysing the organisation's long-term resource requirements
- Clear advertising of the vacancies via appropriate media thereby ensuring the widest possible pool of suitable candidates is attracted and much desired choice in the selection process achieved



- Determining appropriate reward linking the process with other HRM strategies
- The measurement, review and evaluation of the selected candidates' performance being fed into the organisation's performance management systems.

By emphasising the continuity of the process and the links with other HRM systems Larraine and Cornelius' approach reveals the vital importance of effective recruitment and selection process; ensuring an appropriate supply of skilled staff that can positively contribute toward the achievement of the business objectives.

#### 2.3.3.3. Team deployment

The staffing function is also increasingly concerned with team formation and building, and the deconstruction and redeployment of teams (De Feis, 1987; Mendelsohn, 1998; Spatz, 2000). The fundamental requirement of effective team deployment is to select team members carefully on the basis of their personality and skills (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993). This is crucial; enforced changes in key project personnel are highly disruptive to project performance (Chapman, 1999). Many typologies and approaches to achieving effective team composition exist. For example, Belbin's (1991) team role model and Margerison and McCann's (1991) team management wheel can aid the selection of individuals who together form a balanced and complementary workgroup. However, effective team performance also relies on members' abilities to successfully integrate their individual actions (Zaccaro *et al*, 2001). In addition, Gray (2001) found that organisational climate affects the success of a project team. Characteristics, such as freedom of expression,

participation in the definition of goals (employee involvement) and innovation were found to positively impact project outcomes. He concluded:

*“a low threat, secure and stable environment in which individual contribution is maximised within a distinctive team culture offers the optimum environment for successful project outcomes”* (Gray, 2001).

This kind of climate rarely exists within the modern business environment and so effective leadership is vital in defining team direction and in ensuring their optimum performance (Kliem and Anderson, 1996; Zaccaro *et al*, 2001). Flexibility is a key requirement to which the team deployment activities must respond. As discussed in section 2.2.2, the use of multiple and parallel flexibilities help ensure that an organisation (i) is able to deploy its people and make use of their talents effectively and efficiently, (ii) is able to respond to and embrace change, and (iii) is able [and willing] to accommodate the employee needs and preferences with a view of retaining staff. Sole focus on organisational competitive advantage potentially violates the psychological contract construct (see section 2.2.1) and leads to an exit from the organisation.

#### 2.3.3.4. Exit

The monitoring and management of exit from the organisation is best carried out on an on-going basis and its outcomes applied into the organisational learning processes as they emerge (Huxtable and Cheddie, 2002). The management of involuntary forms of exit, such as redundancies, retirements or dismissals, should adhere to legal

and procedural guidelines (ibid.). Absence, employee turnover and voluntary means of exit from the organisation may, on the other hand, be managed through performance and career management processes.

#### 2.3.3.5. Performance/ career management

Performance and career management mechanisms focus on maximising individual, team and organisational performance whilst facilitating employees' career development (Mabey *et al*, 1998). Performance management systems, particularly those aimed at evaluating team performance via a composite of qualitative and quantitative measures, can also help assess the complex sum of variables that contribute to effective team/ project performance. Skilfully operated systems provide a useful tool for managing the balance between the competing organisational, project and individual employee priorities, needs and preferences. Employee involvement is a key to the success of performance and career management initiatives and systems. Unless employees feel an integral part of the process, they are unlikely to buy into the long-term commitment often required to achieve desired results. As Baruch (2003) suggested (section 2.2.3), a normative model, within which both the employee and manager actively participate in decision-making, may provide an appropriate solution for managing modern careers.

#### 2.3.3.6. HR administration

HR administration focuses on the collection, storage and use of employee and organisational data and supports the monitoring and analysis of HR information (Torrington *et al*, 1991). As discussed in section 2.2.5, contemporary human resource information system (HRIS) solutions provide sophisticated instruments to aid this process (CIPD, 2002b). The most advanced web-enabled software interfaces with other administrative programmes and include “self-service” capabilities whereby individual employees update their own records which can subsequently be used in the strategic HRP activities. This makes process integration easier, reduces managers’ administrative workload and encourages employee involvement among the numerous other benefits detailed in section 2.2.5.

#### 2.3.3.7. Change management

Many of the challenges within employee resourcing are concerned with change. Thus, the fourth SHRM objective employee resourcing activities seek to fulfil is change management. Change management as an academic subject is an area of significant research and many organisations have dedicated departments or teams managing their change programmes. The employee resourcing remit of change management is not to interfere with this but rather support an integrated implementation and application of change. The aim is to ensure that the significance of change in organisations is recognised and that changes are managed effectively (Taylor, 2002b: 3). This involves the management of processes through which the

organisational structure and culture progressively evolve (ibid.), such as recruitment and selection, team deployment and performance and career management. Warrick (1994) refers to “change agents”:

*“Change agents are specialists in managing change and developing high-performance organisations, teams and individuals.”*

Change management in the context of this thesis therefore refers to the means to achieve enhanced organisational effectiveness and individual development (Harrison, 1997: 146) via a strategic and integrated employee resourcing activities.

#### 2.3.3.8. Approaches to employee resourcing

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) identifies three main approaches to employee resourcing (Taylor, 2002b: 13). These include the traditional paradigm, the contingency-based paradigm and new paradigms.

##### *The traditional resourcing paradigm*

The traditional paradigm is based on established “good practice”. According to Taylor (2002b: 14) this paradigm assumes that an organisation is medium or large in size and that it has control over the environment within which it operates. The environment is competitive and employees employed on permanent contracts of employment. The various resourcing processes progress in chronological order, for

example, from recruitment and selection to performance and then in time to retirement.

### ***The contingency-based resourcing paradigm***

The contingency-based paradigm recognises that organisations vary in their environments, aims and structures (Taylor, 2002b: 14-16). The approach highlights no one right way to manage the employee resourcing activities. Hence, it is particularly suitable for transient organisations as no resistance to change is held.

### ***New resourcing paradigms***

The new approaches to employee resourcing emphasise innovation and un complication. Taylor (2002b: 16) describes the approach as *“take a blank sheet of paper and focus on the goal”*. This follows the Buckingham and Coffman’s (2000) ‘first, break all the rules’ model, which encourages managers to “do things differently” with the belief that *“people are capable of almost anything”*. In this the approach is the complete opposite of the traditional paradigm. The four keys to achieving innovation and un complication in their view are: finding the right fit for employees, focusing on the strengths of employees, defining the right results and selecting staff for talent, not just for knowledge and skills. *“The aim is to focus people toward performance”* and *“the manager is, and should be, totally responsible for this”* (Buckingham and Coffman, 2000).

Regardless of the approach adopted, employee resourcing is highly contingent and contextual. The objectives of employee resourcing, and the relationships between these objectives, are contingent upon particular organisational circumstances and the organisational context (Corbridge and Pilbeam, 1998: 2). Consequently, the three interrelated components of SHRM (employment relations, which provide the overall management philosophy for the organisation (section 2.3.1); HRD, which aims for organisational effectiveness via training and development (section 2.3.2); and employee resourcing, which focuses on staffing, performance, HR administration and change (section 2.3.3)) provide an integrated network of practices which each influence and in turn are influenced by the related activities.

#### **2.4. IN CONCLUSION: THE CHALLENGES AND ADVANTAGES OF SHRM**

A summary of the key SHRM functions and their sub-systems and processes together with an account of the challenges and advantages these provide to modern business organisations is provided in Table 2.9. This is not to offer an exhaustive list of all the factors involved but rather an indicative summary of the issues discussed.

**Table 2.9:** Summary of the key SHRM functions and the challenges and advantages to modern businesses

<b>SHRM functions</b>	<b>Operational sub-systems/ processes</b>	<b>Challenges/ advantages to modern businesses</b>
<i>Employment relations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overarching people management philosophy and style</li> <li>• Collective bargaining</li> <li>• Negotiations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualisation of employment contracts – psychological contracts</li> </ul>
<i>Human resource development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Personal and professional development</li> <li>• Coaching, mentoring</li> <li>• Organisational learning (OL)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift in focus from providing skills for an individual to perform the current post, toward providing a range of competencies 1) necessary for improving current performance and 2) those required for future posts</li> </ul>
<i>Employee resourcing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing, incl. recruitment and selection, promotion, deployment, dismissal, redundancy, retirement, HR planning, etc.</li> <li>• Performance and career management</li> <li>• HR administration</li> <li>• Change management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills shortages</li> <li>• Changes in career structures</li> <li>• Need for flexibility</li> <li>• Increased need for continuous individual and organisational performance improvement</li> <li>• Adopting/ utilising HRISs</li> </ul>

These functions, systems and processes are interdependent, as was identified within the discussion on Sparrow and Marchington's 'integration of HRM functions' model (section 2.1.2.5). Despite this, the different areas of SHRM have often been considered and studied separately, due to their wide reach and applicability which makes an in-depth investigation into SHRM as a whole impractical, if not impossible. The employment relations and human resource development categories have received much of the extensive attention within the field, whilst the employee resourcing agenda has consisted of a smaller number of studies that frequently focus on one particular operational aspect of the function. Therefore, and in line with the research aims, objectives and hypothesis (section 1.2), focus within this thesis is placed on the employee resourcing systems and processes.

Hypothesis one (*H1*), as set out in the introduction (section 1.2), suggested that:



*“SHRM provides a more effective approach to employee resourcing than those grounded in the personnel management paradigm through improved organisational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work”.*

Section 2.1.2.5 supported this contention. SHRM was shown to provide a comprehensive approach toward the management of people within organisations, which is integrated, individualistic and business focused, incorporates flexibility and takes into account factors external to the organisation, the environment. The view suggests that the effectiveness of an organisation largely depends on the efficient use of human resources via practices designed to maximise organisational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work. These qualities make the approach more effective solution for contemporary people management than those grounded in the personnel management paradigm, which focused on procedures and control, administration of employment contracts and job grades and collective bargaining with little strategic involvement.

Furthermore, hypothesis six (*H6*), also set out in the introduction (section 1.2), suggested that:

*“Information technology (IT) systems offer potential solutions for managing the employee resourcing function effectively”.*

This was supported by the discussion on HRISs (section 2.2.5) under the current trends in SHRM. HRISs were shown to have revolutionised the SHRM function by

providing up-to-date information, services to employees, return on investment, and strategic analysis and partnership by potentially provide the stimulus to effect the required change in employee management practices.

The next chapter (3) looks at the challenges project-based environments introduce to the efficient management and allocation of the organisation's human resources in the context of the construction industry.

# Chapter Three

## Current approaches to employee resourcing within the construction industry

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The previous chapter (Chapter 2) established the theoretical basis for a strategic human resource management (SHRM) approach to employee resourcing. This chapter presents a more in-depth review of the employee resourcing literature in the context of the construction industry. To begin with, the environment within which project-based work is carried out is defined and the distinction between 'operations' and 'projects' is discussed. Building on this, a detailed examination of project work and the current initiatives adopted to address the challenges within such an environment is then carried out via an analysis of the construction industry. Next, the industry literature on SHRM and employee resourcing is discussed. The importance of the resourcing function to effective strategic management of the organisation/projects is highlighted and current models are critically evaluated. A conceptual model of the construction employee resourcing cycle is presented. The chapter is

concluded by linking the challenges faced by the industry in adopting a SHRM approach to employee resourcing (Chapter 1) and the literature in support of such a strategy (Chapter 2) together.

### 3.1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PROJECT-BASED WORK

Work within organisations is generally categorised under ‘operations’ or ‘projects’. The operations are primarily ongoing and repetitive, where as projects are characterised by impermanence, uniqueness and uncertainty (Hamilton, 1997:64). Table 3.1 summarises the differences between project work and operations.

**Table 3.1: Project work versus operations (Hamilton, 1997: 65)**

<i>Projects</i>	<i>Operations</i>
Revolutionary change	Evolutionary change
Disequilibrium	Equilibrium
Limit in time and scope	Eternal
Unbalanced objectives	Balanced objectives
Unique	Repetitive
Transient resources	Stable resources
Goal orientated	Role orientated
Effectiveness	Efficiency
<i>Examples of business sectors</i>	
Construction	Manufacturing plant
IT/ consultancy services	Retail/ banking

Turner and Müller (2003: 7) provide a definition of a project:

*“A project is a temporary organisation to which resources are assigned to undertake a unique, novel and transient endeavour managing the inherent*

*uncertainty and need for integration in order to deliver beneficial objectives of change.”*

They arrived at this revised definition (for earlier versions see Turner, 1990; 1993; 1999) via considering project as (i) a production function, (ii) a temporary organisation, (iii) an agency for change, (iv) an agency for resource utilisation, and (v) an agency for uncertainty management. These elements were analysed on the basis of the project aims, features, pressures and processes outlined in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2: Features of projects (Turner and Müller, 2003: 1-2)**

<b>Alm</b>	<b>Features</b>	<b>Pressures</b>	<b>Processes</b>
<i>To deliver beneficial change</i> (defined by quantitative and qualitative objectives)	<i>Unique</i> – no project before or after will be exactly the same  <i>Novel</i> – undertaken using novel processes  <i>Transient</i> - it has a beginning and an end	<i>Uncertainty</i> – it is not certain the plans will deliver the required outcomes  <i>Integration</i> – of the resources to do the project, between different parts of the project and of the project into the business  <i>Transience</i> – undertaken subject to urgency: delivering the desired outcomes within the desired timescales	<i>Flexible</i> <i>Goal oriented</i> <i>Staged</i>

Over recent decades, there has been a significant increase in project-based working (Lundin and Söderholm, 1995), with many sectors having to manage complex and dynamic business environments and structures. The traditional project-based industries include construction, shipbuilding, aerospace and pharmaceuticals, whilst IT and consultancy services represent more recently developed sectors. However different these sectors may be in terms of the nature of their products, the managers’

decision-making challenges remain consistent; they are concerned with constant change.

Change has become an integral part of the modern business. It occurs at various levels, stages and forms within business processes with organisations changing their shape and style (Lownds, 1998: 13). Communication systems are one area that has seen perhaps the greatest change (Hamilton, 1997: 5). Information technology has radically transformed communications in that today people can communicate almost irrespective of their location using mobile phones, satellite connections and the internet. This has brought about an easy access to a wealth of information, at times resulting to difficulties in judging the importance and relevance of the available data to any given setting. These changes in technology and communications have also brought about changes in the way work is organised. Project-based and virtual organisations (where a group of individuals work at separate locations toward a common aim), flatter hierarchies, networks and teams are now a common plan (CIPD, 2001).

The benefits of these changes are numerous. They mean possibilities for organisations to operate within wider range of markets and geographical locations, easier knowledge sharing, enhanced communications and opportunities for competitive tendering. However, change also has negative consequences, such as unpredictability, rising expectations, increased competition and pressure to get things working (Boddy and Buchanan, 1990). These require careful management if an organisation is to keep up with the change avoiding the threats and thriving on the opportunities this may bring. Change management, as discussed in section 2.3.3.7, is

an integral aspect of the employee resourcing function. However, due to the significant increase in project-based work many organisations have adopted project management practices to deal with the fast pace of change.

### 3.2. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project management differs from operational management practices in that integrated planning and control processes are crucial due to the temporary and unique nature of the work. In addition, project management features total accountability by a single person, project commitment rather than functional dedication and requirement for co-ordination across functional lines (Hamilton, 1997). This allows for increased flexibility, thus helping organisations to better cope with change. The project management processes are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

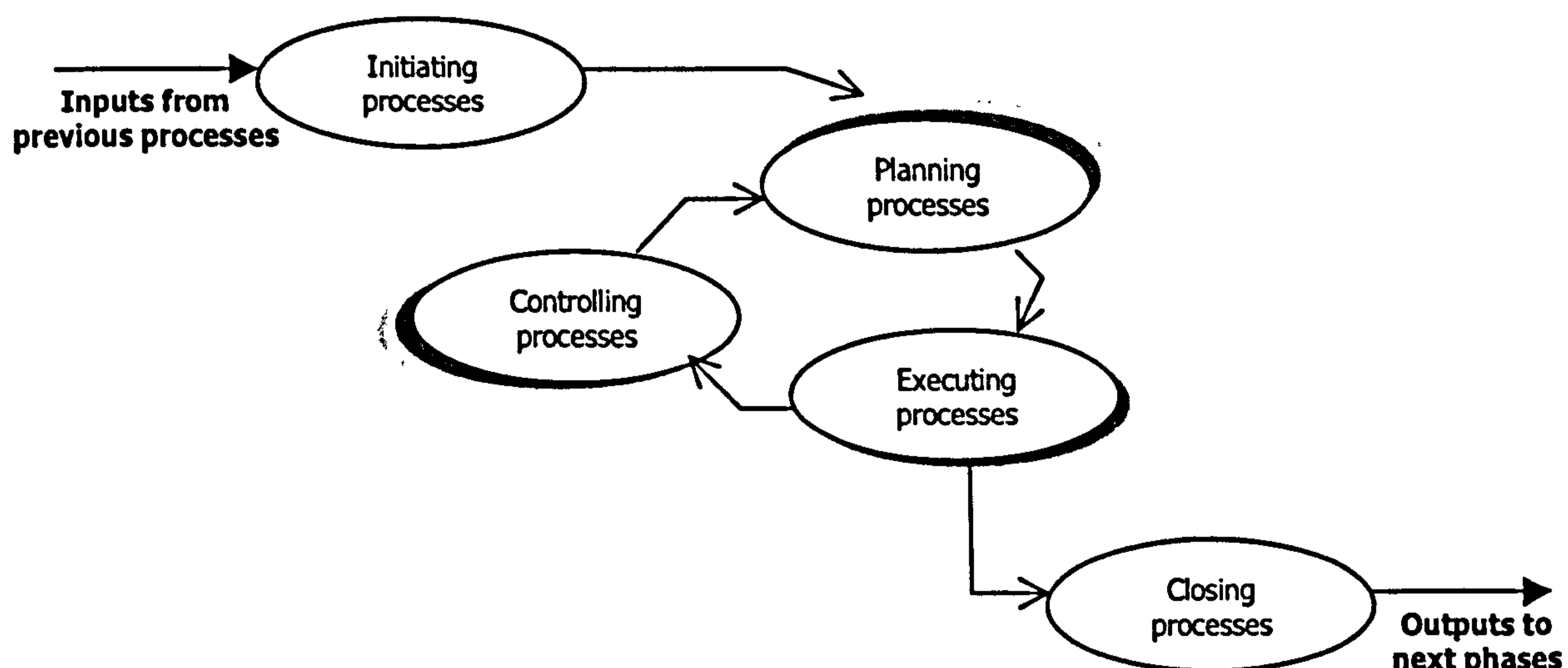


Figure 3.1: Project management process (Hamilton, 1997:80)

These processes are interrelated. Initiating refers to the identification of a need for a project and committing resources to it. Planning includes the construction of a plan that will achieve this requirement. The execution processes involve the undertaking of the actual work required for the plan to be successful, where controlling ensures the work progresses and is completed to the plan. Closing will finish the project in a formal acceptance that the requirements have been met. The processes rarely occur in a sequential fashion following a logical sequence; rather they overlap taking place at varying levels and stages of a project (Hamilton, 1997: 80). The inputs and outputs of the processes feed into the following phases of a project, as well as the outputs also feed into forthcoming projects.

### *3.2.1. The Human Factors Approach*

The human factors approach to project management integrates these basics of project management and the principles of team building, planning and strategy (within functional groups), organisational behaviour, interfacing, use of management time, conflict management, communication, negotiating, decision-making, managing change and managing behaviour (Dinsmore, 1990). In essence, it is an approach integrating SHRM (Chapter 2) and project management. Central to the human factors approach to project management are teams. It requires behaviourally-related interpersonal skills from the managers if it is to lead to successful co-operation between the project participants, such as the client, project sponsor, project manager, project team, functional groups and third parties, and the achievement of project goals (Boddy and Buchanan, 1990).



Extensive research on teamwork and teambuilding (Higgs, 1996; Wilson, 1996; McDonald and Keys, 1996; Prasad, 1998), team management (Harris and Harris, 1996), team roles (Belbin, 1993, 1996a, 1996b, 2000), team performance (Senior, 1997; Davis, 1998) and team development has shown its benefits and links with overall business performance (Ingman, 1996). These include increased synergy within the team and other project participants, sound psychological contracts, creation of a productive work environment, reduction of organisational constraints, improved client relations and more effective project management (Dinsmore, 1990). However, the increased emphasis on teamwork within project management has also been criticised for its lack of concrete evidence in linking teamwork and high performance (Church, 1998). Despite this, many project-based organisations rely on teamwork as their main structural orientation due to the nature of their work. The construction industry is a prime example of this.

### ***3.3. THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY***

The construction industry presents probably the most dynamic and challenging environment of all the project-based sectors. As discussed in the introduction (section 1.1.1) the industry's product is unique, custom built to client specifications on a one-off basis. It is also often large and complex so that it becomes inseparable from the geographical location of the output (Bresnen, 1990: 46). The size and complexity frequently imply long production cycles. A large number of diverse organisations and individuals with disparate perspectives and directions, such as the client, the architect, the contractor and their subcontractors, have input into the project (Clough and Sears, 1991). This has resulted in fragmentation (Egan, 1998). In

addition, the participants involved in the planning and construction of the product often change between projects with little or no continuity (Clough and Sears, 1991; Kwakye, 1997; Blismas, 2001). By nature, the industry also appears to have higher risks than other industries (Levy, 1994) and a strongly ingrained adversarial culture (Egan, 1998).

These characteristics typical for the construction industry present particular challenges for its managers, especially for securing appropriate staffing for projects at different stages in various locations (Langford *et al*, 1995: 33; Druker and White, 1996: 2; Sparrow and Marchington, 1998: 15; Jenner, 2002: 207; Veitch, 2002: 243; Loosemore *et al*, 2003: 4, 84). In the previous chapter (Chapter 2) SHRM approach to employee resourcing, and more specifically team deployment, was identified as an effective route to successfully resourcing projects and project organisations (section 2.3.3). Within construction management, current trends have placed increasing importance on combating the industry's staffing challenges, but more willingly with a focus on wider business and management agenda than with a focus on the HR/employee resourcing function.

### *3.3.1. The industry performance improvement agenda*

An industry wide performance improvement agenda has focused on strengthening its business and management practices. This followed from reports by Latham (1994) and Egan (1998) which called for improvement within the wider issues of construction procurement, quality and efficiency. A report from the M<sup>4</sup>I's working

group on Respect for People (2000) focused on finding practical ways to enhance the industry's performance on people issues. Recruitment and retention were brought to the forefront. Although these reports and related initiatives have raised the crucial employee resourcing issues to the forefront of the industry's performance improvement agenda, little evidence exists of their actual impact to the industry's practices as yet.

Alongside the industry improvement agenda management tools and practices, such as partnering, total quality management (TQM), business process re-engineering (BPR), learning organisation (LO) and knowledge management (KM), which all seek to further organisational effectiveness and progress, have attracted growing interest and importance within the construction industry. These are discussed below (sections 3.3.2 – 3.3.6) with regard to their success in combating the industry challenges.

### 3.3.2. Partnering

Partnering is a teamwork approach to achieving success (Harback *et al*, 1994). It is a relationship among the stakeholders in a project: the owners, design professionals and contractors, which is based on trust, dedication to common goals and an understanding of each party's expectations and values (Harback *et al*, 1994; Slater, 1998). This working relationship promotes prompt resolution of situations at the lowest level of authority with potential benefits defined by Slater (1998) as:

- Increased opportunity for profit and heightened productivity

- Improved decision/ reaction time and efficient resolution of situations aiding project schedules and thus reducing the risks for overrun or delay and claims for extension of time
- Reduced exposure to claims or litigation
- Enhanced quality of construction
- Lower exposure to cost escalations/ plan deficiencies and reduced overall cost
- Enhanced relationships between the parties, assuming overall cost reduction and avoidance of reconcilable litigation.

Harback *et al* (1994) illustrate partnering as shown in Figure 3.2.

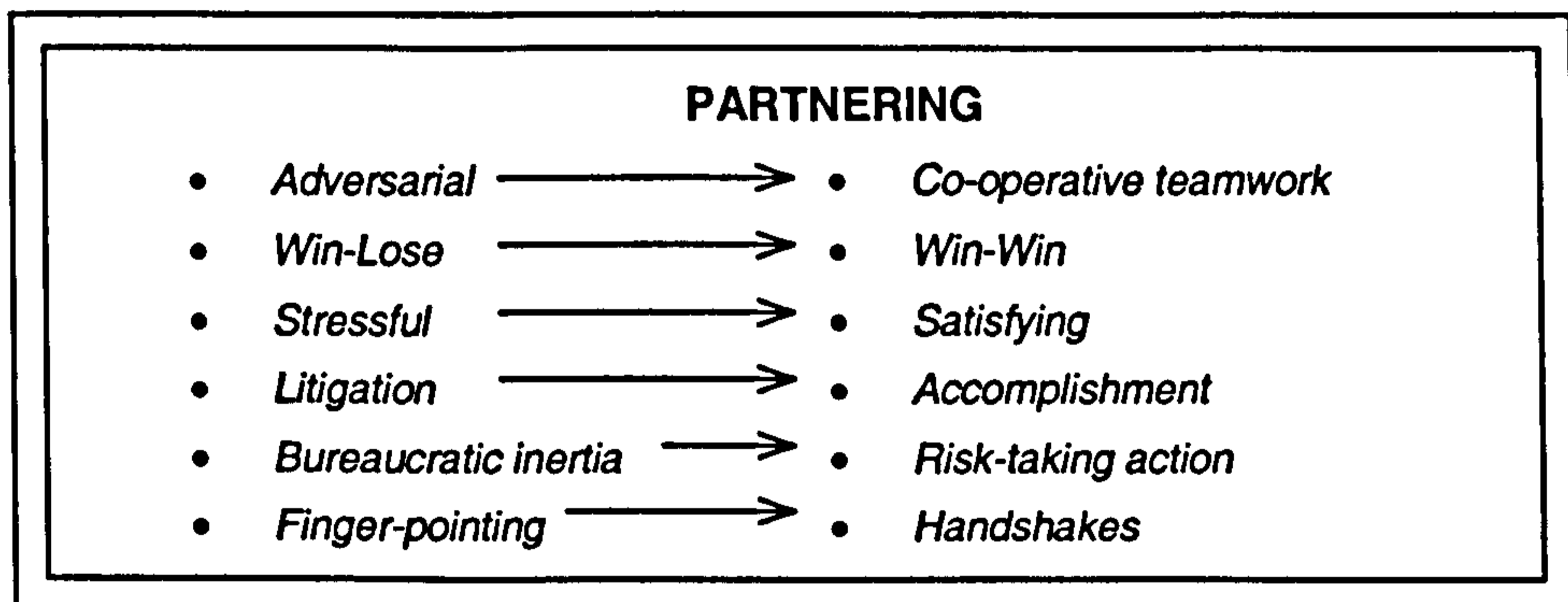


Figure 3.2: Partnering (Harback *et al*, 1994: 26)

Partnering is one of the best established “new” management techniques in construction. It has gained increasing attention within the industry over the last decade, with the result of an extensive and growing research database on the suitability and efficacy of partnering in practice (Bresnen and Marshall, 2002).

*“The literature is certainly replete with case study examples of successful partnerships and alliances” (ibid.).*

However, despite the clear emphasis on relationships and culture, much of the attention tends to presume or imply that implementing partnering is essentially a technical-managerial problem (Bresnen and Marshall, 2002). In short, the belief is that by applying appropriate tools and techniques, such as rigorous selection procedures, formal teambuilding exercises and financial incentive systems, changes in motivations, attitudes and expectations will be achieved. This is true especially within the construction literature (Bennett and Jayes, 1995, 1998). The industry is heavily biased towards formal mechanisms, which underplay the importance of the social and cultural dimensions of partnering and the dynamics of relationships between organisations and individuals (Bresnen and Marshall, 2000). Thus, the fundamental assumptions of teamwork, shared culture and working relationships which promote prompt resolution of situations at the lowest level of authority have been largely overlooked. Indeed, Love *et al* (1998) note that it is the cultural and behavioural barriers that have tended to hinder the effective implementation of partnering within the construction industry. This implies a need for establishing a culture, which embodies the principles of total quality management (TQM) (Harback *et al*, 1994). TQM is discussed next (section 3.3.3).

### 3.3.3. Total Quality Management (TQM)

The principles of total quality management (TQM) derive from the notion that the processes necessary for the production of particular goods and services should be determined by the functional requirements of the customer (Oakland, 1993). It is a horizontal management technique (Sparrow and Marchington, 1998: 4) which focuses on:

- *Customer/ supplier relationships* – at each link within the delivery chain it is the responsibility of the customer-supplier to signal his/ her requirements and ensure that the requirements placed are met
- *Prevention rather than detection of defects* – the emphasis is on identifying the origin of defects and continually improving the capacity to prevent them from occurring
- *Leadership* – total commitment of top management to TQM
- *Change in organisational culture* – attitudes and expectations about ways of working must change in line with the philosophy of TQM
- *Emphasis on team work* – problem-solving requires cross-boundary communication and co-operation
- *The use of statistical tools* – methods for measuring improvement must be developed (Shamas-Toma *et al*, 1998: 182).

As such, TQM is attitudinal and aspires to endless improved performance (Sui-Pheng and Khoo, 2001). It emphasises teamwork, collaboration and openness (Coyle-Shapiro, 1995; Buch and Rivers, 2001). However, evidence of change initiative

success rates suggests that about two thirds of TQM schemes “*grind to halt because of their failure to produce hoped-for results*” (Little and McKinsey & Co, cited in Senge *et al*, 1999: 5-6). In the UK construction industry, Shamma-Toma *et al* (1998) reason the high failure rate to:

- Narrow views of relationships
- Emphasis on detection of defects rather than prevention (training to control quality and identify sources of problems not apparent)
- Management commitment to cost and profitability rather than quality
- Culture dominated by short-term financial considerations, reflected in unco-operative and suspicious relationships
- Frequently antagonistic relationships, with accusations, recriminations and blame common
- Absence of measurable quality criteria against which improvements could be monitored.

Sommerville and Robertson (2000) therefore concluded:

*“the construction industry within the UK still has some way to go in terms of developing and implementing appropriate quality initiatives across the board”.*

#### 3.3.4. Business Process Re-engineering (BPR)

Another horizontal management technique (Sparrow and Marchington, 1998: 4) which has received increasing attention within recent years is business process re-engineering (BPR). Many organisations have adopted the technique in attempts to optimise the workflows and productivity of their projects and operating divisions (Soliman and Youssef, 1998). Hammer (1990) defines the concept as:

*“a fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical measures of performance-cost, quality, capital service and speed.”*

BPR aims to engender fundamental changes in organisational structure, job design, performance measures and reward systems (Soliman and Youssef, 1998). This requires significant changes not only in the business processes, but also in the ways in which people are managed (Scott, 1995; Vakola and Rezgui, 2000). Change often breeds insecurity, which in turn spreads resistance to change; the biggest challenge to the success of BPR (Revenaugh, 1994; Vakola and Rezgui, 2000). Creative use of IT plays an important role in shaping and restructuring the organisation in a way which promotes innovation (Soliman and Youssef, 1998; Ruikar *et al*, 2003) and encourages people to view the change as an opportunity rather than a threat. A German enterprise resource planning (ERP) application SAP has been found a particularly flexible platform that can be used to support a wide range of approaches to BPR (Soliman and Youssef, 1998; SAP, 2003).



BPR, as an approach to fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes, is one of the latest buzzwords to enter the construction management agenda. Unfortunately, it has entered the field with very unclear groundings from engineering, re-engineering, business process improvement, redesign and management, business transformation, incremental process improvement and core process redesign (Oliver, 1993; Mohamed, 1997; Love and Li, 1998; Loosemore *et al*, 2003). Also, in the same way as TQM (section 3.3.3), BPR has entered the construction management field with evidence of very high failure rates: Lorenz (1993) and Senge *et al* (1999) report this being around 70%. In construction Love and Li (1998) note evidence of BPR led improvements being merely anecdotal.

In response to these problems, a construction specific variant 'construction process re-engineering' (CPR) was developed to offer a more pragmatic, incremental and flexible approach to BPR that is suited to the needs and characteristics of the industry (Mohamed, 1997; Love and Li, 1998). However, according to Loosemore *et al* (2003: 292), this appears to offer nothing more than an unjustified, watered-down construction-specific version of BPR. Evidence of successful CPR implementation is yet to be found.

### 3.3.5. Learning Organisation (LO)

Pedler *et al* (1988) define learning organisation (LO) as:

*“an organisation which facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself... [It is a] vision for an organisational strategy to promote self-development amongst the membership and to harness this development corporately by continuously transforming itself as part of the same process.”*

LO is characterised by learning climate, ethos of self-responsibility and self-development, learning approach to strategy, participative policy-making, internal collaboration, continuous development, reward flexibility, inter-company learning, and temporary structures responsive to environmental changes (Coopey, 1996; Corbridge and Pilbeam, 1998) which suggest an extremely attractive working climate. Indeed, Newall (2001: 111) confirms that the most successful organisations that incorporated learning and improvement as an integral aspect of their organisational culture are:

- *Strategically led*, with all employees able to articulate the vision with understanding
- *Competitively focused*, driven by the need to compete at the highest levels and well aware of what competition is up to
- *Market-oriented*, close to both the customer and the consumer, via research into their changing needs and the agility to respond quickly

- *Employee-driven*, with highly competent people united by the desire to learn, innovate and experiment
- *Operationally excellent*, with finely tuned processes and clear performance measures.

Despite its attractive qualities, LO has received minimal attention at an applied level (Loosemore *et al*, 2003: 255). It has not achieved much more than partnering (section 3.3.2), TQM (section 3.3.3) or BPR (section 3.3.4) in terms of improvement within the construction industry. Indeed, Druker *et al* (1996) found construction organisations being far from learning organisations. The industry is known for its low take-up of the Investors in People (IiP) initiative and poor commitment to human resource development (HRD) (section 1.1.2). Kululanga *et al* (1999), Ford *et al* (2000) and Loosemore *et al* (2003) confirm this true with recent research evidence, which suggests one possible reason for the low take-up and commitment to LO and HRD being the predominance of an engineering culture that focuses on technology instead of people. Other potential (and real) barriers to effective learning culture are discussed in section 3.5.1.5 below. In many respects LO is considered as the “*next frontier in development work*” (El-Sawad, 1998b: 425).

### 3.3.6. Knowledge Management (KM)

A concept closely related to and often associated with the LO that has attracted wider interest especially within the construction industry, is that of knowledge management (KM) (Loermans, 2002). KM deals with the organisational optimisation of

knowledge to achieve enhanced performance, increased value, competitive advantage and return on investment through the use of various tools, processes, methods and techniques (Skyrme and Amidon, 1997; Siemieniuch and Sinclair, 1999; and Snowden, 1999; Kamara *et al*, 2002: 54). It is a concept, which has been acknowledged of comprising two distinct elements: the content and context for KM.

The content of KM is concerned with understanding what constitutes “knowledge” (Kamara *et al*, 2002: 54). Orange *et al* (2000) describe knowledge as “*the product of learning which is personal to an individual*”. Rennie (1999) defines knowledge as “*know-why, know-how and know-who*” or “*an intangible economic resource from which future revenues will be derived*”.

The context of KM refers to the organisational setting for the application of this knowledge (Kamara *et al*, 2002: 54). Ståhle (1999) suggests that every organisation is a three-dimensional system with a mechanistic, organic and dynamic nature, as illustrated in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3:** The mechanistic, organic and dynamic dimensions of an organisation (after Ståhle, 1999 and Kamara *et al*, 2002)

	<b><i>Mechanistic</i></b>	<b><i>Organic</i></b>	<b><i>Dynamic</i></b>
<b><i>Concern</i></b>	Part of the organisation that works like a machine	Helps organisation to work flexibly and to adapt to changing business environments	Continuous improvement and innovation
<b><i>Aim</i></b>	Management of <i>explicit</i> knowledge	Management of <i>tacit</i> knowledge	Facilitation of <i>networking</i> capabilities
<b><i>Initiatives/strategies</i></b>	Quality systems, manuals, IT tools	People-centred approach	Interdepartmental teams

Snowden (1999) adds another dimension to Ståhle's classification of the KM context: "culture". In the context of KM this may mean an explicit culture defined by organisational charts/ documents or a tacit culture, which is defined by networks, relationships and dependencies (Kamara *et al*, 2002: 55). Alternatively, organisational culture can also be defined in terms of work processes, for example, collaborative vs competitive culture; informal vs formal culture or individual vs group (*ibid.*).

Within the different contents and contexts for KM two main approaches to KM have emerged. Scarbrough *et al* (1999) identify these being supply-driven and demand-driven approaches. Table 3.4 below summarises these.

**Table 3.4:** Supply- vs demand-driven approaches to KM (after Scarbrough *et al*, 1999 and Kamara *et al*, 2002)

	<i>Supply-driven approaches</i>	<i>Demand-driven approaches</i>
<i>Concern</i>	Flow of knowledge and information within organisation	Users' perspective and their motivation, attitudes seen as important
<i>Aim</i>	Increase the flow of knowledge and information by capturing, codifying and transmitting knowledge	Work flexibly and adapt to changing business environments
<i>Initiatives/ strategies</i>	Tendency for initiatives to have a strong technology component	Strategies usually include reward systems and ways of encouraging knowledge sharing

Within the construction literature, Kamara *et al* (2002) describe KM as either 'mechanistic' or 'organic'. This is shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Mechanistic vs organic KM (created from Kamara *et al*, 2002)

	<i>Mechanistic</i>	<i>Organic</i>
<i>Focus</i>	Technology	People
<i>Concern</i>	Management of <i>explicit</i> knowledge	Management of <i>tacit</i> knowledge
<i>Aim</i>	To codify knowledge through the use of ICT (information and communication technology)	To create a self-aware descriptive capability in organisation; to initiate and sustain interventions that create resilience, robustness and redundancy; and to allow newcomers to learn from oldtimers by participation
<i>Initiatives/ strategies</i>	Knowledge-based expert systems	Storytelling/ communities of practice

The mechanistic approach closely corresponds to Scarbrough *et al*'s (1999) supply-driven approach, and the organic to the demand-driven approach.

Within the construction industry knowledge management has been fuelled by the need for innovation, improved business performance, client satisfaction (Kamara *et al*, 2002: 56) and individual and organisational learning (Vakola and Rezgui, 2000). The effective management of project knowledge is seen as vital. In line with the mechanistic approach (Table 3.5) Anumba *et al* (2002) have developed knowledge-based expert systems. Initiatives that attempt to facilitate the more organic KM (Table 3.5) include post project reviews, which aim to facilitate and capture learning via knowledge sharing (Scott and Harris, 1998). These tools and initiatives have been used to manage the project knowledge throughout project lifecycles, and transfer knowledge between different stages of a project and across different projects (Kamara *et al*, 2002: 56-57). Apart from sharing technical knowledge, Kamara *et al* (2002: 58-59) identified the main SHRM related drivers for KM initiatives as being:

- The need to cope with organisational changes, such as high staff turnover and changing business practices and/ or organisational structures

- The need to cope with growth and diversification of an organisation's business activities
- The need for knowledge of organisational processes and procedures
- The need for sharing and transferring individual employees' knowledge by capturing and reusing that knowledge or effective redeployment of the employees.

Unsurprisingly Kamara *et al* (2002: 62, 66) conclude that the people-centred, organic (or demand-driven) approaches have been found more successful within project-based environments than those focusing on the use of IT tools (mechanistic or supply-driven approaches) (see Tables 3.4 and 3.5). Despite this, the potential of ICT tools, such as Knowledge Worker System (KWS) (Augenbroe *et al*, 2001), in facilitating the capture and reuse of especially process knowledge was recognised. This suggests that an approach combining elements of both organic and mechanic aspects of KM may present the most effective way forward.

### 3.3.7. Summary

There is considerable evidence that the initiatives introduced above (partnering, TQM, BPR, LO and KM) are becoming increasingly popular in the construction industry, with many industry leaders and academics suggesting that they all offer better ways of managing the industry (Loosemore *et al*, 2003: 288). However, as established (sections 3.3.2 – 3.3.6), these techniques incorporate a strong 'people element' and emphasise managing relationships as a key feature of success in

initiating such strategies. Unfortunately, the construction industry appears to be currently neglecting the crucial role people play in implementing these management approaches (ibid.). This is likely to form the main barrier to effective utilisation of the approaches.

Green (1998, 2001) further argues that these “trendy” techniques seem to saturate the professional and academic literature in construction without critical perspective, being hailed as the way forward in the face of declining profitability. The blind enthusiasm to experiment with new ideas which often have ambiguous records and offer questionable results (Green, 1998, 2001; Loosemore *et al*, 2003) appears to have overwritten common sense and analytical approaches to critical evaluation of the suitability of particular trends to each organisational setting.

In response to the limited impact of the performance improvement agenda (section 3.3.1) and lack of success of many recent management tools and practices (sections 3.3.2 – 3.3.6) to achieve improvements within the industry, the potential of the SHRM approach (Chapter 2) as a solution to combating the industry challenges is examined next in section 3.4.

#### ***3.4. SHRM WITHIN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY***

As alluded to in the introduction (section 1.1.3), construction organisations commonly support the traditional personnel management style people management practices rather than those associated with the SHRM approach. The industry is said to be



*“characterised by a particular, archaic set of values, attitudes and practices which pervade the organisation and which resist pressures to change”*

(Druker and White, 1995: 83).

Druker and White (1995) identified that the industry was managed by people concerned with cost and production. Personnel specialists hold close proximity with strategic decision-making, but are unlikely to influence the decisions taken to any significant extent. Employment relations form the core concern for the personnel function. Many of the day-to-day HR responsibilities have been devolved to the operational line managers. Consequently, the role of the personnel specialists consists of:

*“a sort of emergency provision, coping with the immediate problem, without the capacity to change the wider circumstances which had led to it”* (Druker and White, 1995: 86).

Little attention has been paid to the psychological contract construct despite its central role in understanding the employment relationship (section 2.2.1). Dainty *et al* (2003a) identified the traditional individualistic relations now being strained by widespread organisational expansion and flattening organisational structures. In response they suggested that construction firms must develop HRM policy which emphasises career development and which recognises the contribution of the individual, rather than rely on pluralistic solutions.

Changes in the business environment have initiated fundamental transformation in construction careers over the recent years (Schirmer, 1994; Weddle, 1998). Much in line with Thite's (2001) contemporary framework (Table 2.3, section 2.2.3) it is now the employees who control the direction of their own careers and hence focus their efforts on personal and professional growth (Schirmer, 1994; Weddle, 1998). The growth is achieved via continuous development and inter-organisational job moves (ibid.), to which the recent increase in business activity within the sector has created escalating opportunities. It is argued that, as long as the people are maintaining an overview of the job market situation (Weddle, 1998) and aligning their capabilities with those required by the organisations, they can manage their careers instead of reacting to the environment (Schirmer, 1994).

However, a return to Baruch's (2003) (section 2.2.3) argument of careers still to an extent being the property of the organisation and therefore needing to be managed by them provides an alternative perspective in contrast of this highly individualistic view. Indeed, Dainty *et al* (1998, 1999, 2000a, 2000b) suggest that it is essential for construction organisations to address the current career/ developmental barriers that hold back the progress of, especially female, professionals within the sector if they are to tap into the best talent available within the society. Career management/ development opportunities tend to influence other areas of SHRM, for example, reducing or increasing the pool of potential candidates for recruitment and selection. Accordingly, it is imperative for the success of strategic and integrated SHRM within the industry that construction organisations provide their employees with a flexible range of career structures and varied opportunities for personal and professional development (Schirmer, 1994; Fellows *et al*, 2002). This implies the need for

organisations to resume their part of the career management responsibility, despite the recent trend to transfer the responsibilities to their employees, and work in partnership with their employees. Partnership approach to career management and development would also increase the level of employee involvement (EI) in the industry.

Currently, evidence of EI is poor, particularly in relation to continuous improvement (Santos and Powell, 2001). This is despite the recent governmental suggestions (Egan, 1998; Rethinking Construction, 2000) and strong positive message communicated by research in the area. Advocates of EI have tried hard to press for the concept to be embodied as an integral aspect of contemporary construction management. For example, Tener (1993) argued that

*“the profitability and competitiveness of a firm are driven by, more than any other element, the ability of the organisation’s leadership to empower its people to perform to their maximum potential”* [emphasis in original].

Long (1997) identified the concept as a positive driver toward enhanced employee performance and corporate success within the industry. More recently, Dainty *et al* (2002a) suggested that

*“used selectively, it could play an important part in helping construction organisations to address increasing performance demands whilst mitigating the negative effects of the fragmented project delivery process.”*

However, they also recognised the potential barriers to successful implementation of EI within construction organisations and proposed the concept to be best implemented where flatter management/ organisational structures, formal support networks and devolved lines of responsibility with regard to project production delivery exist (Dainty *et al*, 2002a; Loosemore *et al*, 2003).

Flexibility is highly important to construction organisations. Risk and uncertainty are an every day feature of project and organisational management within the industry (Walker and Loosemore, 2003). Thus, an accommodating approach to [especially unexpected] change is required. This applies equally to the production related issues as well as human resources. Walker and Loosemore (2003) present an effective “*solution-building ethos*”: “*best-for-project culture*”. This focuses on detecting emerging problems early and dealing with them quickly at a project level. EI plays a key role in this.

At the company level, Langford *et al* (1995: 55), Druker and White (1995: 88) and Loosemore *et al* (2003: 54-55) note the relevance of Atkinson’s (1981) flexible firm model (section 2.2.2) to the way construction workforce is organised. Construction organisations’ project and operational senior managers easily fit into the core group and the use of the first peripheral group’s numerical flexibility allows “*untroubled and speedy adjustment to changes and uncertainty in the construction services market*” (Langford *et al*, 1995: 55). Most importantly however, the external sources of labour: subcontractors, agency temporaries and self employed, are very common in construction (Langford *et al*, 1995: 55; Debrah and Ofori, 1997; Winch, 1998; Loosemore *et al*, 2003: 54).

As suggested in section 2.2.5, HRISs offer the potential to recognise and integrate the individual needs, preferences and requirements of employees' with the achievement of project/ business objectives by suggesting optimal solutions to particular resourcing requirements. This could have long-term benefits in relation to the retention and development of staff, and hence in meeting the future succession management plans of the organisation. Although HRISs are widely used to support the employee resourcing function within other sectors (Torrington *et al*, 1991; Taylor, 1998, 2002b; CIPD, 2000b), the ways and levels of practice within construction organisations vary greatly (Raideen *et al*, 2001a).

Loosemore *et al* (2003: 109) identify the key advantages of using a HRIS to support SHRM decision-making in construction to include:

- Easier provision of information to line managers, thereby enabling rapid resourcing decisions during projects
- Easier processing and control of employee records and performance data linked to reward systems (i.e. removing the need for managers to maintain unwieldy paper-based systems)
- A reduction in the workload of the personnel function, thereby lowering the head office overhead associated with the SHRM function.

Ng *et al* (2001) modelled an HRIS for Australian construction companies. They drew on the work of Patchett (1983) whom identified the major construction activities that require HR information as manpower planning and development, payroll, labour control, safety management, industrial relations and compensation and benefits. This

approach seems limited in serving the full range of SHRM information requirements within construction companies. Numerous studies have also focused on developing generic scheduling support, cost control and information and project management models/ systems for the construction industry (see for example Choo *et al*, 1999; Griffith, 2000; Abudayyeh *et al*, 2001; Deng *et al*, 2001; Kang *et al*, 2001; Mak, 2001; Yang *et al*, 2001; Lam, *et al*, 2001; Isidore *et al*, 2001; Al-jibouri, 2002; Zhang *et al*, 2002; Ruikar *et al*, 2003). By combining these approaches to work scheduling and project management with an HRIS and optimal solution may be identified, although barriers to the process may present the industry's limited trust and confidence in IT systems (Aouad, *et al* 1999; Riley *et al*, 2000; Marsh and Flanagan, 2000; Gann, 2001).

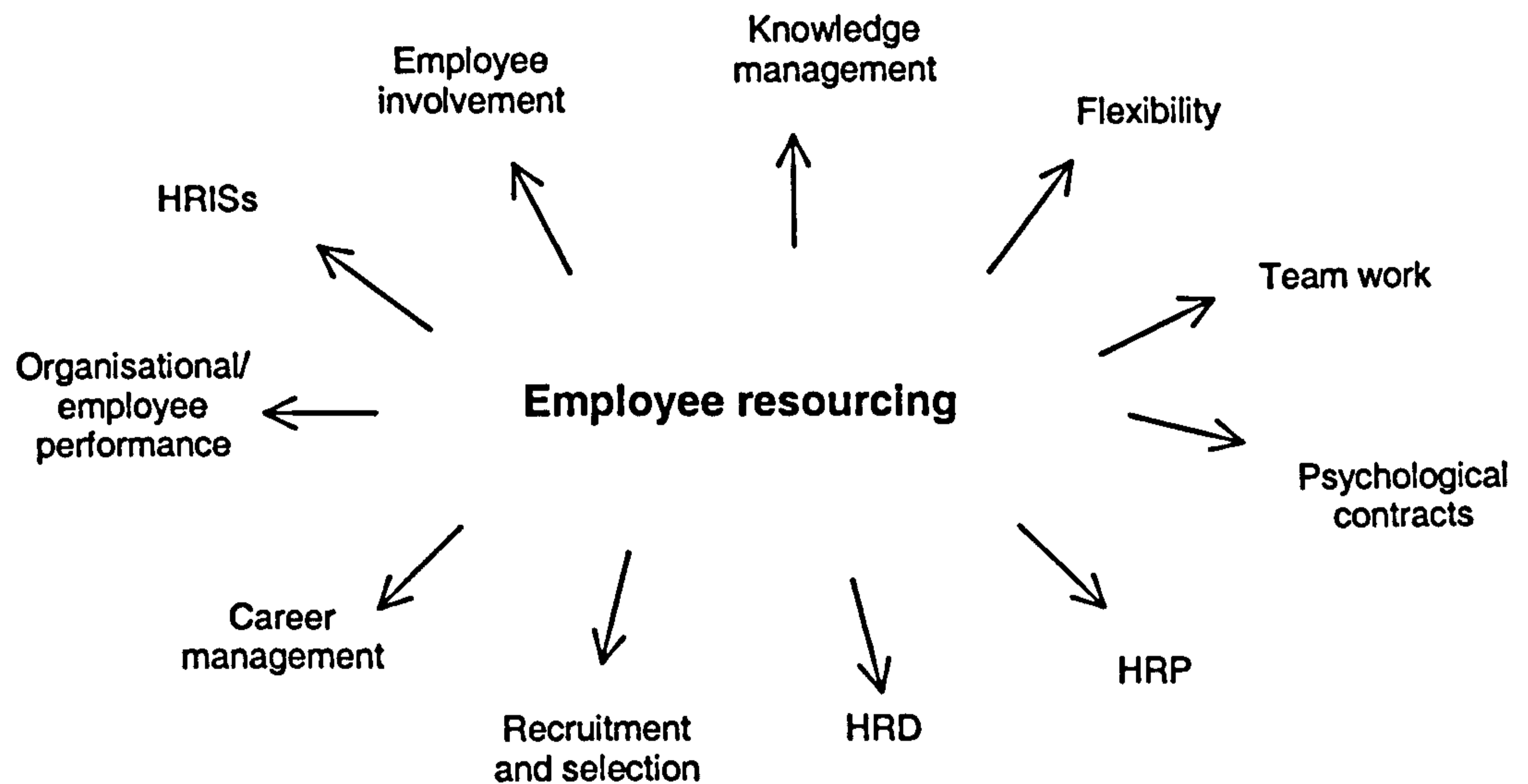
### 3.5. THE INDUSTRY'S EMPLOYEE RESOURCING CHALLENGE

Employee resourcing is one of the key SHRM functions within construction organisations (Dainty *et al*, 2000c; Raiden *et al*, 2002b, 2003b; Loosemore *et al*, 2003: 83). It focuses on matching human resources to the strategic and operational needs of the organisation and ensuring the full utilisation of those resources (Armstrong and Baron, 2002). This is achieved by meeting the SHRM objectives of staffing, performance, administration and change discussed in section 2.3.3. Within these objectives key concerns for management in construction organisations are team deployment and formation due to the project-based nature of the industry (Hamilton, 1997; Cornick and Maher, 1999; Loosemore *et al*, 2003). At the same time, Druker and White (1996: 158) identify these activities as one of the most challenging features of management within the industry. The nomadic, transitory, project-based

environment of the sector commonly results in employee needs being excluded from the decision-making process, in particular, due to the short notice at which construction projects tend to be won at and the resulting requirement for rapid mobilisation of teams to the often distant project locations (Loosemore *et al*, 2003: 84). This is despite the fact that construction organisations usually manage these activities centrally within specialist departments (*ibid*: 83) or divisional/ regional senior management teams. This type of practice clearly overlooks the strategic importance of the function, which is highlighted next in section 3.5.1.

### *3.5.1. Strategic importance of the function*

As set above, employee resourcing is arguably one of the most challenging and important SHRM function within construction organisations. In addition to the project-based nature of the industry, much of this is due to the widespread influence the resourcing function has on other SHRM and related processes, as shown in Figure 3.3. This figure provides a non-exhaustive list of the factors related to employee resourcing within construction organisations. Rather it illustrates the diversity of inter-linked variables that can be shaped via effective management of the function drawing attention to those discussed within the SHRM literature (Chapter 2), and those with direct relevance to the management of the construction resourcing process.



**Figure 3.3:** Importance of effective resourcing

Despite the recognised importance of the function and its wide reaching impact on construction people management, relatively little research has been undertaken in the area. The following accounts for the current literature under the main components of employee resourcing and HRD. Table 3.6 outlines a structure for the discussion and references the construction related literature in support of effective employee resourcing. Section 3.4 above discussed flexibility, empowerment/ EI, career management and HRISs. Knowledge management was examined in section 3.3.6.



**Table 3.6: Construction related literature in support of effective employee resourcing**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Writers</b>
<i>HR planning (HRP)</i> (section 3.5.1.1)	Huang <i>et al</i> , 1996; Anderson and Woodhead (1987); Schaffer, 1988; Maloney, 1997; Smithers and Walker, 2000; Chinowsky and Meredith, 2000; Avila, 2001; Pitzrick, 2001; Trejo <i>et al</i> , 2002; Loosemore <i>et al</i> , 2003
<i>Recruitment and selection</i> (section 3.5.1.2)	Bresnen, <i>et al</i> , 1985, 1986; De Feis, 1987; Burfeind, 1994; Bronzini <i>et al</i> , 1995; Langford <i>et al</i> , 1995; Druker and White, 1996; Dainty, 1998; Oliver, 2000; Shuster, 2000; Glagola and Nichols, 2001; Fellows <i>et al</i> , 2002; The Housing Forum, 2002; Strategic Forum for Construction, 2002; Loosemore <i>et al</i> , 2003
<i>Teamwork</i> (section 3.5.1.3)	Carrier, 1992; Walker, 1996b; Olomolaiye <i>et al</i> , 1998; Ogunlana and Siddiqui, 1999; Moore and Dainty, 1999; Spatz, 1999, 2000; Vassos, 2000; Yankov and Kleiner, 2001; Santos and Powell, 2001; Ogunlana <i>et al</i> , 2002; Odusami, 2002, 2003; Gomar <i>et al</i> , 2002; Goldberg, 2003
<i>Organisational/ project/ employee performance</i> (section 3.5.1.4)	Lee Smith, 1993; Glad, 1994; Shah and Murphy, 1995; Nesan and Holt, 1999; Bprc, 1999; Moore and Dainty, 1999; Smithers and Walker, 2000; Kagioglou <i>et al</i> , 2001; Nicolini, 2002; Smither, 2003; Loosemore <i>et al</i> , 2003; Cox <i>et al</i> , 2003;
<i>Human resource development (HRD)</i> (section 3.5.1.5)	Langford <i>et al</i> , 1995; Hancock <i>et al</i> , 1996; Barlow and Jashapara, 1998; Huemer and Östergren, 2000; Vakola and Rezgui, 2000; Hessen and Lewis, 2001; Yankov and Kleiner, 2001; Eckford <i>et al</i> , 2001; Chan <i>et al</i> , 2001; Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), 2001; Fellows <i>et al</i> , 2002; Jashapara, 2003; Loosemore <i>et al</i> , 2003
<i>Flexibility</i> (section 3.4)	Langford, <i>et al</i> , 1995; Druker and White, 1995; Hodgkinson, 2001; Loosemore <i>et al</i> , 2003; Walker and Loosemore, 2003
<i>Empowerment/ EI</i> (section 3.4)	De Feis, 1987; Afifi, 1991; Tener, 1993; Cirilli, 1997; Love, 1997; Croucher and Druker, 2001; Holt <i>et al</i> , 2000; Yankov and Kleiner, 2001; Santos and Powell, 2001; DTI, 2002b; Cochrane, 2002; Karpf, 2002; Dainty <i>et al</i> , 2002a; Loosemore <i>et al</i> , 2003
<i>Career management</i> (section 3.4)	Marini, 1988; Schirmer, 1994; Weddle, 1998; Dainty <i>et al</i> , 1999, 2000a, 2000b; Construction Manager, 2002; Smither, 2003; Loosemore <i>et al</i> , 2003; Kappia <i>et al</i> , 2003
<i>HRISs</i> (section 3.4)	Patchett, 1983; Raiden <i>et al</i> , 2001a; NG <i>et al</i> , 2001; Loosemore <i>et al</i> , 2003
<i>Knowledge management</i> (section 3.3.6)	Egbu, 2001; Anumba <i>et al</i> , 2002; Kamara <i>et al</i> 2002; Bresnen <i>et al</i> , 2003; Robinson <i>et al</i> , 2001, 2002a, 2002b; Carillo <i>et al</i> , 2003a, 2003b, 2003c

### 3.5.1.1. Human resource planning (HRP)

The early literature on construction HRP by Huang *et al* (1996), Anderson and Woodhead (1987) and Schaffer (1988) dealt with a quantitative approach termed “manpower planning”. This focused on forecasting the numerical supply and demand of manpower and reconciling these (Anderson and Woodhead, 1987). Methods to carry out the supply analysis included fractional flow models and renewal models

(Huang *et al*, 1996). The demand side techniques included time series models, workload methods, regression models and the manpower system model (*ibid.*). Schaffer (1988) begun to introduce softer aspects to HRP literature by encouraging organisations to make, what he called “*the moral contract*”. This was based on interaction, agreement and mood of commitment within the parties involved and simple procedures of operation (*ibid.*).

Maloney (1997) built on this type of approach and highlighted the importance of strategic planning for HRM in construction. He noted the current HRP/ HRM strategies being largely emergent. In response, he strongly advocate the need for HRM strategies to become more deliberate (*ibid*: 52). Areas of particular importance were identified to include strategic vision, view of human resources, management vs worker orientation, short-term versus long-term orientation and availability of a skilled workforce. Smithers and Walker (2000) added to this the need for increasing planning effectiveness and decreasing the chaotic nature of a project. A potential solution to the motivation problem within the industry was identified:

*“for construction companies to more strategically target their workload toward a more profitable work while improving the construction site management style”* (*ibid*: 841).

This called for greater HRP at two levels: [1] HR-business planning integration and [2] cultural management. Chinowsky and Meredith (2000) further focused the importance of strategic planning at organisational level, where Kang *et al* (2001) concentrated on the unit of production within the industry, the project, in developing

a computerised model for optimal schedule planning. Shi and Halpin (2003) attempted to integrate the two by utilising a construction enterprise resource planning system (CERP). All usefully recognised the specific constraints the nature of construction work places on the planning process, however failed to take into account the HRP consequences. Loosemore *et al* (2003: 84-89) noted the complications the competitive tendering process and cyclical nature of construction markets bring to effective HRP. In particular, they highlighted the dilemma of laying staff off in response to a downturn versus problems in recruitment during upturn. They reasoned that this influenced organisations to hold an apparently inefficient surplus of labour during recessionary periods. Thus, not surprisingly, Druker and White (1996: 24) concluded the construction HRP in practice as relatively underdeveloped.

#### 3.5.1.2. Recruitment and selection

De Feis (1987) recognised the crucial role of employee recruitment and selection in effective people management. The current and estimated future skills shortages in the industry (section 1.2) have recently highlighted the need for increased recruitment efforts. Fellows *et al* (2002: 119-122) note this being important at three levels:

- The industry
- Trade/ profession
- Company.

Naturally, the recruitment of appropriately skilled candidates to the industry and the trades/ professions within it are seen as having a crucial impact to attracting a suitable pool of potential candidates at the company level. National bodies, such as the Construction Industry Council (CIC), the Construction Industry Board (CIB) and the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), actively promote the image of the industry (ibid.). At the company level this vital task is generally managed by line managers rather than specialist HR personnel (Bresnen *et al*, 1985, 1986; Druker and White, 1996: 45; Dainty, 1998: 181). Informal practices and personal introductions and contacts are common and important source of recruitment at all levels (Druker and White, 1996: 52; Dainty, 1998: 177- 181). Selection methods are usually restricted to interviews and assessment centres (Langford *et al*, 1995: 111-119; Druker and White, 1996: 55; Loosemore *et al*, 2003: 94), although the SHRM literature suggests that a much wider range of techniques may be beneficial (section 2.3.3.2). The Housing Forum (2002) put forward a range of initiatives that could enhance the industry's ability to recruit. These include promoting the industry within schools and higher education institutions and diversifying organisational recruitment and selection procedures to target wider audiences, such as women, ethnic minorities and the unemployed (ibid.). The poor image of the industry is seen as the most influential factor that restricts the current recruitment markets to a limited pool of suitable candidates (Strategic forum for Construction, 2002; CITB, 2003; Loosemore *et al*, 2003).

### 3.5.1.3. Teamwork

Effective teamwork is described as the “*key to competitive advantage*” in the construction industry (Druker *et al*, 1996). It plays a central role in the industry’s operations due to the project-based nature of work. Yankov and Kleiner (2001) also identify it as a powerful motivator: team belonging fosters a feeling of participation in a group. This supports the achievement of the project/ organisational goals leading to improved productivity (Walker, 1996a; Olomolaiye *et al*, 1998). Good team relationships are essential for achieving such success. Project leaders play a key role in building and maintaining productive team environment (Spatz, 1999). Odusami (2002) found leadership, motivation, communication and effective decision-making as the central qualities of a resourceful project leader. This supported his literature search findings, which repeated ‘soft’ people skills throughout as crucial elements of successful project management (see Odusami, 2002: 63, Table 2). Spatz (1999) further pointed out that outstanding leaders assess their own abilities to lead. This creates a powerful condition for successful leadership: trust.

The ultimate goal of a teamworking environment is a co-operative culture where managers and employees grow and prosper together (Spatz, 2000). Team effectiveness coaching can help create such a culture by improving team interaction and thereby increasing its technical qualities (Goldberg, 2003). This follows the argument that the intangibles of human interaction frequently separate average performance from outstanding execution (Spatz, 1999; Goldberg, 2003).

Despite the recognised importance of teamwork for construction organisations, little attention has been paid to the actual process of building or composing effective

teams. Walker's (1996b) work on winning construction teams in terms of project time performance in Australia provide some indicators to successful team deployment. In short, Walker found that the responsibility for good construction time performance lies firmly with the management team. However, his work placed considerable emphasis on the management team's ability to influence and manage the construction *process*, rather than team interaction as suggested by Spatz (1999, 2002) and Goldberg (2003).

Furthermore, Ogunlana *et al* (1999, 2002) found that, at least in the Thai context, the project manager's ability to meet the external clients' needs was considered as the most important project management quality in deploying leaders to projects. The project manager's technical experience, relationships (with clients, project team and management) and management abilities (planning, controlling, directing, organising and staffing) were found the top three factors that influenced team leader selection. Leadership capabilities were ranked sixth out of 11 categories.

These reports contradict Odusami's findings above. Ogunlana *et al* (1999, 2002) recognise the limited scope of their study (Thailand) and thus recommend for their findings to be viewed in the context of the societal culture. This could explain the differences between Ogunlana *et al*'s (1999, 2002) and Odusami's (2002) work. Walker (1996b) also notes that in addition to the management team's ability to manage the construction process their interaction with the client's representative and the team members' competence in terms of technical and general education, practical skills, problem solving and analytical thinking were also crucial to project success.

This balances his view towards those of Spatz (1999, 2002), Odusami (2002) and Goldberg (2003).

In conclusion, it is argued that both, the 'hard' (technical/ process) *and* 'soft' (leadership/ team interaction) factors contribute to project success and therefore should be included as integral aspects of team deployment decision-making. This suggests that a more comprehensive range of factors than that given in hypothesis two (*H2*) should determine employee resourcing decisions. Hypothesis two (*H2*) stated:

*"The employee resourcing decision-making is currently determined by project and broader business requirements rather than employee needs and preferences."*

#### 3.5.1.4. Organisational/ project/ employee performance

The industry's performance improvement agenda has challenged organisations to strengthen their business and management practices in order to improve the overall efficiency, quality, productivity and cost effectiveness of the industry (sections 1 and 3.3.1). Kagioglou *et al* (2001) investigated the literature on performance management and measurement at an organisational level with a view of transferring best practice into construction. They identified that traditionally, performance measurement within the industry was approached in relation to the product as a facility and in relation to the product as a process. 'Hard' client objectives, such as

cost, time and quality, were identified as the dominant factors in assessing the success/ failure of construction projects.

Kagioglou *et al* (2001) usefully argued that in isolation these do not provide a balanced view of the project's performance. 'Softer' factors, such as people involved, impressions of harmony, goodwill and trust, need to be included in the equation. Thus, a three category performance assessment criteria was established that incorporated financial performance, an internal business process perspective and the customer. This was supplemented by the UK best practice programme's (BPRC, 1999) key performance indicators (KPIs): client satisfaction in relation to product and service, defects, predictability in relation to cost and time, profitability, productivity, safety and construction time and cost. These are intended as a benchmarking indicators for the industry as a whole; an individual organisation can evaluate itself against the national average and identify areas for improvement. (For a review of the American KPIs see Cox *et al*, 2003.)

Although the 'softer' people issues were highlighted in the analytical stages of Kagioglou *et al*'s (2001) review, the final model: performance management process framework (PMPF) only included a brief section on staff appraisal. The main outputs of the model formed an indication of the extent to which an organisation achieved its goals (Kagioglou *et al*, 2001). This significantly undermines the importance of individual/ team input to the bigger picture.

Moore and Dainty (1999) recognise the relationship between effective team integration and performance: engendering a single focus and culture of co-operation



within a team should outweigh the additional costs of bringing the team members together at the outset of a project and maintaining close physical proximity through an improved response to unexpected change events, better project performance and hence, enhanced client satisfaction. This highlights the importance of considering the team and related team deployment issues in assessing project/ organisational performance. Belout (1998) and Nicolini (2002) further emphasised the significance of human resource and social and cultural factors on project success. Nicolini (2002) termed a well-integrated team within which good and open communications facilitated effective collaboration, psychological safety and care and the achievement of shared goals 'project chemistry'. His findings suggested that good 'project chemistry' binds the team together and thus enhances the quality of the final product by harvesting expertise and creativity from all team members, reduces time through early detection of potential problems and improved problem-solving process, constitutes a motivator and helps people work in the same direction, and allows for more productive use of resources and less defensive bureaucracy.

At an individual (employee) level Glad (1994) identified the act of balancing the needs of employees with the needs of the business the most challenging performance issue. According to her findings many managers fear that they will either cave in to employee demands at the expense of better business judgement or act too mechanistically in serving the business, thereby creating a people problem. Confronting performance problems was identified as the most difficult arena. In response, Glad (1994) suggested a four-step programme:

1. Managers must realise that staff turnover is costly and consider the employee's present and potential value to the company
2. The problem, or a 'performance gap', must be defined in a measurable way
3. The nature of the inferior performance must be determined: is it "can't do" or a "won't do" problem
4. A realistic action plan for improvement, which involves both the manager and employee must be set and implemented.

Shah and Murphy's (1995) study suggested the performance appraisal as an effective tool for managing and improving employee [and organisational] performance. They found an increasing use of the tool within civil engineering organisations, with the benefits of increased motivation and productivity. Nevertheless, areas for improvement were noted: consistency in the process and timing, training, follow-up, commitment from the top management and open discussions.

Druker and White (1996: 122) identify the disparate location of construction projects as the main problem to effective performance management within construction organisations. Managers tend not to have close frequent contact with their employees and thus see little of their day-to-day performance. In line with Shah and Murphy's (1995) findings, they note that although appraisal systems exist within most organisations in the industry, they are often ad hoc and informal.

Nesan and Holt (1999: 168) suggest 'group assessment' as an effective way forward for performance measurement. This is similar to the 360° feedback mechanism mentioned in section 2.2.3 in that it is based on performance data from a diverse

range of sources (self, team, department, financial, senior management) and senior management takes the responsibility for benchmarking company-level performance with identified business competitors as well as publishing the outcomes back to the employees and external customers/ suppliers highlighting both successes and failures. However, Loosemore *et al* (2003: 100) critique this technique on the grounds that the very breadth of such a system makes it costly and time consuming to operate and requires a considerable staff resource. Besides, unless an open culture of trust and honesty is firmly embedded within an organisation, 360° feedback or group assessment is likely to produce corrupt results. Particularly the appraisee's subordinates may fear retribution and therefore provide favourable feedback regardless of their true opinions. This ties back to the areas for improvement identified by Shah and Murphy (1995): consistency in the process and timing, training, follow-up, commitment from the top management and open discussions are a must if appraisals are to succeed within the industry.

#### 3.5.1.5. Human resource development (HRD)

Besides the employee resourcing activities discussed above, human resource development (HRD) is an important aspect of SHRM for construction organisations (Yankov and Kleiner, 2001). Sections 1.1.2 and 3.3.5 discussed the industry's low take-up and commitment to IiP, LO and HRD generally. This section focuses on the training aspect of the function.

Fellows *et al* (2002: 131-136) identify three vehicles of training suitable for managerial and professional staff (focus of this research) within the construction industry:

- Professional development
- Management development
- The use of learning networks.

The professional development refers to graduate training toward achieving a corporate membership of a chartered institution, such as the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB), Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) or Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE).

Management development seeks to develop the employees' managerial skills beyond the professional membership requirements. This commonly includes formal education and training activities as well as informal, incidental and opportunistic learning (Langford and Newcombe, 1992; Langford *et al*, 1995; Druker and White, 1996; Fellows *et al*, 2002). The ICE (2001), for example, have developed guidelines for the organisational management development activities, which also provide useful information for the construction professionals as to their role in the process. However, Langford *et al* (1995: 136) note that the number of organisations undertaking management development within the industry is small, although those organisations that do undertake management development tend to place a lot of emphasis on it and support formal technical training courses with coaching. Loosemore *et al* (2003: 257-258) reason the low uptake to stem from

- The assumption that training delivery is expensive
- Clashes with production objectives
- Legislative training requirements dressing additional activities as unnecessary add-ons or luxuries
- Staff turnover concerns in relation to the belief that training and developing employees will make them more attractive to other companies
- A macho environment, within which traditional classroom education is often seen as a non-productive, feminine activity and associated with failure
- A 'learn on the job' culture.

The third technique, use of learning networks, includes on the one hand formal organised networks, which are often based around professional groupings and managed by appropriate professional bodies, and on the other, more informal networks, which develop as companies work together. Supply chains and partnering commonly encourage this type of learning and thus facilitate inter-organisational transfer of knowledge (Barlow and Jashapara, 1998).

Jashapara (2003) researched the impact of learning to organisational performance within construction organisations. The conclusions of the study suggested that the dynamics of competitive forces evident within the industry imply a need for construction organisations to focus their organisational learning on efficiency and proficiency to achieve competitive advantage. To this effect, the industry practice could be argued as suitable and appropriate since much of the training focuses on meeting statutory requirements and providing staff with the skills required to carry

out the tasks involved in their current roles (Druker and White, 1996; Chan *et al*, 2001; Eckford *et al*, 2001). However, a short-term focus of organisational learning on efficiency and proficiency undermines the long-term individual career development and organisational succession planning benefits that potentially follow from strategic HRD policy, which takes into account the needs of the organisation *and* the people it employs (Dainty *et al*, 2000b). In line with sections 1.1.2 and 3.3.5 that discussed the industry's low take-up and commitment to IiP, LO and HRD, Hancock *et al* (1996) found no significant incidence of HRD in large construction companies. Dainty *et al* (2000b) recognised the missed opportunities of strategic HRD and suggested a fundamental realignment of the HRD function with the employee needs so that maximum benefits, effective recruitment and retention and competitive advantage could be achieved.

#### 3.5.1.6. Summary

In conclusion, this review suggests that much of the attention given to the crucial employee resourcing function and related HRD component of SHRM has been piecemeal. Many of the texts discuss specific elements or processes in isolation of other areas of the function. This has resulted in a disjointed approach to employee resourcing and HRD, quite the opposite to the strategic and integrated view proposed by the general SHRM literature discussed in section 2.3.2.

It is sufficient to summarise, however, that by emphasising the continuity of the processes and the links with other SHRM systems effective recruitment and selection processes can help ensure an appropriate supply of skilled staff that can positively

contribute toward the achievement of the business objectives. This is especially true within project-based sectors where the often short-term assignments can suffer detrimental consequences should staff shortage delay projects at any stage. It is arguably even more crucial for the construction industry as it is currently experiencing increasing difficulties in attracting skilled staff (Shuster, 2000; Pitzrick, 2001). Taking employee priorities and preferences into account in the process, resourcing can also enhance job satisfaction and employee development (HRD) and career management processes. Strategically considered allocation decisions can offer valuable learning experiences to employees. This can better teamwork, facilitating high performance and productivity, which in turn result in increased profits. The overall process contributes toward staff retention allowing for more efficient HRP, including succession management, which in turn contributes toward the achievement of organisational goals and knowledge sharing. In effect employee resourcing can achieve organisational flexibility in that a full range of information sources can be utilised for effective strategic planning as well as for deciding immediate responses or short-term solutions to changing requirements.

A number of models and frameworks have been developed in attempts to influence better management of the function. A selection of these are discussed below.

### ***3.6. THE CURRENT MODELS OF EMPLOYEE RESOURCING WITHIN THE INDUSTRY***

Four main employee resourcing specific models were identified within the existing construction HRM literature. These are Serpell and Maturana's (1995) SAGPER,

Vassos' (2000) CALIBRE, Trejo *et al*'s (2002) framework for competency and capability assessment for resource allocation, and Loosemore *et al*'s (2003: 84) model of the competing pressures and interdependent functions involved in the resourcing of project teams.

### 3.6.1. SAGPER

The 'SAGPER' model (SAGPER by its Spanish acronym) presents a knowledge-based system methodology for supporting management decisions and improving human resource management in construction projects (Serpell and Maturana, 1995). This is achieved by providing managers with suitable information about employee motivation and work satisfaction on a construction site (*ibid.*). Serpell and Maturana (1995) developed the model in response to increasing competition, more technically complex projects, client demands and a shortage of qualified labour in the Chilean construction industry. Their research showed that one of the main limitations faced by construction managers for managing human resources was the almost absolute lack of information about most of the aspects related to personnel. The model was to improve this via effective collection and analysis of required data with the suitable steps of the process being automated. On the basis of this evaluation, recommendations for improvement were to be generated and presented to the managers, whom were assumed to hold the responsibility for their implementation. From the outcomes of this data collection and analysis, recommendations and implementation cycle, the learned experience was to be fed back to the data collection and analysis process as well as the company personnel specialists. The personnel specialists were assumed to hold responsibility for the design and quality



of the data collection instruments. Figure 3.4 shows the general architecture for the SAGPER.

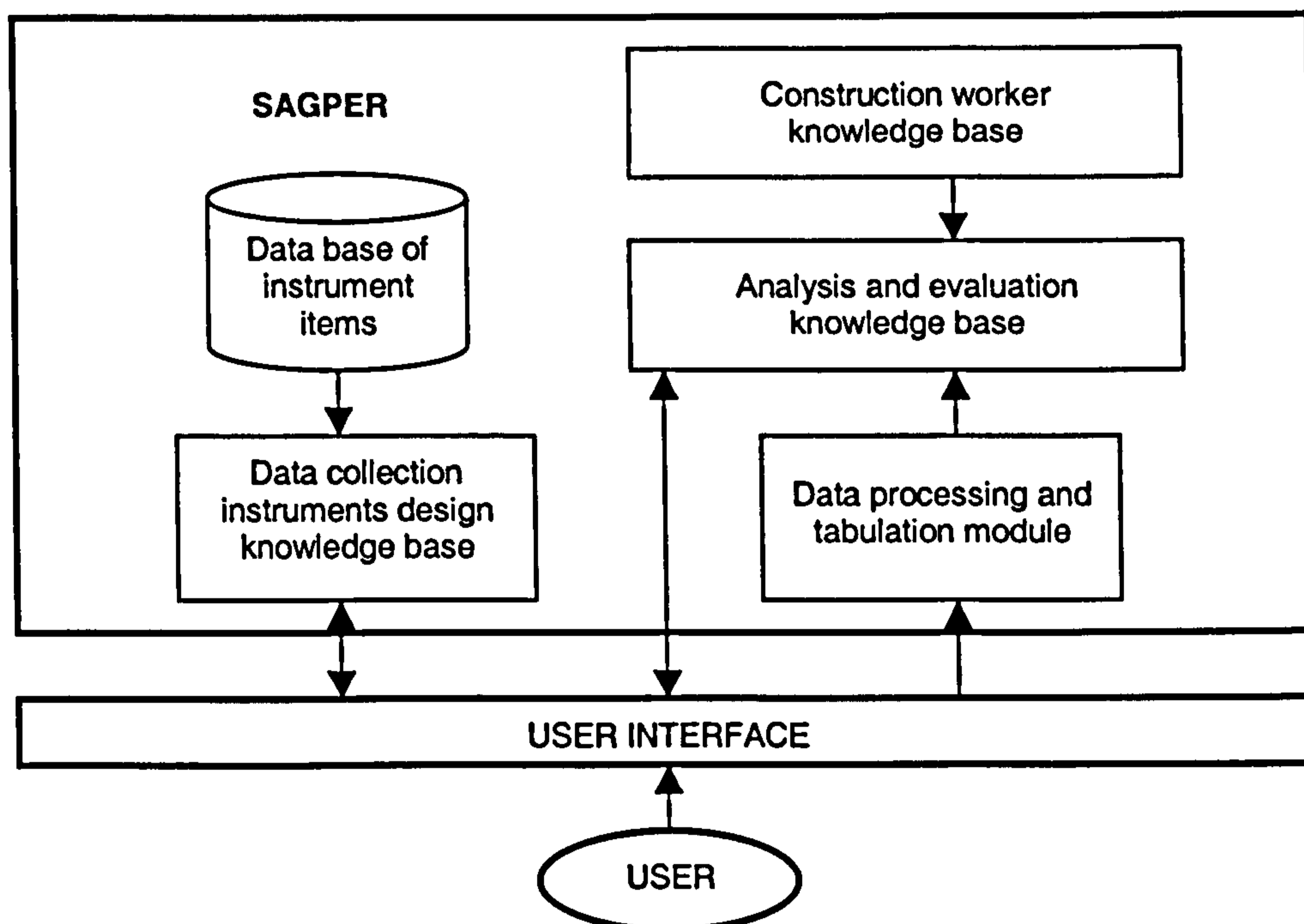


Figure 3.4: General architecture of SAGPER (Serpell and Maturana, 1995)

SAGPER suggests significant improvements to construction human resource management via structured decision-support with the potential benefits of acquiring empirical evidence on site-based HRM issues, storing labour management expertise and making crucial knowledge available to a large number of managers (Serpell and Maturana, 1995). The model utilises expert system technology to support its automated components. This feature contains a set of rules, which evaluate the level of satisfaction [and dissatisfaction] among the specified site operatives on the basis of the input data. This satisfaction measure is calculated from a combination of 11 factors: materials availability, responsibility, work stability and pressure,

relationships with supervisor and managers, communication, compensation, safety conditions, work facilities, recreation and food (ibid.). As such the practical applicability of the model to a wide range of situations is constrained by the limited number and range of factors included in the analytical process. Furthermore, the model being entirely project/ site focused, its applicability to managing the varied employee resourcing activities organisation-wide is negligible. Finally, the use of the model for the purposes of this research is made inappropriate by its focus on

- Site operatives, whom are commonly employed by subcontractors on projects managed by large contractors in the UK (see section 1.1.1)
- Evaluating the satisfaction/ dissatisfaction rates of these site operatives, rather than managing the complex and diverse employee resourcing activities in an integrated manner as suggested most appropriate by the SHRM approach.

### 3.6.2. *CALIBRE*

Vassos (2000) attempted to facilitate smarter team building via the development of a UK construction industry toolkit CALIBRE. CALIBRE is a generic project management toolkit that incorporates an element on resource utilisation (labour and plant) performance measurement. Other elements of the model include

- Time evaluation and assessment measurement system (TEAMS), which seeks to identify how time is utilised on construction sites

- BREPlan, which seeks to determine the predictability of the construction product delivery process
- Site environmental assessment system (SEAS), which seeks to measure the environmental impact and working environment of construction sites
- SMARTWaste, which seeks to identify the volume, type and causes of material waste on site
- As built CD ROM, which provides the end user with a digital record of the project (Vassos, 2000).

As such, CALIBRE does not provide a comprehensive employee resourcing model, but rather a generic tool for managing the construction site activities. The 'resource utilisation performance measurement' element contributes to the team deployment aspect of the staffing function within employee resourcing by its data collection and analytical capabilities, which can be used to inform site management of labour requirements and time constraints. However, even at this specific level the tool fails to deliver SHRM style holistic and integrated employee resourcing support. As specified above, focus is on project management information and the construction process, rather than the human resources related employee resourcing issues.

### *3.6.3. Framework for competency and capability assessment for resource allocation*

Trejo *et al's* (2002) framework for competency and capability assessment for resource allocation focuses on matching individual employee competencies/capabilities to the requirements of the organisation (Figure 3.5).

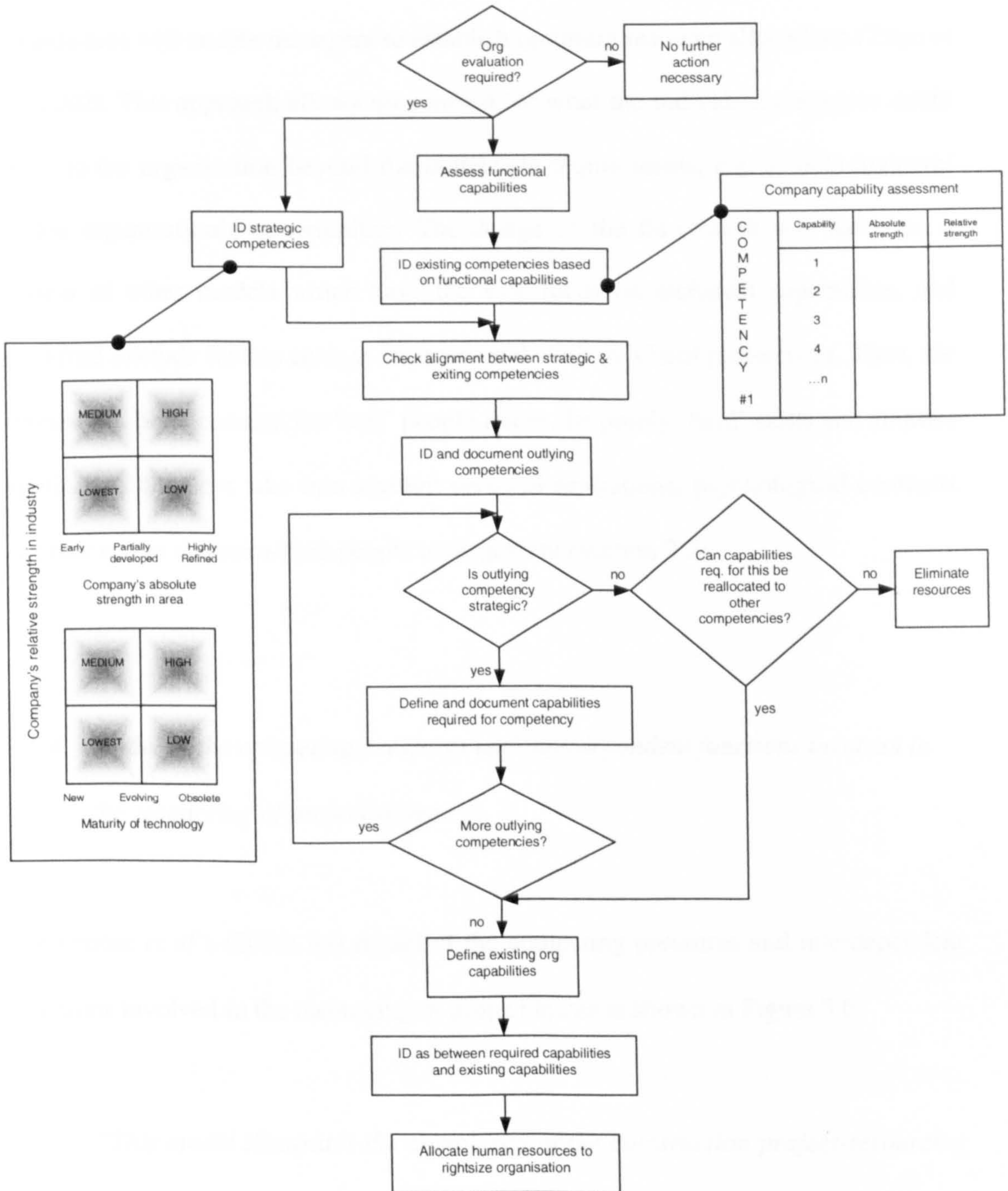


Figure 3.5: Framework for competency and capability assessment for resource allocation

(Trejo et al, 2002)

This model (Figure 3.5) was developed under the assumption that a systematic approach to determining accurate predictions of the organisational strengths and weaknesses will enable managers to establish optimum resource allocations (Trejo *et al.*, 2002). This approach allows no concern for what the individual employee could offer to the organisation beyond the immediate requirements, e.g. to help improve/widen organisation's opportunities. The design of the framework was based on a review of other models which have the sole focus on technical capabilities, and therefore exclude factors such as interpersonal skills or client preferences. Thus, the framework lacks concern for 'soft' people issues. Its purely 'hard' skills and abilities application does not take into account personal aspirations, psychological contracts or other recent themes within people management (section 2.2).

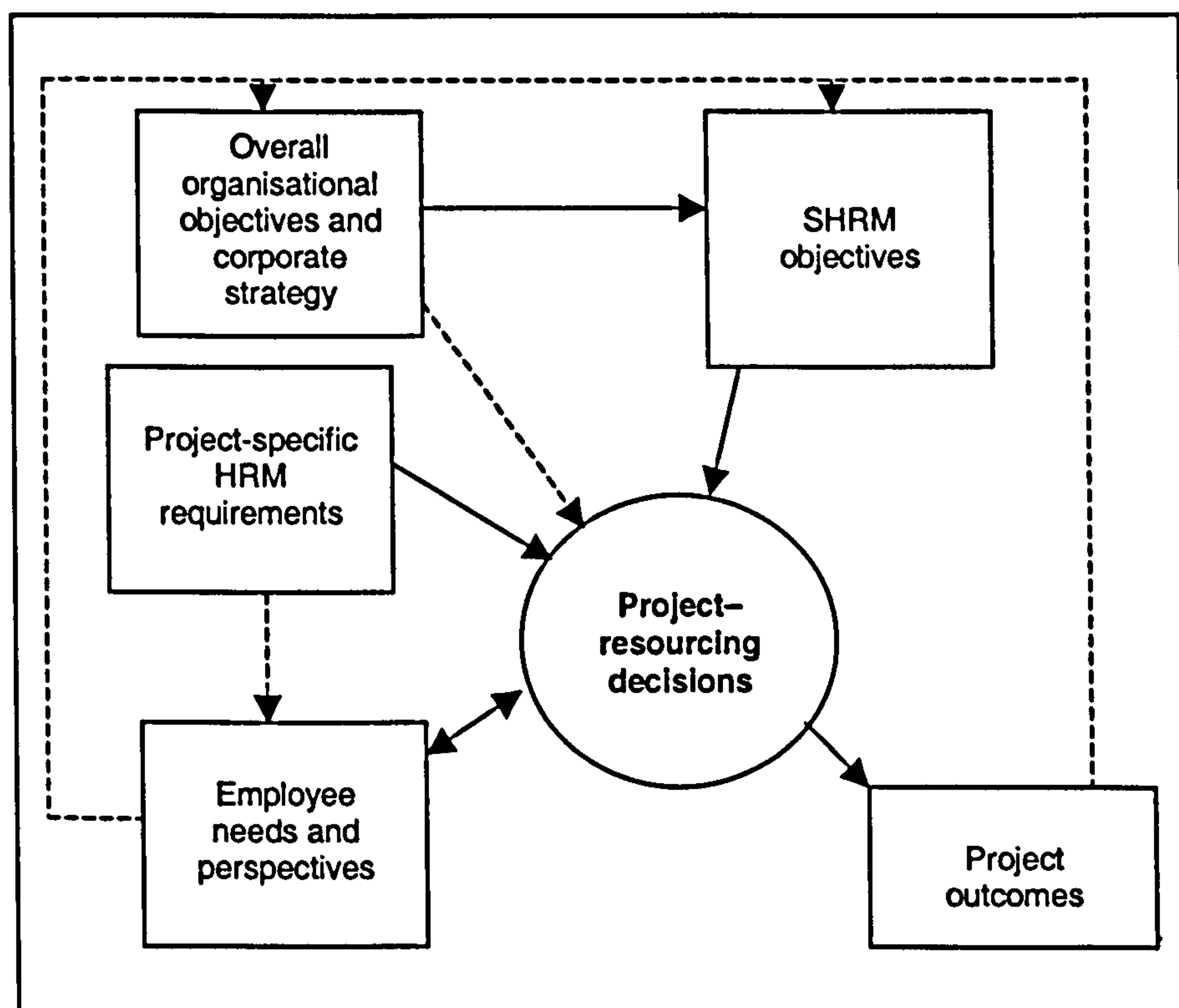
#### *3.6.4. Model of the competing pressures and interdependent functions involved in the resourcing of project teams*

Loosemore *et al.*'s (2003: 84) model of the competing pressures and interdependent functions involved in the resourcing of project teams is shown in Figure 3.6.

*"This model illustrates the complexity of the construction project-resourcing environment... [and] reveals the many potentially competing objectives which the resourcing process must meet" (ibid.).*

As such, the model usefully fulfils its purpose. However, regardless of the concern for project-resourcing *environment*, it fails to take into account the crucial impact of

the environment external to the organisation, which, as stated earlier (section 1.1.1), has a fundamental effect on way the employee resourcing activities are managed. In addition, Loosemore *et al*'s model fails to recognise the impact project-resourcing decisions have on the project specific HRM requirements, overall organisational objectives and corporate strategy and SHRM objectives. Links illustrated in the model show only one way relationships between these aspects.



**Figure 3.6:** A model of the competing pressures and interdependent functions involved in the resourcing of project teams (Loosemore *et al*, 2003: 84)

On the basis of the industry literature (sections 2.4 and 3.5) and the current models (section 3.6) a conceptual model of the construction employee resourcing cycle was developed (Raiden *et al*, 2002a, 2002b). This is introduced next in section 3.7.

### 3.7. A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYEE RESOURCING

The conceptual model of employee resourcing cycle (Figure 3.7) highlights the key employee resourcing activities and the internal and external factors that influence the function within the industry. The employee resourcing specific SHRM objectives of staffing, performance, HR administration and change management form the central core of the cycle. HRD and employment relations are closely linked to the individual activities within the function. The ultimate goal of the function is the continuous achievement of organisational goals at a minimum risk whilst maintaining balanced psychological contracts.

Factors internal and external to the organisational context influence the effective management of the function. The internal influences within the model (Figure 3.7) include *the organisation's strategic choice in terms of SHRM*, which often affects higher level issues of employee resourcing, development and relations (Iles and Mabey, 1992: 255). In construction this may mean an organisation opting to employ staff only on fixed-term temporary contracts, invest heavily in training or devolving HR responsibility from HR practitioners to line management (Druker and White 1996; Maloney, 1997). *Organisational structure* is another significant internal influence. This may mean, for example, adopting a hierarchical structure or differing functional and hierarchical reporting lines, so called matrix organisation (Bresnen, 1990: 2; Hamilton, 1997: 99). *Organisational culture* can influence the factors above as well as the SHRM practices (Bate, 1992). This is more difficult to manage and control, as it is difficult to describe and measure, and varies between organisational departments and divisions. Finally, *factors central to the individual employees within*

*the organisation* have impact on employee resourcing. Similarly to the organisational culture, employee needs and preferences may not have such a direct or tangible effect on the SHRM practices as the organisational strategic choice or structure, although they should influence the developmental stages of SHRM processes. The processes should serve the needs of the managers in managing the employees and the needs of the employees' in involving them in the process.

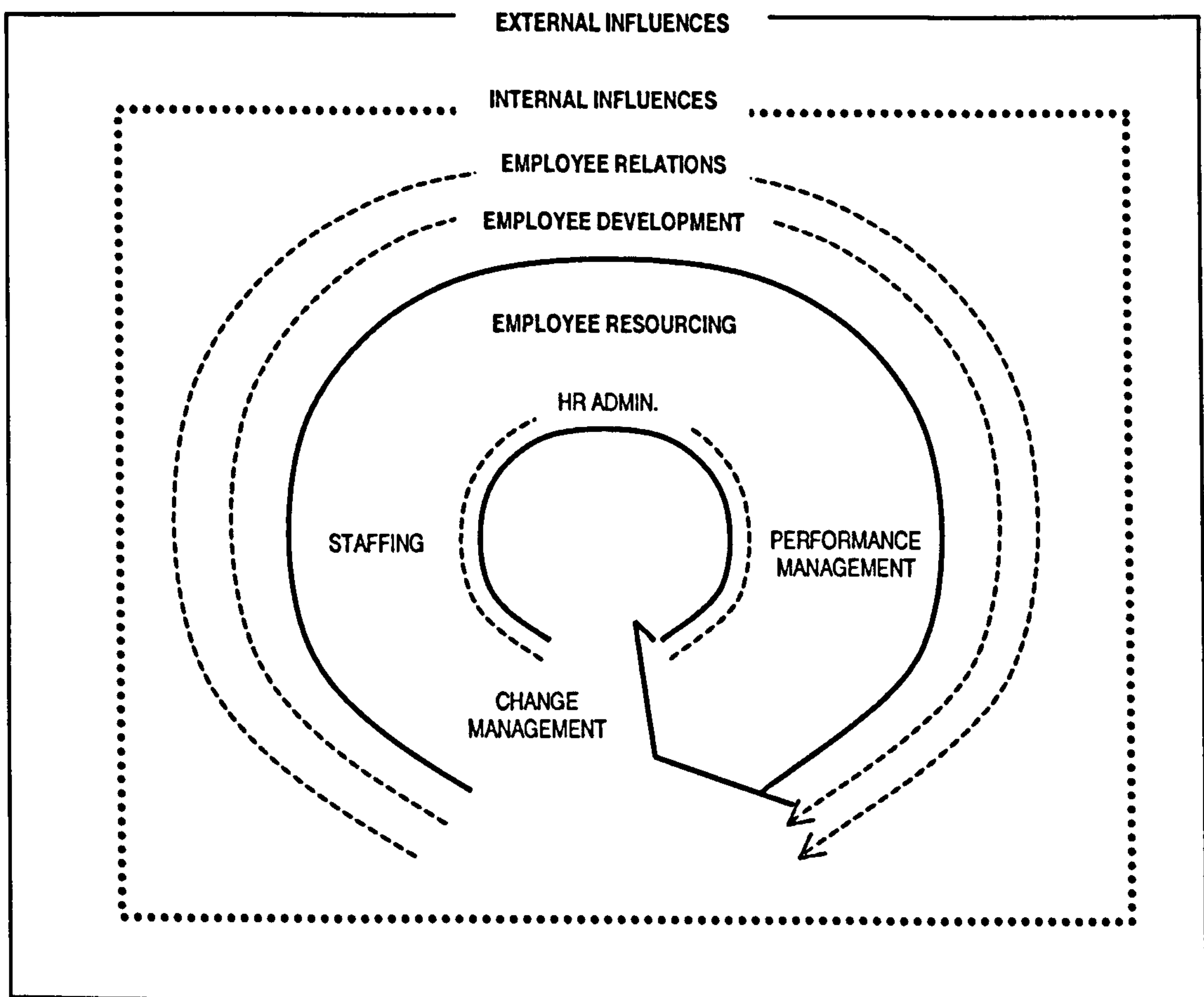


Figure 3.7: A conceptual model of the employee resourcing cycle in construction (after Raiden *et al*, 2002a, 2002b)



Ultimately, however, the internal factors contribute to the strategic business objectives of employee resourcing: the continuous achievement of organisational goals at a minimum risk whilst maintaining balanced psychological contracts. Understanding the psychological contract is vital to understanding employee responses to the employment relationship as discussed in section 2.2.1. Thus, to ensure maximum productivity, it is crucial that the individuals' preferences and expectations are taken into account throughout the resourcing process.

In addition to the factors internal to the organisation influencing the SHRM processes, several factors external to the organisation affect the way SHRM practices are organised. The fluid and dynamic environment of the construction industry presents a particularly problematic context for effective employee resourcing. The challenges include those that apply to construction industry specifically (sections 1.1 and 3.3) and those, which apply to all business sectors. Common throughout all different business sectors are technological, legislative and demographic changes; changes in peoples' values and beliefs, quality standards and expectations; and changes in the economic/labour markets.

Further challenges to the process introduce the need to balance these competing external, organisational, project and individual priorities and needs, both at strategic (long-term) and operational (short-term) levels. The current employee resourcing practices often rely on the personal assessments of line management (Druker *et al*, 1996), which have the potential for inconsistencies, poor allocation decisions and hence, disillusioned employees through the violation of the psychological contract (Dainty *et al*, 2000b). Due to the project/organisational needs predominating the

process, this has the potential to contribute to increase employee turnover, and hence, to contribute to the overall inefficiency of the industry. This places extreme demands on both HR departments and line managers, and requires a flexible approach to the employee resourcing function in construction organisations (Dainty *et al*, 2000b).

Industry wide, recent governmental initiatives within the industry's performance improvement agenda (section 3.3.1) have recognised the importance and business case for advanced SHRM practices. As a response they have developed a set of toolkits to assist organisations in adopting good people management practices. These may form a useful starting point, however, being piecemeal they seem to neglect the importance of the strong relationships between the different SHRM functions.

### **3.8. THE NEED FOR AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRATEGIC/ INTEGRATED RESOURCING**

This chapter has detailed the theoretical framework for the research (SHRM: Chapter 2) in the context of the project-based environment of construction industry. Drawing on the characteristics of project-based work and the nature of the industry, the current attempts and initiatives to address the performance improvement and people management challenges prominent within the sector were identified as unsuited or poorly implemented (section 3.3.7). Furthermore, discussion on the industry's approach to SHRM and employee resourcing identified the current literature as lacking a holistic and integrated perspective to the management of people (sections 3.4 and 3.5). The often competing organisational priorities, project requirements and individual employee needs and preferences are at an imbalance. Thus, it is an

imperative that the research hypothesis two (H2), three (H3), four (H4) and five (H5) set out in the introduction are further explored through empirical research.

Hypothesis two (H2) was that

*“The employee resourcing decision-making is currently determined by project and broader business requirements rather than employee needs and preferences”.*

Hypothesis three (H3) stated

*“Employee needs and preferences from the deployment process centre around the fulfilment of personal needs and wider career ambitions rather than factors linked to their organisational role”.*

Hypothesis four (H4) further identified that

*“The conflict evident between the competing organisational priorities, project requirements and employee needs and preferences present a challenging context for implementing a SHRM approach to employee resourcing within construction organisations”.*

Finally, hypothesis five (H5) projected that

*“The importance of the team deployment and project resourcing activities within construction organisations introduce a need for the provision of a structure and knowledge base to inform the strategic employee resourcing decision-making”.*

Chapter 2 discussed hypothesis one (H1) and six (H6) concluding that *SHRM provides a more effective approach to employee resourcing than those grounded in the personnel management paradigm through improved organisational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work and Information technology (IT) systems offer potential solutions for managing the employee resourcing function effectively* when selected and implemented with a broad range of criteria in mind.

The nature of the hypothesis *H2 – H5* introduce a need for a parallel investigation of the organisational processes and priorities, project requirements and employee needs and preferences. The next chapter (Chapter 4) discusses the research design and methodology adopted for the empirical work.

# Chapter Four

## Research design and methodology

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Parallel investigation of organisational processes and priorities, project requirements and employee needs and preferences is a complex task, which requires a systematic approach to data collection and analysis if meaningful results are to be achieved. This chapter presents the research design and methodology adopted to explore the hypothesis and meet the research aims and objectives set out in the introduction (section 1.2). At first, the aims, objectives and hypothesis are restated and the general research strategy and approach explained. The chapter justifies the interpretative framework adopted and describes the specific methods of data collection and analysis used.

#### 4.1. THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The research aims, as set out in the introduction (section 1.2), were two-fold:

- 1: *To produce a structured and comprehensive explanation of current employee resourcing practices within large construction contractors*
- 2: *To develop a framework and knowledge base to inform strategic employee resourcing decision-making for recruitment and retention of knowledge workers*

Accordingly, the research objectives were:

- A. To establish organisational SHRM strategy, policy, practices, organisational priorities and project requirements in relation to employee resourcing
- B. To model the current resourcing decision-making processes
- C. To establish employee personal and career needs and preferences in relation to their deployment
- D. To establish the compatibility and conflicts between managerial and employee deployment objectives
- E. To verify that the findings and results have general application to other construction firms
- F. To develop a more appropriate framework to inform the employee resourcing decision-making than is currently used that reflects leading-edge practice within the industry's larger employers.

Furthermore, the research hypothesis stated:

- Hypothesis one (H1): *SHRM provides a more effective approach to employee resourcing than those grounded in the personnel management paradigm through improved organisational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work.*
- Hypothesis two (H2): *The employee resourcing decision-making is currently determined by project and broader business requirements rather than employee needs and preferences.*
- Hypothesis three (H3): *Employee needs and preferences from the deployment process centre around the fulfilment of personal needs and wider career ambitions rather than factors linked to their organisational role.*
- Hypothesis four (H4): *The conflict evident between the competing organisational priorities, project requirements and employee needs and preferences present a challenging context for implementing a SHRM approach to employee resourcing within construction organisations.*
- Hypothesis five (H5): *The importance of the team deployment and project resourcing activities within construction organisations introduce a need for the provision of a structure and knowledge base to inform the strategic employee resourcing decision-making.*
- Hypothesis six (H6): *Information technology (IT) systems offer potential solutions*

*for managing the employee resourcing function effectively.*

These aims, objectives and hypothesis imply a need for a parallel investigation of organisational processes and priorities, project requirements and employee needs and preferences.

The research aim one: *To produce a structured and comprehensive explanation of current employee resourcing practices within large construction contractors* and related objectives A, B, C, D and E involve an examination of the current practices within large construction organisations. In order to produce a structured and comprehensive explanation a diverse range of in-depth and generally applicable data are required. This should include both descriptive and analytical information, so that a full explanation can be achieved.

In addition, the research aim two: *To develop a framework and knowledge base to inform strategic employee resourcing decision-making for recruitment and retention of knowledge workers* and related objectives E and F seek to develop a solution to combating the challenges construction organisations face in recruiting and retaining professional staff. This necessitates the use of analytical techniques that allow for both exploratory and orderly systematic examination of varied data. The data must be collected and analysed in a way, which most efficiently and effectively brings out the key issues. As the literature review (Chapters 2 and 3) highlighted, the recruitment and retention elements of employee resourcing are highly personal and delicate activities that must take into account each individual's specific needs and preferences. This suggests that a research strategy/ approach is adopted that allows



for the investigation of personal, subjective accounts. The research strategy and approach developed to explore the hypothesis and meet the objectives in line with these requirements is outlined next in section 4.2.

## 4.2. RESEARCH STRATEGY/ APPROACH

According to Creswell (2003: 6), a research framework consists of three elements: ontology, epistemology and the detailed procedures of data collection and analysis (methodology and methods). This section outlines a “roadmap” for the research design and methodology. It begins by developing the philosophical position that underpins the project. Firstly, the ontological standpoint is established. Secondly, the philosophical assumptions about what constitutes knowledge, the epistemology, are discussed. Thirdly, the general procedures of research, or strategies of inquiry are explained. Section 4.3 outlines the research design. Sections 4.4 and 4.5 discuss the methods and detailed processes of data collection and analysis.

### 4.2.1. *The first philosophy, ontology*

Ontology refers to the first philosophical assumption that underpins research: the theory/ philosophy of reality (Hussey and Hussey, 1997: 49). It is concerned with establishing how the research is set out within the external and internal contexts apparent within the research topic and how the researcher views the subject of the research. In this thesis the ontological assumption is that the world is socially

constructed and best understood by examining the perceptions of the human actors, as follows from sections 1.2, 1.3, 3.8 and 4.1. It is accepted that the researcher has an impact on the empirical data collection and analysis.

#### *4.2.2. The epistemological standpoint*

The underlying philosophical assumption as to what is knowledge, or the epistemological standpoint of this research, takes a pragmatic position on knowledge claims (Creswell, 2003: 11-12). Pragmatism is real-world practice oriented. The concern is with application and solutions to problems (Patton, 1990). Attention is focused on the research problem and pluralistic approaches are used to derive knowledge about the problem (Patton, 1990; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Murphy and Rorty (1990), Cherryholmes (1992) and Creswell (2003) further characterise pragmatism as:

- Not committed to any one system of philosophy or reality – inquirers draw liberally from both qualitative and quantitative methodologies
- Mixed methods research – a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods provide the best understanding of a research problem.

They also agree that pragmatists believe that research always occurs in social, historical, political, organisational and other contexts.

### 4.2.3. *The research strategy and methodology*

Drawing on the literature on research methodology and the assistance of experts in the field a scientific, interpretative approach was adopted as the overarching research strategy for the project. Qualitative data forms the main source of information for the project, supported by quantitative data. This combination of quantitative and qualitative data is commonly used within a case study approach, which entail the detailed examination of one or a small number of cases (Bryman, 1989: 30, 175). Case study methodology has been incorporated as an integral aspect of the overall methodological framework. A qualitative approach tends to place emphasis on understanding what is going on in organisations in participants' own terms (Bryman, 1989: 29). This is central to the research project in that it seeks to establish the compatibility and conflict between the competing organisational, project and individual employee priorities.

### 4.3. *RESEARCH DESIGN*

The research design (Figure 4.1) maps out the research objectives and the proposed key outputs on the methodological journey from the "problem domain" through to the proposed solution. The objectives (A – F) were set out in section 1.2 and restated in section 4.1. The proposed key outputs (1 – 3) include:

1. A list and explanation of the key issues that form the centre focus for the study
2. Theoretical output, which includes a structured and comprehensive explanation of current employee resourcing practices within large construction organisations.

Also a proof of concept outline for a framework and knowledge base to inform strategic employee resourcing decision-making for recruitment and retention of professional staff as per the research aims set out in section 1.2

3. Practical output, which includes a paper-based checklist/ procedural and process guidelines for effective employee resourcing and team deployment decision-making.

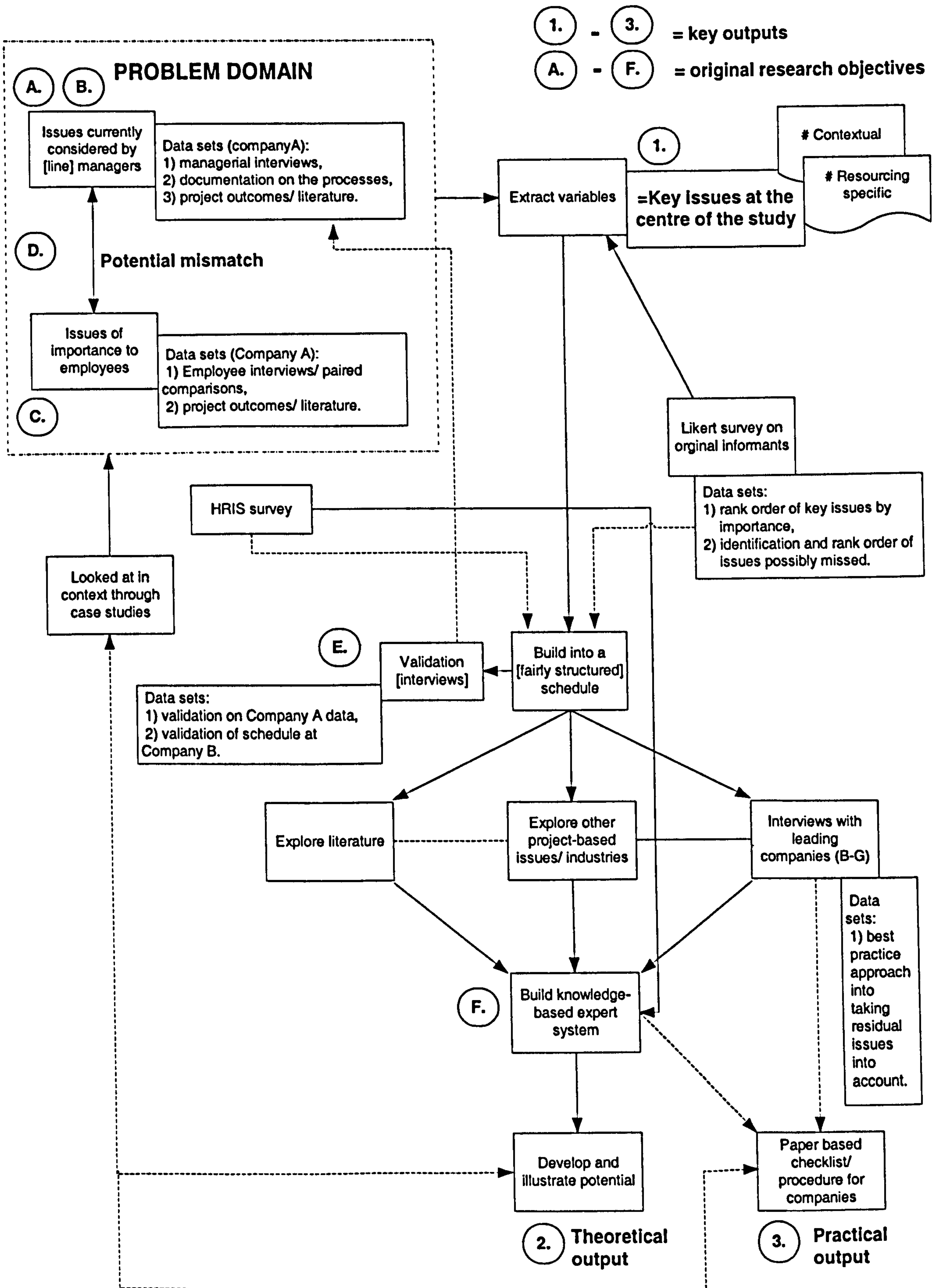


Figure 4.1: Research Design

Within the overall interpretative framework multiple methods of data collection have been employed to gather the combination of qualitative and quantitative material to explore the hypothesis and meet the research aims and objectives. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the specific methods used for data collection and analysis in relation to the research objectives.

**Table 4.1: Summary of the objectives and related methods of data collection and analysis**

<i>Research objectives</i>	<i>Method of data collection/ analysis</i>
A. To establish organisational SHRM strategy, policy, practices, organisational priorities and project requirements in relation to employee resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi-structured interviews with managers – NVivo</li> <li>• Researcher administered management style questionnaire – SPSS, MS Excel</li> <li>• Document analysis</li> </ul>
B. To model the current decision-making processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postal factor validation questionnaire – SPSS, MS Excel</li> </ul>
C. To establish employee personal and career needs and preferences in relation to their deployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi-structured interviews with employees – NVivo</li> <li>• Researcher administered analytic hierarchy method questionnaire – SPSS, MS Excel</li> <li>• Postal factor validation questionnaire – SPSS, MS Excel</li> </ul>
D. To establish the compatibility and conflicts between managerial and employee deployment objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NVivo</li> <li>• Summary statement matrices</li> <li>• Thematic analysis</li> <li>• Project case studies – NVivo</li> <li>• SPSS, MS Excel</li> </ul>
E. To verify that the findings and results have a general application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postal factor validation questionnaire – SPSS, MS Excel</li> <li>• Best practice/ validation case studies – NVivo</li> <li>• Telephone interviews – NVivo</li> </ul>
F. To develop a more appropriate framework to inform the employee resourcing decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practice/ validation case studies – NVivo</li> <li>• HRIS evaluation</li> </ul>

Figure 4.2 illustrates the connections between the different methods of data collection and analysis. This does not follow a chronological sequence of the research events (see Figure 4.3), rather it illustrates the complex interplay of the different data sets.

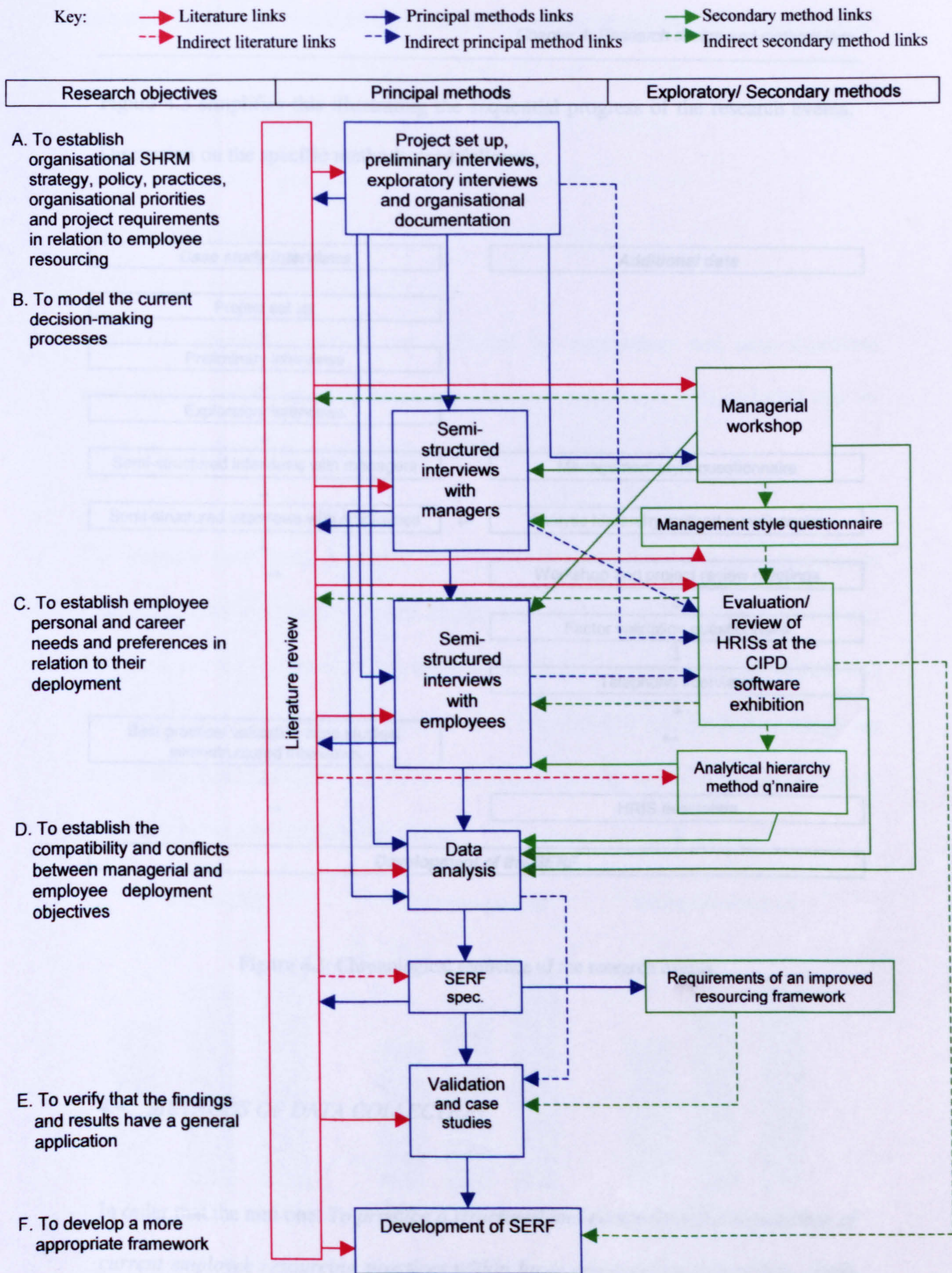


Figure 4.2: Data flows within the methodology

Figure 4.3 simplifies this illustrating the sequential progress of the research events.

Discussion on the specific methods used follows.

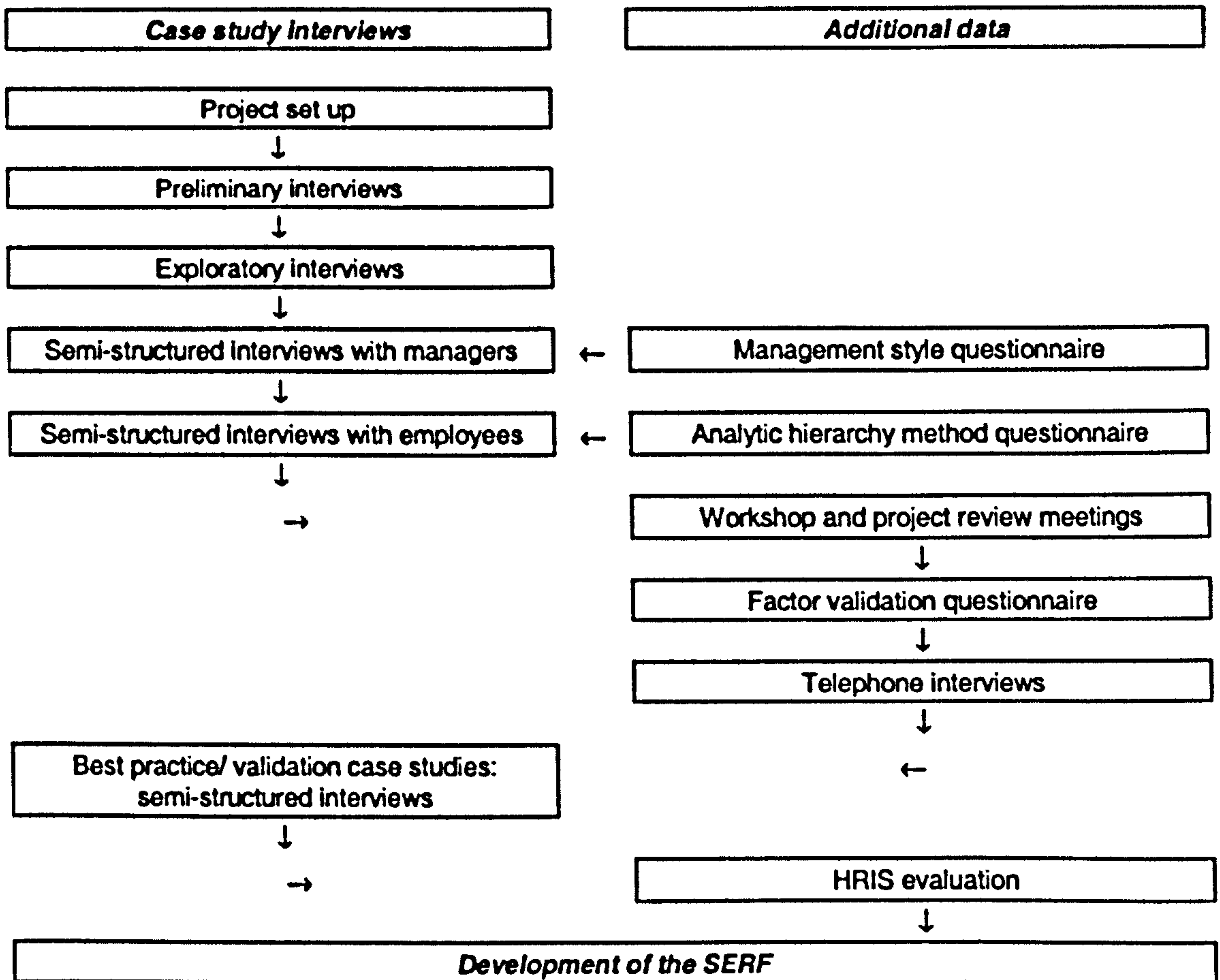


Figure 4.3: Chronological sequence of the research events

#### 4.4. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

In order that the aim one: *To produce a structured and comprehensive explanation of current employee resourcing practices within large construction contractors*, could be met a diverse range of methods to collect both in-depth and generally applicable

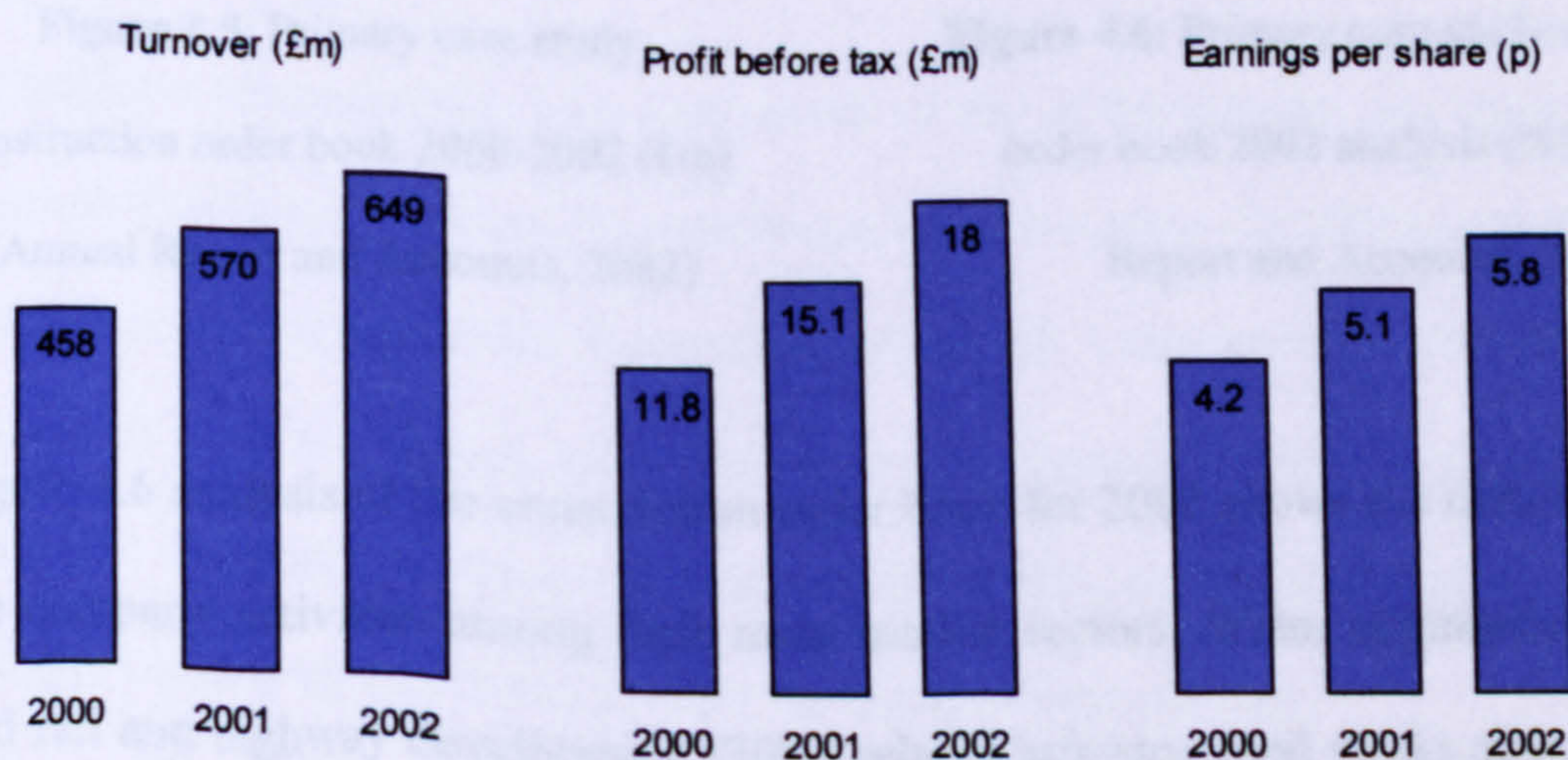


data were employed. This included interviews, questionnaire and case study material and organisational documentation.

#### 4.4.1. Interviews

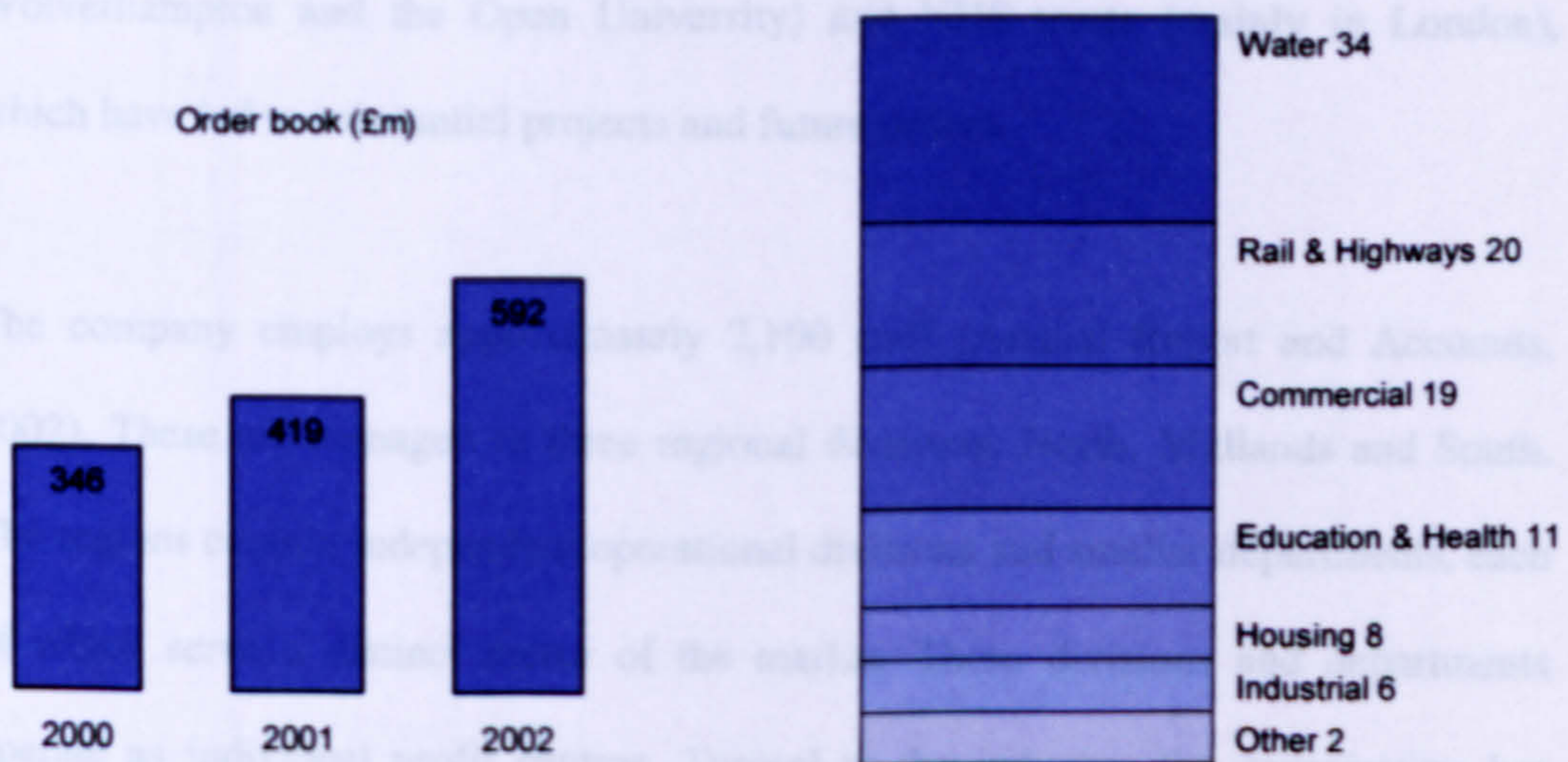
Qualitative interview material was collected via exploratory and semi-structured interviews in seven large UK based construction contractors. This included one in-depth case study and six best practice/ validation studies.

The primary case study consisted of a national contractor, with an approximate turnover of £500 million per annum. During the year to June 2002 their turnover was £649 million, with a construction order book of £592 million (Annual Report and Accounts, 2002). The company profit before tax was £18 million and earnings per share 5.8 p (ibid.). Figure 4.4 shows the recent growth in the company turnover, profit before tax and earnings per share.



**Figure 4.4:** Primary case study turnover (£m), profit before tax (£m) and earnings per share (p) 2000-2002 (Annual Report and Accounts, 2002)

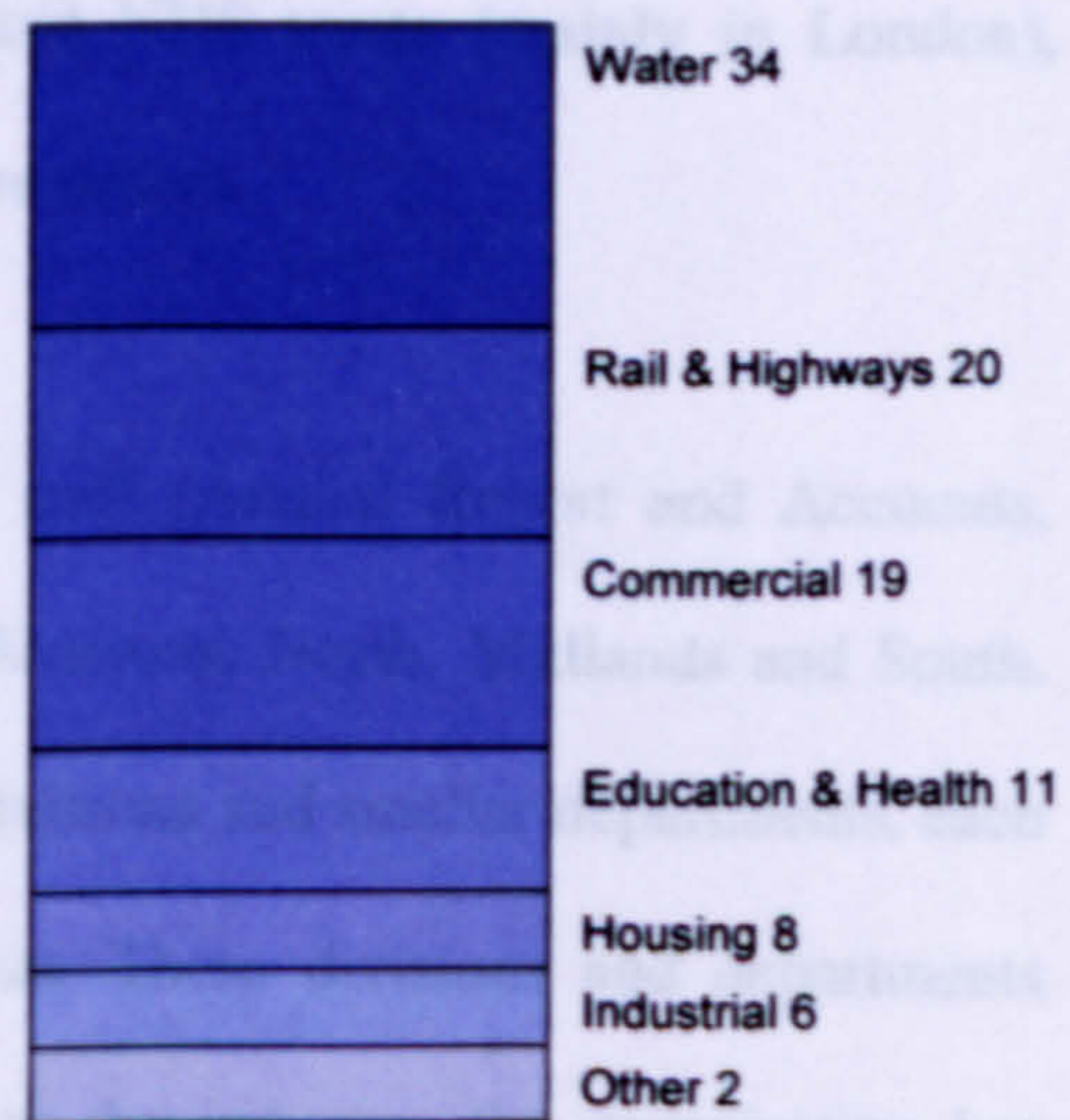
This figure (Figure 4.4) shows rapid growth in all areas. 2001-2002 the company turnover grew from £570 million to £649 million, by 14%. Profit before tax increased by 19%, from £15.1 million to £18 million. Earnings per share were also up by 14%, from 5.1 p to 5.8 p. Growth in terms of the construction order book was even more significant. 2001-2002 the order book achieved 29% improvement, from £419 million to £592 million (Figure 4.5).



**Figure 4.5:** Primary case study

construction order book 2000-2002 (£m)

(Annual Report and Accounts, 2002)



**Figure 4.6:** Primary case study construction

order book 2002 analysis (%) (Annual

Report and Accounts, 2002)

Figure 4.6 analysis of the construction order book for 2002 shows the distribution of the company activities among their main market sectors. Water engineering (34%) and rail and highway development (20%) related infrastructural works account for a total of 54%. Commercial (19%) and education and health (11%) related works fill another 30%. The remaining 20% consists of housing (8%), industrial works (6%)

and other smaller projects, such as interior and refurbishment business (2%). Clients within these sectors include both public and private developers. In the private sector, for example O<sup>2</sup> telecommunication services provider and Compass Roadside Travelodge developer generated significant orders during 2002. In the public sector the company has initiated partnerships with several borough councils (such as Bradford Metropolitan), universities (such as Cambridge, Warwick, Birmingham, Wolverhampton and the Open University) and NHS trusts (mainly in London), which have led to substantial projects and future orders.

The company employs approximately 2,100 staff (Annual Report and Accounts, 2002). These are managed in three regional divisions: North, Midlands and South. The regions contain independent operational divisions and smaller departments, each of which serve a distinct sector of the market. These divisions and departments operate as individual profit centres. Typical to the industry, the organisation has recently merged with a similar contractor.

Altogether 50 respondents were interviewed as part of the primary case study. This included divisional directors (4), operational senior managers (7), HRM staff (4) and employees at various levels of the organisation (35). Contact was established with some of these respondents more than once (see Table 4.2 respondent profile for details). Appendix C shows the hierarchical positions and relationships of the primary case study respondents within the organisational structure.

The external best practice/ validation case study respondents included human resource and operational senior managers responsible for project allocation decision-

making (9) (for a profile of the external case study organisations see section 4.4.6.2).

Table 4.2 summarises the interview respondent profile.

Table 4.2: Respondent profile

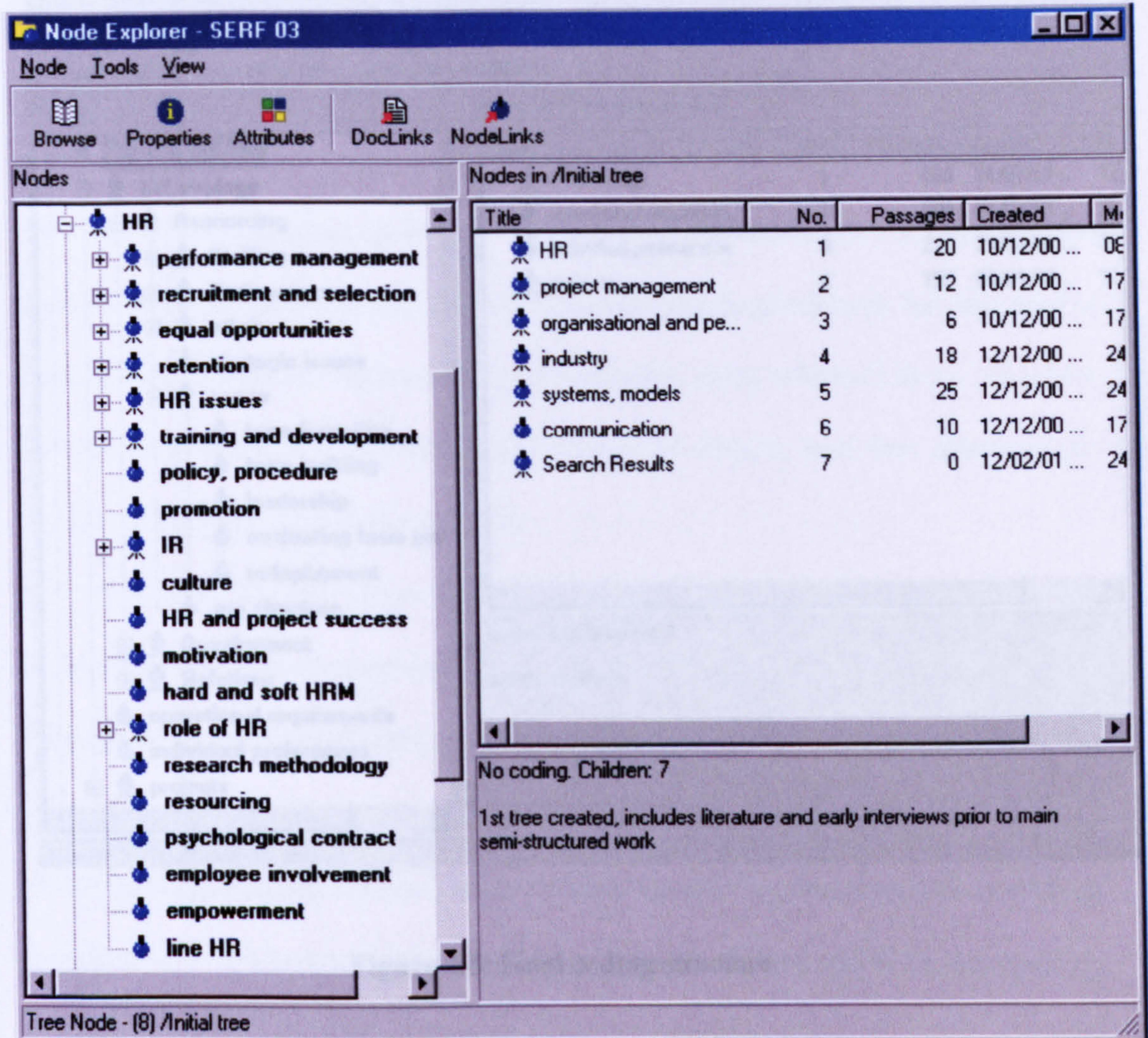
Scope	Category	Research method	In-depth case study										Supplement. cases		
			Project set up	Preliminary interviews	Exploratory interviews	Semi-structured interviews	Management style questionnaire	Analytic hierarchy method questionnaire	Workshop	Project review meetings	Factor validation questionnaire	Telephone interviews	Best practice/ Validation case studies	TOTAL (number of contacts/datasets)	Project based
	<b>TOTAL</b>		2	4	7	44	7	31	4	5	29	4	9	146	
	<b>Director</b>		2	3	3	4	2		1	5	1	1	24		
	Operational director		1	1	1 (x2)	1			1	1 (x3)			9		
	HR Director		1	2	1	1			1	1 (x2)		1	9		
	Departmental MD					2	2						5		
	Commercial director										1		1		
	<b>Operational senior manager</b>					6	5	1		1	6	2	22		
	Contracts manager				4	4	3	1		6	2		17		
	Chief estimator				1	1	1						2		
	Chief surveyor				1	1	1						2		
	Regional engineering manager											1	1		
	<b>HRM staff</b>								1		1	7	13		
	HR manager				1	2			1			7	11		
	Payroll administrator				1								1		
	Personnel administrator				1								1		
	<b>Staff</b>							30		23			87		
	Commercial manager				1		1						2	✓	
	Project manager				6		5			3			14	✓	
	Site manager				1		1						2	✓	
	Site agent				7		6			8			21	✓	
	Design co-ordinator				2		2			2			6	✓	
	Senior estimator				2		2			2			6		
	Senior surveyor (QS)				4		4						8	✓	
	Surveyor (QS)				2		2			1			5	✓	
	Engineer				4		4			3			11	✓	
	Assistant QS				2		2						4	✓	
	General foreman				2		1			4			7	✓	
	Working foreman				1								1	✓	
	<b>Ext. org.</b>												6		
	<b>Qualitative</b>		2	4	7	44	7	31	4	5	4	9	79		
	<b>Quantitative</b>									29			67		

Two bespoke interview schedules were developed to assist in establishing

- The organisations' HRM strategy, policy and practice
- The organisational/ project requirements
- The individual needs and preferences of employees.

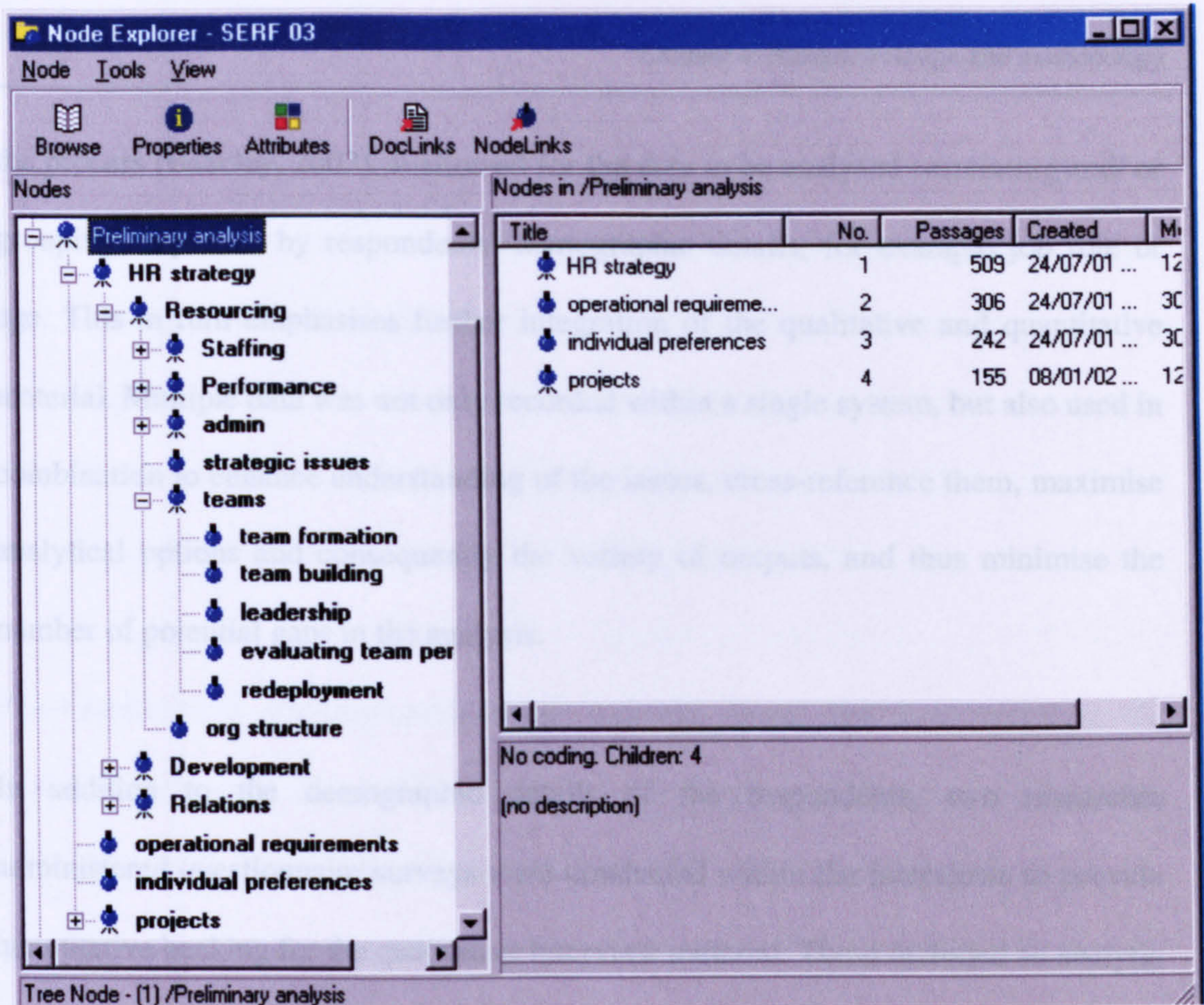
One of the schedules was designed for the managerial interviews and the other for employees. The managerial schedule focused the discussions on exploring the organisational procedures and managerial practices. The interviews with employees sought to establish the individuals' personal needs and preferences and how these were currently met by the resourcing practice. (See appendices D1 and D2 for the interview schedules. In addition to the topics for discussion the schedules incorporated an introduction to the research project and a section to collect demographic data from the respondents.)

The schedules provided structure for the discussions and helped to ensure all the topics were covered, whilst they also allowed for the issues to be explored flexibly and the order of the questions to be modified according to each respondent's style and interview situation. In addition, the schedules proved useful in tracking the interviewees' thought processes. The "probe cells", which contain the topics for discussion and a variety of probes to explore the issues, formed the initial NVivo coding structure (Figure 4.7 below).



**Figure 4.7:** Initial coding structure derived from the interview schedules

This structure was later refined following the development of the conceptual model (section 3.7) and a thus the emergence of a new significantly improved coding hierarchy. Figure 4.8 details the HRM/ employee resourcing/ teams part of the final coding structure within the main four categories to exemplify the layered approach taken.



**Figure 4.8:** Final coding structure

The interview material has been tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed using NVivo and summary statement matrices. The qualitative interview transcripts were coded, initially using broad-brush coding, and then “coded-on” by concept coding (Bazeley and Richards, 2000: 54-55). Broad brush coding groups larger sections of the data under broad themes. The concept coding “codes-on” under these themes assigning issue specific codes or conceptual labels to particular segments of the text. “Nodes” represent the coding in NVivo. The quantitative demographic data was input into NVivo document attributes (ibid: 41-43). This combination of coded interview transcripts and demographic details is a clear example of effective integration of quantitative and qualitative data and the use of computers to facilitate



the process (Bazeley, 2003). It allowed for the data to be analysed correlating and/ or grouping responses by respondents' demographic details, for example job role or age. This in turn emphasises further integration of the qualitative and quantitative material. Multiple data was not only recorded within a single system, but also used in combination to enhance understanding of the issues, cross-reference them, maximise analytical options and consequently the variety of outputs, and thus minimise the number of potential gaps in the analysis.

In addition to the demographic details of the respondents, two researcher administered questionnaire surveys were conducted within the interviews to provide quantitative backing for the qualitative interview material. These included an analytic hierarchy method questionnaire (Saaty, 1980; section 4.4.2) for employees and Blake and Mouton's (1985) management style questionnaire (section 4.4.3) for managers.

#### *4.4.2. Analytic hierarchy method questionnaire*

The analytic hierarchy method questionnaire asked employees to rank the importance of nine factors that potentially influence team deployment decision-making against each other (see appendix E1 for the questionnaire form). These were derived from the preceding literature review:

1. Personal and/or professional development
2. Work location close to home/ maintaining work-life balance
3. Training opportunities

4. Organisational division
5. Experience in working under different procurement systems or contract forms
6. Gaining broad and/ or specialist experience
7. Project type (e.g. size, complexity, etc.)
8. Good team relationships
9. Promotional opportunities

The results were analysed using SPSS and MS Excel and then linked to the qualitative interview data in NVivo via “proxy” documents (Bazeley and Richards, 2002: 39-40, 61), DocLinks and External Data Bites (ibid.: 45-47, 51, 96-97; 17-18). The proxy documents were used to record the location of research material external to that held in NVivo (for example the original response forms in a paper file) and summarise the key contribution of this data. The DocLinks were used to link the research material, such as proxy document summary description, to nodes and other research documents relevant to the results. External Data Bites also link research material external to the main NVivo data. They differ from the proxy documents and DocLinks in that the anchor to which the external data is linked to forms a world-wide-web type hyperlink, which directs the user directly to the data source. Hence, the External Data Bites are only useful for linking electronic data. In relation to the analytic hierarchy method questionnaire, the survey results were linked to the corresponding thematic broad brush coding and concept coding. For example, a chart showing the project managers’ order of importance was linked to a node that represented team relationships, as this was the factor the respondents in this group ranked highest. This, again, signifies the effective integration of qualitative and quantitative data (Bazeley, 2003).

#### 4.4.3. *Management style questionnaire*

Blake and Mouton's (1978, 1985) management style questionnaire was used to ascertain the managerial respondents management/ leadership style. This technique involves the administration of a basic questionnaire (appendix E2) within which managers indicate their response to a range of situations. The questionnaire results provide only an indicative measure of the respondents' management style. However, it was selected as appropriate measure for the purposes of this research since the questionnaire was quick and easy to administer within the interviews and the data was to be used to support/ verify the qualitative interview material and not to provide a main source of information. Simple, quick and easy tools often work best with busy managerial respondents whose time is limited. For this reason and the secondary nature of the method, the Blake and Mouton questionnaire provided a practical solution.

Similarly to the analytic hierarchy method (section 4.4.2) the findings and results of the management style questionnaire were analysed using SPSS and MS Excel and then linked to the qualitative interview data in NVivo via proxy documents, DocLinks and External Data Bites.

#### 4.4.4. *Document analysis*

The analysis of the organisational documentation involved the examination of all available and relevant printed company information, such as

- Annual reports and mission statements
- Policies and procedures (including equal opportunities policies, new employee induction packs, general terms and conditions of employment, offers of employment and performance appraisal forms)
- Project outcome records (customer project reviews)
- Leaflets, brochures, pamphlets and booklets published for advertisement and/ or PR purposes.

As with the questionnaire data discussed above, links to this data were created in NVivo using proxy documents. The location of the documents were recorded and saved for future reference, and summary accounts of key issues noted. This minimised the likelihood of the data being lost or forgotten from the analysis. The summary accounts were coded in a similar fashion to the interview material, and so incorporated in the search and retrieval process (Bazeley and Richards, 2000: 78-79; 25-26).

#### 4.4.5. *Factor verification questionnaire*

The factors identified as important to be taken into account in the employee resourcing process within the interview and analytic hierarchy method questionnaire data were verified via a self-administered postal questionnaire. This was carried out in order:

- To confirm the factors had been extracted truthfully

- To establish an estimated rank order for the variables included
- To allow respondents beyond the original interview sample inform the research of any additional factors that had not previously been identified.

The questionnaire took a 12 page Likert scale format (appendix E3) to follow-up the primary case study organisation's annual staff satisfaction survey. The layout of the questionnaire form was designed on the style of the organisational survey. The forms together with self-addressed prepaid return envelopes were delivered to the organisation's main research contact, whom distributed them across the organisation. Departmental managers encouraged their staff to complete and return the forms. This partnership approach adopted for the administration of the questionnaire helped to secure a good response rate.

The results were analysed using SPSS and MS Excel.

#### 4.4.6. *Case studies*

Two types of case study material were collected to provide contextual data on the employee resourcing issues within the construction industry. These included project case studies within the primary research collaborator and best practice/ validation case studies external to this organisation.

#### 4.4.6.1. Project case studies

Three case study projects were used to explore the effectiveness of historical employee resourcing decision-making and illustrate the multiple challenges common within the team deployment and wider employee resourcing function. Thus, they were of exploratory and illustrative nature (Hussey and Hussey, 1997: 66). The main data collection was integrated into the semi-structured interview schedule and thus conducted in the course of the project duration. Accordingly, the data were extracted from the interview material by coding it under a separate 'projects' structure. From within this tree node material on each project was pulled out by conducting Boolean searches (Bazeley and Richards, 2000: 70-73). The data were analysed independently, however with the overall conclusions in mind, and used for writing up case studies. On completion of each of the projects, customer project reviews were obtained as part of the document analysis to provide outcome data on the projects' success. These data were linked to the appropriate project nodes via proxy documents, DocLinks and External Data Bites, as explained above.

#### 4.4.6.2. Best Practice/ Validation Case Studies

The best practice/ validation case studies conducted external to the primary case study served a dual-purpose:

- To validate and verify the issues highlighted in the initial in-depth case study and the findings drawn so as to validate the applicability of these challenges to the industry as a whole

- To extract best practice approaches to the employee resourcing processes, which can be transferred/ adapted to support the development of a more appropriate resourcing model.

The companies selected were similar to the in-depth case study in size, number of employees and turnover. Table 4.3 lists the type of participating organisations, their main operating sectors and annual turnover at the time of the research interviews: 2001-2002. 'National contractor' refers to an organisation with its main base (headquarters) in the UK. This distinguishes case studies A-E from the 'European contractor' whose headquarters are located in Holland. All of these organisations have a strong international profile.

**Table 4.3: Participating best practice/ validation case study organisations**

	<i>Case study</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Turnover (£'000s)</i>
A	National contractor	Building	1,074.000
B	National contractor	Civil engineering	487.238
C	National contractor	Civil engineering	1,680.000
D	National contractor	Building	1,382.200
E	National contractor	Civil engineering	1,335.900
F	European contractor, UK branch	Building	706.000

As alluded to earlier (section 4.4.1), nine HRM and managerial respondents were interviewed within these organisations. Similarly to the material collected within the in-depth case study, the interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed using NVivo. As within the primary case study, organisational documentation was collected from the best practice/ validation case studies to support the interview material. This included recruitment and induction packs,

appraisal documentation, career development material, organisational structure charts and graduate information sets.

#### *4.4.7. Telephone interviews*

The detailed examination of the customer project review documents (section 4.4.4) was followed by telephone interviews with managers responsible for the resourcing of each of the projects. These were conducted in order to extract the managers' views on the outcomes and success of the project, and add detail and more in-depth notions to the data given in the company records. The notes on these interviews were documented in NVivo and coded in a similar way to other interview material.

#### *4.4.8. HRIS evaluation*

The HRIS evaluation included an analysis of HR software packages readily available for purchase "off-the-shelf" at the CIPD 'Computers in Personnel' event. The system capabilities were assessed in relation to the specific employee resourcing challenges project-based environments present. The results were tabulated in a matrix format shown in appendix F.



#### 4.5. DATA ANALYSIS

The requirements for the analytical techniques outlined that they must incorporate exploratory as well as orderly and systematic examination of the varied data collected and allow for the investigation of personal, subjective accounts (section 4.1). The extensive use of the NVivo qualitative analysis software facilitated this through the processes of coding, sorting, organising and analysing the research material.

Initially, a basic “content breakdown” was derived from the NVivo coding structure (appendix G). This was in order to provide indication as to the spread of areas covered and approximate guidelines as to the importance of the issues on the basis of [1] number of documents coded and [2] number of passages coded. The breakdown also helped to identify any obvious gaps in the data and potential case study projects for in-depth examination. Likewise to the in-depth case study interview material, a “content breakdown” was drawn from the best practice/ validation case study data (Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4: Best practice/ validation case study “content breakdown”**

<b>Node</b>	<b>Sub node</b>	<b>Documents</b>	<b>Passages</b>
<b>GOOD PRACTICE</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>128</b>
	Graduate recruitment/ development	6	33
	Recruitment	7	30
	HR planning	6	13
	Career management	7	24
	Team deployment	7	39
	HR admin and policy (incl. mngt style and HR role)	6	40
	EI	5	12
	Performance management	7	25
	Communication	5	9
	Work-life, flexibility, travel	7	28
	Exit	5	13
	Job descriptions	3	6
<b>Current issues &amp; challenges</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>90</b>
	Change	5	10
	Leave and come back	1	1
	Admin, IT, HRISs	6	11
	Team deployment	6	12
	Performance management	6	12
	Hours, travel, flexibility, work-life	7	28
	Retention	7	12
	Communication	5	9
	Recruitment	5	11
	Strategic planning	4	21

Extensive use of NVivo matrix intersections (Bazeley and Richards, 2000) and summary statement matrices (Miles and Huberman, 1994) were also made in analysing the multiple sets of data. The matrix intersections allowed for the data to be examined in manageable chunks, made comparison/ contrasting by nodes and/ or document attributes easy and differentiated between high-low volumes of data coded under each node by document/ passage count and colour coding.

The matrix intersections were constructed by job roles from the document attributes and tree nodes. Summary statement matrices were then drawn from each matrix

intersection (see appendix H for an example of a summary statement matrix). These summarised the overall contents of each node, or “a cell”, in the matrix intersection highlighting any exceptionally positive/ negative material and quotes from the respondents. Colour coding was used to highlight areas where an issue has been explored with a number of respondents, similarly to the matrix intersection layout. The summary statement matrices provided an easy access to viewing brief descriptions of the data and gaining an overall view of the specific issue, whilst the matrix intersections allowed for any interesting issues to be explored more in-depth effortlessly.

Lists of factors important to be taken into account in the resourcing decision-making were extracted from the matrices. Again, this was done by job roles as it was found a variable with significant influence to the participants views and an even spread of all roles were covered within the sample (see Table 4.2 and appendix I). Other demographic factors were found of lesser significance, and also in many cases an uneven spread across the range was achieved (appendix I).

The factors were correlated with causes of potential (and real) dissatisfaction and related potential (or real) consequences (appendix J). Thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998) was later used to categorise the issues into more manageable sections, as the number of variables found (139) proved overwhelming and practically impossible to deal with individually. The themed summary tables of the factors, causes and consequences provided an insight into the significance of issues covered forming part of the crucial data reduction exercise. Tables 4.5 illustrates this, full details are provided within the findings and results (Chapter 5) and discussion (Chapter 6).

Central to Table 4.5 are the factors highlighted as important to take into account in the resourcing decision-making. The left hand column indicates the theme under which the factors have been grouped. The causes of potential (and real) dissatisfaction are listed in the second column from the left. The right hand side column lists the potential (and real) consequences of the dissatisfaction should improvements not occur.

**Table 4.5:** Summary of potential (and real) causes and consequences of dissatisfaction in relation to factors important to take into account in employee resourcing decision-making

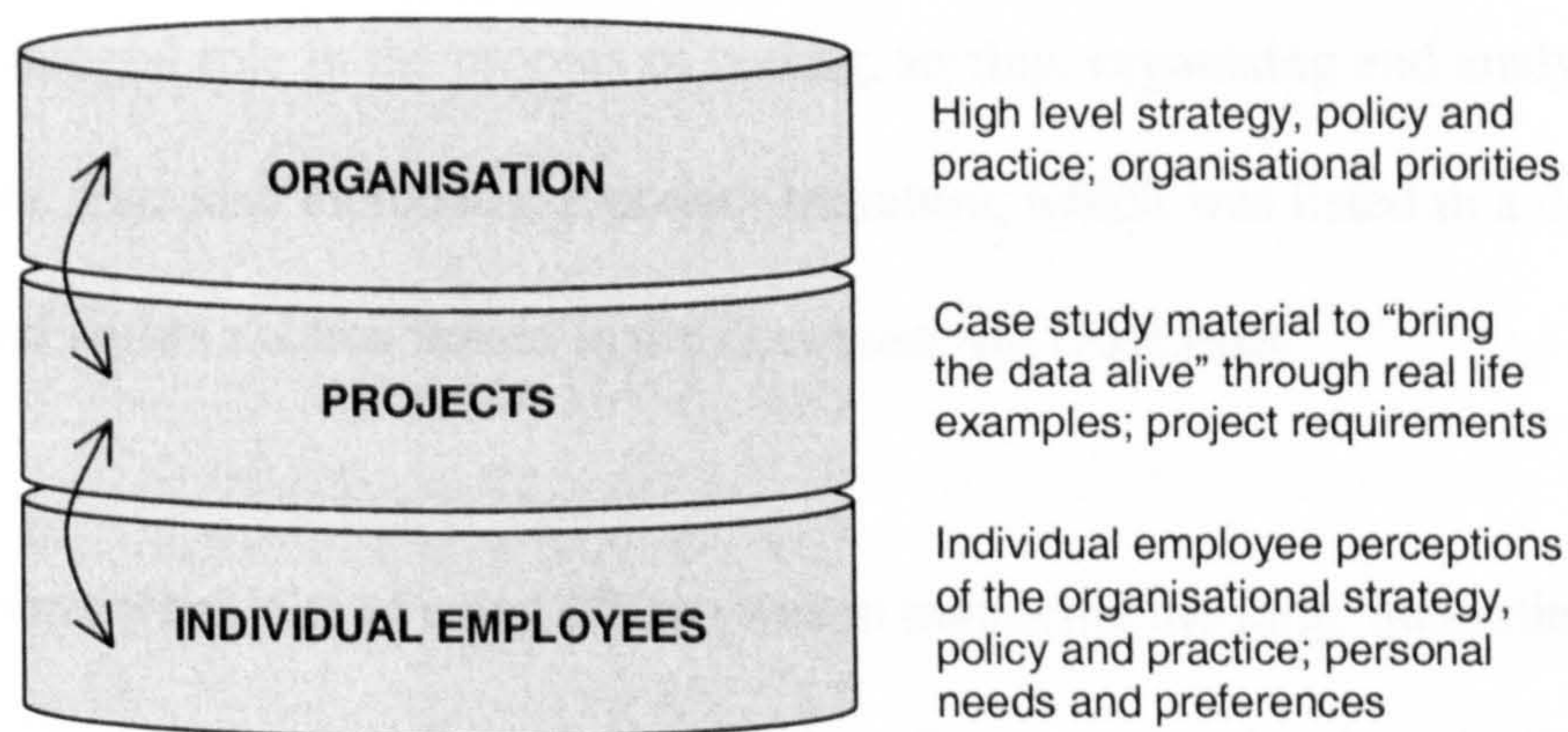
<b>THEME</b>	<b>CAUSE</b>	<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>POTENTIAL EFFECT</b>
<b>Team/ project</b>	No organisational procedure/ system Each manager manages with his/ her own individual style Staff shortages Project staffed with new employees (and agency) throughout	<b>Team member selection</b>	High numbers of new employees on a team No knowledge of organisational systems "Blind leading blind" Hindered performance and progress
	Project requirements (e.g. busy periods at start & toward end) Informal management style – no structure	<b>Team Integration and co-ordination</b>	No effective planning/ follow up on programme progress Disorganisation Difficulties at start of a project
	Induction not facilitated – "dumped on site"/ "thrown in at the deep end" Due to organisational growth informal interaction disappearing Induction pack not followed through Organisational growth	<b>New recruit/ team member Induction</b>	Difficulties in getting used to different working/ management styles Takes considerable time to achieve team cohesion Problems at start of a project Poorer performance at early stages Don't know colleagues
	Heavy administrative load – the organisation and co-ordination of roles and responsibilities Rigid development/ experience need structure (especially at early stages of career)	<b>Best use of skills and talents</b>	Building skills not used effectively
	Reduced divisional workload Merger Lack of co-operation between departments/ divisions	<b>Team spirit</b>	Reduced motivation Eroded divisional/ project team spirit Feeling of "them and us"

#### 4.5.1. Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis is defined as:

*“individuals, groups, or organisations, they could be almost any activity, process, feature, or dimension of organisational behaviour” (McClintock et al, 1979).*

Within this research three parallel units, or levels, of analysis were used: the organisation, projects and individual employees. Figure 4.9 illustrates how these were brought together to form a comprehensive framework of analysis.



**Figure 4.9:** Units of analysis

At the level of the organisation, the current SHRM strategy, policies and processes, employee resourcing activities and factors that specify the organisational priorities were analysed. The project analysis included case study material (section 4.4.6.1) to “bring the data alive” through real life examples and examination of the project requirements managerial respondents highlighted as important to take into account in

the resourcing decision-making. The individual employee account provided their perceptions of the effectiveness of the organisational strategy, policy and practice. The respondents' personal needs and preferences were extracted and analysed in relation to the current practice and organisational/ project priorities and requirements.

#### ***4.6. INTEGRATION OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA THROUGH THE USE OF NVIVO***

A recurring theme in discussing the different methods of data collection and analysis has been the integration of qualitative and quantitative research data. NVivo has helped immensely in bringing all this data together and provided a structure for the organisation and management as well as analysis of the varied material. NVivo played an integral role in the process of coding, sorting, organising and analysing the project data. This also included the project literature, which was listed in a document and detailed within memos linked to the document via DocLinks.

One of the main benefits of using NVivo was in managing the large quantities of data acquired. The multi-layered, tree-structured coding process developed allowed for the data to be explored in manageable sections. The document attributes used allowed for cross-referencing by interviewees' personal characteristics.

NVivo also supported effective integration of the quantitative and qualitative data. The software helped to collate them together forming a robust mixed methodology, which was not only focused on collecting data from multiple sources but also facilitated the use of this varied material to cross-reference and complement the

arguments/ conclusions drawn (Bazeley and Richards, 2000; Scholz and Tietje, 2002). Moreover, the linking of qualitative and quantitative data helped in bringing the quantitative content analyses drawn from the node structures and rich, detailed qualitative accounts together. This, together with extensive use of the search facility and data modeller, supported comprehensive analysis of large, complex sets of qualitative data.

Nevertheless, difficulties have been met along the project. On the whole, a major challenge to the project was to balance the emphasis on the holistic/ strategic view (focus of the study) but without losing the detail of the more operational issues, difficulties and challenges highlighted by the findings (Wright and Boswell, 2002). The NVivo coding structure (tree nodes) helped in layering the coded material. However, the coding process tended to result in duplication of much of the data as sections of text were found to refer to a number of issues, which resulted in extremely complex links between different nodes and documents. This required that efforts were concentrated on the coding process itself rather than the rich accounts found in the data. Although the distractions were recognised at an early stage of the analysis, they resulted in clear division of the operational processing of the data and the creative analytical stages of the research development. Consequently, radical data reduction was required. This was accomplished utilising matrix intersection and thematic analysis, as discussed above. An in-depth critical evaluation of the overall usefulness of NVivo in the research process is provided in Raiden *et al* (2003a) with insights to the benefits and downsides of using computers for qualitative data analysis.

#### 4.7. SUMMARY

This chapter served to document the research design and methodology adopted for the empirical research. The methods of data collection and analysis employed to investigate the hypothesis and meet the research aims and objectives were explained. The research instruments and analytical processes explained are transparent and can be adopted by other researchers. This represents a robust basis for the research. However, it is important to note that same results may not be achieved due to the contextual and subjective nature of qualitative research. The next chapter (5) presents the findings and results of this research.



# Chapter Five

## Case study findings and results

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This chapter presents the findings and results of the primary case study. The chapter is structured according to the research objectives A-C (section 1.2). Firstly, the primary case study organisational strategies, policies and practices are explained. Secondly, the organisational requirements and project priorities are outlined. This is followed by the employee needs and preferences and an examination of the external influences that were found to affect the resourcing decision-making. Thirdly, three diverse project case studies are presented in order to contextualise the findings. The chapter concludes by verifying the applicability of the primary case study findings and results to other organisations of similar nature within the industry (objective E). Throughout, the chapter aims to reflect on the findings in order to fulfil research aim one:

*To produce a structured and comprehensive explanation of current employee resourcing practices within large construction contractors.*

The key issue in developing this explanation concerns the effective translation of the organisational strategic intent and HRM policy into a successful managerial practice.

### **5.1. HRM STRATEGY, POLICY AND PRACTICE**

Research objectives A and B set out:

- A. To establish organisational SHRM strategy, policy, practices, organisational priorities and project requirements in relation to employee resourcing
- B. To model the current resourcing decision-making processes.

The following sections outline the primary case study organisation's strategy, vision and values (section 5.1.1), the role of HR specialists within the organisation (section 5.1.2) and the organisational policy and practices in relation to the three interrelated components of SHRM previously outlined within the literature review: employment relations (section 5.1.3), HRD (section 5.1.4) and employee resourcing (section 5.1.5). Section 5.2 presents the organisational priorities and project requirements the managerial respondents stated as being crucial to the employee resourcing decision-making.

### 5.1.1. Organisational strategy/planning

The company's Annual Report and Accounts (2002) states the overarching organisational strategy:

*“to be a market leader in delivering complete construction service through a partnership approach with a strong sector focus.”*

The organisational vision and values support this (ibid.):

*“Our vision is to be a leader in building partnerships for service excellence and our values are:*

- *to act professionally*
- *to seek innovation and continuous improvement*
- *to empower our people*
- *to conduct our business openly and honestly*

*[...] We seek to build positive, long-term relationships with all our stakeholder groups, whether customers, employees, investors, suppliers or partners, based on fairness, trust and responsibility and to make active contribution to their needs.”*

This clearly suggest a significant degree of senior management commitment to good people management practice and continuous human resource development (HRD), as

also does their “People Statement” (ibid.). This recognises employee contribution to the organisational success and highlights the company commitment to training and development, Investors in People (IiP), equal opportunities, work-life balance and employee communication (appendix K).

Delivering the strategy, vision and values forms the focus of the human resource plan, which is formulated annually as part of the overall business plan. The plan is distributed to the divisional directors and senior managers whom hold the responsibility for its implementation, with the support of HR.

The company’s strategic choice in terms of operational SHRM was to devolve many of the responsibilities to line management. Although the company had a main board level HR director, HR staff generally had little influence at divisional/ project level. The company’s organisational structure was strictly hierarchical despite the dynamic nature of the industry. This was apart from a limited number of small pockets of matrix management, which were found within the quantity surveying staff.

In line with the company’s “People Statement” (appendix K), vast majority of the respondents described the organisational culture as “*friendly, open and family orientated*” with two-way communications at the heart of the operations. However, some employees referred to the existence of an internal “*old boy’s network*”. They suggested that newcomers were “tested” by longer serving members of staff at site level. Only when the new employees had proven themselves to their colleagues were they accepted as members of the team.

### *5.1.2. Role of HR specialists*

As alluded to above, the day-to-day SHRM responsibilities were devolved to operational line managers. The role of the HR specialists was found to be purely advisory in this regard. It was the responsibility of divisional directors and senior managers to ensure that the operations run smoothly and the personnel involved in projects were looked after appropriately.

The HR director worked as a strategic link between the regional profit centres. He had a main board chair, with the responsibility of looking after the company's HR and training budgets. These funds were allocated between the regions as necessary.

Initially, the company had four designated staff for dealing with SHRM related matters. This included

- The Managing Director's (MD) Personal Assistant (PA), who looked after the executive recruitment and selection process
- The Quality, Environment and Training manager, who administered and monitored the "Q-Pulse" in-house training database
- The Payroll Administrator, who looked after the operative recruitment and selection administration and payroll
- A Graduate Recruitment and Development Officer, who managed the graduate recruitment and development programmes.

Many managers viewed the HR function as intrusive and unnecessarily bureaucratic:

*"[They are] always chasing for information and records, where I have a good system here locally."* (Divisional MD)

Operations managers did not acknowledge or understand the organisation-wide benefits of having a centralised SHRM support or information database.

The employees had minimal contact with HR staff. Line management formed the main source of HR information for project-based staff. The only HR related contacts the employee respondents mentioned were meetings with the company Health and Safety Officers. These were employed under the personnel function, however, their role focused solely on site safety inspections and related guidance.

Overall, the HR specialists' role, although strategic to the extent of providing policy and procedural support, tended to revolve around reactively 'fire-fighting' problems as they occurred and dealing with their consequences, rather than proactively preventing the problems from occurring in the first place. For example, problematic equal opportunities issues with the potential of industrial tribunal action, were referred to the department rather than managed appropriately within initial recruitment and selection and performance management procedures by the operating divisions.

### 5.1.3. Employment Relations

At policy level the company had established a firm standing. Equal opportunities, grievance, dismissal and other related policies were well in place, as indicated by the company's People Statement (appendix K). However, many of the policies/procedures had rarely translated into effective practice at project/ site level. Many managers and employees were unaware of the existence of such documentation, or even its possible location should a need for reference arise. Despite this, employment relations were not found to be a significant issue. The friendly organisational culture and individualistic management style gave many a feeling of confidence in fair practice. Trades union representation at professional level was minimal. Pay was negotiated individually within wide scales and a standard benefits package was applied to all staff. Annual bonus was assigned on the basis of the company's financial performance and each employee's individual achievements. All respondents were happy with the bonus arrangements. However, few complained that they were only remunerated for their contracted working hours despite committing many more in order to secure successful project outcomes.

The company dismissal procedure was found an area of some concern. A divisional commercial manager highlighted a need for unified practice with appropriate documentation, which his division did not currently operate regardless of the plc level policy. His main concerns related to possible court cases should a particularly un-knowledgeable and task oriented manager deal with a more sensitive member of staff (see Blake and Mouton management styles section 5.1.3.1 below). The harmful consequences were mentioned to include "*bad press*", which in turn was said to

negatively influence the organisation's customer base and the pool of potential future employees. This suggested that the company's communication efforts in relation to delivery of policy and procedure to operational implementation were ineffective.

#### 5.1.3.1. Management style

In support of the qualitative interview material, a management style assessment (section 4.4.3) was used to ascertain the managerial respondents' management/ leadership style. The Blake and Mouton's (1985) managerial grid technique measures each respondent's leadership style along two dimensions: concern for people and concern for production. The intersection of the two variables categorise the respondents' management style in, or close to, one of the five broad groups: 9,9 team management; 1,9 country club management; 5,5, organisation man management; 9,1 authority-obedience or 1,1 impoverished management (Blake and Mouton, 1978). Table 5.1 explains the typical characteristics of the five styles.

Naturally, many intermediate degrees of these five styles are common (for example 9,5; 5,9; 8,3 or 4,4). However, as Blake and Mouton (1978: 12) note, most of the benefits to be gained from theories at these intermediate locations do not seem worth the complexities involved in specifying the characteristics of each possible combination. Thus, the five broad styles (9,9; 1,9; 5,5; 9,1 and 1,1) are used for the purposes of exploring the questionnaire results.



**Table 5.1: Blake and Mouton (1978, 1985) management styles**

	<i>Description</i>	<i>Concern</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
9,9	<i>Team management:</i> Work accomplishment is from committed people; interdependence through a "common stake" in organisation purpose leads to relationships of trust and respect	Production (9) and people (9) concerns integrated at a high level	Goal oriented and seeks to gain results of high quality and quantity through participation, involvement, commitment and conflict-solving
1,9	<i>Country club management:</i> Thoughtful attention to the needs of people for satisfying relationships leads to a comfortable friendly organisation atmosphere and work tempo	Minimum concern for production (1) coupled with maximum concern for people (9)	Primary attention placed on promoting good feelings among colleagues and subordinates
5,5	<i>Organisation man management:</i> Adequate organisation performance is possible through balancing the necessity to get out work with maintaining morale of people at a satisfactory level	Medium concern for both people (5) and production (5)	"Middle-of-the-road", "go-along-to-get-along" assumptions revealed in conformity to the status quo
9,1	<i>Authority-obedience:</i> Efficiency in operations results from arranging conditions of work in such a way that human elements interfere to a minimum degree	Maximum concern for production (9) combined with minimum concern for people (1)	Focus on maximising production by exercising power and authority and achieving control through compliance
1,1	<i>Impoverished management:</i> Exertion of minimum effort to get required work done is appropriate to sustain organisation membership	Minimum concern for both people (1) and production (1)	Do the minimum required to remain within the organisation

The questionnaire form included six elements, which asked the respondents to select a statement that most closely matches their view on the following areas (the 1,1 and 9,9 extremes are given as examples of the options, for full details see appendix E2):

- *Decision-making:* I accept the decisions of others with indifference/ I place high value on sound creative decisions that result in understanding and agreement
- *Convictions:* I avoid taking sides by not revealing opinions, attitudes and ideas/ I listen for and seek out ideas, opinions and attitudes different from my own. I have strong convictions but respond to ideas sounder than my own by changing my mind.

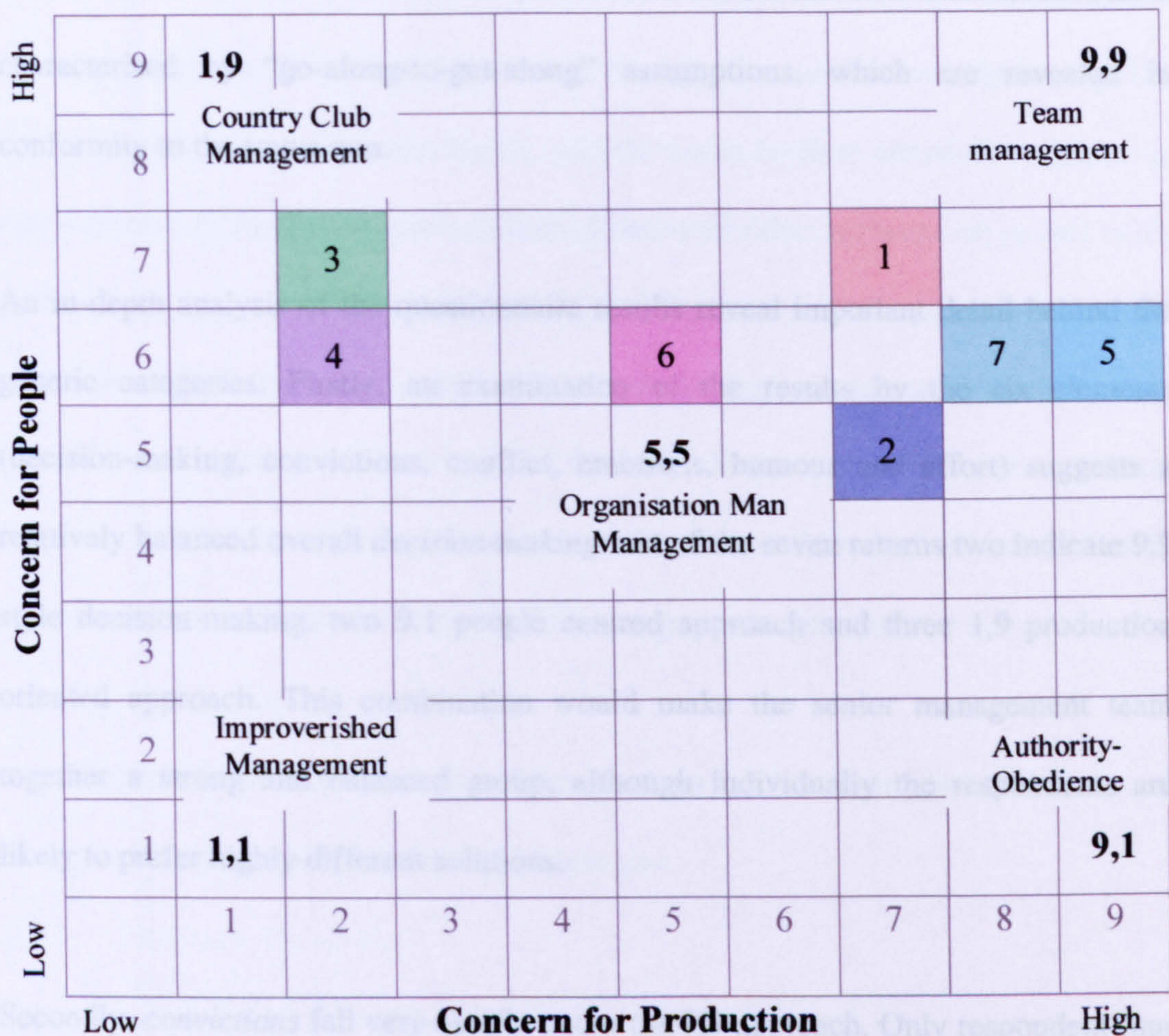
- *Conflict*: When conflict arises, I try to remain neutral/ When conflict arises, I try to identify reasons for it and seek to resolve underlying causes
- *Emotions (temper)*: By remaining uninvolved I rarely get stirred up/ When aroused, I contain myself even though my impatience is visible
- *Humour*: My humour is seen as rather pointless/ My humour fits the situation and gives perspective; I retain sense of humour even under pressure
- *Effort*: I put out enough to get by/ I exert vigorous effort and others to join in.

Eight questionnaires were administered as part of the semi-structured interviews with managers group in the primary case study. This sample consisted of the divisional construction director, contracts managers (5), the chief estimator and the chief surveyor (see appendix C for their hierarchical positions within the organisational structure). Seven of these eight respondents filled the questionnaire out correctly. One respondent had marked multiple responses to each section making accurate analysis of the data impossible. This response has not been included in the sample. Table 5.2 shows the seven responses tabulated on a matrix.

**Table 5.2:** Management style response matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Decisions	9,9	1,9	9,9	9,1	1,9	1,9	9,1
Convictions	5,5	9,9	9,9	1,9	9,9	9,9	9,9
Conflict	9,9	9,9	9,9	9,1	9,1	9,9	9,1
Emotions	1,9	1,9	1,9	5,5	9,9	1,9	5,5
Humour	9,1	1,9	1,9	1,9	1,9	9,9	1,9
Effort	9,9	9,1	9,9	9,9	9,1	5,5	5,5
AVERAGE	7,7	5,7	7,2	6,2	6,9	6,5	6,8

Figure 5.1 illustrates the averages from Table 5.2 plotted on the managerial grid. Colour codes are used for clarity.



**Figure 5.1:** Management style questionnaire respondents' averages on the managerial grid

The initial conclusions suggest that only few of the respondents show 'balanced', SHRM type management/ leadership style, namely those toward the 9,9 team management style.

Two respondents (three and four) show strong tendency to focus on people falling toward the 1,9 country club management style. This is somewhat surprising taking the demanding operational requirements of construction industry into account. Respondents two and six fall toward the 5,5 organisation man management style

characterised by “go-along-to-get-along” assumptions, which are revealed in conformity to the status quo.

An in-depth analysis of the questionnaire results reveal important detail behind the generic categories. Firstly, an examination of the results by the six elements (decision-making, convictions, conflict, emotions, humour and effort) suggests a relatively balanced overall *decision-making*: out of the seven returns two indicate 9,9 style decision-making, two 9,1 people centred approach and three 1,9 production oriented approach. This combination would make the senior management team together a strong and balanced group, although individually the respondents are likely to prefer highly different solutions.

Secondly, *convictions* fall very clearly under the 9,9 approach. Only respondent four deviates from this toward the 1,9 production oriented style. This suggests the organisation having an open, no-blame culture where innovation and new ideas are encouraged. The questionnaire results on *conflict* support this. The management team’s approach to conflict handling is unmistakably people centred, with four 9,9 team management responses and three 9,1 people oriented country club management responses.

The *emotions* element, however, received a rather production oriented response. Four out of the seven respondents indicated a 1,9 production oriented authority-obedience approach to dealing with emotions in the workplace. Similarly, *humour* received five out of the seven responses on the 1,9 production oriented authority-obedience scale.

The distinct production orientation toward the emotions and humour elements of the assessment, together with the highly people centred *effort* element, suggests an environment of “hard people orientation”. Focus and effort is placed on people when performance is required, but much colder, production oriented approach is adopted when the ‘softer’ emotional aspects of work relationships are in question. Analysis of the individual responses (on the basis of Table 5.2 data) supports this assertion. Only respondent five deviates from this in that his decision-making is production oriented (1,9) but emotions element balanced team management style (9,9).

Overall, these results indicate a promising platform for developing SHRM excellence through effective employee resourcing strategies.

#### *5.1.4. Human Resource Development*

Human resource development (HRD) was one of the key topics discussed within many of the primary case study interviews. Both managerial and employee respondents felt the company promoted training and strongly encouraged continuous development. This confirms the company’s People Statement on HRD true. Training toward professional qualifications and gaining chartered status as well as continuous professional development (CPD) were high priorities within management ranks. They focused on promoting staff development through the appraisal system. (This is discussed in detail in section 5.1.5.8 below.)

Although many of the employees saw the management's focus on recognised training programmes as an ideal opportunity, some disagreed with the rigid structure of these programmes and recommended greater flexibility. Apart from the occasional references to guidance from senior site staff, little evidence of structured on-the-job training/ development was found.

Overall however, despite management efforts in investing in future through continuous development, HRD appeared reactive rather than proactive in meeting the organisational needs.

#### 5.1.5. *Employee Resourcing*

The company's employee resourcing practices are discussed below under headings extracted from Table 5.3 below (for full details see section 2.3.3).

**Table 5.3: Employee resourcing (section 2.3.3, Table 2.8 reduced)**

<i>SHRM objective</i>	<i>SHRM activity</i>
Staffing	Human resource planning
	Recruitment and selection
	Team deployment
	Exit
Performance	Performance management
	Career management
HR admin.	Collection, storage and use of employee data
Change	Change agent

Appendix L provides a strategic overview of the current employee resourcing process showing the linkages between the different activities.

#### 5.1.5.1. Human resource planning (HRP)

Human resource planning (HRP) was managed at an organisation-wide level but with certain aspects being devolved to operational managers (see appendix L1 for a visual illustration). An overall strategic plan was put forward by the board of directors with targets for each division to achieve with regards to staff development and retention. Senior divisional managers then reconciled the targets against their resourcing requirements with a view of ensuring that appropriately qualified and skilled staff were available and that there was a constant supply of new staff into their division. In the short-term this involved the formulation of a business plan and associated strategies to meet its objectives. It also included running “what if” scenarios by notionally allocating staff to projects for which the division had bid in order to identify the possible gaps and how quickly they could be filled. More organised forecasting included numerical HRP on volumes of staff required for meeting the objectives of the business plan. HR specialists were consulted as to the employee development that supported the divisions’ succession planning.

The outcome of the typical approach to HRP was that organisation could foresee gaps in their resources and HR capabilities in advance of projects coming on stream. Although this was effective in principle, it was managed as a relatively isolated process in which the division explored its own staffing requirements largely out of context of the rest of the organisation. This may be caused by the devolution of

responsibility for the management of employee resourcing activities to divisional directors and senior operational managers. Furthermore, the uncertain environment made effective HRP extremely challenging:

*“The problem, especially with major projects, is that you never know which ones you are going to win. You may come to work one morning and the best thing you know is that there are two or three projects you are applying for. Staffing wise, you may either have enough people to do a 60 million pound job that you don’t need, or suddenly overnight you may need all of them. So, determining how many people we need and how quickly we can get them is probably the biggest problem.”* (Construction director)

Nevertheless, the organisation’s approach to strategic HRP suggests a likelihood of the senior management team integrating resourcing requirements with the business objectives.

#### 5.1.5.2. Recruitment and selection

A recent rapid growth in the organisational workload had demanded a sharp increase in the recruitment of new staff at all levels. This had included bringing in key senior personnel to run major projects, project team members and a number of support staff, such as HR specialists, IT and administrative support workers. Despite extensive recruitment efforts, only around 50% of the staff recruited had been taken on as permanent employees, with the remaining shortfall being made up with temporary



agency staff (see external influences, section 5.5 below for further details). The industry skills shortages were widely discussed as having a significant impact:

*“Currently there is a lot of work in the UK. There are lots of opportunities for people and the situation is getting to the stage where you have a continuing shortage of skilled people. It is a big problem. From a stage where people were glad to have a job were are now moving to the stage where you only need to have a quick look at the trades journals and there are numerous jobs advertised at the backs of those.”* (Design co-ordinator)

Additional pressures on the recruitment and selection process had also become apparent from the need to shift towards new market opportunities in the PFI and commercial building sectors following a parallel decline in infrastructure works over the past few years. Different management competencies were required for such positions, which were difficult to acquire. Moreover, the rapid changes in workloads led to short-term recruitment needs:

*“Recently, we got a contract... which is a 40 million pound job. It was really sudden. We didn't expect to get it at all. And we had to recruit very quickly a senior person for it. So that was almost overnight recruitment...”*  
(Construction director)

Word-of-mouth recruitment and headhunting played a significant role in identifying new managers. This was to ensure that the new entrants have core interpersonal qualities such as a keenness to work as part of a team, assertiveness (but not

aggression), the ability to fit in within the organisational culture and good communication skills. Technical competence, previous experience, personal skills and knowledge and personal ambition were also seen as important characteristics of the managers that were likely to take the business forward. One innovative approach was that senior managers and personnel staff sought to determine these qualities through the provision of scenarios, a selection interviewing technique known as “behavioural interviewing”. Divisional managing directors monitored the process for senior positions, but lower level vacancies were filled at the discretion of line managers at a project level (see appendix L2 for a detailed illustration of the current recruitment-to-induction process). This decision-making protocol proved to be effective, although many managers responsible for the recruitment and selection at project level had not been trained for the role:

*“I haven’t had any formal interviewing training. I have been through booking schemes and trial and error. But I suspect I have not been allowed into this position and been promoted to do those interviews until I have demonstrated that I have a fair chance of getting the right type of people because of my background, I know the culture and I have been developed as a senior manager in line with the rest of the senior managers with a common focus, common ambition.”* (Operational senior manager)

Senior managers and employees alike discussed the importance of getting the recruitment and selection decisions right if the culture, which had ensured the retention of many of the organisation’s longest standing staff, was to be maintained.

The HR director noted:

*“We have always had it difficult to bring people in at the senior level, to bring them into the company culture. It is not an easy thing to do. People grow in our culture and receive the training, then they can develop within the company.”*

The influx of so many new staff had had a marked negative effect in that it had contributed to a dilution of the strong “friendly, open and family-oriented” culture upon which the organisation had been founded.

#### 5.1.5.3. Graduate recruitment

The operational senior managers believed that poor graduate recruitment and development were holding back the expansion and improvement of the industry’s resources as a whole. The process of recruiting and retaining quality candidates was identified as becoming increasingly problematic in recent years. Fast track progression opportunities were offered to attract and retain suitable candidates. However, although this had allowed for fresh ideas to be brought into management decision-making, at the same time it had also resulted in resentment from some existing staff members, dilution of the organisational culture and even to certain individuals suffering from stress related problems. A senior contracts manager referred to one of his employees on such a scheme:

*“The question is how far can you stretch a person... we have had, luckily only a small number of incidents with individuals suffering from stress related illnesses. But once you have somebody it is horrific. I have got an*

*individual working on one job who hit exactly that at Christmas. We basically sat him down and he had time off. We put a lot of time into giving him support, bringing him back. We put him into a job role that he was comfortable with. Now, I did his appraisal last week and it would appear that he is back on strain now. I believe we might have pushed him too hard again...Somebody who is on the surface capable of taking anything really and then in front of you snaps. That is one of my key issues with human resources..."*

#### 5.1.5.4. Team deployment

Team formation and deployment was considered to be the most important of all the aspects considered under employee resourcing:

*"The real issue in construction is whether you can form good teams or not. This makes the difference between success and failure. Actually half of your long-term success is in the strength of your team". (Senior operational manager)*

Nevertheless, the process was also considered extremely challenging to manage effectively due to the short-term time scales that apply to most construction projects. The need to select, form and deploy a team rapidly placed considerable strains on the efficacy of the processes currently in place (see appendix L3). Staffing a project with entirely new personnel was considered too risky, which had resulted in people with known abilities being taken from existing projects, even where this could cause

problems elsewhere. However, the dynamic nature of the staffing situation had inevitably led to a breakdown in this principle as operational needs overtook strategic objectives. Some major projects had ended up being staffed by teams of entirely new staff with little knowledge of the organisation and its operating procedures or even by members external to the organisation. Selecting staff suitable for working with particular clients was therefore rendered extremely problematic and often led to teams having to be reformed during a project when they failed to perform as required.

The selection criteria for finding the suitable key people to head a project were almost unanimously stated being based upon, in order of priority:

1. Availability
2. Previous experience (ability)
3. Client preferences
4. Individual's need for a particular job to gain experience or training
5. Individual's personal aspirations (including their career management/ development needs)
6. The ability to devolve responsibilities (e.g. to develop and give experience to trainees on a project).

These priorities demonstrate the industry's tendency to focus on meeting immediate organisational/ project needs, therefore placing employees' preferences and aspirations well down the priority list:

*“First and foremost we have got to safeguard our interests, obviously to make profit, and to satisfy the client.”* (Operational senior manager)

Staff appraisal records were rarely considered in the decision-making process, with subjective senior management decisions being relied upon in the majority of deployment decisions. This relied upon senior managers’ abilities to fully understand the capabilities of their staff, a task that was increasingly difficult given the rapid intake (and turnover) of staff in the current competitive labour market.

Nevertheless, a senior estimator explained:

*“We probably do it from a gut feel really. I know the company, I have worked here for 27 years. You know people. There are newcomers, but I know the key players. It is all in here [pointing to his head]...”*

This intuitive process forms another an example of isolated systems.

In addition to selecting the key personnel to head a project, ensuring a balance between the team members’ strengths and weaknesses and their willingness to work together for a common aim was considered crucial.

*“It is getting the balance right, the team members are not identical. This guy may be quite good at this, and the other may be weaker at that. It is like a piece of jigsaw; if it fits well into the situation with this guy then between them they can be quite strong.”* (Operations director)

However, weaker team members who did not necessarily complement other managers were still placed into teams once they had been released from their previous projects, regardless of their personal requirements of their new roles. Again, the need to resource project teams rapidly and a lack of information to inform the process had led to a strong likelihood that inappropriate decisions would be made. Indeed, such practices appear to render the practicality of the principles of structured forms of team formation suggested by Belbin (1991, 2000) and others as highly questionable.

The consequences of adopting such an informal and reactive approach resulted in a substantial loss of valuable knowledge. This was brought into focus by the unfortunate death of the chief surveyor during the course of the research. In his interview, he made his exceptionally considerate management style very clear by referring to numerous examples of where a realistic balance between the business and individual employee needs had led to a successful long-term outcome. He explained the importance of mutual trust and respect:

*“People are not only coming to work to earn a good salary, they also want to satisfy their own personal aspirations in terms of the responsibility they have got and they want to feel a part of a management team. And I do think that is one of my jobs to try and make people feel they are part of a team... to give them jobs which challenge them and secondly to create a climate and a perception in the company that they can go on... I like to think I am flexible in this sort of position, I measure people’s performance, not necessarily in the hours they work but by whether they can do the job. And if they have got*

*any problems that is fair enough with me. I empower my people... Well firstly, if they are involved in the decision-making process, if you get them to buy into it and they go away thinking they have been involved in it, they will want to implement it... Secondly, I am a firm believer in that you work but you have got life outside of work. And what we are trying is avoid one person who lives on the east of the country travelling over to the west of the country, and the guy who is on the west of the country travelling over to the east. It is expensive in terms of operating the job, but more important the person who is doing the job is tired when they get there... But, if somebody has worked away for some time, they know that I am not going to send them away again. It all comes down to trying to operate a fair system really. And have regard for people's own personal circumstances."*

Clearly this manager operated a SHRM approach in relation to team deployment, empowerment (employee involvement), performance and career management and work-life balance. Unfortunately, his approach reflected the informal culture of the organisation insofar as he had no records of his decisions and techniques. Hence, much of his valuable contribution was lost following the accident. The following quote he made during the research interview only three months prior to his untimely death emphasises the importance of effective recording mechanisms for continuity of practice:

*"There are no records to say that we have had so and so working away two years ago and he was out there for 9 months. And I don't think it is necessary to have a record of that. You might say 'well, if I leave or die or something*



*like that who is going to remember it?' It depends on how seriously the other, my successor, would take that style of management..."*

#### 5.1.5.5. Team building

Team building was considered vital to the success of a project. Various levels and forms of exercises were found to be in use. Larger more complex projects involving vast numbers of new staff included cultural integration exercises to provide focus and feeling of belonging, whereas smaller teams relied on informal social events to foster team synergy. A team briefing structure was said to cascade down throughout the organisation. Divisional directors briefed their senior management teams, who then conducted similar meetings within their respective department heads. The department heads delivered the information to their project managers and senior surveyors and estimators. These personnel then met with their site-based teams. Inevitably, longer-term projects tended to develop their own team sub-cultures, partially as a result of the considered effort to integrate people within them to work better together. This had led to problems when it came to breaking up such teams, as managers found it difficult to readjust into new team sub-cultures.

Somewhat surprisingly considering the recognised importance of the team formation and team building in contributing to the overall success of the organisation, team effectiveness was not measured in any structured way. It was only considered where, for example, a team did not work well together. In such a case, making everybody aware of what is required of them and explaining why particular decisions were made was found an effective route to problem solving. If this was unsuccessful some

of the project staff tended to be re-deployed. This effectively defeated the original team selection process and hindered learning and knowledge sharing.

#### 5.1.5.6. Exit

Salary and reward were cited as the main reasons for people leaving construction organisations. As a result, more individualised reward mechanisms, including a bonus system, had been initiated to prevent further problems from arising (see section 5.1.3 above). A substantial investment in training, together with the maintenance of an informal and friendly organisational culture, were considered the organisation's strongest retention factors and priorities for the organisation.

#### 5.1.5.7. Careers

Recent organisational growth had resulted in many staff being promoted rapidly if they demonstrated appropriate leadership abilities. This has provided ambitious individuals the opportunity to further their careers at a fast pace and realise their aspirations far more quickly than would have been possible during a stable or downturn period. (Appendix L4 portrays the current career structures.) However, there were concerns as to the viability of such practices in the future, as the organisation will not be able to fulfil the employees' raised aspirations and expectations which was likely to have detrimental effect on staff turnover. The following quote from a project manager illustrates this concern:

*“I am a project manager and I have said to him [the manager] I want to be a senior project manager, but we only have two in the company. Now whether there is a place for a third... You have to look at it from their point of view and be realistic. But then you look at it from my point of view and I couldn't care less how they react. I am good at the job and I can do the job and I need an opportunity to show them I can do the job. If they don't give me the opportunity, plenty of others. I mean, people ring in every week, we are being constantly headhunted...”*

On the other hand, the high level of expectation on both new and existing managers had resulted in certain individuals suffering from stress related problems, as already discussed in relation to graduate development (section 5.1.5.3). Consequently, these individuals were said to require extensive periods of time off work and careful reintegration once they returned. Thus, senior managers were faced with the negative consequences of stress related illnesses and the associated costs of time taken off sick, reduced productivity and morale, possible loss of valuable members of staff and the subsequent costs of recruitment and training of replacement personnel.

Due to the rapid increase in the organisation's workload, certain individuals had also been promoted to positions that they didn't necessarily enjoy, as this example illustrates:

*“...It was supposed to be a promotion but I don't think it actually was as far as the money is concerned. I got a car, but I never bothered about cars. Before I was a general foreman I always used to have a van. It took me where*

*I wanted to go, I have never been a car lover. I never asked for the promotion, they approached me. I sat on it for at least ten weeks. Everybody was saying you want to do it. My wife was saying you want to do it. So I took it. After three months, I went to see [the director] and said 'this isn't for me, I will have my little van back and I'll give you your car back'."*

These difficulties in managing the career structures appeared to be symptoms of the short-term outlook toward the resourcing process.

#### 5.1.5.8. Performance appraisal

The performance appraisal system formed the only formal means of selecting people for promotion. The annual appraisal interview provided an opportunity for discussing potential progression solutions and aided assessing individuals' current job performance, developing personal development plans (PDPs) and recording employees' aspirations and preferences (see appendix L5 for the performance appraisal process chart). However, the data gathered appeared to have little influence over the resourcing decision-making processes:

*"The objective part is: am I doing what I am supposed to be doing, if not what am I going to do about it... so that is measurable. Then there is the subjective part, which is what does he think of me, what do I think of him, what do I think he thinks of me... And that is it. Then we all sign it and put it away for a year!"* (Chief estimator)

The fact that only paper copies of the appraisal records were kept may have contributed to the limited use of the data as this may make it too difficult for managers to utilise it effectively. Furthermore, the appraisal linked to the graduate-training programme for junior staff, which also included a performance evaluation tool, was completely removed from the main performance management system. The resulting mass of paperwork that this created, understandably led to managers being reluctant to draw upon such information when making deployment decisions. A well-organised and easily accessible IT-based system would allow for the data to be integrated into the resourcing processes.

#### 5.1.5.9. HR Administration

Much of the HR information was recorded and stored in manual paper files, with the remainder being stored within computerised systems operated in isolation from each other. For example, a bespoke database had been developed to hold employee records at a company-wide level, but training and development data was held on a separate system administered at a divisional level. Payroll details were held on another system held by the personnel department. This resulted in several members of HR and operational staff having to be involved in any SHRM related decision and the information being transferred across multiple systems. It also made it very difficult to factor in other information such as appraisal data when making resourcing decisions. When discussing the possibilities of introducing an integrated employee self-service human resource information system (HRIS), several managers felt this would prove useful in reducing their administrative workload. Others suggested that

it would be useful in promoting movement across divisions when demands on the business required it.

#### 5.1.5.10. Organisational development and change

The recent merger had introduced major change within the organisation. Operations of the merging contractors were being integrated and HR related policies and procedures assimilated. This included adding a smaller division to the operations strategy and deciding a functional focus for the new department. House building was selected as being suitable. This resulted in temporary decline in the division's workload and consequently to severe staff insecurity. An 18-month delay in agreeing new terms and conditions of employment for the division's employees did not contribute to productive working environment. Communication on progress up-dates and future plans was minimal. Hence, many of the respondents suggested that the merger had not been managed effectively.

Relocation of the division's offices was also required. Due to the recent growth of the organisation, room within the region was tight and so the region's training quarters were converted into offices for the new employees. This resulted in the loss of valuable training space and also some resentment from the new employees. In some cases their travelling distance from home to work had increased by up to 60 miles.

Another cause of concern for some of the employee respondents was the lack of training available. They felt isolated from the region's other divisions, as little training on the organisational policy and procedures had been provided. The estimating staff raised particular concerns with regards to a computerised estimating package in use within the rest of the region. The division's old operating system had been discontinued at the time of the office relation with immediate prospects for introduction of the regional practices. At the time of the research interviews, the estimators had carried out their duties manually for over 12 months, with no near-future predictions for moving onto the computerised estimating package in use within the rest of the region. This was said to have slowed down their work and to have contributed to the poor performance of the division. Consequently, this had contributed towards the reduction in workload, which in turn resulted in some projects becoming overstaffed.

This type of scenario would suggest a reactive approach towards the management of change, with little evidence of higher level, strategic planning. This was evident within the organisation's approach toward change management in other areas too. HRD appeared reactive rather than proactive in meeting the organisational objectives (section 5.1.4) and resourcing decisions/ actions were initiated when problems arose, with no forecasting or scenario planning carried out in advance (section 5.1.5.1).

The following section looks at the organisational requirements and project priorities in relation to the objectives of employee resourcing.

## 5.2. ORGANISATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND PROJECT PRIORITIES

The managerial interviews highlighted a number of factors that were considered important to be taken into account in the resourcing decision-making process. Table 5.4 summarises these ( $N=92$ ). Initially the factors were organised according to the unit of analysis: organisation, project and individual employee (section 4.5.1). The HRM/ organisational factors include variables that affect the organisation as a whole and are managed at strategy/ policy level within the higher senior management positions. The project/ team factors consist of specific activities and variables that have direct impact on the project process and outcomes. The desired employee qualities include factors the managerial informants stated as necessary, or advantageous, for carrying out the tasks involved in most construction roles.



Table 5.4: Organisational/ project factors and desired employee qualities

<u>HRM/ Organisational factors</u>	<u>Project/ team factors</u>	<u>Desired employee qualities</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparent progression opportunities for employees – good retention tool</li> <li>• Succession planning</li> <li>• Career development (achievable aspirations!)</li> <li>• Fast track progression</li> <li>• Taking on trainees</li> <li>• Org (and employee) development via training plan – improve weaknesses</li> <li>• Graduate development</li> <li>• Workload</li> <li>• Continuous improvement</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Org. culture and spirit</li> <li>• Maintaining the culture</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• No blame culture</li> <li>• Openness</li> <li>• Communal breaks</li> <li>• Empowerment, people feel they have a contribution</li> <li>• Partnering</li> <li>• Broaden business in strategic terms</li> <li>• Two-way communication</li> <li>• Work within legislation/ regulations (e.g. TUPE)</li> <li>• Shifting emphasis from civil engineering focus toward building (org. level)</li> <li>• Repeat business</li> <li>• Individualistic management style</li> <li>• Longer-term planning</li> <li>• Balance between agency and permanent staff ratio</li> <li>• Short and direct links through management structure</li> <li>• Managers approachable and accessible</li> <li>• Delegation</li> <li>• Employees to get recognition from management and colleagues</li> <li>• Open door policy</li> <li>• Manageable employee turnover</li> <li>• Job rotation</li> <li>• Quality assurance</li> <li>• Stabilise/ increase turnover (£)</li> <li>• Integration within larger group (following the merger)</li> <li>• Marketing and developing business</li> <li>• Equal terms and conditions for staff</li> <li>• Work-life balance (good employer scenario) – facilitates retention</li> <li>• Induction: bring people in the company way of working, integrate quick and give opportunity to perform</li> <li>• Employee pay – when right strong retention factor</li> <li>• Managing change</li> <li>• Job satisfaction and enjoyment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make best use of employee skills, talents and abilities</li> <li>• Project performance:</li> <li>• Profitability</li> <li>• Efficiency of site</li> <li>• Health and safety</li> <li>• Quality</li> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Balanced team, blend of individuals, mix of personalities</li> <li>• Good/ strong leadership: right leader (e.g. project manager) on team</li> <li>• Team spirit</li> <li>• Team relationships</li> <li>• Team – client relationships (highly important!)</li> <li>• Subcontractor relationships</li> <li>• No controversial correspondence</li> <li>• Client satisfaction</li> <li>• No attitude problem</li> <li>• Manager to know his/ her staff, their abilities and needs (e.g. training needs)</li> <li>• Subcontractor performance</li> <li>• Client preferences</li> <li>• Client involvement</li> <li>• Commercial aspects (surveying)</li> <li>• Effective communication both internally &amp; externally</li> <li>• People not chasing the same ball – clear roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Minimum travel – can affect performance/ employee health, facilitates retention</li> <li>• Disruptive influences removed fast</li> <li>• Singularity and focus (re: teams)</li> <li>• Situations be solved at middle management tiers</li> <li>• Tackle problems effectively</li> <li>• Give value for money</li> <li>• Cross project learning</li> <li>• Effective information flows</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly motivated</li> <li>• Determination to succeed</li> <li>• Self-drive</li> <li>• 'Can do' attitude</li> <li>• Quick decisions</li> <li>• Multiskilling and ability to tie in various professions</li> <li>• Adaptable, ready to react on deviation required</li> <li>• Imagination</li> <li>• Flexible, broad people</li> <li>• Technical capability and competence</li> <li>• Professionally qualified</li> <li>• Professional attitude</li> <li>• Mature, trades background</li> <li>• Willing to travel</li> <li>• Task orientation</li> <li>• People skills</li> </ul>

Close examination of this table suggested that a thematic grouping may provide a more practical presentation technique due to the wide variety of factors involved and the interlinking nature of the HRM/ organisational and project/ team variables. Thus, the factors were regrouped into categories and arranged by themes and type of SHRM practice, i.e. hard ~ soft (Table 5.5). The 'hard' category contains factors that refer to SHRM processes/ procedures. The 'soft' category includes those that could be termed as cultural factors. Moreover, the factors presented in blue, mainly placed toward the harder category, refer to issues that require procedural/ policy support in order to contribute to successful employee resourcing practice. The factors displayed in red, mainly toward the softer end of the scale, mark variables that necessitate cultural change as well as procedural support. These issues are much more complex and difficult to manage, but are of crucial important to successful resourcing practice. For example, organisational culture and communications set the overarching context within which the more specific processes, such as promotion and training, are managed. Thus, for any particular policy to succeed these contextual factors need to be carefully considered and managed in a way that supports the effective implementation of the operational resourcing procedures and policies.

Unsurprisingly, many of the factors managers highlighted as important to the resourcing decision-making process, focus on operational effectiveness and client relations. Perhaps unexpectedly though, the softer cultural aspects form an equally important component of the overall picture.

**Table 5.5: Managers views on factors important to be taken into account in the resourcing decision-making**

<b>Key</b>	<b>Function</b>
Red	Task/ activity can be improved with procedural changes
Blue	Requires cultural (and procedural) changes
Green	Business (not SHRM specific) factor or those that do not require change

<b>THEME</b>	<b>HARD</b>	<b>~ ~ ~</b>	<b>SOFT</b>
<b>Team/ project</b>	<p>Induction: bring people in the org. way of working, integrate quickly and give opportunity to perform</p> <p>Project performance: profitability, efficiency on site, H&amp;S, quality, time</p> <p>Balanced team, blend of individuals &amp; mix of personalities</p> <p>Good, strong leadership: right leader (e.g. project manager on a team)</p> <p>Subcontractor performance</p> <p>Commercial aspects (surveying)</p> <p>Clear roles and responsibilities (people not chasing the same ball)</p> <p>Disruptive influences removed fast</p> <p>Singularity and focus (aims)</p> <p>Give value for money</p>	<p>Best use of employee skills, talents and abilities</p> <p>Team relationships</p> <p>Team-client relationships (highly important!)</p> <p>Subcontractor relationships</p> <p>No controversial correspondence</p> <p>Client satisfaction</p> <p>Client preferences</p> <p>Client involvement</p> <p>Manager to know his/ her staff, their needs and abilities</p> <p>Situations to be solved at middle management tiers</p> <p>Tackle problems effectively</p>	<p>Team spirit</p> <p>No attitude problems</p>
<b>EI/ communications</b>	<p>Open door [communications] policy</p>	<p>Two-way communication</p> <p>Short and direct links through management structure</p> <p>Delegation</p> <p>Employees to get recognition from management and colleagues</p> <p>Effective communications internally &amp; externally</p> <p>Effective information flows</p>	<p>Management approachable and accessible</p>
<b>Careers</b>	<p>Transparent progression opportunities – good retention tool</p> <p>Succession planning: career development, fast track progression, taking on trainees</p> <p>Job rotation</p>		
<b>HRD</b>	<p>Organisational development/ learning via training plan to improve weaknesses</p> <p>Employee development</p> <p>Graduate development</p>	<p>Cross-project learning</p>	
<b>Organisation</b>	<p>Workload</p> <p>Broaden business in strategic terms</p> <p>Work within legislation and regulations (e.g. TUPE)</p> <p>Repeat business</p> <p>Quality assurance</p> <p>Stabilise/ increase financial turnover</p> <p>Integration within larger group (following merger)</p> <p>Marketing and developing business</p>	<p>Continuous improvement</p> <p>Flexibility</p> <p>Shifting emphasis from civil engineering &amp; focusing toward building</p> <p>Longer-term planning</p> <p>Balance between freelance and permanent staff ratio</p> <p>Manageable employee turnover</p> <p>Managing change</p>	<p>Organisational culture &amp; spirit: trust, no blame, openness, communal breaks, partnering</p> <p>Empowerment</p> <p>Individualistic management style</p>
<b>Remuneration</b>	<p>Equal terms and conditions for staff</p> <p>Pay – when right strong retention factor</p>		

<b>THEME</b>	<b>HARD</b>	<b>~ ~ ~</b>	<b>SOFT</b>
<i>Individual</i>	Minimum travel: facilitates retention, can affect employee performance/ health	Work-life balance, good employer scenario – facilitates retention	Job satisfaction and enjoyment
<i>Desired employee characteristics</i>	Technical capability and competence Professionally qualified (Mature, trades background) (Willing to travel)	'Can do' attitude Quick decisions Multiskilling and ability to tie in various professions/ responsibilities Adaptable, ready to react on deviation required Flexible, broad people Professional attitude Task orientation People skills	Highly motivated Determination to succeed Self-drive Imagination

Five major themes are significant within this table (Table 5.5):

1. Team/ project
2. Employee involvement (EI)/ communications
3. Careers
4. HRD
5. Organisational planning.

### ***Team/ project***

In relation to the team/ project category, “team spirit” and “relationships” associated factors highlight the importance of collaborative teamwork/ partnership culture. The ‘hard’ procedural variables, such as induction, problem-solving and clarity of roles and responsibilities, support this. In addition, the need for a “manager to know his/ her staff”, the “best use of employee skills, talents and abilities”, and “balanced team” factors emphasise the importance of effective team formation and deployment.

### *Employee Involvement (EI)/ communications*

The EI/ communications section shows the significance of appropriate management style to the process. An open and approachable approach is emphasised through effective two-way communications, delegation and the requirement for recognition of individual employee contribution. An open door communications policy is suggested as the appropriate procedural solution.

### *Careers and HRD*

The careers and HRD themes draw attention to organisational development and continuous improvement. A clear link with knowledge management is apparent in “cross-project learning”. Management style is also further emphasised. The “transparent progression opportunities” and “succession planning” focus on staff retention and achievement of organisational goals in the long-term via career development, fast track progression and taking on trainees. These provide a foundation for a culture of learning organisation (see section 3.3.5).

### *Organisational planning*

The ‘soft’ cultural factors highlighted under the theme “organisation” focus on effective human resource planning (HRP). This emphasises the importance of long-term planning, organisational flexibility and management of change via organisational culture founded on trust, openness, partnering, empowerment (employee involvement) and individualistic management style. The ‘harder’ organisational factors point to operational issues, which are beyond the immediate employee resourcing framework. Thus, these are passed and assigned for investigation in future work (see section 8.5).

The “desired employee characteristics” outline variables directly relevant to staff recruitment and selection. The other themes (remuneration and individual) highlight factors “contextual” to the employee resourcing process (these are discussed in more detail in section 6.4).

### 5.2.1. *Summary: hypothesis two supported*

The research hypothesis two (H2) was that

*“The employee resourcing decision-making is currently determined by project and broader business requirements rather than employee needs and preferences”.*

This is supported by the data presented above. Ninety-two HRM/ organisational and project/ team focused factors needing to be taken into account in the employee resourcing decision-making process were identified within five key themes: team/ project, EI/ communications, careers, HRD and organisational planning. These included variables that affect the organisation as a whole, those that have direct impact on the specific project processes and outcomes, and qualities necessary or advantageous for carrying out the tasks involved in most construction roles. Many of the factors identified are context specific and so are expected to change over time. For example, one of the current HRM/ organisational priorities was to establish equal terms and conditions of employment for all staff. This is a direct result from the organisation’s recent merger. Once the new staff have been integrated within the

organisation, such a contractual issue is likely to be of lesser concern at strategic HRM level. Ideally, facilitating the achievement of balance between the HRM/ organisational, project/ team and individual employee factors in the resourcing decision-making forms the central focus. No evidence of the managers considering the employee needs and preferences were found within the sample. The next section explores the individual needs and preferences of the employee respondents.

### **5.3. EMPLOYEE NEEDS AND PREFERENCES**

Research objective C was:

- C. To establish employee personal and career needs and preferences in relation to their deployment.

The analytic hierarchy method questionnaire (section 4.4.2) provided an initial indicative rank order as to the importance the employee respondents placed on a range of factors derived from literature as important to effective employee resourcing decision-making. Table 5.6 summarises these factors together with their categories corresponding to Figure 5.2 below.

**Table 5.6:** Employee resourcing priority pair-wise comparison test factors and short-keys corresponding to Figure 5.2

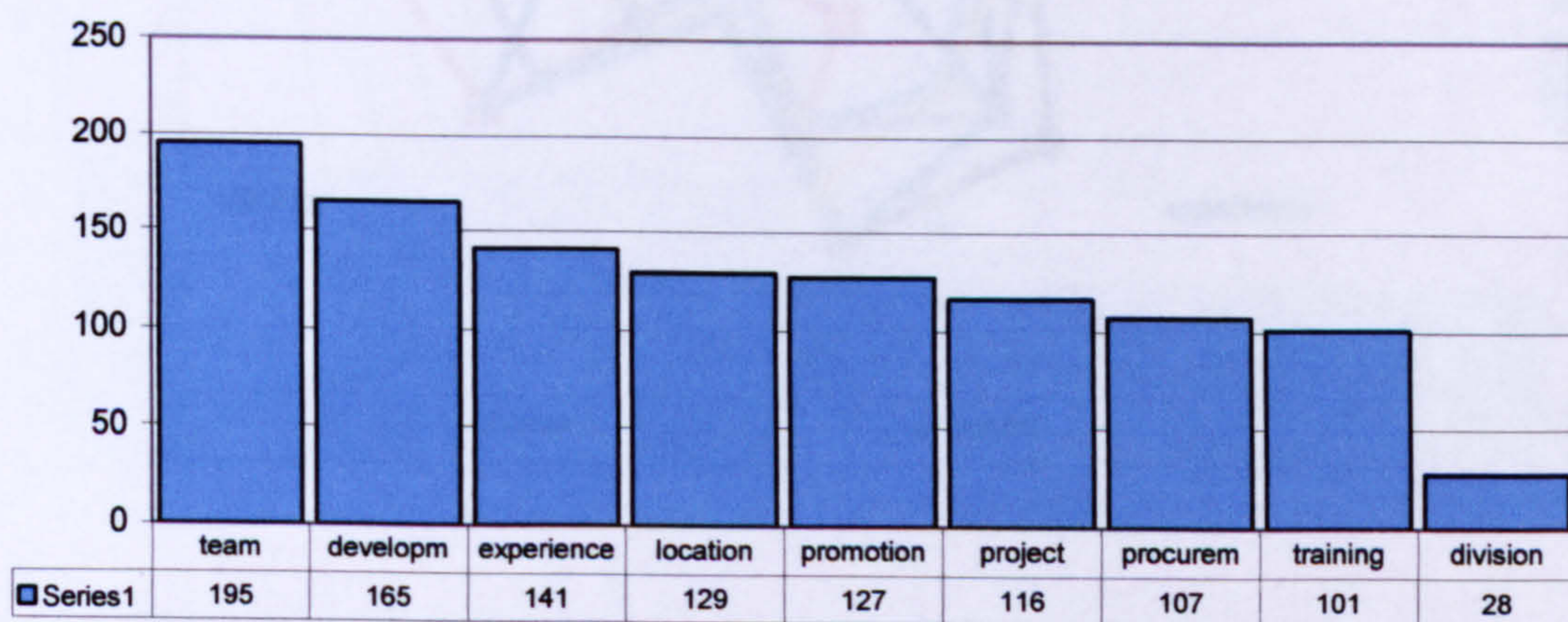
	<i>Factor</i>	<i>Figure 5.2 key</i>
1.	Personal and/or professional development	[developm]
2.	Work location close to home/ maintaining work-life balance	[location]
3.	Training opportunities	[training]
4.	Organisational division	[division]
5.	Experience in working under different procurement systems or contract forms	[procurem]
6.	Gaining broad and/ or specialist experience	[experience]
7.	Project type (e.g. size, complexity, etc.)	[project]
8.	Good team relationships	[team]
9.	Promotional opportunities	[promotion]

Since the questionnaire was administered within the interviews, a significantly high response rate of 88.6% was achieved.

As Figure 5.2 clearly shows, “*good team relationships*” [team] together with “*personal and/ or professional development*” [developm] and “*gaining broad and/ or specialist experience*” [experience] were ranked as most important factors to be taken into account. The “*good team relationships*” factor achieved nearly 70% of the maximum ranking value (248) by scoring 195. “*Personal and/or professional development*” scored 30 marks (approx. 10%) below at 165 (~58%), with “*gaining broad and/ or specialist experience*” another 24 marks below this at 141 (~ 56%). These were closely followed by “*work location close to home/ maintaining work-life balance*” [location] at a value of 129 (~ 52%) and “*promotional opportunities*” [promotion] at 127 (~ 51%). This indicated a strong preference toward the “softer issues”, and thus supports the relational view of a psychological contract.



“Project type (e.g. size, complexity, etc.)” [project] and “experience in working under different procurement systems of contractual forms” [procurem] were positioned only just below the 50% range at 116 (~ 47%) and 107 (~ 43%) respectively. Interestingly, despite “personal and/or professional development” scoring second highest in importance, “training opportunities” [training] was ranked as the second least important factor to be taken into account in resourcing decision-making by employees. It is likely that this is due to the company placing great importance on encouraging and operating a system of equal training opportunities for all its staff and successfully implementing this (see section 5.1.1 above). In addition, due to the culture of the organisation, which emphasises departmental loyalty and commitment to local practices (resulting in very little movement between divisions/departments) “organisational division” [division] received a very low importance rating of 28 at 11.29%.



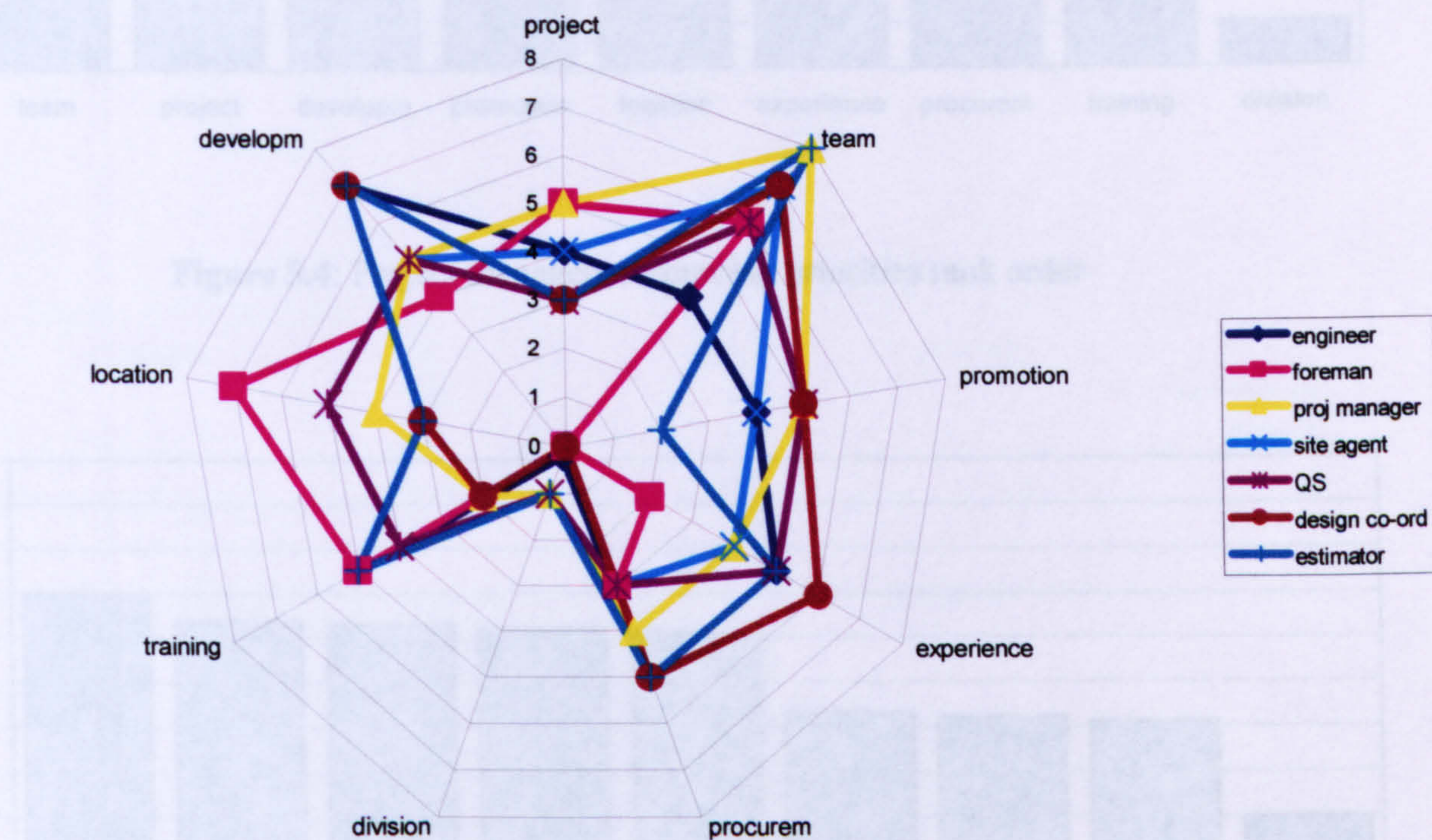
**Figure 5.2:** Analytic hierarchy method questionnaire results overall rank order

Table 5.7 below summarises the factor values and related percentages calculated from the total highest possible value of 248 (= 31 responses \* 8 [the highest possible score for any individual factor within a questionnaire form]).

**Table 5.7:** Employee resourcing priority pair-wise comparison test factor values and related percentages

	team	developm	Experience	location	Promotion	project	procurem	training	division
<b>Value</b>	195	165	141	129	127	116	107	101	28
<b>%</b>	68.66	58.09	56.85	52.01	51.20	46.77	43.14	40.72	11.29

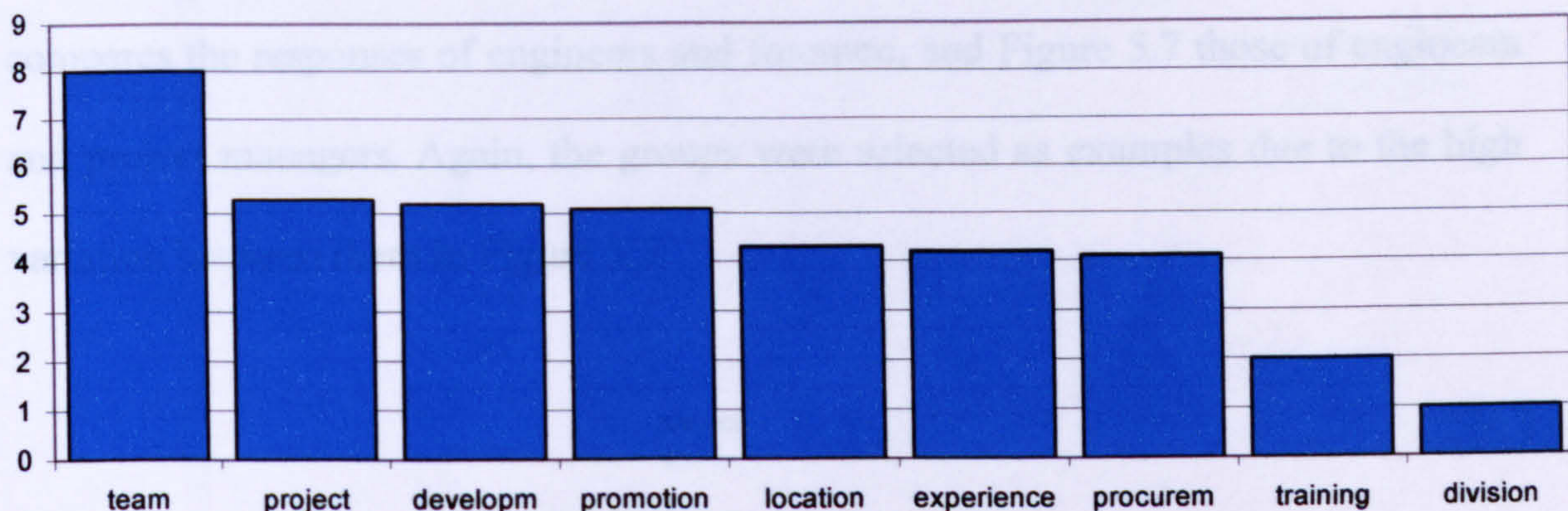
Figure 5.3 provides a breakdown of the totals by job role on a relational scale 0 – 9 (0 not at all important – 9 very important).



**Figure 5.3:** Employee resourcing priority pair-wise comparison test rank order by job role

The variations between the different respondent groups, in for example “*work location close to home/ maintaining work-life balance*” [location], “*gaining broad and/ or specialist experience*” [experience] and “*promotional opportunities*” [promotion], are notable. Figures 5.4 and 5.5 illustrate the differences between the

respondent groups in more detail showing the priorities as ranked by project managers and quantity surveyors (Qs). These groups were selected to provide suitable examples as they showed significant variation in Figure 5.3.



**Figure 5.4:** Project managers resourcing priorities rank order

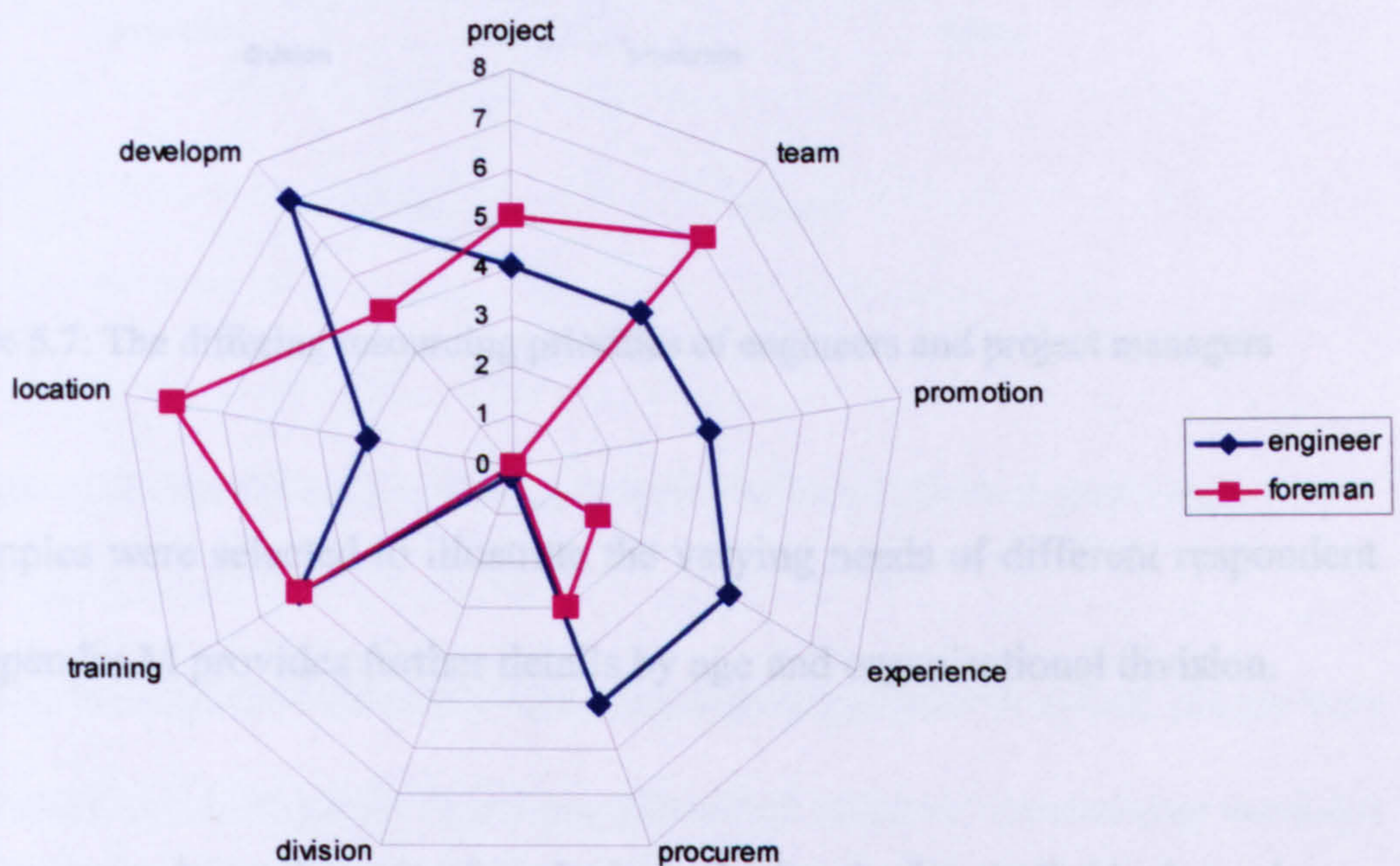


**Figure 5.5:** Qs resourcing priorities rank order

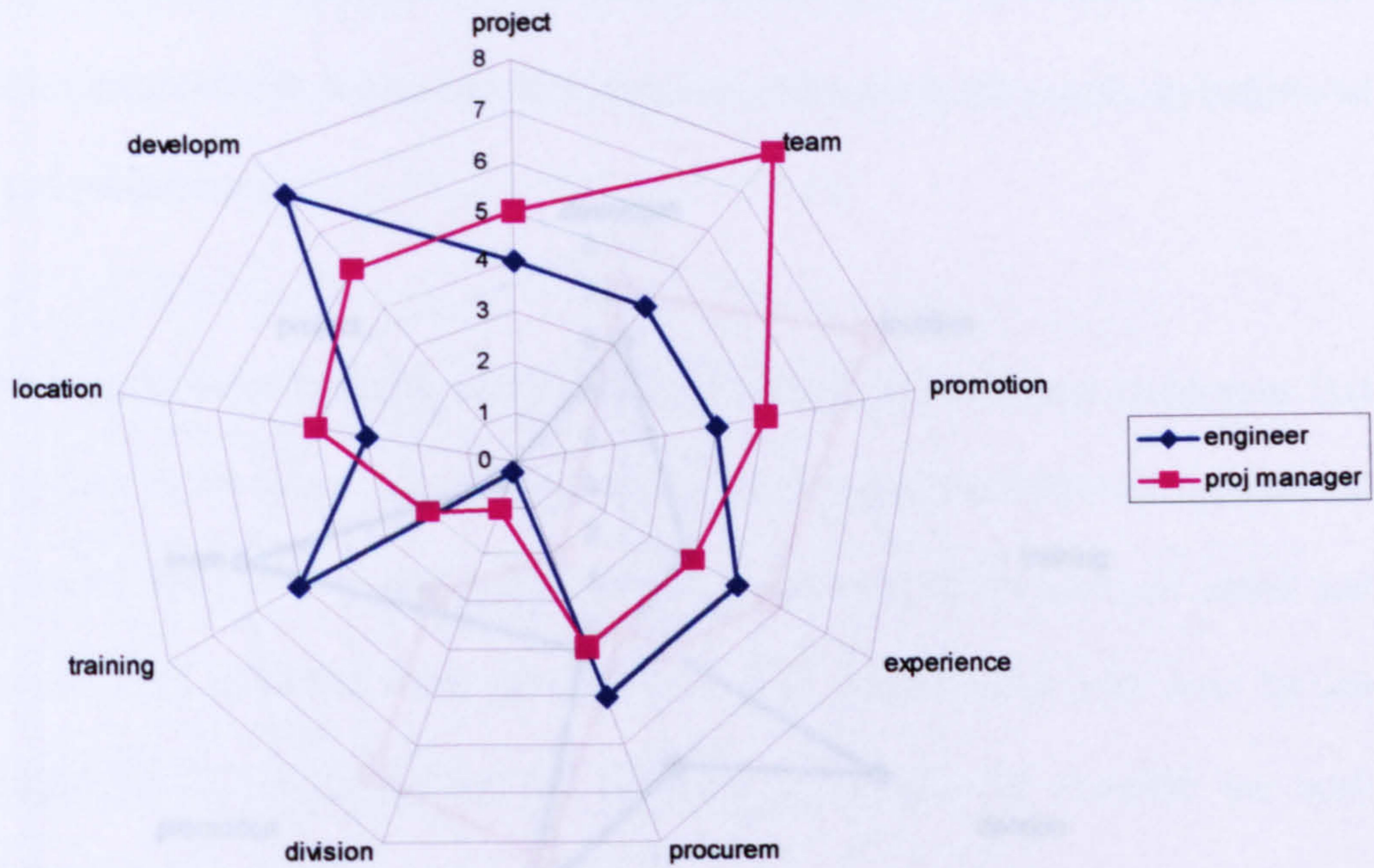
Comparison of these two charts shows that both groups rank “good team relationships” [team] the most important. Yet, the project managers rate it higher than the Qs. Similarly, with the procurement factor (“experience in working under different procurement systems or contract forms” [procurem]) project managers give

higher priority to it. It would seem that Qs distribute their attention more equally amongst a number of factors rather than placing significant importance on a few selected variables.

Figures 5.6 and 5.7 further illustrate the variations between different roles. Figure 5.6 compares the responses of engineers and foremen, and Figure 5.7 those of engineers and project managers. Again, the groups were selected as examples due to the high variation between them in Figure 5.3.



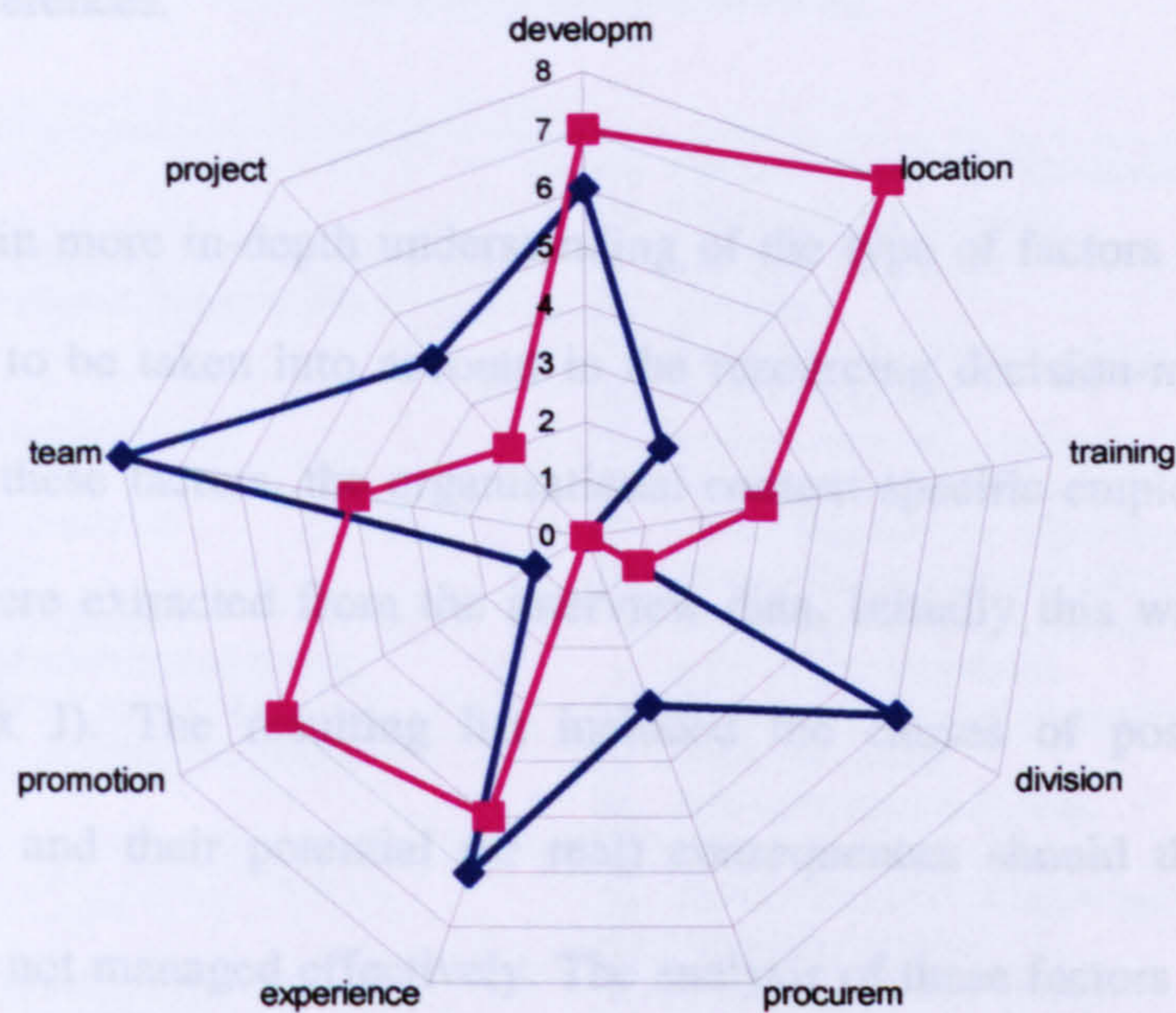
**Figure 5.6:** The differing resourcing priorities of engineers and foremen



**Figure 5.7:** The differing resourcing priorities of engineers and project managers

These examples were selected to illustrate the varying needs of different respondent groups. Appendix M provides further details by age and organisational division.

Figure 5.8 narrows down the unit of analysis to the level of an individual employee, showing examples of two very different responses selected from the sample. The responses were selected to illustrate the intense variations evident within the data.



**Figure 5.8:** The differing resourcing priorities of two individual employees

In examining this figure it becomes clear that the respondent A (pink) places very high importance, for example to “*work location close to home/ maintaining work-life balance*” [location], where for the respondent B (blue) this is totally irrelevant. In contrast, respondent A places no at all to “*organisational division*” [division], where the respondent B regards it relatively high priority. Indeed, with regards to all of the nine factors their opinions differ to a significant extent.

This clearly illustrates how different each individual’s needs and priorities may be in comparison to those of their colleagues. Therefore, it is crucial that organisations

operate a system, which is capable of taking into account the very specific individual needs and preferences.

In order to gain more in-depth understanding of the type of factors employees feel are important to be taken into account in the resourcing decision-making, and the rank order of these factors, the organisational context specific employee needs and preferences were extracted from the interview data. Initially this was done by job role (appendix J). The resulting list included the causes of possible (or real) dissatisfaction and their potential (or real) consequences should the situation be overlooked or not managed effectively. The analysis of these factors and the related causes and consequences indicated that many of them were linked to several different factors. In other words, a single cause was often found to relate to a number of factors, and any one factor commonly had several causes associated with it. Similarly, many causes were also linked to several different consequences, and many factors were linked to a number of consequences. This suggested extremely complex relationships between the causes, factors and consequences and so indicated a need for a robust data reduction exercise. This was conducted through cause-factor-consequence matrices (see appendix N for an example of a cause-factor-consequence matrix). Table 5.8 provides a summary of the factors ( $N=47$ ).

**Table 5.8: Factors employee respondents highlighted as important to take into account in the resourcing decision-making**

1. Progression	25. Personal (and org.) development
2. Promotion	26. Staying (lodging) away
3. Career (development)	27. Work-life balance
4. Long hours (+working weekends)	28. Overtime
5. Org. culture	29. (New recruit/ team member) induction
6. Training	30. Health problems
7. Feedback on performance	31. Interest from top management/ head office
8. Org. structure	32. Role and responsibilities
9. Employee Involvement	33. Communication on wider org. issues
10. Communication	34. Discussion on expectations (both organisational & employees') – psychological contract
11. Feedback on progress	35. Team integration and co-ordination
12. Recognition of contribution to org.	36. Progress review
13. Interdepartmental co-operation	37. Team member selection
14. Office location (& move of offices)	38. Nature of work
15. Travel	39. Job enrichment/ enlargement
16. Work type	40. Horizontal moves
17. Appraisal	41. Best use of skills/ talents
18. Team spirit	42. Recognition of individual qualities
19. Project (deployment) opportunities	43. Graduate development
20. Moving between divisions/ departments	44. Benefit preferences (e.g. car)
21. Project (work) location	45. Procurement methods
22. Pay	46. Holiday
23. Employee suitability to project and specialisation in project allocation	47. Comprehensive range of info on project
24. Team redeployment (kept together)	

As with the organisational/ project factors, it was felt that a thematic grouping of the factors could provide a clearer presentation format (Table 5.9). Thus, similarly to the managerial table (Table 5.5, section 5.2), the factors are grouped into categories and arranged by themes and type of HRM practice, i.e. hard ~ soft. The 'hard' category contains factors that refer to HRM processes/ procedures. The 'soft' category includes cultural factors. The factors presented in blue, mainly placed toward the harder category, refer to issues that require procedural/ policy support in order to contribute to successful employee resourcing practice. The factors displayed in red, mainly toward the softer category, mark variables that necessitate cultural change as well as procedural support.



**Table 5.9:** Employee views on factors important to be taken into account in resourcing decision-making

<b>Key</b>	<b>Function</b>
Red	Task/ activity can be improved with procedural changes
Blue	Requires cultural (and procedural) changes
Green	Business (not SHRM specific) factor or those that do not require change

<b>THEME</b>	<b>HARD</b>	<b>~ ~ ~</b>	<b>SOFT</b>
<i>Team/ project</i>	Team member selection Team integration and co-ordination Team redeployment (teams kept together) Employee specialisation and suitability to project New recruit/ team member induction Procurement methods	Project deployment opportunities Best use of skills and talents	Team spirit
<i>EI/ communications</i>	Appraisal (feedback)	Communication (overall) Communication on wider organisational issues Comprehensive range of info on projects Feedback on performance/ progress Progress review Discussion on expectations (psychological contract) Recognition of contribution to organisation Employee involvement	
<i>Careers</i>	Progression Promotion Horizontal moves Job enrichment/ enlargement Role and responsibilities Organisational structure	Career development Recognition of individual qualities Nature of work Work type (e.g. housing/ civil engineering)	
<i>HRD</i>	Training Graduate development	Personal development Organisational development/ learning	
<i>Organisation</i>	Moves between divisions/ departments Office location	Interdepartmental co-operation Interest from senior management/ head office	Organisational culture
<i>Remuneration</i>	Pay Overtime Holidays	Benefits (different preferences and needs)	
<i>Individual</i>	Personal health problems	Work-life balance	
<i>Industry characteristics</i>	Project location Lodging away Travel	Long hours (and working weekends)	

Similarly to the managerial table (Table 5.5, section 5.2), the employee responses (Table 5.9) show a relatively equal balance between the 'hard' factors that can be improved with procedural changes (shown in red in Table 5.9) and the 'softer' variables, which require cultural as well as procedural changes for improvements to be achieved (shown in blue in Table 5.9). In addition, the emphasis is on the same themes: team/ project, EI/ communications, careers and HRD.

The team/ project factors focus on team member selection and the integration and co-ordination of the project activities. Team spirit is highlighted as the main 'soft' factor. The EI/ communications related variables centre around performance management systems, such as the appraisal and continuous feedback. The communications specific issues focus on the delivery of organisation wide information. Employee involvement and the recognition of individual contribution to the organisation as a whole bring in the 'softer' cultural aspects in relation to this theme. The careers and HRD sections draw attention to progression and development within the organisation. The organisational factors emphasise the importance of culture and co-operation. The central issue in relation to remuneration is benefits. This highlights the importance of recognising the different needs of individual employees and agreeing suitable arrangements. Work-life balance forms the focus in relation to the individual and industry characteristics.

### 5.3.1. Summary: hypothesis three supported

The research hypothesis three (H3) suggested that:

*“Employee needs and preferences from the deployment process centre around the fulfilment of personal needs and wider career ambitions rather than factors linked to their organisational role”.*

This is partially supported by the data presented above (section 5.3). The analytic hierarchy method questionnaire clearly established that the employee needs vary between groups of employees categorised by job role, age and organisational division. The questionnaire results also showed that the preferences and priorities vary between individual employees. The list of factors derived from the interview data added to this by specifying the type of needs and preferences employees feel important to be taken into account in the resourcing decision-making process. The factors were varied, ranging from ‘hard’ organisational procurement methods to the ‘soft’ issues of team spirit and organisational culture. This included variables concerned with organisational role and division. Thus, the importance of organisational variables in addition to the factors concerned with the fulfilment of personal needs and wider career ambitions must be recognised in the deployment process. Furthermore, the nature of many variables involved suggests that the importance between as well as within the factors is likely to change over time as the individual employee’s personal circumstances change. For example, typically a young, career ambitious trainee engineer with no family commitments would probably prefer promotional/ developmental opportunities over work-life balance

arrangements at the early stages of his/ her career, where a more family-oriented and well-established senior engineer would be likely to place greater importance on organisational family-friendly leave policies and opportunities for flexible working.

#### **5.4. FACTOR VERIFICATION**

The factor verification questionnaire (section 4.4.5) was carried out in order to verify the wider applicability of the analytic hierarchy method questionnaire and interview findings and results within the primary case study organisation. The questionnaire was sent out to 100 informants within the organisation selected using stratified random sampling. Respondents included in the interview sample were excluded from the sampling range. The partnership approach adopted for the administration of the questionnaire helped to secure a good response rate. The survey was designed on the style of the company staff satisfaction survey and introduced as a follow-on to it. The organisation's main contact distributed the questionnaire forms across the organisation and encouraged departmental managers to push for their staff to complete and return the forms. The questionnaire received an average response rate of 29%.

The results clearly support the managerial and employee interview data (sections 5.2 and 5.3) and the analytic hierarchy method questionnaire findings (section 5.3). Table 5.10 below lists the thirty most important factors specified by the survey respondents as important to be taken into account in the employee resourcing decision-making process. The left-hand column lists the responses from employees

and right-hand column those from the managerial informants. The middle column highlights factors referred to by both the employees and managers.

**Table 5.10:** Top-ten rank order of the factor validation questionnaire results

	<i>Employees</i>	<i>Both</i>	<i>Managers</i>
1.	Holiday entitlement	<b>Work-life balance</b>	Right project manager on a team/ project
2.	Working hours	<b>Friendly culture</b>	Legal and regulatory frameworks
3.	Appraisal (conducted effectively)	<b>Team spirit and integration</b>	Technical capability and competence
4.	Senior management/ HQ staff interest	<b>Travel</b>	Disruptive influences removed
5.	Expectations discussed (psychological contract)	<b>Two-way communication</b>	Effective problem solving
6.	Continuous feedback	<b>Taking on trainees</b>	Continuous improvement
7.	Benefit preferences	<b>Induction programme</b>	Satisfied workforce
8.	Employee involvement in project allocation	<b>Career management/ succession planning</b>	Professional attitude
9.	Personal project preferences	<b>Clear role and responsibilities</b>	Continuous workload
10.	Job rotation	<b>Transparent progression</b>	Repeat business

The analysis shows evidence of recurring themes: organisational culture, team spirit, communication and careers. Noticeably, the survey also highlighted a factor that had previously been paid little attention to: “holiday entitlement”. The employee respondents indicated concerns in relation to not being able to take their holidays during the specified working year and thereby losing their entitlement due to project priorities dominating the team deployment functions. Many of the conflicts stemmed from environmental issues particular to project-based sectors. Those identified as prominent within the interviews are discussed in section 5.5 below.

## 5.5. KEY CHALLENGES FOR CONSTRUCTION ORGANISATIONS

### 5.5.1. Client demands

The most common external influence on the SHRM practices discussed above was “client demands”. This included increasing pressures for satisfying clients as the company aimed for repeat business. Indecisive clients were especially troublesome within public-private partnership (PPP) finance initiatives, where changes to project schedules or plans had to be approved at committees. This potentially complicated the resourcing function severely.

Managers had responded to client challenges by allocating specific members of staff to projects which met their customer needs. This resulted in some members of staff being constantly based within hazardous environments or on projects of a certain type. Managers saw this as an opportunity to build better relationships with the clients, as they were able to provide continuity and a single point of contact. Employees, however, indicated dissatisfaction with this style of management practice. Being placed on certain types of project hindered their opportunities for gaining varied experience and resulted in repetitiveness. One employee, tired of having worked for three years on a chemical plant commented:

*“...It is someone else’s turn now, but I am stuck with it because I have been trained [in H&S] and have been doing it for the past three years...”*

Maintaining good client relations also affected managers' schedules, in that demanding clients often required them to attend meetings at a very short notice. One contracts manager commented:

*"...I can get a call at three in the afternoon saying they want me in London by five. And you have to go..."*

### 5.5.2. Recruitment

Apart from client demands, several managers referred to difficulties in recruiting suitable candidates for selection. The industry's poor image was said to affect young peoples' career decisions leading them to work for IT/ law firms rather than 'traditional' construction companies. Also, the trend for young people to opt for full-time education instead of part-time degree programmes offered by the company was said to adversely affect recruitment. Efforts were made to communicate with local universities, schools and colleges to secure a suitable pool of potential candidates. However, their difficulties in retaining graduates indicated possible problems in the company's practices.

The current labour market conditions presented a need for high numbers of freelance staff despite the company's general aim to reduce the use of agency staff. On average, around half of all staff were agency employees, although attempts were being made to offer long serving freelance staff permanent contracts of employment.

This could lead to the employment of too many or not the right kind of staff if careful HRP is not operated.

### *5.5.3. Demographic changes*

The organisational/ divisional directors did not consider demographic changes within the staff profile internally to be a problem, but rather an opportunity to diversify the workforce. Young people were said to bring in valuable new insights and knowledge, although this was recognised to introduce the potential for internal conflicts should the changes be too rapid or managed ineffectively.

Few of the senior operational managers, however, indicated concerns in relation to the changing age profile of the construction workforce as a whole. They noted that skilled labourers were clearly getting older, with most of their operative site staff approaching their 50s and 60s. The severe shortage of young trades people was therefore of an issue of major concern. In contrast, the majority of the industry's IT professionals were said to be in their 20s and hence lacking in the necessary experience to understand the crucial business/ operational issues currently affecting the organisation and the sector as a whole.

The recruitment difficulties and impact of the demographic changes to the age profile of the construction workforce were related to the poor image of the industry (see section 1.2). The following project case studies (section 5.6) and discussion (Chapter 6) explore this further.



## 5.6. PROJECT CASE STUDIES

Three very different project case studies were explored in order to illustrate some of the challenges identified above. These were:

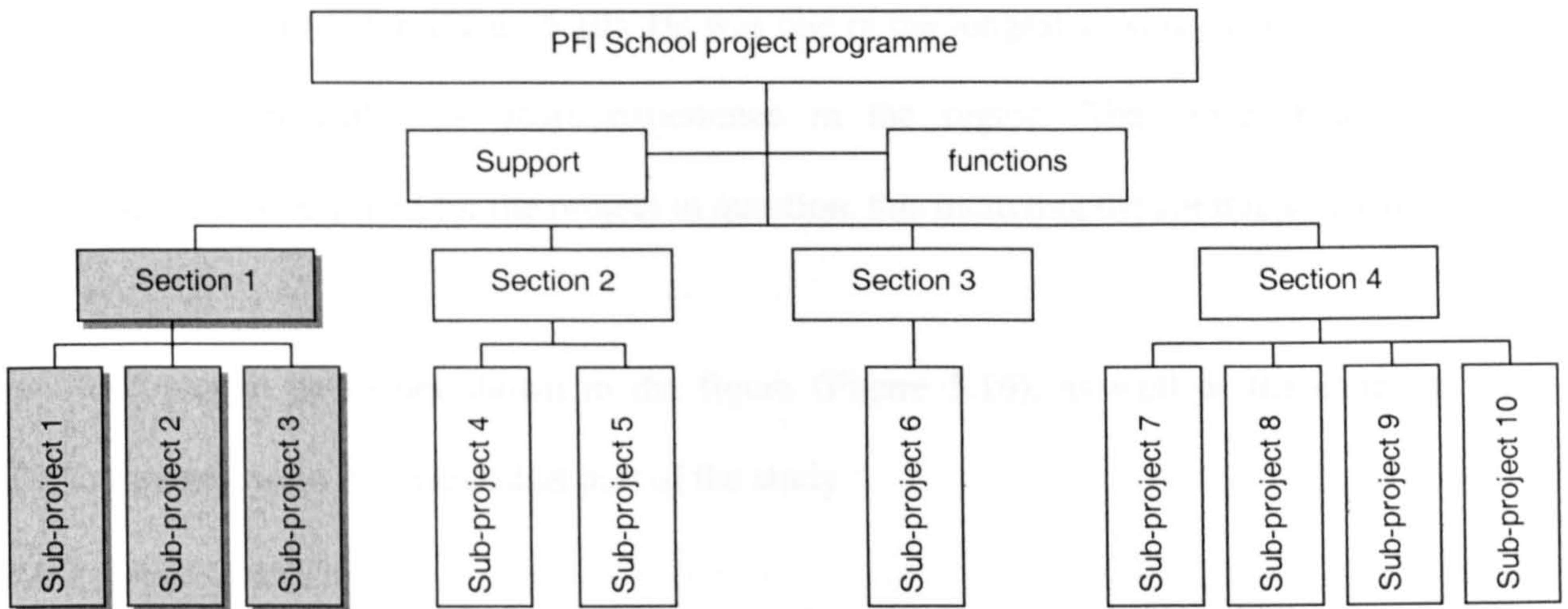
- A PFI schools project
- A major joint venture project
- A large distribution warehouse.

These cover the main forms of contract currently commonly in use: Public Finance Initiative (PFI), joint venture and the traditional form of contract.

The PFI schools case study specifically focuses on recruitment and selection and team formation issues, the joint venture illustrates the crucial team building and change management aspects of resourcing, and finally the distribution warehouse explores the HRP and performance/ career management related elements of employee resourcing.

### 5.6.1. PFI Schools project

The PFI schools case study consisted of a subsection of a larger project programme. The overall programme included the construction of ten schools within a single region. This was divided into four sections, of which this case study was the first to commence (Figure 5.9).



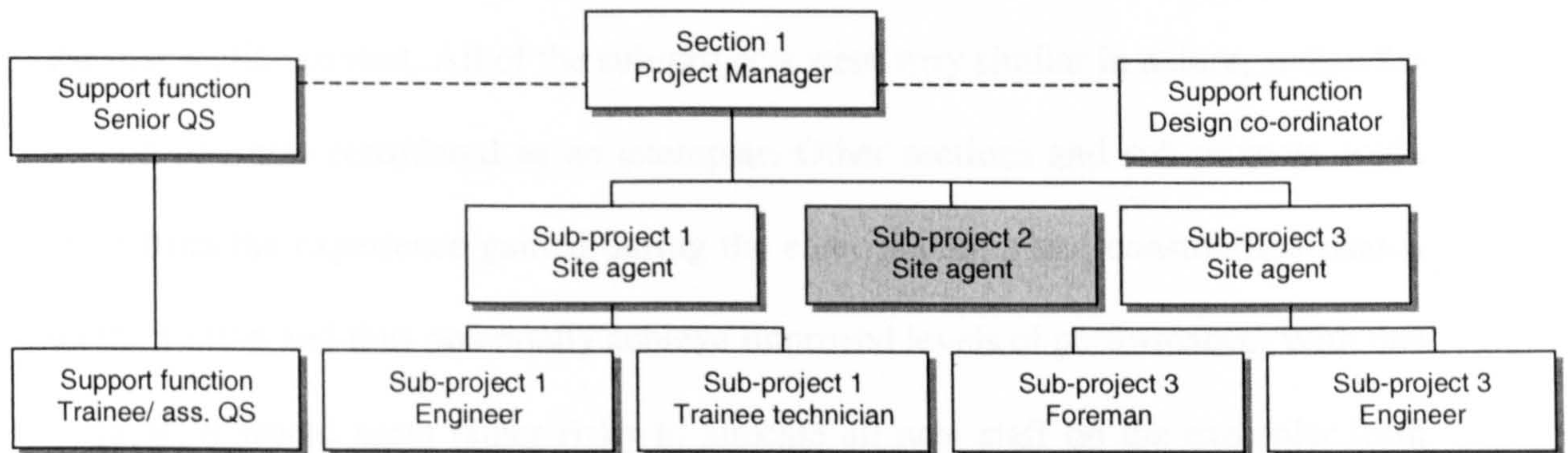
**Figure 5.9:** PFI School project programme

The overall project programme was overseen by a contracts manager, who reported to the divisional construction director. A matrix management structure applied to the support functions, where for example the project surveying staff (Qs) were managed by the divisional chief surveyor rather than the contracts manager. Each section of the programme had a project manager. The project managers managed the section's production teams for the one, two, three or four sub-projects involved. Each sub-project had a manager or an agent, who was responsible for the supervisory staff (foremen, engineers, trainees) and directly employed labour. Most of the operatives were labour only subcontractors.

Focusing on section one of the overall programme, the PFI schools case study, Figure 5.10 provides a detailed structure of its sub-projects and appropriate support staff.

The section one staff were all new to the organisation, apart from the sub-project two site agent (shaded in Figure 5.10). He was one of the longest serving members of the organisation with 35+ years experience in the region. The others had been specifically recruited for the project in question, this including the contracts manager.

All project personnel shown in the figure (Figure 5.10), as well as the contracts manager, were interviewed as part of the study.



**Figure 5.10:** PFI schools case study project management structure

Projects within sections two and three of the programme had significantly high proportions of existing personnel supplemented with a few freelance and/ or newly recruited staff. Section four had a relatively balanced mix.

This type of staffing strategy resulted in multiple challenges throughout the overall programme duration. Initially, the contracts manager, being new, required extensive resourcing guidance from his longer serving colleagues. As alluded to above, the organisation had no written policy or procedures for project allocation/ team deployment. Regular contracts managers meetings and the divisional directors'

tentative human resource plans formed the core of the staffing activity. Thus, the newly recruited contracts manager was forced to rely on his colleagues as to judgements on the suitability of his resourcing decisions in relation to the company practice. Similarly, in recruiting new personnel he had to actively seek advice so as to be able to follow established unwritten company practice.

At the site level, there was extreme pressure to meet expected performance levels. As alluded to above, the case study section of the project programme (section one) was the first section to start. All of the sub-projects were very similar in nature, and so the section one was considered as an exemplar. Other sections and sub-projects could learn from the experience gained during the early planning and construction phases on the section and thus potentially achieve improved levels of performance. With this in mind, it would seem rather risky to allocate all new staff on the exemplar from which others could learn. Nevertheless, the section's ten new recruits were trusted to undertake the work with the guidance of an older, very long serving site agent. On the positive side, this allowed for fresh ideas and working methods to be brought into the project and via that possibly to the organisation too, and useful lessons from external expertise to be learnt. However, this was at the price of unproven working relationships and hence, reduced team synergy. Many respondents on the project questioned why the later sub-projects (within sections two and three) had teams consisting of mainly existing employees, and suggested that a better balance between new and existing staff would have been beneficial on the "exemplar" section.

In summary, the staffing problems highlighted in this case study were:

*Programme staff allocation*

- The contracts manager in charge of the programme new to the organisation
- No written policy/ procedure on recruitment and selection or team deployment
- Extensive team deployment and recruitment and selection related guidance required from longer serving colleagues
- Reliance on the appropriateness of the colleagues' resourcing decision suggestions in learning the organisational practices/ culture
- The ratio between new and existing project staff at an imbalance within the four sections of the programme: section one mainly new personnel, sections two and three significantly high proportions of existing staff, section four relatively balanced mix

*Section one case study project team deployment*

- "Exemplar" section within the programme: extreme pressure to meet expected performance levels and deliver learning from the planning and early construction phases to the subsequent sections of the programme
- The project staffed with personnel new to the organisation
- Difficulties in team building due to unproven working relationships and "power struggles"
- Reduced team synergy.

### 5.6.2. Joint venture project

The joint venture project was a high profile £62m project involving two major UK contractors: the in-depth case study organisation and another comparable contractor in terms of size, turnover and number of employees. The project duration was scheduled to last three years employing a total of 50 professional staff. At a peak production the project required approximately 200 subcontracted operatives on site.

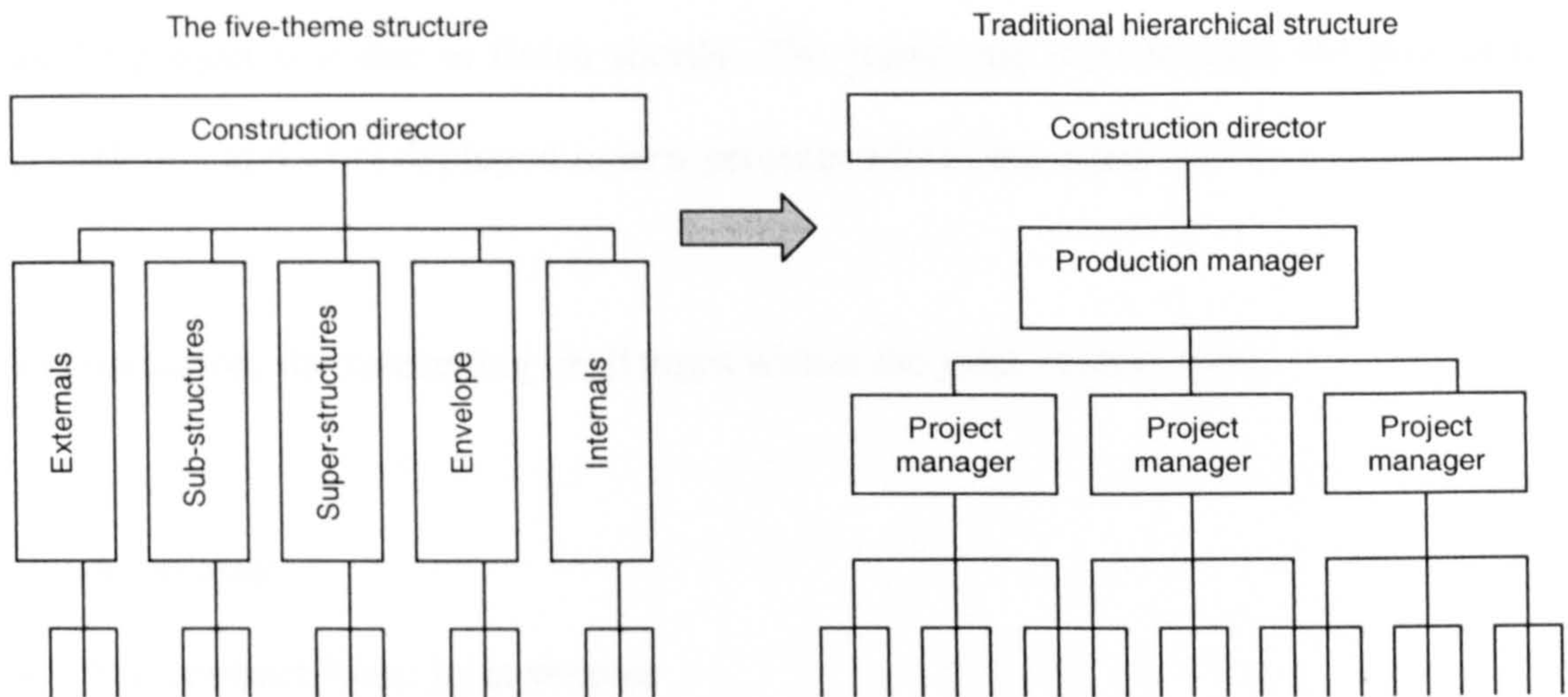
The overall programme was overseen by the divisional construction director. Similarly to the PFI schools project, matrix management structure applied to the support functions. During the initial design phase and start of the production, the project management and engineering functions were structured according to five principle themes: externals, sub-structures, super-structures, envelope and internals (see Figure 5.11). Each section had an assigned leader with qualities central to the theme (such as design capability/ design co-ordination capability/ commercial capability/ production capability) and a team responsible for their particular element of the building. This structure was initiated in order to avoid “*everyone chasing the same ball*”, a problem the construction director said to be common in larger projects.

Altogether eight members of the project team were interviewed across a range of professions. This included the construction director, commercial manager, project manager, senior QS, design co-ordinator, site agent and two site engineers.

The initial set up the project required close teamwork at a senior management level during the planning and project initialisation stages. The start of the construction

process followed with intense recruitment and selection, induction and team building phases. Due to the nature of joint venture undertakings, it was an imperative that the production staff worked well together. Not only were the organisations to induct their new recruits into the project organisation that was created to provide singularity and focus for the duration of the project, but also assimilate their existing members of staff. This required extensive team building exercises, with some casualties inevitably occurring. Few existing members of staff were assigned positions they simply did not want to do. Their role had previously involved overseeing considerably smaller contracts independently. Thus, they found it difficult to work as a part of a larger multi-organisation team. Overall, however, the five-theme structure was found successful during the design phase and into the start of the production.

When the project progressed toward the main construction phases the sectional teams began to divide and power struggles surfaced between them. In response, the team composition was changed to a traditional hierarchical structure with a single leader in charge of the production as a whole. Figure 5.11 shows the change from the five-theme structure to the hierarchical structure.



**Figure 5.11:** The joint venture case study project five-theme design structure and hierarchical production structure

In addition, approximately half way through the contract the second partner in the joint venture went into liquidation. The primary case study organisation chose to take the project on as a whole. The lost partner had employed approximately 50% of the project staff. To minimise disturbance to the project progress, the case study organisation decided to offer all of these people temporary contracts of employment for the duration of the project. Despite their efforts, several members of the team were lost to other contractors, who poached key personnel on the project as soon as the news had been released. Later, permanent employment was offered to almost everyone that had remained with the project through to completion.

Towards the completion of the project a number of employees indicated interests to move onto new projects that the organisation had secured. This was managed to suit the newly acquired projects. The redeployment moves caused a temporary reduction in the joint venture staff and forced the remaining project staff to extend to cover for



the lost members' workload. The personnel that had been moved were not replaced as the project was due to finish shortly. The remaining staff brought the project to completion and were deployed to new projects within the organisation.

In conclusion, the resourcing challenges within the joint venture were:

### *Team building*

- The contract form: joint venture
- Initial set up of the project, which required close teamwork at a senior management level
- Intense recruitment, selection and induction due to the size of the project
- Extensive team building exercises aimed at ensuring the two companies' employees worked well together, the new recruits were inducted into the project organisation, singularity and focus was created for the duration of the project, and the existing members of staff were assimilated
- Staff motivation: ensuring the personnel that had been allocated positions they did not want to do were integrated within the multi-organisation team and performed to required standards

### *Change management*

- Change in the project team structure from the themed structure to traditional hierarchical structure
- Loss of the joint venture partner and subsequent changes in project personnel: temporary contracts of employment offered to all staff previously employed by

the lost partner, several members of the team lost to other contractors who poached key personnel on the project as soon as the news had been released

- Changes in project personnel due to employee needs and preferences and the requirements of newly acquired projects
- Temporary reduction in the joint venture staff due to the redeployment moves
- Requirement for the remaining project staff to extend to cover for the lost members' workload.

### *5.6.3. The distribution warehouse development*

In comparison to the joint venture, the distribution warehouse was a relatively small £16m industrial development, consisting of the construction of a freight terminal with two warehouses and an office base. It was a sudden, unexpected addition to the organisation's workload. The tender had been seen as highly unlikely to succeed. Thus, when the contract was won the divisional managers were not prepared and staff availability minimal. The construction director commented:

*"I have been told we have a job starting 1st June, in 3 weeks time: 16 million in 22 weeks. That is going to need (a) a lot of people and (b) some really key people. And I sit here today and I actually don't know who they are."*

The main difficulties in staffing the project stemmed from many of the organisation's key project managers and engineers being employed on the other two large projects being undertaken concurrently, the PFI schools and joint venture described above.

The remote location of the project site also added additional pressures to the situation. The team members would have to lodge away for the project duration, a requirement that needed to be carefully considered. The long hours (due to the fast track nature of the contract) coupled with staying away from home Monday to Friday for 22 weeks, did not present the most attractive option for many members of staff. Thus, two younger engineers with no family commitments and an agent keen for promotional opportunities were approached as potential core personnel for the project. They all accepted the offer and soon were moved to prepare the site for the construction phase. The core team was supplemented with freelance staff and two permanent foremen. This brought together a 12 strong team consisting of the contracts manager, project manager, project co-ordinator (freelance), works manager, senior engineer, four site engineers (two permanent and two freelance), a QS (freelance) and two general foremen. Five out of the 12 staff were interviewed for the project case study, including the contracts manager, project manager, two permanent engineers and one of the foremen.

During the early stages, the progress on the project was faster than expected. This allowed for the young engineers to undertake planned training courses in support of their professional qualifications and health and safety certificates. Unfortunately however, their performance appraisals were long overdue. This was due to the staffing changes and shortages near the completion of the joint venture, their previous project, which had resulted in all non-urgent activities being postponed. The realistic prospects for a constructive discussion with the new site agent only few weeks after the start of the project were naturally bleak.

This clearly illustrates the frustration unconnected and/ or badly managed employee resourcing and other SHRM activities arise. The young engineers clearly showed aspiration for development and progression, but found little support in the organisational SHRM framework. Appraisal data was not included in the deployment decision-making neither was it used to support the development of the engineers and other personnel on the project. Managerial actions were based solely on their subjective knowledge of their staff, and the employee voice was included only where individuals' had firmly expressed their views or actively showed interest toward a given project/ path/ option.

In summary, the staffing challenges illustrated by this case study were:

#### *Human resource planning*

- Lack of forward planning: the project unexpected addition to the organisation's workload
- Managers unprepared and staff availability minimal: key personnel employed on other high profile projects
- Unattractiveness of the project due to the geographical location and fast track nature of the contract, which required long working hours

#### *Performance/ career management*

- Long overdue performance appraisals due to previous project priorities/ commitments
- Inability of the new project manager to give constructive feedback on employee performance/ progress at the start of the project

- Employee aspirations for development and progression not supported by organisational SHRM/ employee resourcing procedures/ practices
- Isolation of the SHRM/ employee resourcing decision-making processes
- Limited employee involvement in the process.

### ***5.7. VERIFICATION OF THE CASE STUDY FINDINGS AND RESULTS***

Research objective E was:

- E. To verify that the findings and results have general application to other construction firms.

As referred to in section 4.4.6.2, the six best practice/ validation case studies were conducted with a dual purpose:

- To validate and verify the issues highlighted in the initial in-depth case study and the findings drawn so as to validate the applicability of these challenges to the industry as a whole
- To extract best practice approaches to the employee resourcing processes, which can be transferred/ adapted to support the development of a more appropriate resourcing model.

Consequently, the best practice/ validation case study material was analysed with a view of validating and verifying the issues highlighted by the primary case study data so as to verify the applicability of these challenges to the industry as a whole.

The case study organisations were all top-ten UK contractors, similar to the primary case in terms of their size, turnover and number of employees (see Table 4.2, section 4.4.6.2 for details). They all have a strong international profile in building (companies A, D and F) or civil engineering work (companies B, C and E). The organisations A – E operate world-wide from a UK base. Company F headquarters are located in Holland.

Overall, the data collected showed patterns similar to those identified within the primary case study. The organisations had well-established HR policies (section 5.1.3), but the role of the HR specialists' tended to revolve around reactively 'fire-fighting' problems as they occurred and dealing with their consequences, rather than getting involved at the outset as to prevent the problems from occurring in the first place (section 5.1.2). Company A HR manager explained:

*“Ironic this is really, but HR is dealing with the wrong end of the business. Our main problems are associated with terminations: industrial tribunals, compensation and lots of hassle. HR does not get an opportunity to input to line management decision-making as to the suitability of the people they are taking in. This is wrong. If you are trying to run a successful business, it is the people that you bring in that are critical. Then we wouldn't need to get involved in so many negative exit situations.”*

This illustrates concerns very similar to those within the primary case study (sections 5.1.2 and 5.1.3). The other organisations had also experienced difficulties comparable to the scenario above. Company E HR officer referred to a “*drip feed culture*”:

*“We are backwards as regards to HR and it is frustrating not to be able to implement HR initiatives that you read about in journals and the press. We should be adopting similar principles... but you have got to drip feed it: you put an initiative forward to the board, get it rejected, change it slightly and put it forward again in six months time... over time change happens, but unfortunately most likely as a result of regulatory/ legislative change.”*

The role of HR within some of the other case study organisations (companies C and D) was seen as that of a “negotiator” and “coach”. Similarly to the primary case and companies A and E, they were called to interfere and work out solutions to problem situations. Employees were said to approach HR most commonly when they required information on leave, grievance procedures or developmental opportunities. Managers on the other hand often required guidance as to appropriate ways of managing the more sensitive issues in the workplace, such as work-life balance conflict. Within all of the case study organisations, policy alone was not seen as the most effective solution to dealing with the problem situations. Trust and openness within the HR-line management interface and transparency of organisational procedures and practices were cited as equally important. Many of the day-to-day HR responsibilities were devolved to the operational line managers and so they formed the main point of contact for project-based staff in terms of developmental

and promotional opportunities, project/ team deployment issues and other HR related queries. This, again, supports the findings of the primary case.

An operations-oriented management style was suggested as a characteristic of the way the industry operates. For example, company B HR manager described the attitude their line managers commonly adopted to personnel selection and retention as: *“well, if it doesn't work out, just let them go”*. This suggests that the short-term outlook evident within the primary case study is also applicable to other organisations in the industry.

The short-term outlook was particularly apparent within the best practice/ validation case studies in relation to many of the employee resourcing specific activities, although some innovative approaches to the function were found (these are discussed in section 7.1.1). Human resource planning (HRP) was often focused on seeking solutions within one year forecasts, which in terms of strategic planning is relatively short-term. The objective was to assess the current staff profile in relation to the estimated future needs and requirements. Succession planning was commonly informal and managed by the organisations' divisional directors. Their subjective selection criteria was supplemented by HR initiated objective performance/ potential measurement principles only in company B (this is discussed in more detail in section 7.1.1.1).

As referred to above (quote from Company A HR manager), the main responsibility for recruitment and selection was devolved to operational line management. In all but one of the case study organisations (company C) the managers responsible for the



decision-making had not been trained in interviewing or selection techniques. Many respondents mentioned the process being very informal. In response to acute problems with new recruit turnover, the company C had initiated “recruitment workshops” for their line managers.

Overall, the case study findings on both the HRP and recruitment and selection support the primary case data (sections 5.1.5.1 – 5.1.5.3). Moreover, in relation to the external challenges that influenced the employee resourcing processes (section 5.5.), all six organisations had experienced difficulties in recruiting appropriate numbers of suitably qualified staff and mentioned clients becoming increasingly demanding. This was said to put pressure on introducing more effective ways to manage the organisations’ team deployment and other employee resourcing activities. In response, four out of the six companies had either recently developed or invested in HRIS software to support the team deployment function, or were in the process of initiating such developments at the time of the research interviews (these innovations are discussed in detail in sections 7.1.1.3 and 7.1.1.6). Accordingly, the team deployment activities and closely related performance management systems were found to be somewhat better organised within many of the best practice/ validation case study organisations than within the primary case (sections 5.1.5.4, 5.1.5.5, 5.1.5.7 and 5.1.5.8).

## 5.8. CONCLUSION

This chapter (5) has described the main findings and results of the research. A detailed insight into the in-depth case study's current employee resourcing practices was followed by an understanding of the wide variety of organisational/ project and individual employee needs and preferences that are important to be taken into account in resourcing decision-making. A number of multiple systems and processes were found to be in place and a total of 139 variables identified as important to be taken into account in the decision-making processes. Ninety-two of these were organisation/ project related and 47 employee centred. Five key themes emerged: team/ project, employee involvement (EI)/ communications, careers, HRD and organisational planning. The chapter also outlined the major external influences that affect the resourcing decision-making processes and concluded by verifying the general applicability of the findings and results. Project case studies were used to illustrate the complexity of the situation and contextualise the findings. The case studies highlighted challenges in six broad areas central to effective employee resourcing (section 2.3.3). These were project allocation, team formation, team building, change management, human resource planning (HRP) and performance/ career management. The next chapter (6) discusses these research findings in the context of the literature.

# Chapter Six

## Discussion

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The first three chapters of this thesis identified the need for the research (Chapter 1), presented the aims and objectives together with the hypothesis which guided the research (Chapter 1) and set the theoretical framework for the empirical work (Chapters 1-3). Chapter 4 outlined the research methodology adopted to achieve the research objectives in light of the hypothesis. The previous chapter (Chapter 5) reported the main findings and results of the primary case study research and explored current employee resourcing practices within large construction organisations.

This chapter discusses these findings and results in relation to literature, with the aim of extracting the requirements for an improved employee resourcing model. Furthermore, it aims to develop a performance specification for a strategic employee

resourcing framework in order to fulfil research aim two (see section 1.2). Firstly, the nature of SHRM within the construction industry is examined. This is followed by an assessment of the current employee resourcing practices and challenges within the primary case study organisation and their compatibility and conflicts with the employee views and preferences. The current trends in SHRM are explored in the context of employee resourcing. The chapter concludes with an outline of the requirements of an improved mechanism to manage the employee resourcing function.

#### **6.1. THE NATURE OF CURRENT PEOPLE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: PERSONNEL OR SHRM?**

To begin the assessment of the nature of current people management practices within the industry, an analysis of the primary case study data (Chapter 5) in relation to Storey's 27-item checklist (1992) (section 2.1.2.6) was carried out to explore whether the organisation operated within the personnel or SHRM paradigm. Table 6.1 reproduces Storey's checklist with an added column that identifies the aspects of SHRM evident within the primary case study organisation. The discussion on the analysis is sectioned under the headings extracted from this table:

- Belief and assumptions (section 6.1.1)
- Strategic aspects and line management (section 6.1.2)
- Key levers (section 6.1.3).

The dimension numbers [1] – [27] are used to signify the specific issues under discussion.

**Table 6.1: Primary case study organisational practice on Storey's 27-item checklist**

Dimension	IR/ personnel	SHRM	Case study
<i>Belief and assumptions</i>			
1. Contract	Careful delineation of written contracts	Aim to go 'beyond contract'	√
2. Rules	Importance of devising clear rules/ mutuality	'Can do' outlook: impatience with rule	√
3. Guide to management action	Procedures/ consistency control	'Business need'/ flexibility/ commitment	√
4. Behaviour referent	Norms/ custom and practice	Values/ mission	
5. Managerial task vis-à-vis labour	Monitoring	Nurturing	
6. Nature of relations	Pluralist	Unitarist	
7. Conflict	Institutionalised	De-emphasised	
<i>Strategic aspects</i>			
8. Key relations	Labour-management	Business-customer	√
9. Initiatives	Piecemeal	Integrated	
10. Corporate plan	Marginal to	Central to	
11. Speed of decisions	Slow	Fast	√
<i>Line management</i>			
12. Management role	Transactional	Transformational leadership	
13. Key managers	IR/ personnel specialists	General/ business/ line managers	√
14. Communication	Indirect	Direct	
15. Standardisation	High (e.g. 'parity' an issue)	Low (e.g. 'parity' not seen as relevant)	√
16. Prices management skills	Negotiation	Facilitation	
<i>Key levers</i>			
17. Selection	Separate, marginal task	Integrated, key task	
18. Pay	Job evaluation: multiple, fixed grades	Performance-related: few if any grades	
19. Conditions	Separately negotiated	Harmonisation	(√)
20. Labour-management	Collective bargaining contracts	Towards individual contracts	√
21. Thrust of relations with stewards	Regularised through facilities and training	Marginalised (with the exception of some bargaining for change models)	
22. Job categories and grades	Many	Few	
23. Communication	Restricted flow/ indirect	Increased flow/ direct	
24. Job design	Division of labour	Teamwork	
25. Conflict handling	Reach temporary truces	Manage climate and culture	
26. Training and development	Controlled access to courses	Learning companies	√
27. Foci of attention for interventions	Personnel procedures	Wide-ranging cultural, structural and personnel strategies	

### 6.1.1. *Belief and assumptions*

It is clear from Table 6.1 that the primary case study organisation operates an overall IR/ personnel type approach to people management. This confirms Druker *et al*'s (1996) conclusions on the industry's personnel management style to the effect that the industry has retained a short-term approach to the management of people (section 3.4). However, aspects of SHRM are apparent in statements drawn from the analysis, such as [1] "*Aim to go 'beyond contract'*", [2] "*'Can do' outlook*" and drive on [3] "*'business need'/ flexibility/ commitment*". The organisational strategy and values (section 5.1.1) support this. In particular, the company's commitment to empowerment and training and development, together with the friendly and family-oriented culture arguably provide a firm footing for a more strategic approach toward HRM.

### 6.1.2. *Strategic aspects and line management*

The organisation is also well positioned in relation to its line management capabilities. Central to the concept of SHRM are [8] *business-customer relations* and [13] *devolvement of key management activities* to the operational managers (section 2.1.2.5), which are both crucial to the way the organisation is managed. The devolution of key management activities to operational line managers was a particular feature, a trend also identified by Druker and White (1995, 1996) as a characteristic of personnel/ SHRM within the industry as a whole (section 3.4). Furthermore, the role of the HR specialists was found to be operational and reactive,

also in support of Druker and White's (1995) findings (section 3.4). Perhaps due to the devolvement efforts, many line managers operated [9] independent HR systems within their divisions, and viewed HR specialists as intrusive (section 5.1.2). This led to many of the [10] organisation's employment relations policies not being delivered at a project/ site level. The company dismissal procedure was raised as a particular concern (section 5.1.3). These concerns intensified when coupled with the production-oriented management style (section 5.1.3.1). Few managers showed 'balanced' team management approach, which places maximum concern for both people and the production process. On the whole, the role of the HR specialists and line managers' focus on meeting the objectives of the construction process suggested the organisation operating what Purcell and Ahlstrand (1994) termed a "paternalistic" approach to employment relations (section 2.3.1).

### 6.1.3. Key levers

The organisational intention to [19] harmonise the terms and conditions of employment for all staff (section 5.1.5.10) and [20] individualise the company employment relations framework (section 5.1.3) supported the organisation's SHRM objectives. In addition, the [26] *learning company* culture and training and development policy and practices were found to form particularly powerful HR tools (sections 5.1.4 and 5.1.5.6). These were managed and promoted through the company performance appraisal system. Unfortunately, the appraisal system failed to deliver on the many well intentioned schemes (this is discussed in more detail in section 6.2.5). Moreover, the organisation operated a fairly reactive approach to [25]

managing conflict. Managerial behaviour was focused on following established traditions and company practice, a key feature of the “paternalistic” approach to employment relations alluded to above. Task setting was motivated by the need to monitor staff/ labour. In addition, [23] indirect communications and short-term operational view on the majority of the key levers ([17] *selection*, [18] *pay*, [21] *thrust of relations with stewards*, [22] *job categories and grades*, [24] *job design*) were common. This placed the organisation’s view on the psychological contract construct toward the transactional end of the relational-transactional continuum (section 2.2.1).

#### 6.1.4. Summary

In summary, the analysis of the primary case study organisation’s belief and assumptions, strategic aspects and line management provide supporting evidence for a strategic approach toward HRM. However, the [25] reactive approach to managing conflict, “paternalistic” managerial behaviour focused on [4] following established traditions and company practice, [5] task setting motivated by the need to monitor staff and [9] piecemeal personnel initiatives [10] marginal to the corporate plan reduced the organisation’s projected potential for an SHRM type approach. In addition, the [23] indirect communications and short-term operational view on the majority of the key levers [17, 18, 21, 22, 24] place the organisation’s view on the [12] psychological contract construct toward the transactional end of the relational-transactional continuum. Thus, it is concluded that the organisation operates an IR/ personnel type approach to people management. These findings support the literature



discussed in Chapter 3, which revealed an overall absence of SHRM practices within the construction industry. To allow for the maximum benefits of the strategic aspects and line management capabilities to be achieved it is imperative that the remaining personnel style beliefs and assumptions, policies and key levers are addressed. The next section discusses this in more detail specifically in relation to employee resourcing.

## **6.2. REACTIVE EMPLOYEE RESOURCING PROCESSES**

The greatest employee resourcing problem seemed to stem from the diversity of local practices found at a divisional/ project level. The organisation level strategic intention was clearly very positive. Managers attempted to plan for the human resource requirements via human resource planning (HRP) activities and the organisational culture projected an open and friendly working environment. The informal culture, which emphasised divisional/ departmental loyalty and close working relationships between staff and their line managers, failed to translate this intention into effective managerial practice. Employees moving from one project to another, or temporarily between divisions, were met with radically different sub-cultures and ways of working.

### 6.2.1. Human resource planning (HRP)

As alluded to above (section 6.2), HRP supported the organisation's strategic intentions. Senior managers compiled staff development and retention plans, which directed the shorter-term business plan actions (section 5.1.5.1). This practice and the specific HRP techniques in use, such as "what if" scenarios and numerical forecasting (section 5.1.5.1), suggest major implications. A HRIS would offer significant benefits to the current methods, especially the "what if" scenario planning. Numerical forecasting can be carried out by simple spreadsheet applications. These findings show great potential for the improvement of the organisation's HRP practices. To tap into this potential for improvement, it is imperative that HRP is incorporated into the employee resourcing framework via a HRIS component.

Section 5.2 also identified organisational planning as one of the key themes in relation to the factors the managerial respondents found important to be taken into account in their employee resourcing decision-making. HRP was highlighted as a route to organisational flexibility and effective management of change via a culture founded on trust, openness, partnering, empowerment (employee involvement) and an individualistic management style. This supports the work of Laufer *et al* (1999) who argue that effective planning is particularly important within the dynamic project-based sectors, in that it can help reduce uncertainty, introduce structure and create order and action (section 2.3.3.1). The findings also support the work of Smithers and Walker (2000), which emphasised the need for effective planning in order to decrease the chaotic nature of a project via HR-business planning integration

and culture management (section 3.5.1.1). However, despite the recognised importance of planning and support for literature in this regard, the findings and results do not show the current approach as effective, but rather indicate broad areas for improvement. Accordingly, Table 6.2 summarises the requirements for improvement together with the current practice and importance of HRP.

**Table 6.2: Current HRP practice, importance of the function and need for improvement**

<i>Current practice</i>	<i>Importance of the function</i>	<i>Need for improvement</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports organisational strategic intention</li> <li>• Techniques in use: "what if" scenarios and numerical forecasting</li> <li>• Organisational planning and HRP key themes in resourcing decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential route to organisational flexibility and effective management of change</li> <li>• Can help reduce uncertainty, introduce structure, create order and action and decrease the chaotic nature of a project</li> <li>• HR-business planning integration</li> <li>• Cultural management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of HRIS technology</li> <li>• Structured support for the current methods, especially "what if" scenario planning</li> <li>• Transparent HR-business planning integration</li> <li>• Cultural management support</li> <li>• Effective delivery of the planning outcomes to operational decision-making</li> </ul>

### 6.2.2. Recruitment and selection

The organisational recruitment and selection practices were isolated from HRP. Informality was identified as an inherent and integral aspect of the process, which had resulted in highly fragmented systems of operation within local divisions/projects. Vacancy information was not available company-wide and thus employees were not always aware of potential opportunities within the group. Equally, the widest possible pool of candidates was not attracted outside the organisation due to

the methods in favour: word-of-mouth and headhunting. However, despite the recent rapidly increasing demands, managers found the system effective.

The informality of the organisation's recruitment and selection practice strengthens the evidence provided by the industry literature (section 3.5.1.2), which highlights personal introductions common and important source of recruitment at all levels (Druker and White, 1996; Dainty, 1998) and selection methods restricted to interviews and assessment centres (Langford *et al*, 1995; Druker and White, 1996; Loosemore *et al*, 2003). This undermines the vital importance of effective recruitment and selection process, which can be achieved via reconciliation of the HRP outcomes with the shorter-term operational conditions (section 2.3.3.1). The transparent link between HRP and recruitment and selection processes can help ensure appropriate supply of skilled staff that positively contributes toward the achievement of the business objectives (Larraine and Cornelius, 2001). Accordingly, it is suggested the recruitment and selection processes are integrated within the HRP aspect of the staffing function. Table 6.3 summarises the elements required.

**Table 6.3:** Recruitment and selection practice, importance and areas for improvement

<b><i>Current practice</i></b>	<b><i>Importance of the function</i></b>	<b><i>Need for improvement</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolated from HRP</li> <li>• Informal</li> <li>• Fragmented</li> <li>• No vacancy information available group-wide</li> <li>• Word-of-mouth and headhunting prominent methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconciliation of HRP outcomes with short-term operational conditions</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate supply of skilled staff to the organisation</li> <li>• Contributes to the achievement of business objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of structured methods</li> <li>• Transparent HRP-recruitment and selection integration</li> </ul>

### 6.2.3. Team deployment

In relation to project staffing, the research findings suggested that team formation and deployment were the most important of all the resourcing functions (section 5.1.5.4). This finding supports that of Druker *et al* (1996), Yankov and Kleiner (2001), Walker (1996), Olomolaiye *et al* (1998), Spatz (1999, 2000) and Goldberg (2003) (section 3.5.1.3). Despite this, much of the task was managed on an *ad hoc* basis, and in response to immediate project start requirements or problems identified within existing projects. Many problems stemmed from the tendency to move personnel with known abilities around according to the staffing requirements of newly acquired projects. This was often known to cause problems within the projects from which key personnel had been removed, but the approach was still frequently used so as to minimise risk and conflict within new projects. This highlights the industry's short-term outlook toward project allocation [and HRM overall] and is further emphasised by examination of the project leader selection criteria (section 5.1.5.4). Alarming, the respondents stated that "availability" was the number one factor they considered in allocating staff to a project. This was followed by two other variables that focused on meeting the organisational/ project requirements: the potential team member's experience and client preferences. Only after these were the individual employees' needs and preferences considered. This is a clear inadequacy in the organisation's current resourcing practices. Yet, in addition to the poor selection criteria prioritisation, in terms of a decision-making process the current practice relied solely upon the senior managers' understanding of their employees' capabilities and needs. No readily accessible database of information was available to support this intuitive process, and so decisions were based on the

managers' implicit knowledge of their staff. This isolated the process from the other employee resourcing functions that could have been usefully employed to support the team deployment activities.

The ad hoc and subjective nature of the deployment decision-making demanded extensive flexibility from the employees. This was mainly in terms of functional and geographical flexibility, although occasional requirements for temporal flexibility were also evident (section 2.2.2). Managers attempted to compensate informally for this. For example, they promoted earlier finishing times on a Friday if project was progressing as planned and/ or additional days off were possible. No formal means of recognition for the employee flexibility were in place. Many suggested that flexibility was an integral aspect of the nature of work within the industry, and thus a "requirement" rather than an act of commitment or loyalty.

The organisation clearly operated in a manner akin to Atkinson's (1981) "flexible firm" model (section 2.2.2). Emphasis was placed on the core group and agency workers and sub-contracting used extensively. Evaluation of the team deployment activities in relation to Volberda's (section 2.2.2) routine, adaptive and strategic categories, however, revealed a rather reactive approach toward managing flexibility. At a strategic level little external flexibility was evident (see Table 2.2, section 2.2.2, for examples of external strategic flexibility). This extended to the take-up of internal strategic flexibility which was slow. For example, strategies were developed over time in reaction to changes in the environment rather than dismantled and radically changed. Of the adaptive flexibilities, multifunctional teams were naturally common due to the inherent nature of construction project teams, and managerial roles

frequently changed according to operational requirements. The use of temporary labour was widespread, but the use of other forms of internal/ external operational flexibility as a planned activity were less apparent. This highlights the need for a more coherent approach to managing flexibility to be adopted. Thus, facilities for balancing the requirements for flexibility between the organisation/ project and employees are essential aspects of a more appropriate employee resourcing framework.

The isolation of the team deployment activities from the other employee resourcing functions undermined their potential to support the managerial decision-making and use of flexibility as an intended strategy. For example, HRP could provide overall staffing forecasts (Turner, 2002; section 2.3.3.1) and a performance management system gather data on employees' skills and preferences (Nesan and Holt, 1999; sections 2.3.3.5 and 3.5.1.4). A HRIS would conveniently facilitate the collation of this data and make it readily available to support the team deployment decision-making (Tansley *et al*, 2001; sections 2.2.5 and 2.3.3.6). The current one-way approach toward flexibility could be balanced via comprehensive recording and utilisation of organisational, project and employee data (Broderick and Boudreau, 1992; Tansley *et al*, 2001). Taking employee views and preferences into account in team deployment decision-making would show organisational commitment to their employees' needs and introduce flexibility that benefits them as well as the organisation (Mabey *et al*, 1998; Taylor, 2002b). The primary case study organisation's fragmented staffing practice draws attention to the need for radical process improvement and integration if benefit from effective employee resourcing is to be realised. In addition to the areas discussed above, this must include methods for

measuring team performance and effectiveness to address the fundamental weakness in team building (section 5.1.5.5) and guidelines for carefully managing exits from the organisation. Process integration in relation to team deployment and the other staffing functions (such as HRP and recruitment and selection) should form a central components of the more appropriate resourcing framework. Table 6.4 summarises this.

**Table 6.4:** Team deployment practice, importance and areas for improvement

<i>Current practice</i>	<i>Importance of the function</i>	<i>Need for improvement</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ad hoc, reactive to immediate project start requirements or problems</li> <li>• Fragmented, isolated from other resourcing activities</li> <li>• Staff availability number one selection criteria in team formation, employee needs and preferences neglected</li> <li>• Reliance on managers' subjective knowledge</li> <li>• Flexibility managed informally</li> <li>• Team performance measurement weak</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The key to competitive advantage</li> <li>• Most important of all resourcing activities</li> <li>• Powerful motivator</li> <li>• Supports the achievement of the project/ organisational goals leading to improved productivity</li> <li>• The intangibles of human interaction separate average performance from outstanding execution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longer-term planning</li> <li>• Integration with other resourcing activities</li> <li>• Broad range of variables to be incorporated into decision-making</li> <li>• Recognition for employee needs and preferences</li> <li>• Balance between organisational, project and employee factors</li> <li>• Introduction of HRIS</li> <li>• Coherent approach to managing flexibility</li> <li>• Structured team performance and effectiveness measurement framework</li> </ul>

#### 6.2.4. *Employee involvement*

Employee involvement (EI) in team deployment or other employee resourcing decision-making was minimal. Indeed, EI practices within the organisation as a whole were limited to financial incentives (in the form of the bonus scheme and individual pay negotiations) and informal employee-manager relationships. The



organisational culture encouraged one-to-one contact between line managers and their staff. However, the recent rapid expansion of many of the operating divisions had raised the importance of effective communications at this level. The contracts managers' workload had increased significantly, which in turn had also increased the number of employees directly reporting to them. Understandably, managers in charge of up to 150 staff found it difficult to maintain close contact with individual employees. Many employees had noted their manager's increased workload and commented on their unavailability. In addition to the informal employee-manager relationships, many managerial respondents mentioned downward communication. A team briefing structure was said to cascade down throughout the organisation (section 5.1.5.5). Divisional directors briefed their senior management teams, who then conducted similar meetings within their respective department heads. The department heads delivered the information to their project managers and senior surveyors and estimators. These personnel then met with their site-based teams. The employees, however, suggested that the team briefings were infrequent and ineffective. This defeated the employee involvement purposes of the team briefing structure, thus making it a pure information delivery mechanism.

The organisation's approach to EI suggests an approach common throughout all sectors since financial participation, consultation (informal employee-manager relationships) and downward communication are the most common types of EI in use (section 2.2.4). The organisation had not considered upward problem-solving or task participation, which Marchington (1995) identifies as other powerful EI techniques (section 2.2.4). Furthermore, the primary case study approach supports the findings of the construction EI literature, which suggests the prevalence of poor EI practices

within the industry (section 3.4). This together with the inconsistency of current EI practice within the organisation clearly suggest a need for considerable improvement in the area if maximum benefits are to be achieved. Accordingly, it is recommended that EI form a key component of a more appropriate employee resourcing framework for the industry. Table 6.5 summarises this.

**Table 6.5: Current employee involvement, its importance and areas for improvement**

<i>Current practice</i>	<i>Importance of the function</i>	<i>Need for improvement</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not included in the central team deployment function</li> <li>• Limited to financial incentives, informal employee-manager relationships and some downward communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach to increasing organisational effectiveness through manager and employee collaboration and sharing power and control</li> <li>• Driver for enhanced employee performance and corporate success</li> <li>• Tool for addressing increasing performance demands and mitigating the negative effects of the fragmented project delivery process</li> <li>• Effective way to managing change, ensuring customer satisfaction and encouraging innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More frequent and effective team briefing structure</li> <li>• Introduction of up-ward problem-solving and task participation</li> <li>• Integration into the team deployment and other employee resourcing functions</li> <li>• Initiating mechanisms for employees to voice their needs and preferences in relation to their project allocation, development, careers and other employee resourcing and SHRM related issues</li> </ul>

### 6.2.5. Performance

An analysis of the performance and career management activities (sections 5.1.5.7 and 5.1.5.8) support the view discussed above; current practice is dominated by informal and reactive processes which undermine the importance of incorporating a comprehensive range of factors to be taken into account in the managerial decision-making. Much of the responsibility for the management and development of an employee's career was devolved to the individual (section 2.2.3). Managers guided

their decision-making only as far as the organisational/ project requirements demanded immediate solutions and to which a career move of an identified individual was the optimum solution. Many promotions had been initiated as a response to staffing needs arising from the rapid organisational growth. The side effects and long-term implications of such a response had been overlooked (section 5.1.5.7), a symptom typical of the short-term outlook toward the resourcing process. This finding supports Thite's (2001) outline of the recent developments in careers. However, it contrasts with Baruch's (2003) suggestion that careers are still to an extent "property" of the organisation, and hence should be managed by them (section 2.2.3). The normative model of organisational career management suggests a need for balancing the current somewhat heavy employee responsibility for career planning and providing longer-term approach for managing the career structures.

The performance appraisal also enforced the reactive nature of employee resourcing. The system, being entirely paper-based, made the utilisation of the collected data very difficult. The duplication of simple procedures understandably frustrated managers, and the overwhelming bureaucracy led to the under-utilisation of the valuable procedures and information. Again, a HRIS could usefully integrate the complementary procedures within a single system and introduce minimal administration requirements via data sharing facilities (Broderick and Boudreau, 1992; Tansley *et al*, 2001). In summary, a HRIS supported employee resourcing framework could provide structure for the current informal and reactive performance/ career management processes (Tansley *et al*, 2001) which undermine the importance of incorporating a comprehensive range of factors in the managerial decision-making (see Table 6.6).

**Table 6.6: Current performance/ career management practice, importance of the function and need for improvement**

<b><i>Current practice</i></b>	<b><i>Importance of the function</i></b>	<b><i>Need for improvement</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal and reactive</li> <li>• Importance of incorporating comprehensive range of factors into the decision-making undermined</li> <li>• Responsibility for career management on employee, managerial guidance only in relation to immediate organisational/ project requirements</li> <li>• Long-term consequences overlooked</li> <li>• Appraisal paper-based, process duplication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated comprehensive strategy for maximising individual, team and organisational performance whilst facilitating employee career development</li> <li>• Tool for managing the balance between organisational, project and individual employee priorities, needs and preferences</li> <li>• Promotes investment in the development of people</li> <li>• Alignment of the SHRM practices with the organisational strategic decision-making</li> <li>• Encourages innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of structure and longer-term planning mechanisms</li> <li>• Introduction of HRIS technology</li> <li>• Recognition for the importance of incorporating comprehensive range of factors into the decision-making</li> <li>• Balance for employee-manager responsibility for career management</li> <li>• Process integration</li> </ul>

### 6.2.6. *HR Administration*

The organisation's HR administration was managed via a complex mix of multiple paper-based and computerised data recording mechanisms. Several members of the HR and operational staff were involved in the collection and transfer of information within as well as between the systems (section 5.1.5.9). Thus, the idea of a HRIS as a tool for reducing the managers' administrative workload and encouraging information and knowledge sharing was warmly welcomed. This confirms Tansley *et al*'s conclusion (section 2.2.5) in that a HRIS potentially provide the stimulus to effect the required change in employee management practices.

### 6.2.7. Change management

The primary case study organisation's approach to change management in practice (section 5.1.5.10) contradicted the company's HR policy statement (section 5.1.1). The lack of communication on the progress of events relating to the merger and severe delay in harmonising the terms and conditions of employment for the new employees resulted in staff dissatisfaction and insecurity. The values of "*open, honest and constructive communication...*" (appendix K) did not deliver their intended confidence in managerial practice. Significant work-life balance issues also emerged from the increase in travelling distances. Despite the organisation's declaration "*It is important to us to respect our employees' work-home life balance...*" (ibid.), no initiatives were introduced to help manage this. Furthermore, the lack of systems integration and training on the organisational procedures, especially in relation to the computerised operations systems, had resulted in poor performance of the merging division and in turn temporary overstaffing of projects (section 5.1.5.10). Again, this was not in line with the strategic intention communicated by the company's People Statement (ibid.), which stated that

*"[the organisation] undertake to provide each employee with relevant and structured training to provide motivation, job satisfaction and to maximise their contribution to the business."*

This, in line with the discussion above (section 6.2), would further suggest a reactive approach to employee resourcing.

### 6.2.8. *Summary*

If employee resourcing is to work as an effective facilitator of change via its staffing, performance and HR administration activities, it is an imperative that a longer-term strategic view of the function is adopted. Its potential as a “change agent” can only be achieved via integrated, holistic policy and procedures that deliver transparent results and provide a clear focus for the organisation, the projects it manages and people it employs (Taylor, 2002b). HRIS possess the potential to support this through the improvement and integration of HRP (Table 6.2), recruitment and selection (Table 6.3), team deployment (Table 6.4), employee involvement (Table 6.5) and performance/ career management (Table 6.6).

Section 5.7 clearly showed that the best practice/ validation case study material supported the primary case study findings and results. The challenges faced by these organisations in relation to effective employee resourcing were similar to those identified within the primary case. The data also confirmed the HR specialists’ role and line managers’ leadership style as characteristics of the way the industry operates. The resourcing practices therefore appeared as typical to those found elsewhere in the industry, with slight variations in the team deployment activities.

### 6.3. *CONCLUSION: HYPOTHESIS FIVE AND SIX SUPPORTED*

This section discussed the primary case study organisation’s current SHRM and employee resourcing policy and practices in relation to the literature. The organisation was found to practice “personnel management” style approach, rather

than take a SHRM style strategic and integrated approach to people management. Although the organisation's strategic intention was found to be positive, this did not translate into effective managerial practice at a departmental/ project level. The discussion revealed that adopting a more strategic and integrated SHRM approach toward employee resourcing could deliver extensive benefits for HRP, recruitment and selection, team deployment, performance and career management, and change management. A HRIS was identified as a potential tool for supporting such integration. Accordingly, the data supported research hypothesis five and six.

Hypothesis five (*H5*) suggested that

*“The importance of the team deployment and project resourcing activities within construction organisations introduce a need for the provision of a structure and knowledge base to inform the strategic employee resourcing decision-making”.*

Section 6.2 above highlighted the centrality of the team deployment function to construction employee resourcing. The key elements that support effective decision-making in this area were identified as: HRP, recruitment and selection, employee involvement, flexibility, performance/ career management and HRD. The current informal, reactive approach to managing these activities indicated a need for a structure and a HRIS knowledge base to be introduced. Accordingly, hypothesis five (*H5*) is partially supported. Indeed, the central team deployment and project resourcing activities introduce the need for a provision of a structure and knowledge base to inform the strategic employee resourcing decision-making. However,

additionally, the related HRP, recruitment and selection and performance/ career management activities together with employee involvement and flexibility introduce the need for incorporating a comprehensive range of factors into the decision-making. Team deployment forms the central function, however, alone cannot achieve optimal solutions. Therefore, it is crucial that the associated elements of employee resourcing are placed equal importance if they are to feed into the process up to their desired potential.

Hypothesis six (*H6*) suggested that

*“Information technology (IT) systems offer potential solutions for managing the employee resourcing function effectively”.*

Section 6.2 also confirmed that a HRISs hold the potential to provide structure and longer-term prominence for the currently reactive employee resourcing decision-making. Thus, hypothesis six (*H6*) is supported.

The next section (6.4) discusses the compatibility and conflicts between the organisational/ project and employee views.



#### 6.4. *THE COMPATIBILITY AND CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE ORGANISATIONAL/ PROJECT AND EMPLOYEE VIEWS*

Research hypothesis four (*H4*) was that

*“The conflict evident between the competing organisational priorities, project requirements and employee needs and preferences present a challenging context for implementing a SHRM approach to employee resourcing within construction organisations”.*

To determine the validity of this hypothesis the primary case study data was analysed in order to identify the compatibility and conflicts between the organisational/ project and employee views.

With regard to taking employee needs and preferences into account in resourcing decision-making, rather mixed messages were received. The managerial respondents stated that they attempted to accommodate their employees' needs and aspirations, especially with regard to work location. As discussed above (sections 5.1.1 and 6.2.4), this was part of the organisation's HR strategy:

*“It is important to us to respect our employees' work-home life balance...”*

The employee responses varied. Some strongly believed that their managers took their opinions into account, whilst others felt their needs and preferences were continuously ignored.

A comparison of the factors the managers (section 5.2) and employees (section 5.3) felt important to take into account in the resourcing decision-making produced a list of 21 specific points of conflict. Five broad areas of compatibility emerged. These are presented below as follows: Table 6.7 categorises the points of conflict following the thematic hard-soft format used in Tables 5.5 (section 5.2) and 5.9 (section 5.3). (appendix O summarises the major causes of employee dissatisfaction and the potential (and real) effects this may have in relation to points of conflict listed in Table 6.7.) Table 6.8 outlines the areas of compatibility between the employee and managerial views together with the positive features of each factor and their outcomes, as discussed below.

**Table 6.7: Principal points of conflict**

<b>Key</b>	<b>Function</b>
Red	Task/ activity can be improved with procedural changes
Blue	Requires cultural (and procedural) changes

<b>THEME</b>	<b>HARD</b>	<b>SOFT</b>
<i>Team/ project</i>	Team member selection Team integration and co-ordination New recruit/ team member induction	Best use of skills and talent Team spirit
<i>EI/ communications</i>		Communication (overall) Comprehensive range of information on projects Feedback on performance/ progress
<i>Careers</i>	Progression Promotion Horizontal moves Role and responsibilities	Career development
<i>HRD</i>	Training Graduate development	Personal and organisational learning and development
<i>Organisation</i>		Organisational culture
<i>Remuneration</i>	Pay	
<i>Individual</i>	Personal health problems	Work-life balance
<i>Industry characteristics</i>	Travel	

Appendix O summarises the major causes of employee dissatisfaction and the potential (and real) effects this may have in relation to each of the 21 points of

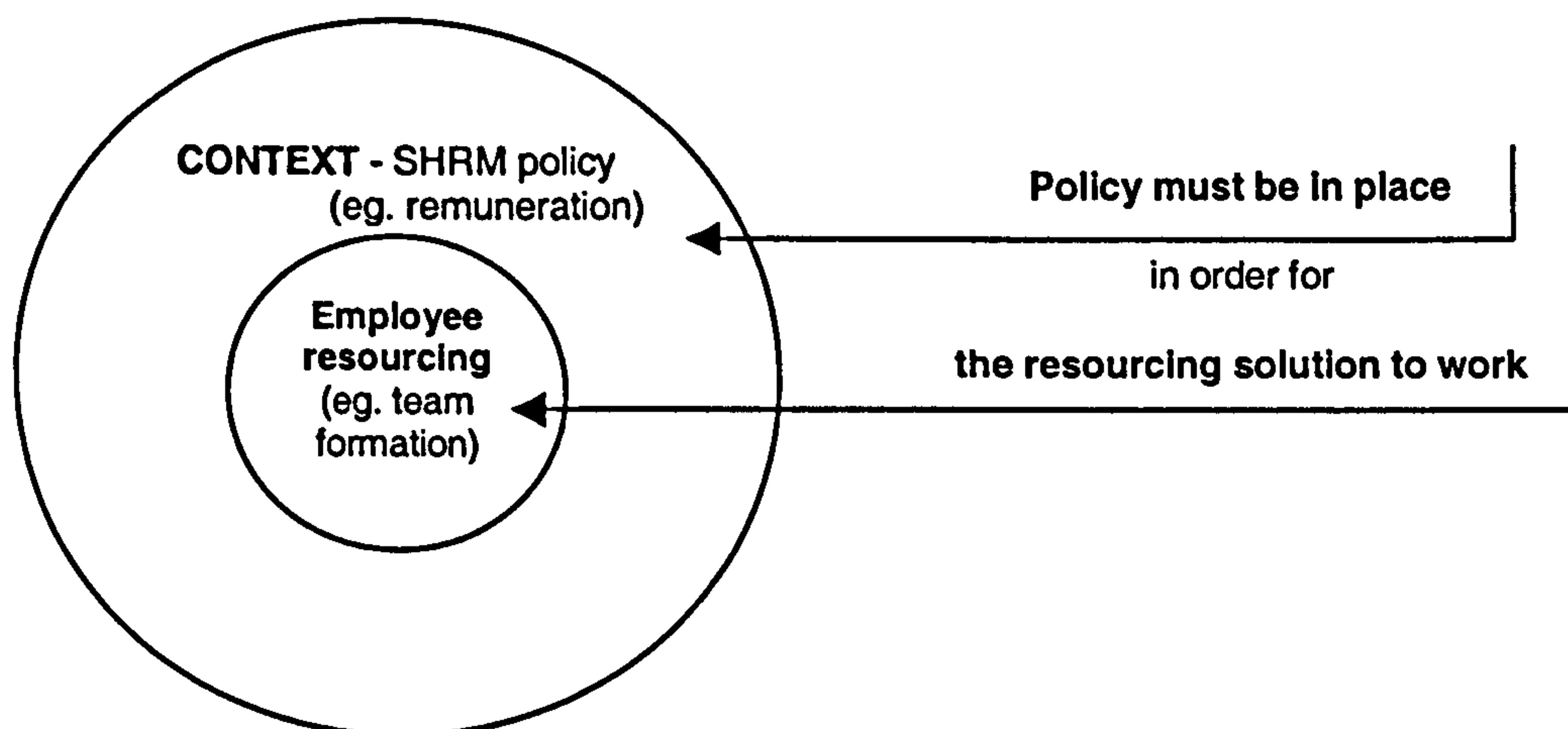
conflict (Table 6.7). Table 6.8 below outlines the areas of compatibility between the employees' and managerial views together with the positive features of each factor and their outcomes.

**Table 6.8: Areas of compatibility**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Positive features</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<i>Formal training courses</i>	Frequent Varied in nature Managers encourage attendance Regular up-dates	Well trained staff that have the required skills and qualifications to carry out their duties Employees realise organisational commitment and opportunities
<i>Personal Development Plans (PDPs)</i>	Training needs discussed Opportunity to highlight personal preferences Managers suggest/ offer range of options	Personalised and tailored solutions Employee involvement and commitment Support for career management
<i>Mentoring/ coaching</i>	More senior/ longer serving members take [informal] responsibility to guide new recruits, team members and recently promoted personnel Part of the organisational culture at many levels	Informal support structure for personnel new to the organisation/ role Enhanced internal relationships via employee participation in the organisational development
<i>Work-life balance a factor in team formation decision-making</i>	Location one of the key criteria in decision-making Aim to 'rotate' staff travelling longer distances/ staying away	Employees' travel requirements minimised Employee trust in managers looking after their staff Fairness of procedure
<i>Individualistic management style</i>	Management approachable and accessible Know their staff and their skills personally Open forum for discussion/ grievances Genuine aim for good people management practice	Positive foundation for future opportunities via development of HRM practices Open communications Employee trust in managers Close relationships between managers and their staff

Overall, the Tables 6.7 (conflicts) and 6.8 (compatibilities) highlight the crucial importance of managing a few fundamental aspects of SHRM effectively. These are careers, remuneration, training and development, and employee involvement (EI). The tables also emphasises the importance of managing organisational culture and taking into account the personal circumstances of individual employees. As expected, the list includes factors specific to the construction industry: team formation and travel.

Although some of the SHRM functions highlighted, such as remuneration, closely relate to the resourcing activities, there is no direct route to managing these aspects via the employee resourcing processes. Thus, these are considered contextual factors, which are essential for the process but cannot/ are difficult to influence. They must be dealt with separately from the resourcing decision-making and be set “right” prior to major decisions taking place regarding promotions, team deployment or any other resourcing activity. Figure 6.1 illustrates this.



**Figure 6.1:** HRM policy vs employee resourcing practice

The other aspects of SHRM (careers, training and development, and EI) can be directly influenced by effective employee resourcing decision-making practices. Indeed, it could be argued that they are best managed via carefully designed and managed resourcing procedures (Taylor, 2002b). Such procedures would also benefit team formation and help in taking the employees’ personal circumstances into account (Kochan *et al*, 1986; Dainty *et al*, 2002a). This way, the impact of travel (the

remaining industry characteristic) could also be minimised. However, it is important to note that procedural change is a sufficient response to only those factors marked in red in Table 6.7 (conflicts). Others, such as team spirit, must be managed via cultural changes as well as procedural guidelines. Similarly, a 'softer' approach is required in responding to organisational culture and the other factors marked in blue in Table 6.7 (conflicts). These variables are not so easy to deal with and require careful analysis and management if they are to be eliminated from the conflict area (Table 6.7) and moved amongst the compatibilities (Table 6.8) or their [negative] impact minimised successfully. This is particularly difficult to engender within the construction industry, where organisational traditions are ingrained in years of operational practice (Chapters 1 and 3).

It is important to note that although 'training' and 'work-life balance' seem to appear on both the conflicts (Table 6.7) and compatibilities (Table 6.8), their scope within each table is very different. Training in Table 6.7 (conflicts) refers to the overall process, the organisation and management of training, including informal and on-the-job training activities, where the same factor in Table 6.8 (compatibilities) focuses solely on formal classroom training courses. Similarly, work-life balance in Table 6.7 (conflicts) comprises all aspects of employee work-life balance, such as long working hours, opportunities for flexible attendance patterns and teleworking, where in Table 6.8 (compatibilities) it is considered only in the context of team formation.

As mentioned earlier (sections 5.1.1, 5.1.3.1, 6.1 and 6.2), the data has indicated strength in the managers' approach and aim for good people management practice. This in itself provides a positive foundation for developing future opportunities for

more organised SHRM practices. It is also a lever for lifting the barriers that hold the employees' trust back with regards to realising this aim. Despite this, it is important to note that only one of the factors in Table 6.4 (compatibilities) (work-life balance a factor in team formation decision-making) is employee resourcing specific. Also, the recent growth and the high numbers of new employees brought into the organisation as a result of this, together with the data from Table 6.7 (conflicts), suggest that the current approach can no longer form the optimal method. A recurring theme is evident: lack of organisational policy/ procedure leads to extensive confusion, uncertainty, disappointment and dissatisfaction. This suggests that the previously sufficient informal systems and individualistic management style are unlikely to provide support within the larger setting and deliver effective SHRM solutions; employees highlighted the requirement for more formal ways to manage the SHRM processes.

#### *6.4.1. Summary*

The analysis of the conflicts and compatibilities between the organisational/ project priorities and requirements and the employee needs and preferences leads to the conclusion that adopting a SHRM approach to employee resourcing within the construction industry requires a carefully balanced combination of 'hard' organisational policies and procedures and 'soft' cultural change initiatives. Establishing structure to the current informal decision-making can be achieved via systematic process analysis and implementation coupled with an on-going monitoring and evaluation. However, the cultural and attitudinal change required in

support of the policy and procedural guidance and in response to the ‘soft’ factors outlined in Table 6.7 (conflicts) is more difficult to achieve. This is especially true in the construction industry as alluded to above. Accordingly, the hypothesis four (H4)

*“The conflict evident between the competing organisational priorities, project requirements and employee needs and preferences present a challenging context for implementing a SHRM approach to employee resourcing within construction organisations”*

is supported. Extensive effort is required to achieve the suggested SHRM approach to employee resourcing.

#### **6.5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE INDUSTRY’S PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT AGENDA**

The literature on industry performance improvement agenda and other initiatives that have been adopted to combat the challenges faced by construction organisations [partnering, total quality management (TQM), business process re-engineering (BPR), learning organisation (LO) and knowledge management (KM)] revealed little improvement on the crucial issues of team deployment and other resourcing (sections 3.3.2 – 3.3.7). Partnering was identified as the only area where success had been achieved (section 3.3.2). The primary case study organisation too had very positive experiences in implementing the principles of partnering. It was incorporated in the corporate strategy:

*“...to be a market leader in delivering complete construction service through a partnership approach...”* (section 5.1.1, emphasis added)

The principles of partnering (section 3.3.2) were delivered through the friendly organisational culture. Although project work was often stressful, adversarial relations and ‘finger-pointing’ were discouraged. Senior managers believed this was their distinct business advantage. Employees were a little unclear of the details the term partnering entailed, but believed the overall approach was deeply embodied within the organisational culture. This created a positive teamwork environment within the organisation and its clients, suppliers and other stakeholders and thus provide a promising foundation for a SHRM approach toward employee resourcing. Improving the employee resourcing specific functions to integrate with the partnering approach would provide a comprehensive methodology for business excellence, in terms of both the internal and external relations.

TQM or BPR had not been considered by the organisation. Quality was monitored via quality assurance (QA) mechanisms. The organisational business and decision-making processes had evolved from senior management leadership and were operated divisionally within the segregated profit centres. The informality of the organisational culture influenced much of the success of the set procedures and the ad hoc operations meant that diversions from the policy/ procedure was not uncommon. For example, when business/ project requirements so demanded, newer employees or freelance staff were left to manage their projects without procedural guidance or system support. Without the necessary knowledge of the organisational procedures, their attempts to record and manage the project information were



accepted as appropriate. A similar approach applied to employee resourcing related processes, as discussed in detail above (sections 5.1.5 and 6.2). Cross-referencing this type of practice to Vakola and Rezgui's (2000) argument on the importance of mapping and understanding the organisation's current processes (section 3.3.4), it is clear that the organisation had not taken the benefits of understanding "what is going on" very seriously. Hence, the research sought to encourage analysis of current situation by incorporating an element of BPR in the work. Process maps and descriptions of the organisational employee resourcing activities were drawn (appendices L – L5). These helped to inform the organisation of the current issues and identify gaps in their policy and procedures, which in turn provided a solid base for future improvement. These data were then utilised in the development of the more appropriate framework.

The organisational commitment to training, development and IiP fell closely under the description of the LO (sections 3.3.5 and 5.1.4). However, this was not recognised as a "label" for their intended approach. Perhaps it is for this reason that the concept has received minimal attention at an applied level (section 3.3.5). Organisations may not realise their approach to human resource development (HRD) has a specific name, and thus find it difficult to report on the issue. This clearly presents an interesting arena for further investigation.

Finally, in relation to KM, no initiatives geared toward managing the organisational knowledge were found in place. The localised employee resourcing practices did not take into account the wider organisational implications and benefits of knowledge sharing, nor did the training and development practices encourage effective delivery

of the learning outcomes to the wider project/ divisional community. This undermines the benefits that effective KM can potentially deliver: enhanced performance, increased value, competitive advantage and return on investment (section 3.3.6). Thus, KM was identified as an area where substantial improvements could be made via the development of the employee resourcing framework. Well-planned team deployment activities support knowledge sharing throughout the organisation (Boddy and Buchanan, 1990; Ståhle, 1999; Kamara *et al*, 2002). Recruitment and selection can be used to fill gaps in the organisational knowledge (Larraine and Cornelius, 2001). Performance management systems facilitate the continuous evaluation and improvement of employee and organisational capabilities (Mabey *et al*, 1998). A HRIS could be used as a record facility to log areas of expertise (Torrington *et al*, 1991; Kamara *et al*, 2002; Loosemore *et al*, 2003). This would make important knowledge easily accessible via a single portal.

### 6.5.1. Summary

In conclusion, the current initiatives adopted within the industry have failed to make a contribution toward improving the organisation's recruitment and retention and other employee resourcing activities. Partnering as a business strategy has been successfully implemented and the LO concept closely followed, however, unintentionally. TQM, BPR or KM have had little or no impact. Hypothesis six (*H6*) is therefore supported:

*“Information technology (IT) systems offer potential solutions for managing the employee resourcing function effectively”.*

The next section discusses the required performance specification of a framework that supports SHRM approach to employee resourcing developed on the basis of the findings and results (Chapter 5) and discussion above.

## **6.6. TOWARD AN IMPROVED EMPLOYEE RESOURCING FRAMEWORK**

The research aim two was:

*To develop a framework and knowledge base to inform strategic employee resourcing decision-making for recruitment and retention of knowledge workers.*

The discussion above highlights the need for a radical process improvement and integration if benefits from strategic employee resourcing processes are to be achieved (section 6.2). The project case studies (section 5.6) contextualised the challenges in team deployment, project allocation, team building, change management, HRP and performance/ career management. Sections 6.2.1 – 6.2.5 identified the areas in particular need of improvement as HRP (section 6.2.1), recruitment and selection (section 6.2.2), team deployment (section 6.2.3), employee involvement (section 6.2.4) and performance/ career management (section 6.2.5). Training and development (or HRD) was suggested as a crucial associate to

successful resourcing (sections 5.2, 5.3, 6.4). Its key role in supporting LO culture and effective KM was said to establish a direct link with the resourcing activities. The organisational priorities and project requirements (section 5.2) and employee needs and preferences (section 5.3) also focused on similar five areas:

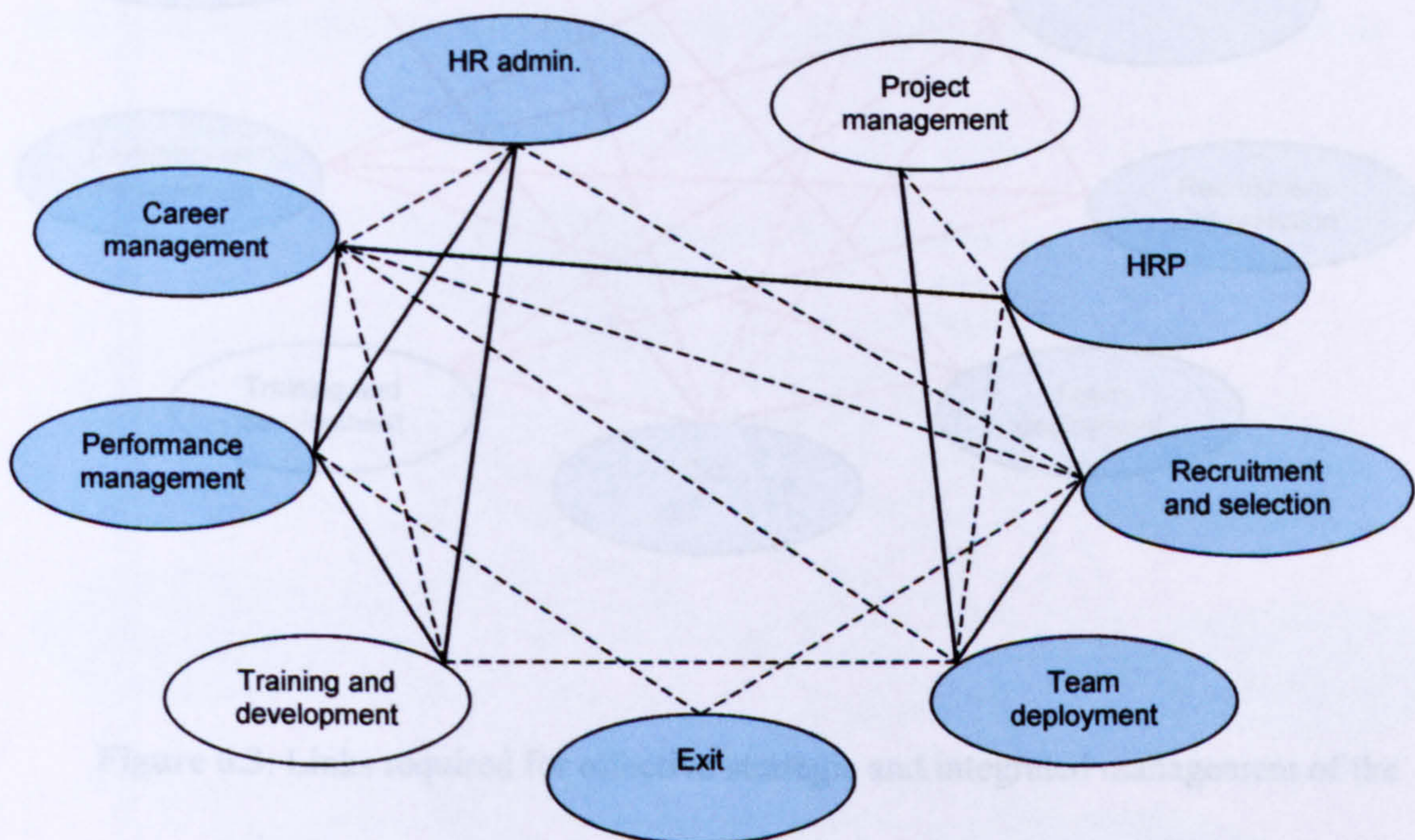
1. Teams
2. Employee involvement
3. Careers
4. HRD
5. Planning.

As discussed within the literature (section 2.3.1), employment relations provide the overarching management style for the organisation. These are considered as running in parallel to the resourcing function, and thus form the contextual factors referred to in section 6.4. Hence, they are not considered as a visible part of the framework. A required performance specification for the improved framework follows.

#### *6.6.1. The need for integration of the SHRM functions*

The discussion on HRP (section 6.2.1), recruitment and selection (section 6.2.2), team deployment (section 6.2.3), employee involvement (section 6.2.4), performance/ career management (section 6.2.5), and HRD (sections 5.2, 5.3 and 6.4) indicated that process integration is crucial to SHRM approach to employee resourcing. An in-depth analysis of the employee resourcing process charts

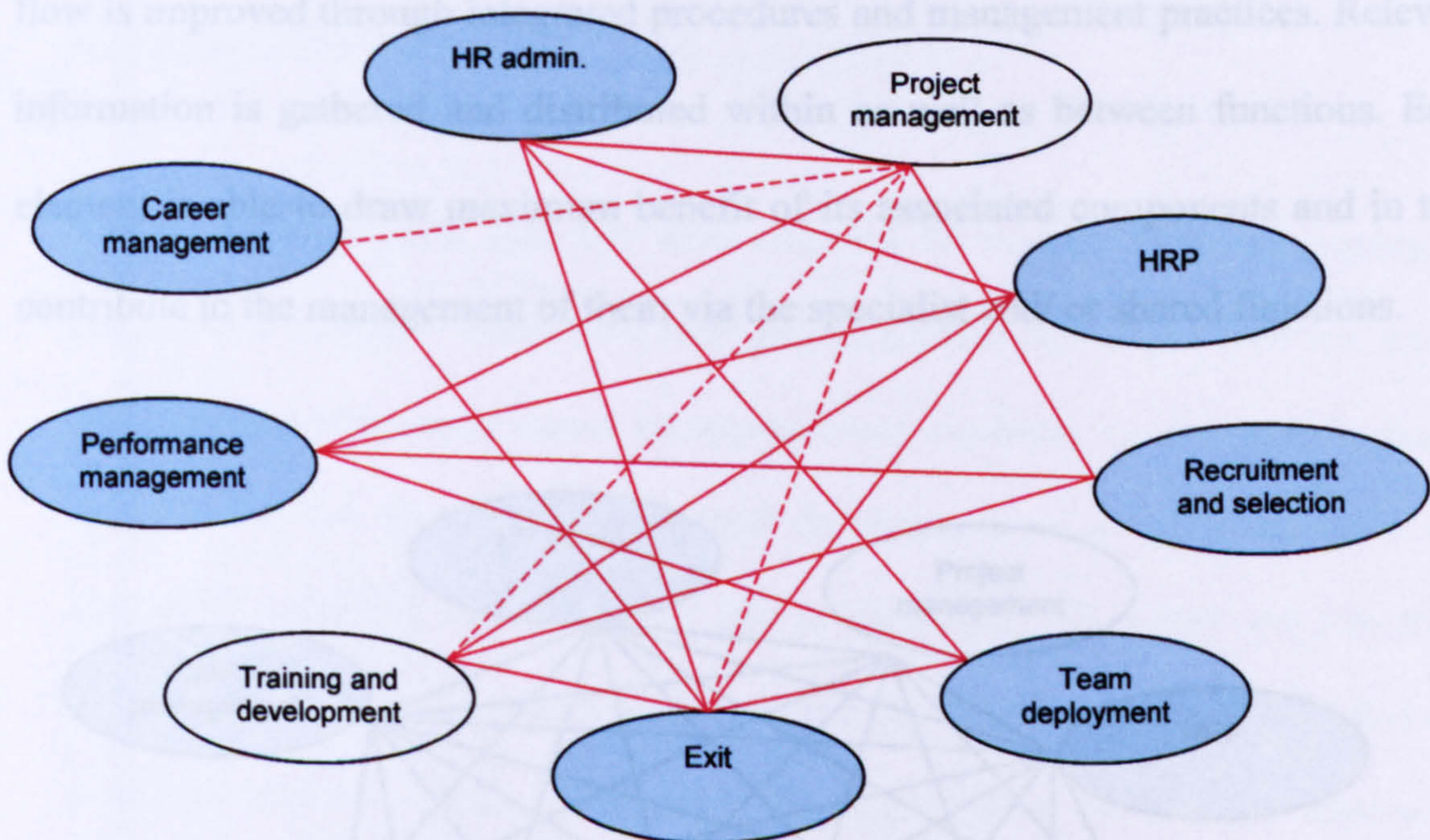
(appendices L – L5) and descriptions (sections 5.1.5.1 – 5.1.5.10), however, clearly highlighted gaps in the integration of the various aspects of the resourcing function. Figure 6.2 illustrates this. This illustration technique was developed from a combination of the resourcing objectives and activities outlined in Table 2.8 (section 2.3.3) and Sparrow and Marchington's (1998) 'integration of HRM systems' model (Figure 2.7, section 2.1.2.5). Table 2.8 provided the process titles and Sparrow and Marchington's model inspired the star-like presentation style.



**Figure 6.2:** SHRM integration gap analysis star diagram

Figure 6.2 highlights the current links (black lines) between the different resourcing functions (light blue ovals). Two additional functions: project management and training and development (white ovals), are included for their vital importance and impact to the resourcing functions. Weaker links that exist but need to be improved (dotted lines) are also represented. Ideally, the figure forms a complete nine-point

star diagram. It is evident that many of the links required for this are missing. In fact, only a small minority of the links required for effective strategic and integrated management of the resourcing function are in place. Figure 6.3 shows the links that therefore need to be established.

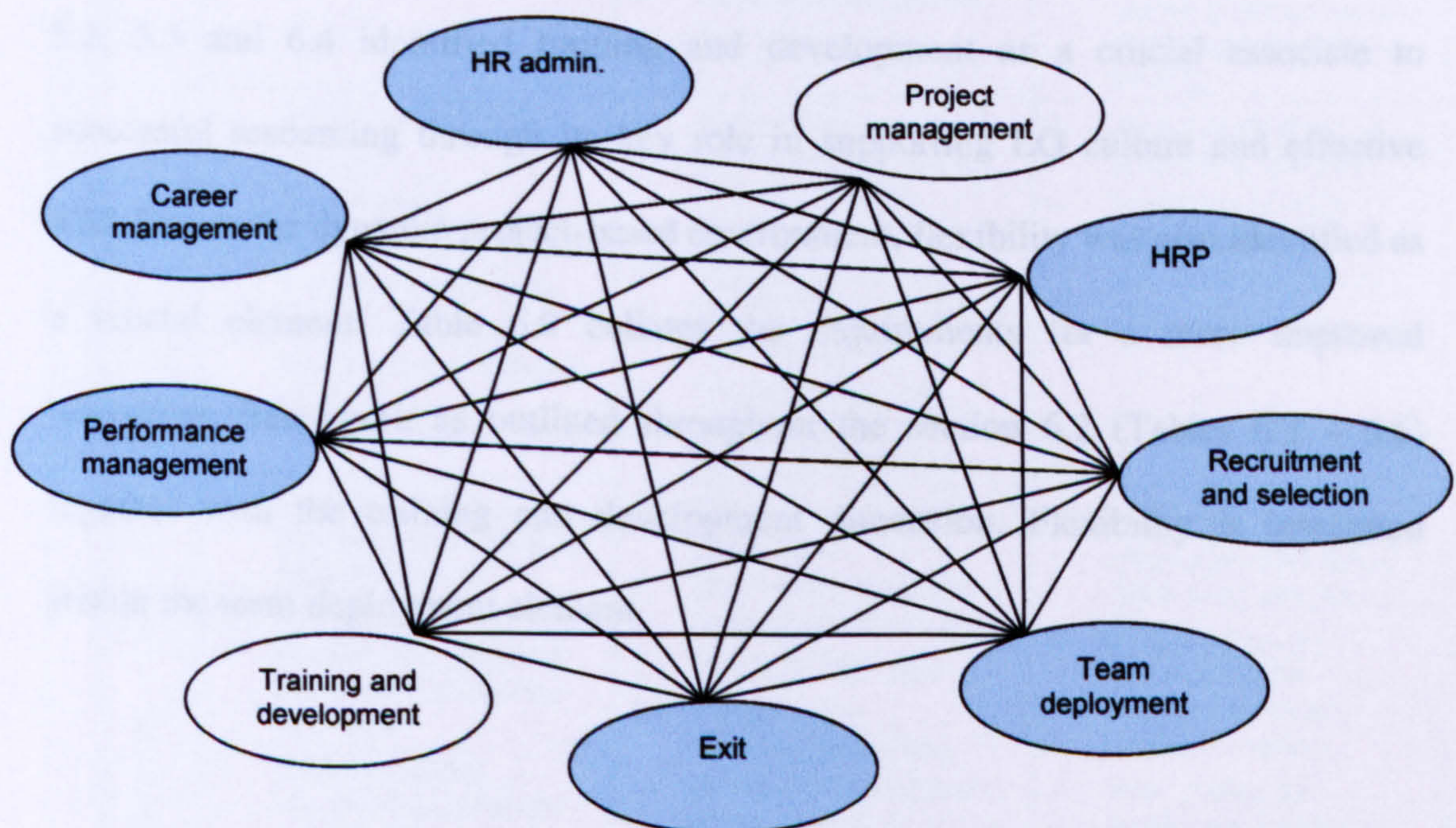


**Figure 6.3:** Links required for effective strategic and integrated management of the employee resourcing function

Accordingly, the main requirement for the organisation in terms of process integration is to improve the existing weak links and establish the missing linkages between the different employee resourcing processes. This, together with the key components identified throughout section 6.2, leads to a performance specification of the requirements of a framework toward adopting a SHRM approach to employee resourcing decision-making.

### 6.6.2. Requirements of the framework

Building on Figures 6.2 and 6.3 above, Figure 6.4 below shows the type of network of interconnected functions that is desired for a strategic employee resourcing function. Seamless links between the components are clearly visible. Information flow is improved through integrated procedures and management practices. Relevant information is gathered and distributed within as well as between functions. Each element is able to draw maximum benefit of its associated components and in turn contribute to the management of them via the specialist and/ or shared functions.



**Figure 6.4:** Network of interconnected employee resourcing functions

As alluded to above (section 6.2.1), HRP activities are now able to distribute overall long-term staffing plans to inform the shorter-term team deployment decision-making (Turner, 2002). Simultaneously, personnel and organisational data gathered

via the performance/ career management plans and records can be used to support a diverse range of activities, such as internal recruitment and selection and training and development selection/ guidance (Taylor, 2002b). HR administration is a straightforward, single-entry data-processing activity with main focus on data manipulation and distribution (Tansley *et al*, 2001).

Section 6.2 highlighted four key areas essential for a more improved employee resourcing framework. These were HRP and related recruitment and selection, team deployment, performance/ career management and employee involvement. Sections 5.2, 5.3 and 6.4 identified training and development as a crucial associate to successful resourcing through its key role in supporting LO culture and effective KM. Due to the dynamic project-based environment, flexibility was also identified as a crucial element. Table 6.9 collates the requirements for a more improved resourcing framework as outlined throughout the section 6.2 (Tables 6.2 – 6.6) together with the training and development dimension. Flexibility is integrated within the team deployment element.



**Table 6.9: The performance specification requirements for a more improved employee resourcing framework**

	<i>Current practice</i>	<i>Importance of the function</i>	<i>Need for improvement</i>
<b>Human Resource Planning (HRP)</b> (Table 6.2, section 6.2.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports organisational strategic intention</li> <li>• Techniques in use: "what if" scenarios and numerical forecasting</li> <li>• Organisational planning and HRP key themes in resourcing decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential route to organisational flexibility and effective management of change</li> <li>• Can help reduce uncertainty, introduce structure, create order and action and decrease the chaotic nature of a project</li> <li>• HR-business planning integration</li> <li>• Cultural management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of HRIS technology</li> <li>• Structured support for the current methods, especially "what if" scenario planning</li> <li>• Transparent HR-business planning integration</li> <li>• Cultural management support</li> <li>• Effective delivery of the planning outcomes to operational decision-making</li> </ul>
<b>Recruitment and selection</b> (Table 6.3, section 6.2.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolated from HRP</li> <li>• Informal</li> <li>• Fragmented</li> <li>• No vacancy information available group-wide</li> <li>• Word-of-mouth and headhunting prominent methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconciliation of HRP outcomes with short-term operational conditions</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate supply of skilled staff to the organisation</li> <li>• Contributes to the achievement of business objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of structured methods</li> <li>• Transparent HRP-recruitment and selection integration</li> </ul>
<b>Team deployment</b> (Table 6.4, section 6.2.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ad hoc, reactive to immediate project start requirements or problems</li> <li>• Fragmented, isolated from other resourcing activities</li> <li>• Staff availability number one selection criteria in team formation, employee needs and preferences neglected</li> <li>• Reliance on managers' subjective knowledge</li> <li>• Flexibility managed informally</li> <li>• Team performance measurement weak</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The key to competitive advantage</li> <li>• Most important of all resourcing activities</li> <li>• Powerful motivator</li> <li>• Supports the achievement of the project/ organisational goals leading to improved productivity</li> <li>• The intangibles of human interaction separate average performance from outstanding execution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longer-term planning</li> <li>• Integration with other resourcing activities</li> <li>• Broad range of variables to be incorporated into decision-making</li> <li>• Recognition for employee needs and preferences</li> <li>• Balance between organisational, project and employee factors</li> <li>• Introduction of HRIS</li> <li>• Coherent approach to managing flexibility</li> <li>• Structured team performance and effectiveness measurement framework</li> </ul>

	<b>Current practice</b>	<b>Importance of the function</b>	<b>Need for improvement</b>
<b>Employee involvement (EI)</b> (Table 6.5, section 6.2.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not included in the central team deployment function</li> <li>• Limited to financial incentives, informal employee-manager relationships and some downward communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach to increasing organisational effectiveness through manager and employee collaboration and sharing power and control</li> <li>• Driver for enhanced employee performance and corporate success</li> <li>• Tool for addressing increasing performance demands and mitigating the negative effects of the fragmented project delivery process</li> <li>• Effective way to managing change, ensuring customer satisfaction and encouraging innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More frequent and effective team briefing structure</li> <li>• Introduction of up-ward problem-solving and task participation</li> <li>• Integration into the team deployment and other employee resourcing functions</li> <li>• Initiating mechanisms for employees to voice their needs and preferences in relation to their project allocation, development, careers and other employee resourcing and SHRM related issues</li> </ul>
<b>Performance/ career management</b> (Table 6.6, section 6.2.5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal and reactive</li> <li>• Importance of incorporating comprehensive range of factors into the decision-making undermined</li> <li>• Responsibility for career management on employee, managerial guidance only in relation to immediate organisational/ project requirements</li> <li>• Long-term consequences overlooked</li> <li>• Appraisal paper-based, process duplication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated comprehensive strategy for maximising individual, team and organisational performance whilst facilitating employee career development</li> <li>• Tool for managing the balance between organisational, project and individual employee priorities, needs and preferences</li> <li>• Promotes investment in the development of people</li> <li>• Alignment of the SHRM practices with the organisational strategic decision-making</li> <li>• Encourages innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of structure and longer-term planning mechanisms</li> <li>• Introduction of HRIS technology</li> <li>• Recognition for the importance of incorporating comprehensive range of factors into the decision-making</li> <li>• Balance for employee-manager responsibility for career management</li> <li>• Process integration</li> </ul>

	<i>Current practice</i>	<i>Importance of the function</i>	<i>Need for improvement</i>
<b>Training and development</b> (sections 5.2, 5.3 and 6.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational strategic intention to deliver HRD</li> <li>• CPD encouraged</li> <li>• Training toward professional qualifications and chartered status management priorities</li> <li>• Planning managed via appraisal</li> <li>• In-house Q-Pulse administration database</li> <li>• Delivery informal, reactive</li> <li>• No structured on-the-job training</li> <li>• Reactive in meeting the organisational needs</li> <li>• Unintentional culture of learning organisation (LO)</li> <li>• Key factor in relation to effective employee resourcing for managers and employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tool for creating sustainable competitive advantage</li> <li>• Learning and development of organisations and people within them</li> <li>• Integral element of SHRM</li> <li>• Ensure staff have the skills required for their current roles and can develop those required for future posts</li> <li>• Motivating/ retention factor: training indicates commitment to people and the recipients are more likely to feel valued</li> <li>• Crucial associate to employee resourcing: key role in supporting LO culture and effective knowledge management (KM)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective delivery of strategic intention to operational practice</li> <li>• Recognition for employee needs and priorities</li> <li>• Introduction of HRIS</li> <li>• Comprehensive and coherent delivery of learning and training activities</li> <li>• Structure for on-the-job training</li> <li>• Proactive approach to meeting the organisational needs</li> <li>• Recognition and active management of the LO culture</li> <li>• Integration into the employee resourcing activities</li> </ul>

The integration of these elements requires an extensive policy structure, procedural support and process guidelines. The policy structure is required to formally recognise and make public the organisational intent. The procedural support and process guidelines provide practical direction and advice to personnel within the organisation as to the appropriate ways of managing their employee resourcing and other related SHRM activities.

There are two practical qualities necessary for the system to be of maximum benefit for managers and staff: easy access and minimal administration. As discussed in Chapters one (section 1.1) and three (sections 3.1, 3.3 – 3.5 and 3.7), the construction industry presents an exceptionally challenging project-based environment for effective SHRM. Pressures for meeting the organisational and project performance

objectives are extremely demanding. Thus, a decision-support mechanism that is easy to access and requires minimal daily maintenance is likely to respond to the needs of the organisation better than a complex framework that involves extensive training and upkeep.

### 6.7. SUMMARY

This chapter (6) has discussed the research findings and results in the context of the literature. The in-depth case study organisation's strategies, policies and management practices have been correlated with recognised models of SHRM. Discussion on the key aspects of employee resourcing was provided. The chapter put forward a suggested performance specification for a more appropriate resourcing framework. The next chapter (7) looks at the development of the framework in accordance with this performance specification and presents the outcome of the design work: the SERF model.

# Chapter Seven

## A Strategic Employee Resourcing Framework (SERF)

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The previous chapter (Chapter 6) discussed the research findings and results and identified a performance specification for the more appropriate employee resourcing framework. Building on this, this chapter discusses the development of such a framework and the outcome: a Strategic Employee Resourcing Framework (SERF). Firstly, the background and developmental stages are discussed. An overview of the SERF model is introduced. This is followed by an outline of the design and the main functions. The web-based interface that integrates the functions is developed. Secondly, the model's potential to support and enhance managerial decision-making is discussed, together with the employee self-service functionality, which forms a key component to balanced employee resourcing decision-making. The testing and validation of the model are described, and the outcomes discussed. The chapter

concludes with an evaluation of the model's potential contribution to the construction industry SHRM/ employee resourcing challenge.

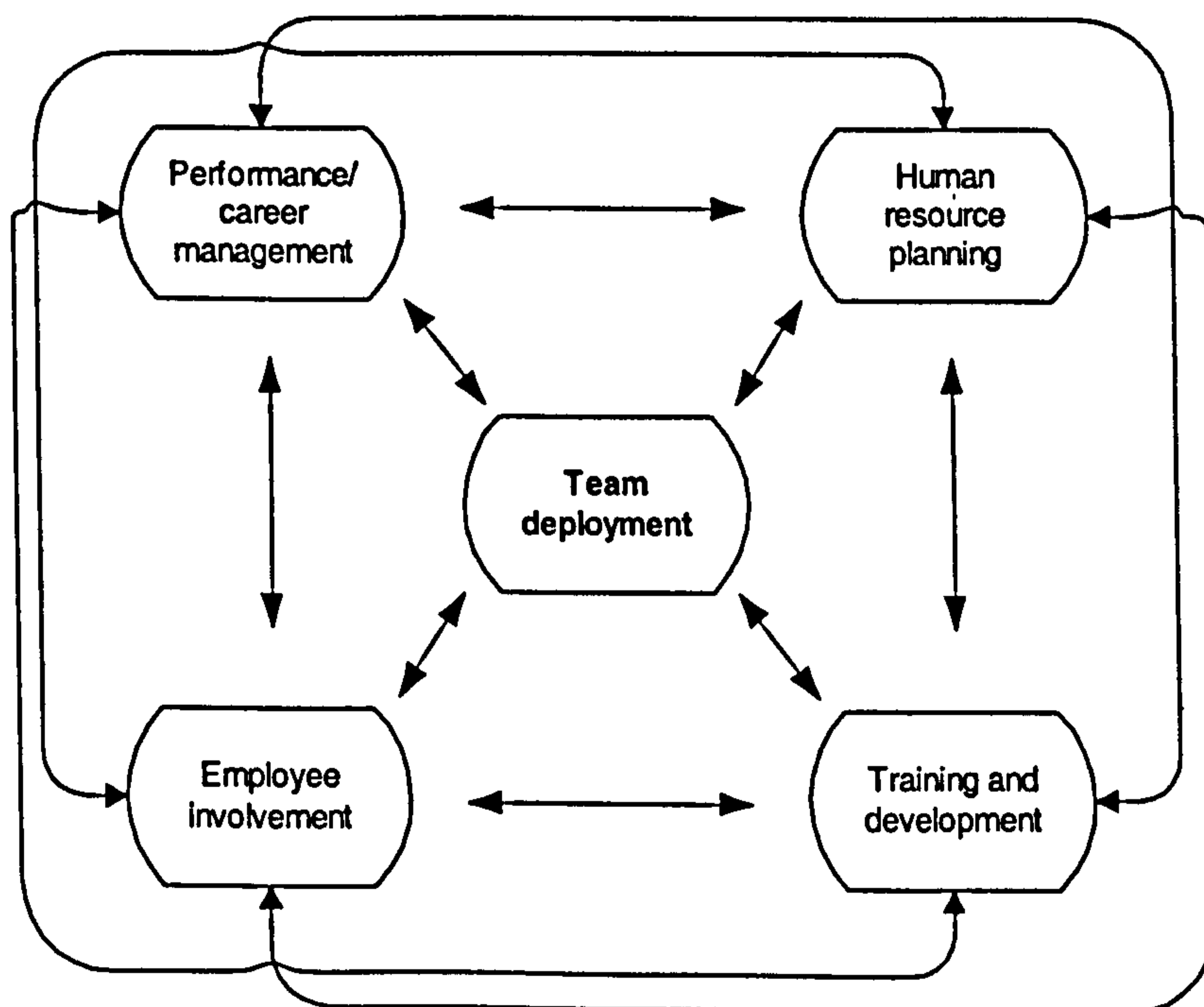
### **7.1. BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SERF**

The research findings and subsequent discussion support the conclusions of SHRM studies, which suggest improvements similar to those proposed in this study. Current employee resourcing decisions tend to focus on meeting the organisational requirements. The importance of integrating employees' needs and preferences into the process is overlooked. Consequently, the research findings and results discussed in this thesis have been used to develop a strategic employee resourcing framework (SERF) that is supported by a HRIS to inform the complex employee resourcing processes. Together with the research findings and results discussed in this thesis, the data for developing the framework was drawn from a combination of the researcher's previous experience and knowledge of the SHRM 'best practice', the SHRM (Chapter 2) and construction industry (Chapter 3) literature and Snowdrop system capabilities (section 7.2.3 and appendix P). The performance specification developed in the previous chapter (Chapter 6) outlined the requirements for such a model and are summarised in Table 7.1.

**Table 7.1: SERF performance specification**

<i>Key elements</i>	<i>Central requirements</i>	<i>Underlying systems/ support</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Team deployment</i></li> <li>• <i>HRP</i></li> <li>• <i>Performance/ career management</i></li> <li>• <i>Employee involvement</i></li> <li>• <i>HRD (training and development)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process integration</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Easy access</li> <li>• Minimal administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedural support</li> <li>• Process guidelines</li> <li>• HRIS</li> </ul>

This specification (Table 7.1) was used as the key reference point in the development of the framework. Initially, focus was on the key elements and process integration (central requirement). This led to the development of the basic outline for the model shown in Figure 7.1.



**Figure 7.1: SERF outline**

Figure 7.1 shows the five key elements interconnected via the central team deployment function. This ensures effective process integration, which was identified as crucial to SHRM approach to employee resourcing (section 6.6.1). The other central requirements focus on system flexibility, easy access and minimal administration. HRIS was suggested as a tool (underlying system/ support) to facilitate these (section 6.6.2). These aspects of the SERF form the operational/ technological framework for the model with the purpose of supporting the policy structure, procedural support and process guidelines. Accordingly, as the nature of these aspects is dependent on the type, depth and style of the policy structure, procedural support and process guidelines, it was appropriate to leave their development until last when the specific details for the SERF would be formulated. Therefore, the development of the policy structure, procedural support and process guidelines are explored initially.

#### *7.1.1. Good practice approaches to employee resourcing*

As alluded to in section 4.4.6.2, the best practice/ validation case studies were conducted with a dual purpose:

- To validate and verify the issues highlighted in the initial in-depth case study and the findings drawn so as to validate the applicability of these challenges to the industry as a whole



- To extract best practice approaches to the employee resourcing processes, which can be transferred/ adapted to support the development of a more appropriate resourcing model.

Consequently, the best practice/ validation case study material was analysed with a view to extract good practice approaches to employee resourcing which could be transferred/ adapted to support the development of a more appropriate resourcing model (for organisational profiles see section 4.4.6.2). SHRM (Chapter 2) and industry (Chapter 3) literature were combined with this data to inform the formulation of the policy structure and development of the procedural support and process guidelines.

From the analysis it became evident that no one organisation managed the resourcing process effectively as a whole. Several areas of good practice were found, but the usefulness of these when operated as independent activities was questionable. The aspects of the case study material useful for the development of the SERF are outlined below.

#### 7.1.1.1. Human Resource Planning (HRP)

##### *Succession planning*

One innovative approach to HRP focused on succession planning. This involved the identification of people who showed director-level potential, who were subsequently placed on executive development programmes. In company A the process was

informal, managed by operational line managers with occasional support from HR specialists. In company B HR specialists and departmental directors collaborated in identifying suitable candidates for their intensive management development programmes. Their selection criteria were drawn from business plans and current organisational capability charts. A named member of the HR team had the overall responsibility for overseeing and facilitating the process providing a single contact point for the directors, HR personnel and staff involved. This ensured effective integration of the organisational strategic and operational requirements of the business with a management team capable of providing the services and products that clients demand (see section 2.3.3.1).

#### *Human resource planning schedule*

Another successful HRP technique was found in company C, which operated a quarterly human resource planning schedule. Key managers met regularly to discuss the HR requirements for the following quarter in relation to the forthcoming workloads. Staff availability charts drawn from a resource management database were used as an information source for the meetings. This type of planning process was said to be particularly useful in identifying and balancing peaks and troughs in staffing requirements. Although, the quarterly schedule represents a relatively short-term outlook on staffing issues, the system helped the organisation to introduce structure to the process and reduce the uncertainty inherent within the industry's staffing practices (see sections 2.3.3.1 and 3.5.1.1).

### *Graduate recruitment*

Many organisations also placed great importance on graduate recruitment. Showing long-term commitment to developing graduates and offering them transparent progression opportunities were seen as key factors to successfully retaining the brightest candidates. Companies A and D, in particular, specialised in student and graduate recruitment as a long-term staffing strategy. This type of long-term approach to graduate recruitment illustrates effective integration of the strategic HRP and recruitment and selection activities integrated with HRD.

### *Summer and industrial placements*

Company E focused their efforts in establishing longer-term commitment with summer and industrial placement students identified as being high-potential candidates for fast track development. They also paid particular attention to recruitment and selection at lower levels with the aim of recruiting good quality candidates and developing them through the organisation. At the time of the research interviews, the company was putting together an internal computerised human resource planning system. The system was described of having capabilities for availability and skills/ experience scanning, and mapping long-term staffing requirements. The company's approach to establishing early commitment and recruitment at lower levels emphasised the importance of the cultural management aspect of HRP (see section 3.5.1.1).

### 7.1.1.2. Recruitment and selection

#### *Corporate image*

Company A prioritised the image of the company as an employer in their recruitment and selection procedures. The suitability of the company's value system to that of the potential candidate's was said to be one of the main determinants of success. Thus, they actively promoted the company culture within the recruitment process and sought to deliver positive messages using media that aligned with the company's values. Apart from the professional publications, this also involved school visits and university milkrounds. This type of approach clearly targeted their recruitment and selection efforts at a population that potentially fits the organisational culture.

#### *Graduate recruitment*

As within HRP, graduate recruitment was also paid particular attention to in terms of recruitment and selection. Many organisations committed considerable resources to it. In company A selection was based on the personal characteristics of each potential candidate. The company paid for the candidates to attend interviews and assessment centre activities. Departmental directors were involved in graduate open days to show strategic high level commitment. The process was managed centrally through the HR department. This was said to be a cost effective and efficient method, and also provide the personnel involved with a benchmark for the general standard and quality of the potential candidates.

**Internal recruitment**

Company C focused on internal recruitment and promotion. All vacancies were advertised in the company Intranet and staff regularly encouraged to access the available information. This provided transparent progression and development opportunities, which encouraged long-term commitment to the company.

**Job descriptions**

Company D made extensive use of job descriptions in their recruitment and selection process, both internally and externally. The job descriptions included two levels of job specific roles and responsibilities. Table 7.3 illustrates this. What was described “an entry level” included the minimum requirements, capabilities and competencies to carry out the duties involved in the post. These were used to assess potential candidates’ suitability for taking up a post. The other level specified the skills and requirements for an advanced understanding of the tasks involved in the post. This specified superior performance. The level was termed “an exit level” as usually meeting the requirements of this level led to the post holder taking on additional responsibilities and being promoted or transferring to a different role via lateral move.

**Table 7.3: Job description outline**

<b>Entry requirements</b>	<b>Exit criteria</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic IT skills (including MS office, e-mail, internet)</li> <li>• Teamworking skills</li> <li>• Ability to work independently under the supervision of a team leader/ project manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced IT skills (including MS office, e-mail, internet) and an understanding of CAD</li> <li>• Team leadership skills</li> <li>• Initiative, innovation and responsibility</li> </ul>

The company policy was to recruit candidates, when ever possible, at the entry level and progress them through to the exit level. This had been proven successful in building longer-term commitment and ensuring staff have the right skills and qualities required for the post. A comprehensive induction programme, which included introduction to the company policies and procedures during the first day of employment, was also said to aid the process.

### *Centralised HR services*

Company E built on a centralised recruitment and selection service managed by the HR department. The responsibilities were clearly divided in two: graduate recruitment and executive recruitment (managers, qualified professionals). Operative labour recruitment was devolved to line management. This provided staff and managers within the organisation with a single point of contact. The company had also initiated an overseas recruitment programme. This was said to successfully cover for shorter-term (up to three years) requirements and occasionally longer-term requirement too. Similarly to company A's graduate recruitment service, company E's centralised recruitment and selection activities provided the personnel involved with a benchmark for the general standard and quality of the potential candidates. In addition, the centralised service helped the HR department to ensure that the widest possible pool of potential candidates was reached by the recruitment efforts. Lorraine and Cornelius (2001) suggested this as one of the key features of effective recruitment and selection practice (section 2.3.3.2). Much of the current practice in the construction industry relies on informal personal introductions and contacts (see section 3.5.1.2).

### 7.1.1.3. Team deployment

#### *Team/ management development*

Senior managers in company A emphasised the importance of effective team deployment to their success:

*“Clearly the project is important, it is fundamental to what we actually do. But we need to build the projects through the people that are working on them, rather than the focus of attention being the project outcome itself...”*

This implied a need for change in managerial behaviour. At the time of the interviews the overall responsibility for team deployment was devolved to line management. This had resulted in short-term, reactive practices, where existing teams moved from project to project largely together and any available people were deployed to fill immediate staffing needs. Management development programmes and employee involvement had been adopted to facilitate change. Employees were asked to voice their preferences, and where possible they were deployed accordingly. Company wide team development initiatives included site-based football, darts and cricket team tournaments. HR information and help centre liased with managers offering advice on any potential issues to them and members of staff.

Company E encouraged employee development via national high profile project opportunities. This was managed in HR-line management collaboration, with operational directors having the “final say” on the basis of information provided by the HR staff.

The HR-line management collaboration in organising and managing the developmental activities ensured both the organisation's operational requirements and SHRM objectives were incorporated into the process. Employee involvement as a facilitator for change also integrated the individual employees personal needs and preferences into the process. This forms a comprehensive methodology for long-term organisational and employee development.

### *National and regional divisions*

Company B had recently restructured its operations to form two separate divisions: regional and national businesses. Within the regional businesses line managers took day-to-day responsibility for team deployment and other SHRM issues. HR personnel managed the national business deployment via a central resource bank, which members of staff could voluntarily agree to join. The central resource bank consisted of an employee skills database, which recorded the members' experience and qualifications. Use of such a database helped the company to ensure that only personnel willing or keen to travel were deployed to projects beyond the regional boundaries. This was useful for managing work-life balance issues.

### *Resource management database*

Company C also utilised a resource management database to inform their team deployment activities. Their system catalogued all employees' job titles, their previous experience and projects, line manager, home address, etc. Availability charts provided a basis for decision-making, which was focused on identifying the required skills and competencies for the upcoming projects and selecting appropriate personnel to fill the vacant posts. Secondary criteria included appraisal records,



career development needs, location, salary package and clients. All this information was held within the resource management database, and thus easily accessible. The system helped to incorporate a comprehensive range of factors into the managerial decision-making.

### *Holistic approach*

Company D operated a particularly effective approach to the team deployment process. Four main sources of information were drawn together to form a comprehensive picture of a potential team members' suitability for a project:

- Technical competence (from job descriptions, experience summary sheets and chartered status records)
- Personal development assessment (to support technical competence evaluation and provide information on personal aspirations, needs and preferences)
- Personal relationships (line managers' subjective knowledge on how the employee works with other people/ as part of a team)
- Time (employee availability, current project/ commitments, potential disturbance of a move mid-project).

Once the team had been deployed, the company encouraged them to socialise and develop their working relationships early on. The clients, designers and subcontractors were also invited to the events to encourage good relationships within the team, which extended beyond the contractors' staff including all parties involved in the design, construction and use of the project/ its outcomes. A project team was recognised as being:

*“three-dimensional with the client up on top, the contractor in the middle, and subcontractors at the bottom... what we try and do is get all those levels to build relationships together...”*

So called “health checks” were carried out every two weeks to ensure progress was satisfactory according to the schedules and staff morale high. The most efficient utilisation of team members’ knowledge was said to form the principal motive behind the dismantling and redeployment of the teams. In general, part of the team was moved to a new project with selected personnel also being disbanded to other locations. This allowed for effective application of knowledge from the project and its team members experience of other sites. Regional functional managers had been introduced to form a communication link between site and office staff. Their role had also been proven effective as an alternative for direct line management contact regarding appraisal interviews, career management discussions and grievance procedures.

#### 7.1.1.4. Exit

Company A carried out exit questionnaires and analysed these thoroughly. Their human resource manager commented:

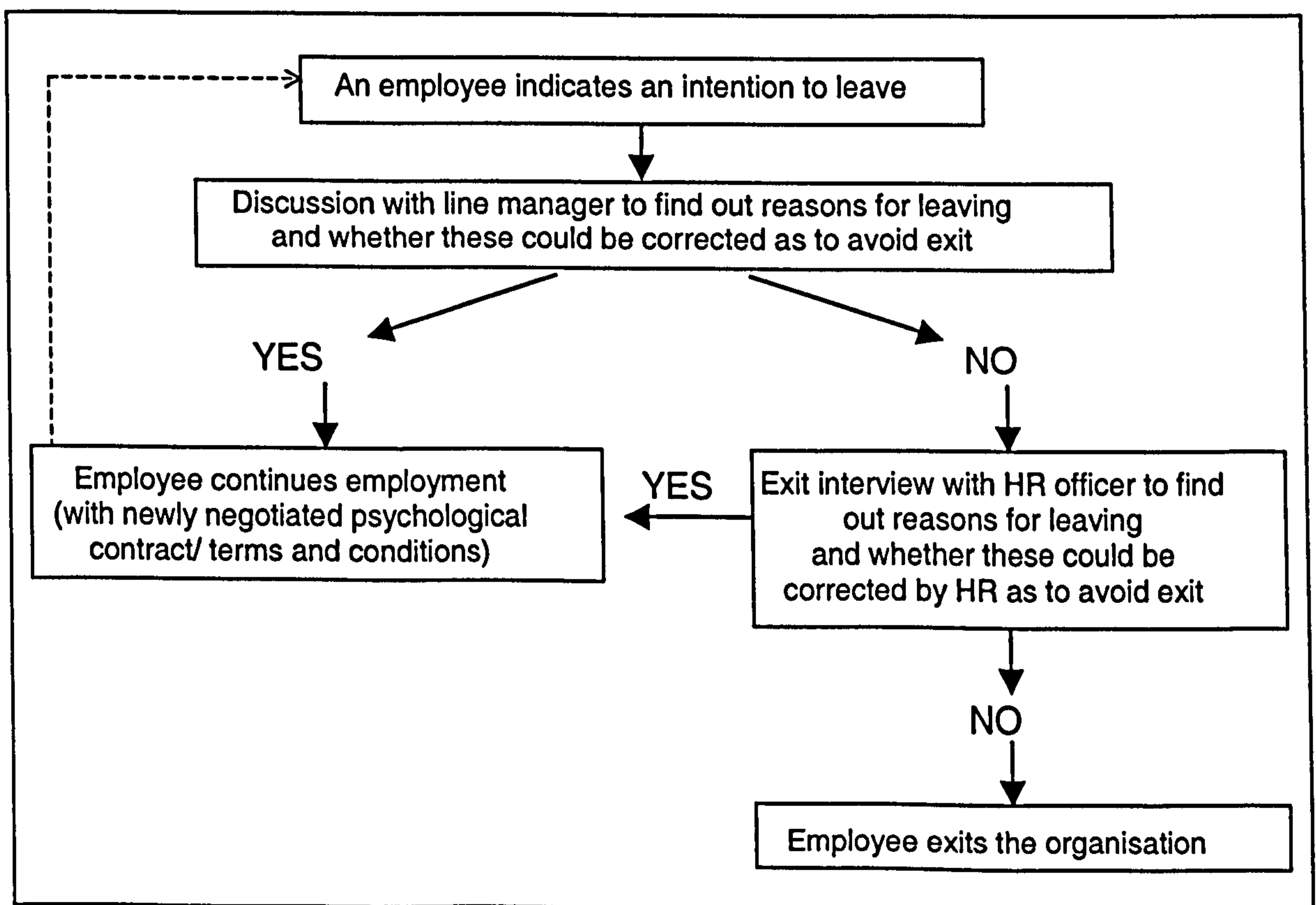
*“Unfortunately we end up spending a lot of time with exits/ terminations, which creates a vicious circle... HR function should be about recruitment and retention. Currently we are dealing with the wrong end of the business and*

*don't get an opportunity to input to line management as to the suitability of the people..."*

Hence, the main problems with staff turnover were said to stem from poor recruitment decisions. Management development was identified as a potential solution to improving their recruitment and selection, training and development, and people management skills (see section 7.1.1.3).

### *Exit interviews*

At company E exits were managed in HR-line management collaboration. Their procedure for dealing with voluntary exits is presented in Figure 7.2.



**Figure 7.2:** Company E voluntary exit procedure

This procedure was carried out with anyone indicating an intention to leave, including managers, professional staff, graduates, industrial placement students, etc. It was said to give the company a chance to persuade a person to stay and correct any issues that might exist within their workplace. This formed a useful addition to the company grievance procedure, which some employees had felt uncomfortable dealing with.

#### 7.1.1.5. Performance/ career management

##### *Appraisals and a resource management database*

Company C's performance management system was geared towards providing information for their resource management database (see HRP and team deployment above). The system identified employees' skills, their personal objectives, aspirations and preferences, training and career development needs, experience and qualifications. This was seen as an effective tool for encouraging employee involvement as it integrated the employee needs and preferences highlighted within the appraisal system with the HRP, team deployment and other related employee resourcing activities. For the organisation the system provided information managers and HR personnel could use to identify high flyers and potential succession planning candidates, individual and organisational competencies and capabilities, and how well their employees shared the company values. Annual appraisals comprised a developmental discussion, which also provided employees with an opportunity to have an informal "job chat" with their managers. This was particularly useful for older employees who had no ambitions for progression but would appreciate a formal thank you for a job well done. After each project employees also had a project

appraisal. This was a discussion on the employees' performance on the project in question, what he/ she would like to do next, what he/ she has learned/ not learned, etc. The project appraisal was described as an exceptionally useful mechanism to support team deployment decision-making. It provided information that could be utilised to transfer knowledge across the organisation and supported the employees personal development planning. The developmental aspects of the project appraisal discussion also helped employees and their managers to monitor their progress and the achievement of the targets set in the performance appraisal.

### *Career management*

Within their very strong hierarchical structure company D operated an innovative approach to career management. This included a "total rewards package" and a network of career paths that were guided by job descriptions (see recruitment and selection above). The total rewards package included competitive salary and benefits, and training and development options. The network of career paths provided transparent progression opportunities. The company Intranet had a career "route map", which clearly showed the options available from each post. The job descriptions, as alluded to above, outlined the minimum and outstanding requirements for each role. These were used to aid discussions on aspired and realistic future moves. They formed a practical tool for benchmarking performance against desired criteria and identifying training and development needs. The system was also used to highlight and fast-track those with potential. The success of the Intranet 'route map' was clear; the careers section was the most popular site within the whole of the company intranet.

*Structured performance management system*

Company F's performance management system was highly structured. It was seen as a key HR tool for making sure employees have the opportunity to speak with their line managers at regular intervals and let them know what they thought of their performance over the past 12 months, as well as what they would like to see happen over the coming 12 months (planning). This also gave the managers an opportunity to tell their employees where they feel they were at their best, where they feel there might have been room for improvement and how they could improve these areas. HR specialists had the overall responsibility for administering and monitoring the system illustrated in Figure 7.3.

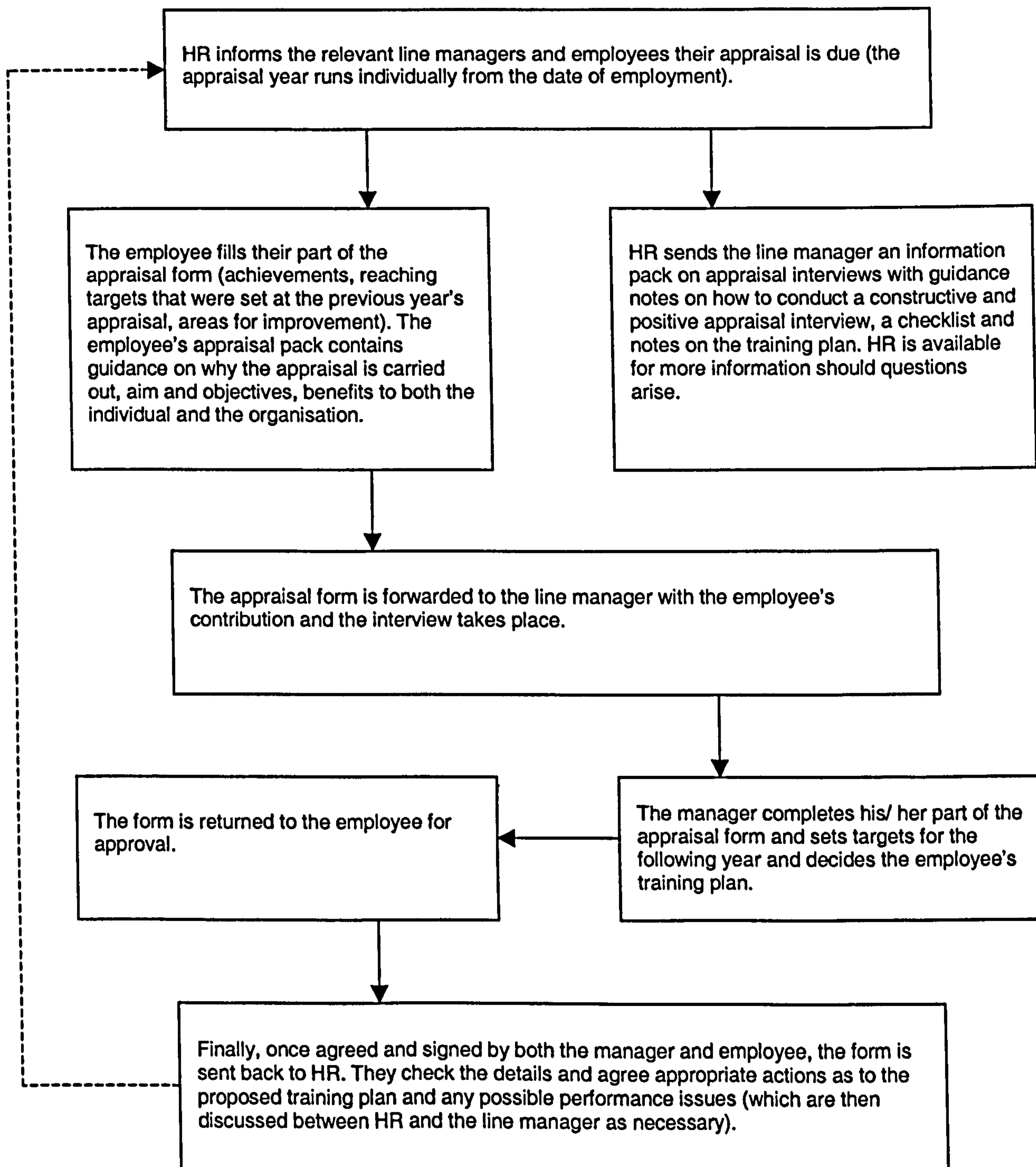


Figure 7.3: Company F's structured performance management system

#### 7.1.1.6. HR administration

##### *In-house HRIS*

At the time of the research interviews, company A was in the process of developing an in-house HRIS. This was to form a complete HR database for the group and hold all basic personnel data, such as employees' addresses, dates of birth, job titles, absence records and holidays. Inclusion of training and development aspects was planned for the future. Ideally, the system was to include everything the organisation need to know about their staff. Despite this, reporting labour/ staff turnover and absence, and ethnic monitoring were seen as the main applications for the system. HR specialists currently manage all SHRM related administration, therefore, it was presumed that they would carry this on but in the future using HRIS. Potentially, such a comprehensive HR database is capable of informing human resource planning, recruitment and selection, team deployment, HRD and other SHRM related planning and decision-making.

##### *Human resource planning (HRP) system*

As with company A, company E was in the process of building an internal HRP information system. This was envisaged to include facilities for comprehensive data management and decision-support. The system was to replace the current divisional databases and provide a centralised information source for the group as a whole. It was to run separately from the group's personnel database, but with capabilities for data sharing between the two. The HR department assumed overall responsibility for maintaining the HRP information system as well as the personnel database.



### *Resource management database*

As discussed earlier company C operated a resource management database. Their performance management system provided all necessary information for this to be run effectively and utilised to support SHRM related decision-making. The HR department held sole responsibility for administering and accessing the system. A HR Officer commented:

*“If we left it to the line managers it wouldn’t get done. We need to act as a voice of reason, a neutral party...”*

These data, together with industry (Chapter 3) and SHRM (Chapter 2) literature, informed the development of the ‘procedural support’ and ‘process guidelines’ (support systems) of the model. Next, focus was on the selection of a suitable HRIS for the framework.

#### *7.1.2. HRIS evaluation*

The evaluation of HR software packages readily available for purchase “off-the-shelf” (section 4.4.8) was carried out in order to inform the selection of a suitable HRIS tool for the SERF model. The system capabilities of 64 specialist HR software packages were assessed in relation to the specific employee resourcing challenges project-based environments present. Appendix F summarises this analysis. This

shows the HRISs exhibited at the CIPD 'Computers in Personnel' event and their capabilities to support the main SHRM activities.

Several systems provided integrated HR/ payroll solutions, such as ADP, Ascent Technology Ltd and ASR Computers Ltd. Other systems are targeted at specific SHRM tasks or functions. For example, Aikin Driver Partnership provide training and development tools, Callidus Software is aimed at supporting performance management and Captor Ltd have developed time and attendance management package. Certain systems also specialise in web-enabled functionality. Ceridian HR, IBM Global Service and Infinium Software Ltd are among these.

Although many of the systems offer a combination of integrated, web-enabled HR/ payroll solutions, only Snowdrop specifically met the key requirements of the more appropriate resourcing framework specification (section 7.1: Table 7.1): HRP (succession planning), recruitment and selection, performance/ career management, employee involvement (employee self-service) and training and development.

Hence, as Snowdrop is specifically indicated to cover the key element requirements of the more appropriate resourcing framework specification (section 7.1: Table 7.1) it was selected as suitable to provide HRIS support for the SERF. In addition, the primary case study organisation was closely involved in the HRIS evaluation and indicated strong interests in investing in a suitable system. Snowdrop was also identified as fulfilling their requirements. Consequently, the organisation initially purchased Snowdrop FOUNTAIN (the training and development module) with a

view of investing in the other elements in the future (see appendix P for full explanation and details of the system components).

Having selected Snowdrop as a suitable HRIS tool to support the formulation (section 7.1.1 above) and implementation (section 7.2.2 below) of the procedural and process guidelines, focus was placed on the development of the user interface. This was incorporated within the overall design of the model, which is discussed next in section 7.2.

## **7.2. SERF DESIGN**

The SERF design brings together the three main elements of the model:

- The user interface (section 7.2.1)
- Decision-making guidelines/ protocols (section 7.2.2)
- Operational HRIS tool (section 7.2.3).

These combine to provide a flexible framework, which acts as a decision support tool for facilitating effective line management and SHRM staff decision-making. The holistic user interface and policy and procedural guidelines help focus and integrate the organisational strategic HR and business objectives in the process, communicate them effectively, and also provide structure for managers in their decision-making. The HRIS component allows for effective collection, storage and use of employee data ensuring employees needs and preferences can be easily incorporated into the

decision-making process. Figure 7.5 shows how these come together to form an overview for the SERF.

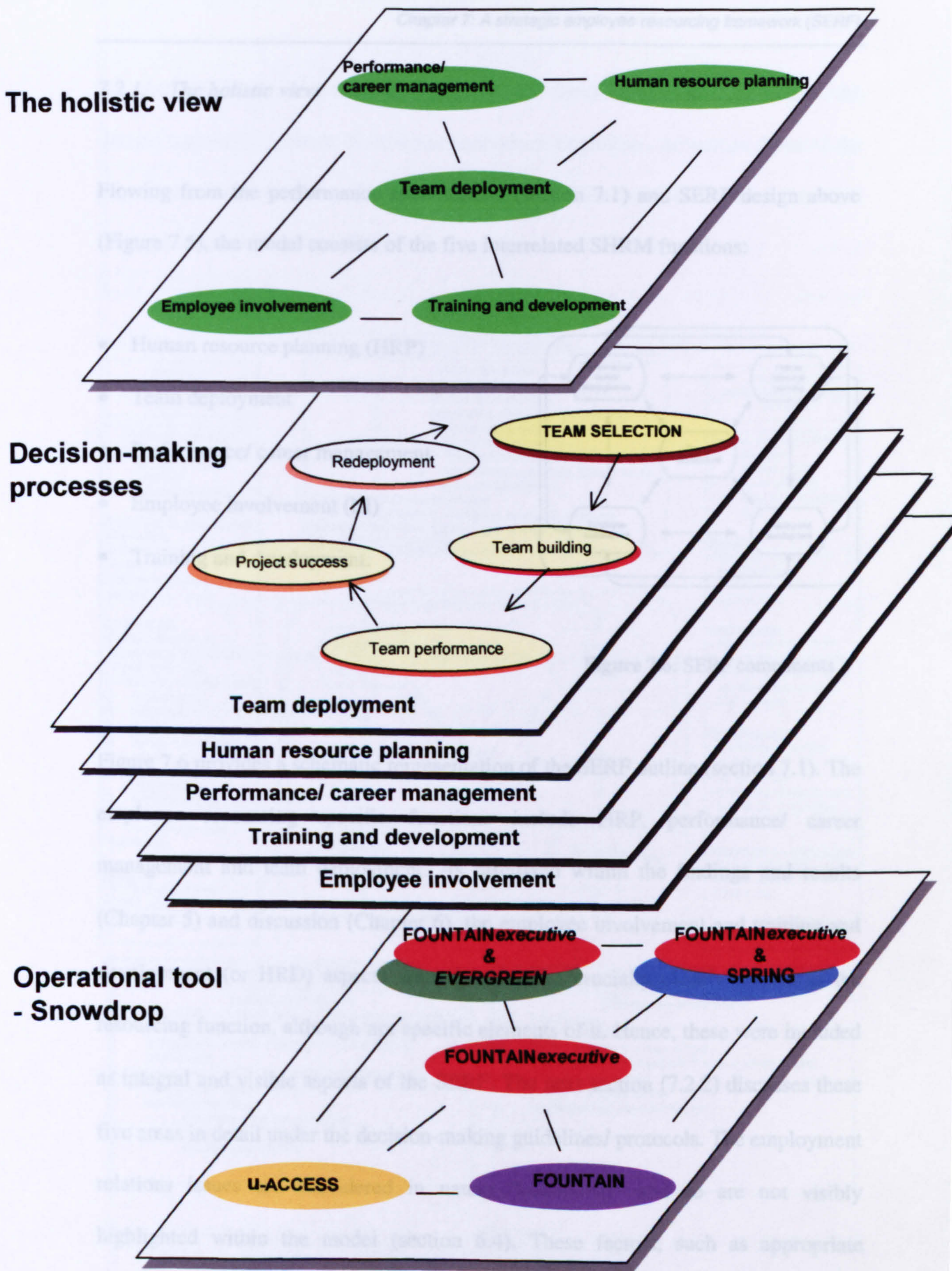


Figure 7.5: Overview of the SERF

### 7.2.1. The holistic view

Flowing from the performance specification (section 7.1) and SERF design above (Figure 7.5), the model consists of the five interrelated SHRM functions:

- Human resource planning (HRP)
- Team deployment
- Performance/ career management
- Employee involvement (EI)
- Training and development.

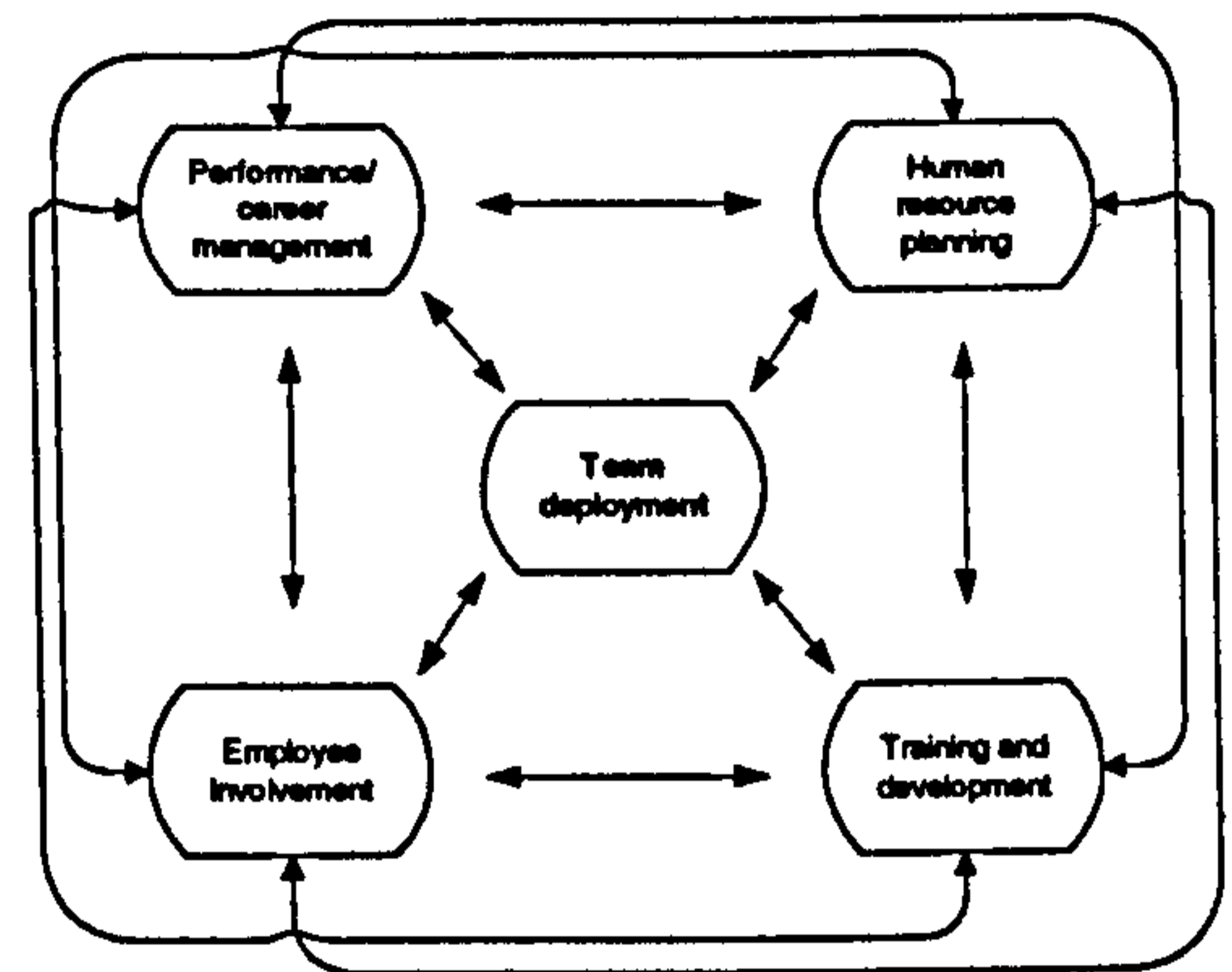


Figure 7.6: SERF components

Figure 7.6 provides a schematic representation of the SERF outline (section 7.1). The employee resourcing specific functions include HRP, performance/ career management and team deployment. As discussed within the findings and results (Chapter 5) and discussion (Chapter 6), the employee involvement and training and development (or HRD) aspects were found to be crucially closely related to the resourcing function, although not specific elements of it. Hence, these were included as integral and visible aspects of the SERF. The next section (7.2.2) discusses these five areas in detail under the decision-making guidelines/ protocols. The employment relations issues are considered in nature “contextual” and so are not visibly highlighted within the model (section 6.4). These factors, such as appropriate management style and the overarching employment relations framework, are required to be in place for the SERF to be useful (see Figure 6.1, section 6.4).

By carefully integrating the five key elements, the SERF takes into account the diverse and varying needs of different individual employees, as well as those of the organisation and projects. The holistic view provides brief introduction to each element, as shown in Figure 7.7.

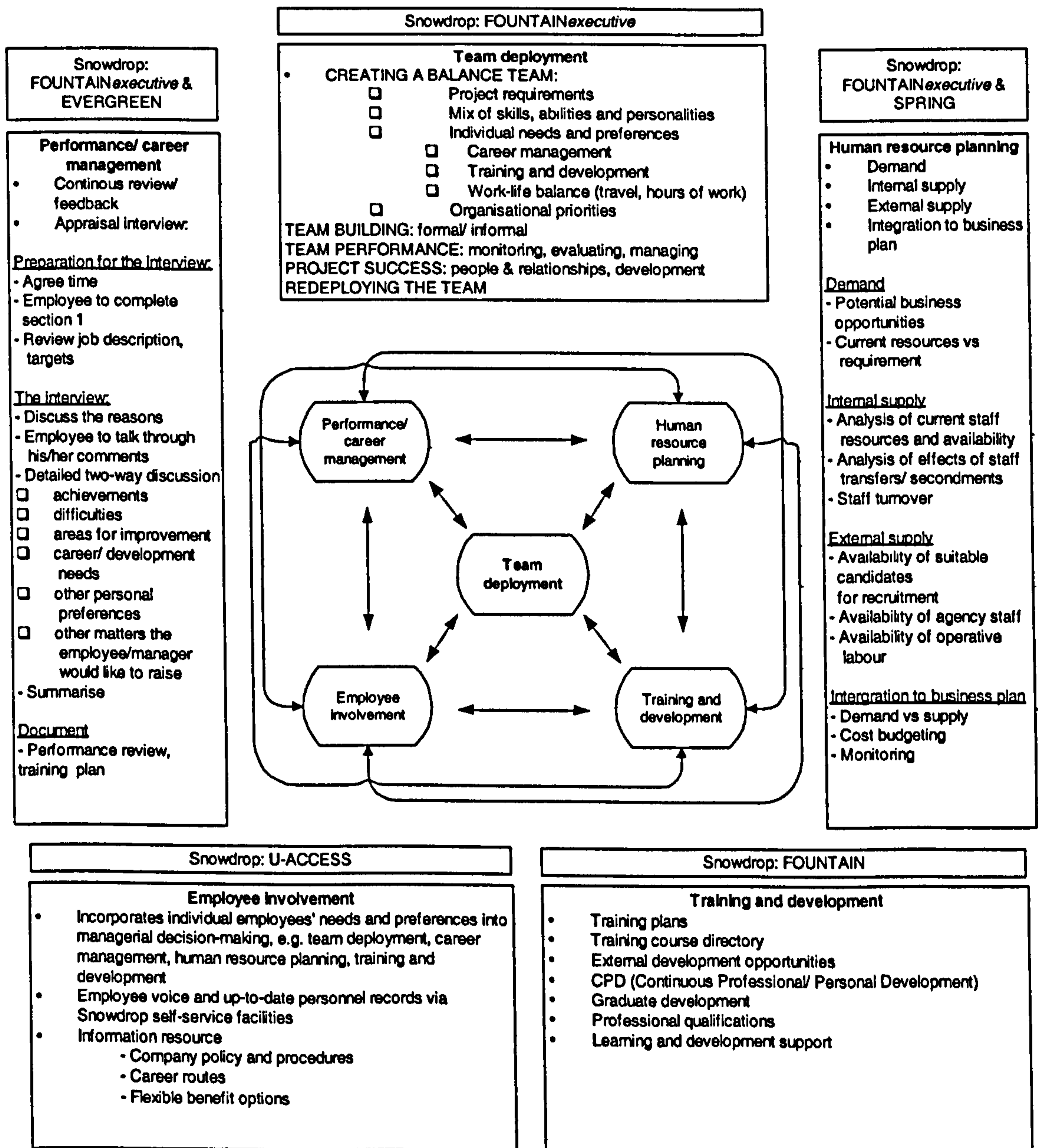


Figure 7.7: SERF – the holistic view

The team deployment aspect outlines the five processes involved in teamwork (according to the requirements set out in section 6.2.3). These are creating a balanced team, team building, team performance, project success and redeploying the team. Each aspect then provides a quick reference guide as to the factors that are important to be considered in related decision-making. With regards to creating a balanced team, for example, this includes the variables that should be accounted for: project requirements, ensuring the team consists of a mix of skills, abilities and personalities, individual employees' needs and preferences, and organisational priorities.

The HRP section introduces/ reminds the user of the four crucial stages involved in effective HR planning: assessing demand, analysing internal/ external supply and integrating the outcomes to the overall business plan (according to the requirements set out in section 6.2.1). This section includes recruitment and selection as integral aspects of analysing (and acting upon) the external supply (according to the requirements set out in section 6.2.2).

The performance/ career management part highlights the importance of continuous review and feedback, and outlines the appraisal procedure (according to the requirements set out in section 6.2.5). The appraisal overview consists of reminders for preparing for the interview, notes on conducting the interview and related documentation.

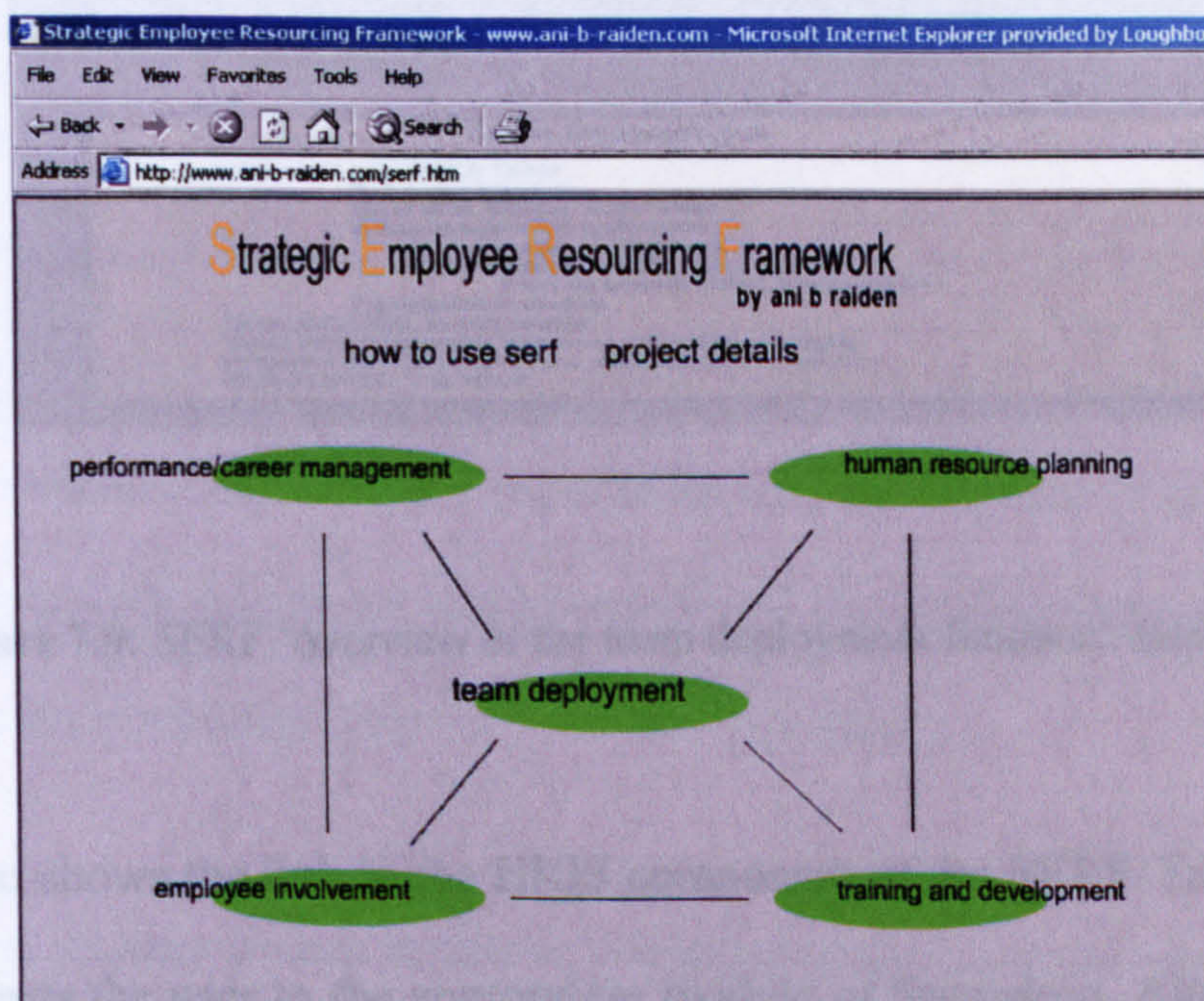
The employee involvement section puts emphasis on incorporating the individual employees' needs and preferences into the managerial decision-making, refers to this being an integral aspect of the HRIS component and points to the information



resource provided by the model via the decision-making guidelines/ protocols component (according to the requirements set out in section 6.2.4).

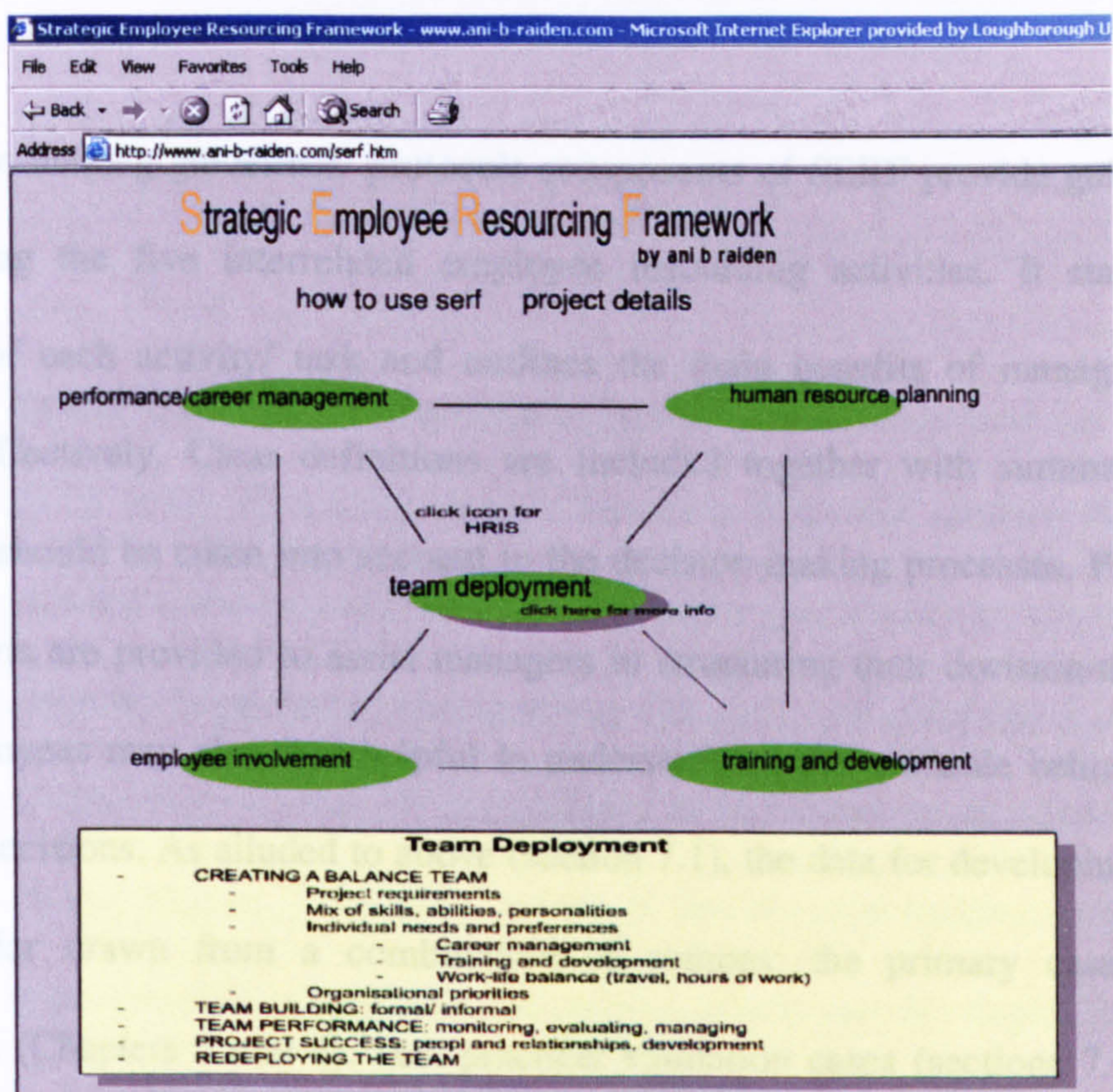
Finally, the training and development section lists the facilities the model provides to support employee, team and organisational development (according to the requirements set out in sections 5.2, 5.3 and 6.4).

A web-based prototype of the user interface was designed to provide a platform and easy access to the electronic SERF model (see <http://www.ani-b-raiden.com/serf.htm>). It portrays the five interconnected elements of effective employee resourcing highlighting the links between the different functions. Interactive buttons present the five components of SERF: HRP, team deployment, performance/ career management, EI and training and development. Figure 7.8 shows the standard display.



**Figure 7.8:** SERF user interface standard display

When the cursor hovers over each button, this triggers a box with an overview to the function to appear (Figure 7.9). Detailed menu and information can be accessed via a single click of the mouse, which then takes the user to the next level down the model. This displays a summary information table with links to further details. Process charts open up new windows to allow for full viewing, and include links to any relevant documentation as well as back to the main page. The relevant documents are available for download or printing. Alternatively these can be filled in on-line.



**Figure 7.9:** SERF 'overview of the team deployment function' display

Figure 7.9 also shows the link to the HRIS component of the SERF. Each section of the model directs the user to the appropriate module of Snowdrop. Alternatively the HRIS can be accessed via the procedural support/ process guidelines or decision-

making protocols, which include full-loop links throughout the system together with detailed instructions and advice on each of the five elements (HRP, team deployment, performance/ career management, EI, training and development). This component of the SERF is discussed next (section 7.2.2).

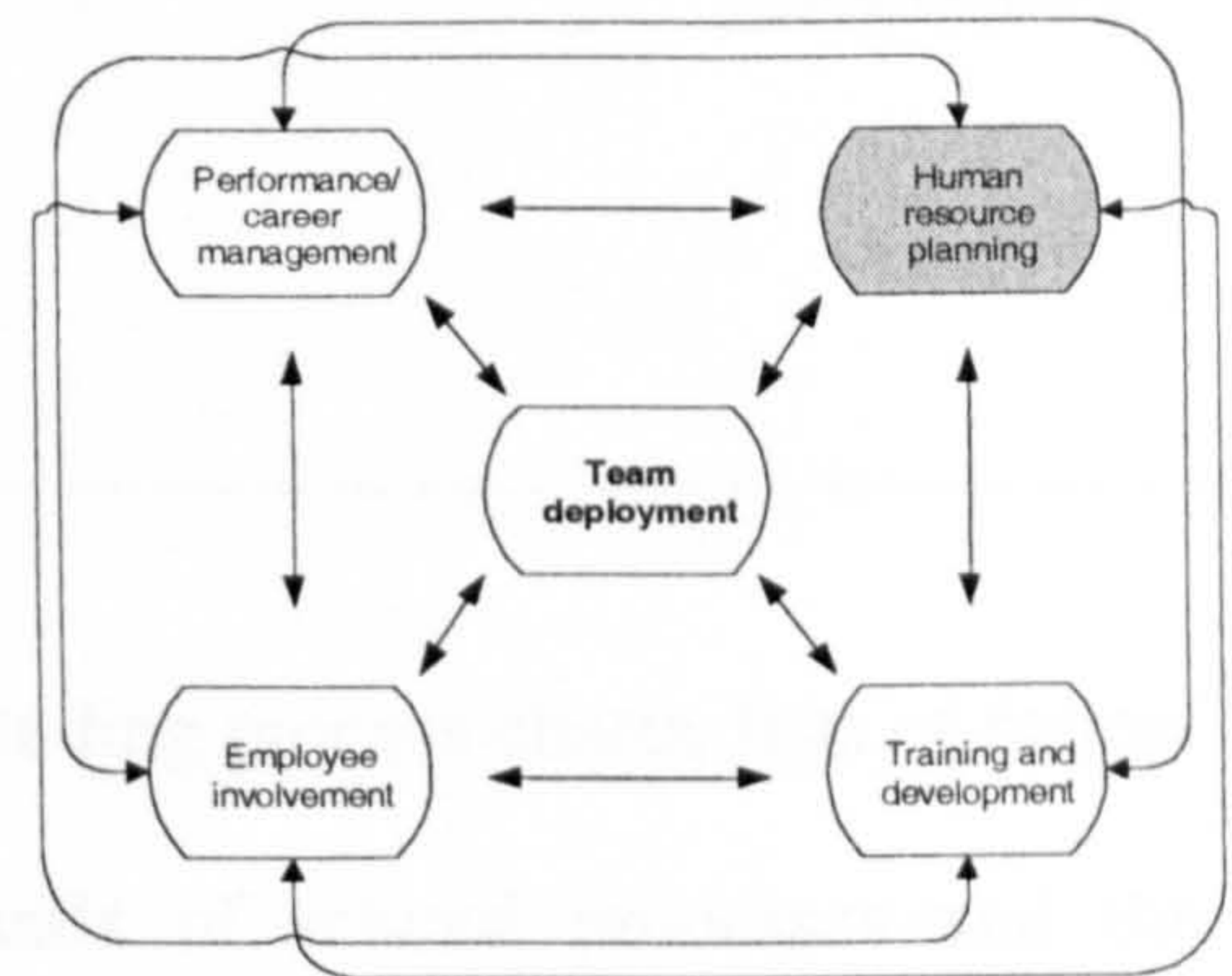
### *7.2.2. Decision-making guidelines/ protocols*

The decision-making guidelines/ protocols components of SERF provide guidelines for managing the five interrelated employee resourcing activities. It states the objectives of each activity/ task and outlines the main benefits of managing the processes effectively. Clear definitions are included together with summaries of factors that should be taken into account in the decision-making processes. Practical process charts are provided to assist managers in structuring their decision-making, which employees may also find helpful in understanding the rationale behind their managers' decisions. As alluded to above (section 7.1), the data for developing these guidelines for drawn from a combination of sources: the primary case study organisation (Chapters 5 and 6), best practice/ validation cases (sections 7.1.1.1 – 7.1.1.6), the SHRM (Chapter 2) and construction industry (Chapter 3) literature, the researcher's previous experience and knowledge of the SHRM 'best practice' and Snowdrop system capabilities (section 7.2.3 and appendix P).

The following sections present the decision-making guidelines/ protocols within the structure of the holistic view (section 7.2.1). Each of the five key elements are

discussed, with the ‘schematic SERF’ (Figure 7.6, section 7.2.1) indicating the relevant section of the model.

#### 7.2.2.7. Human resource planning



The human resource planning section aims to ensure that the organisational human resources, both in terms of volume of staff and their skills and abilities meet the current and potential business requirements. The main responsibility for the function lies with the organisational senior management, HR staff and divisional managers, although other specialists responsible for business development and marketing, may be included in the process. The HRP section of the decision-making guidelines/ protocols is structured following Table 7.4 outline, which was developed from the best practice/ validation case study material and SHRM literature.

**Table 7.4:** SERF human resource planning decision-making protocol outline

<i>Demand</i>	<i>Internal supply</i>	<i>External supply</i>	<i>Integration</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential business opportunities</li> <li>• Matching future requirements against existing resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of current staff resources</li> <li>• Analysis of changes in human resources</li> <li>• Analysis of staff turnover</li> <li>• Analysis of effects of changes in the conditions of work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of external factors influencing the supply of staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating human resource plans into the company business plans</li> </ul>

Each column of the table is dealt with in turn including process charts, lists of factors to be considered in the decision-making, details of related processes and the influence in terms of the potential outcomes. Recruitment and selection are also discussed under HRP together with the related equal opportunities policy.

### *Demand*

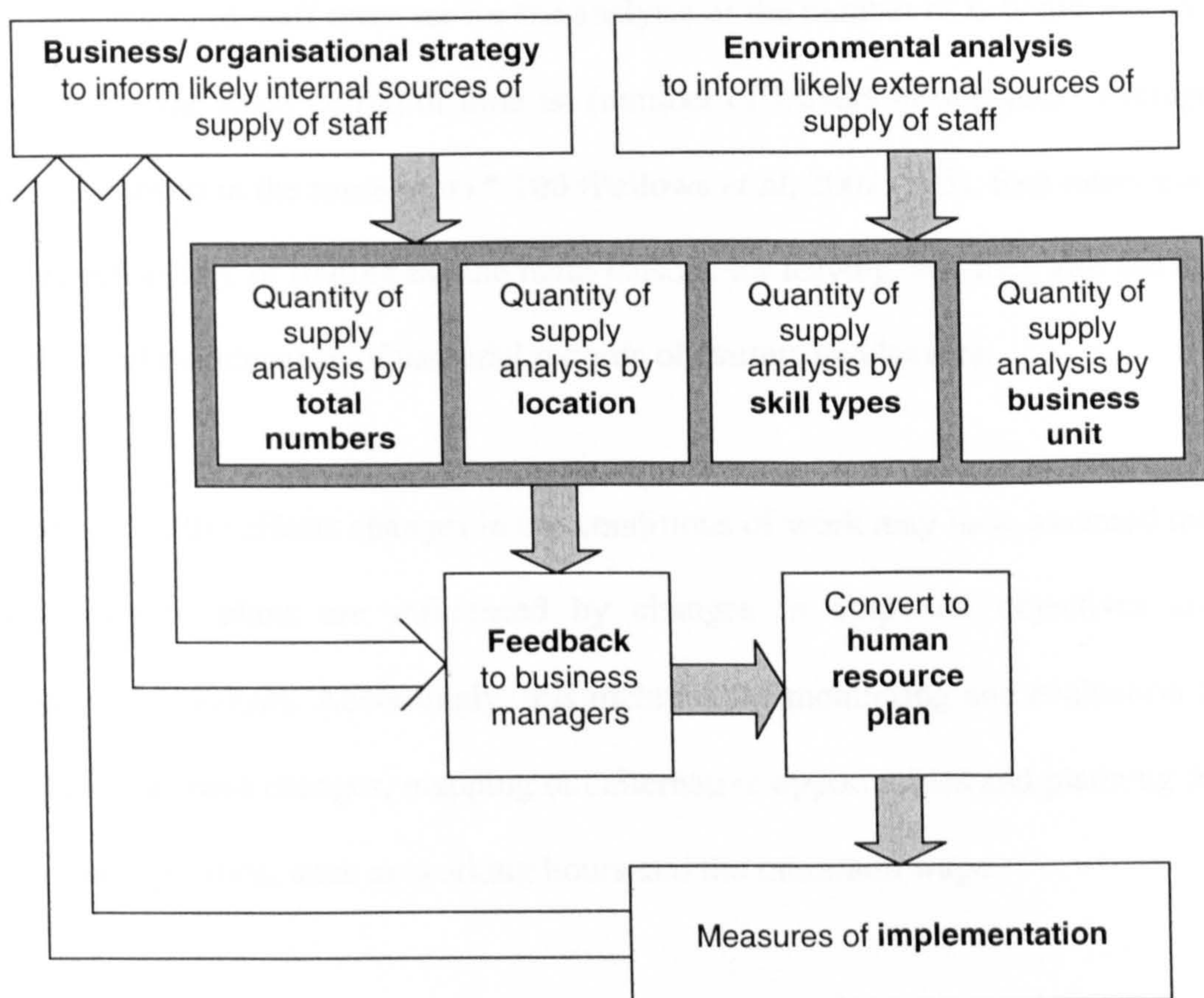
The assessment of the potential business opportunities and matching the future requirements against existing resources focuses on establishing the potential project tender opportunities, identifying gaps between the current staffing levels and those required to fulfil the potential project opportunities, defining the type of recruitment programmes required to achieve the required staffing levels and assessing the feasibility of the potential project opportunities taking into account the economic and social environment. Figure 7.10 lists some factors to consider in assessing the demand for staff.

Qualitative factors	Current skills make-up Current attitudinal measures Current training and development levels Current promotions Knowledge	<b>Future skills make-up</b> <b>Future training and development needs</b> <b>Future knowledge requirement</b> <b>Succession planning</b>
Quantitative factors	Current headcount - Where people work (location) - How many work in each location  Current demographics Current business unit headcount Current divisional/ departmental/ functional headcount Benchmarking comparisons	Projected headcount (totals) Changing geographic patterns Forecast demographic changes Forecast changes in divisions/ departments/ functions Future benchmarking targets
	Short-term	Long-term

**Figure 7.10:** Factors to consider in assessing the demand for staff (Turner, 2002: 98)

### *Internal/ external supply*

The analysis of the potential internal and external supply of staff include the evaluation of current staff resources, changes in human resources, staff turnover, effects of changes in the conditions of work and the analysis of external factors influencing the supply of staff. Figure 7.11 shows the process.



**Figure 7.11:** Analysis of internal and external supply of staff (Turner, 2002: 109)

Internally within the organisation, it is useful to retain records that can be used to show the profile of current staff. Items worth recording may include factors such as the employees' gender, age, education, career development, salary, length of service and personal preferences. Histograms are a useful tool to demonstrate problem areas and changes, for example in the composition of staff complement over time. The charts can highlight the possibilities of growing imbalances, such as the numbers of administrative versus management staff, and assist in clarifying staffing plans by focusing on individuals' career paths.

A simple measure of staff turnover for the analysis of the number of new recruits and leavers within the same period of time is: (number of leavers in one year / average number employed in the same year) \* 100 (Fellows *et al*, 2002: 123). Exit interviews are an effective way of finding out the main reasons for leaving, and they also aid the collection and maintenance of essential records of starters and leavers.

The analysis of the effects changes in the conditions of work may have assumed that human resource plans are influenced by changes in corporate objectives and environmental changes. Accordingly, this includes the monitoring and evaluation of market and business changes, mapping out alternative opportunities and planning for changes in legislation, such as working hours and the minimum wage.

Succession planning is the primary tool for ensuring the company has the managers available to meet its current and future needs. The power of high-potential, high-performing individual(s) is recognised as a major asset. It forms an important aspect of organisational learning, training and development. The process involves:

- The identification of leadership competencies required to execute organisational strategy
- The development of organisational structures for identifying emerging leaders
- Creating development paths across functions and business units
- Compliment with formal training and development activities that align with current/ forecasted challenges
- Monitoring the engagement, loyalty and critical talent in the organisation.



Analysis of the external factors influencing the supply of staff include factors such as the population density in the area of the potential project, local unemployment levels in the principal professions (and trades), current competition from other companies in the area and likely future competition, availability of short-term housing within the area, the impact of legislation (for example working hours) and specialist and trade contractor arrangements.

Recruitment and selection is the process of attracting and employing the appropriate candidates to fill the gaps identified within the human resource planning process (section 2.3.3.2). Recruitment focuses on attracting a pool of suitable candidates for the available vacancies. Selection seeks to identify the candidate(s) that best suit the vacancy. The related equal opportunities policies ensure that all candidates within the recruitment and selection processes [and other aspects of SHRM] are treated equally and fairly, with decisions being based solely on objective and job related criteria.

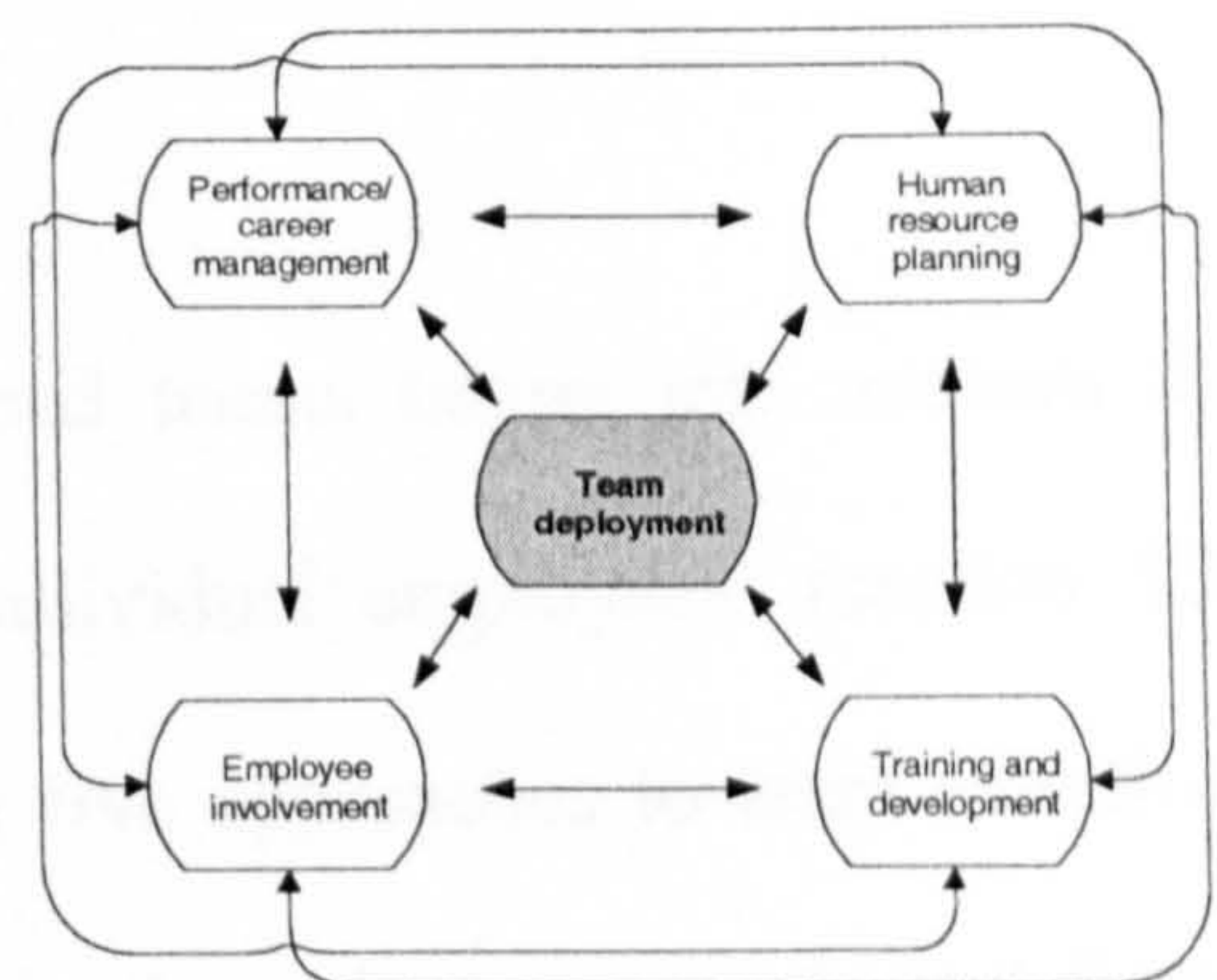
### ***Integration***

The integration of human resource plans into the company business plans consists of an on-going rigorous process. This includes the continues cycle through:

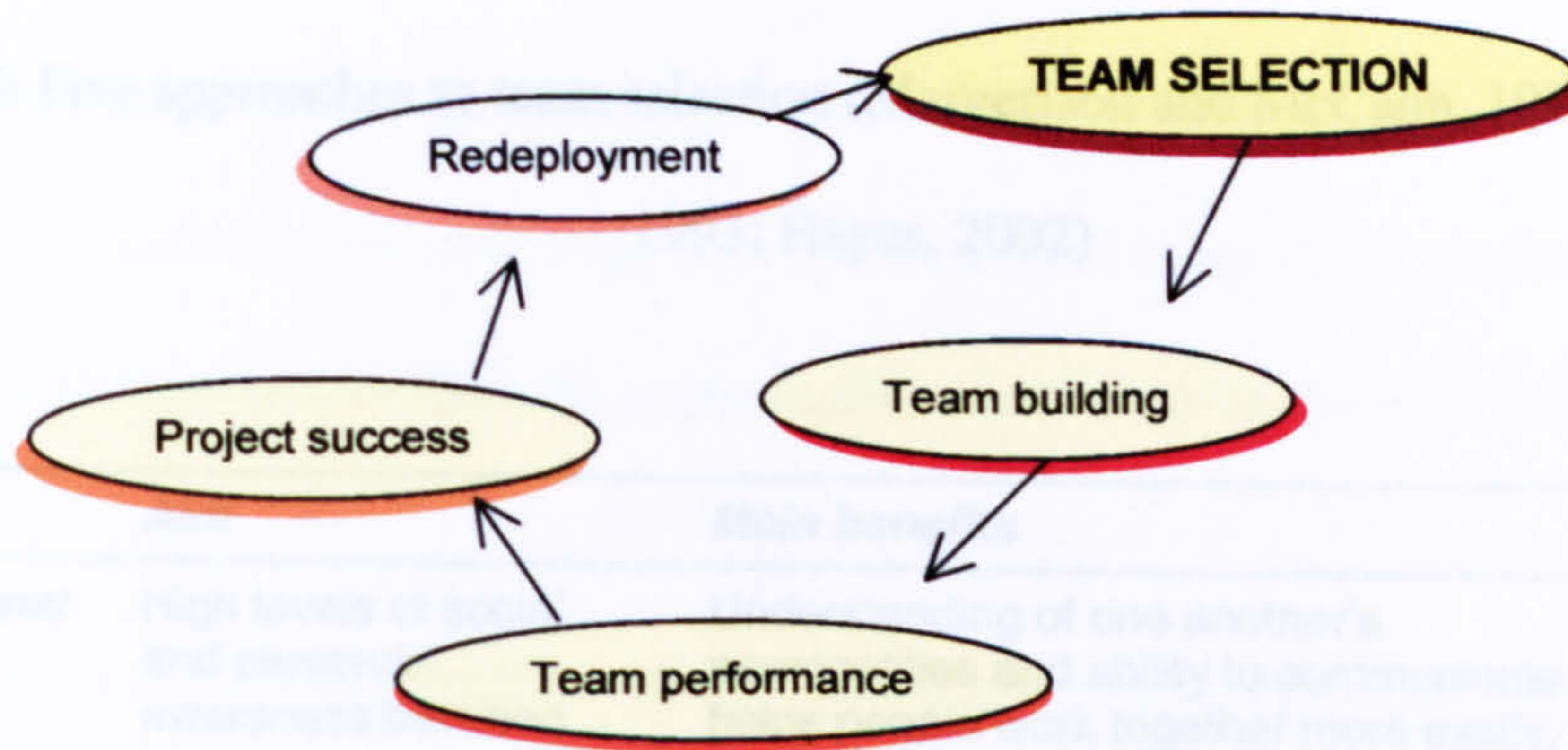
- Demand forecasting – estimating staffing needs by reference to the corporate plan
- Supply forecasting – estimating supply of staff in the context of current and future supply
- Forecasting requirements – analysis of balance between demand and supply so as to be able to predict deficits and surpluses

- Productivity and cost analysis – process re-engineering to eliminate wasteful practices where necessary
- Action planning – preparation of plans to manage recruitment/ set in motion a programme of reduction of human resources
- Budgeting and control – setting human resource budgets and monitoring them against the plans.

#### 7.2.2.8. Team deployment



The team deployment aspect of the SERF operates through a cycle of team selection, team building, team performance, project success and re-deployment, as illustrated in Figure 7.12. It aims to ensure that the teams are balanced in composition, high-performing and effective within which people are motivated and work well together toward achieving a common goal. The main responsibility for the function lies on the divisional senior management, project managers, site agents/ managers, estimators and senior engineers, although any other personnel responsible for project allocation or involved with a project may be included in the process.



**Figure 7.12:** SERF team deployment cycle

### **Team selection**

The team selection focuses on creating balanced teams taking into account the organisational and project (section 5.2) and individual employees' (section 5.3) needs and requirements. The guidelines outline five approaches to team selection: interpersonal approach, role definition approach, the values approach, task-based approach and the social identity approach (Table 7.5). Organisations may find particular approaches to suit different circumstances more effectively than others. However, in general the social identity approach is recommended as the most comprehensive method that takes into account the organisational, project and individual employee priorities, requirements, needs and preferences.

**Table 7.5:** Five approaches to team selection (Margerison and McCann, 1991; Belbin, 1991, 1993; Hayes, 2002)

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Main benefits</b>	<b>Downside(s)</b>
<b>Interpersonal approach</b>	High levels of social and personal awareness between team members	Understanding of one another's personalities and ability to communicate helps people work together more easily, Team members see each other as 'us', An atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence	Lack of recognition of the organisation's needs (strong focus on team)
<b>Role-definition approach</b>	Clarify individual team members role expectations, and the norms and shared responsibilities of the group	Team becomes aware of itself as a working unit and is able to operate effectively and efficiently as members have clear understanding of their place, role and responsibilities within the team	Lack of recognition of the organisation's needs (strong focus on team)
<b>Team roles/ Team management wheel</b>	Individual team members play different roles collectively covering all necessary tasks	Successful team consists of a mixture of different individuals	Unable to cope well with individual flexibility
<b>The values approach</b>	Negotiated and shared understanding, values and aims between team members as a group	Team works together efficiently and members are able to see how each individual's activities contribute to the team as a whole	Should all team members not share the vision they are likely to be found working at cross-purposes or unable to reconcile basic conflicts
<b>Task-based approach</b>	Emphasis on the team's and individual team members' tasks (rather than personalities)	Information interchange and realistic analysis of resources, skills and technical aspects of the tasks	Lack of recognition of team members personalities and the interpersonal relationships between them
<b>The social Identity approach (a combination of all the above)</b>	[1] Create a strong sense of unity and belonging, [2] climate of mutual understanding amongst the team members; and [3] focus on how and why people can feel proud of belonging to their team	[1] the strong sense of unity will motivate the team members to work together and co-operate to achieve their goals, [2] the climate of mutual understanding makes everyone aware of the contributions of others, and helps them see how the different skills and abilities contribute to the success of the team as a whole, [3] can see the contribution the team makes to the organisation as a whole	

### **Team building and performance**

*Team building* focuses on establishing synergy between the team members and encourages careful monitoring of the team's integration. Teams often go through a

cycle of forming, storming, norming and performing (Tuckman, 1965). The section points out some common warning signs of potential sources of conflict and provides useful leader tactics as to how to manage the situation effectively (Table 7.6).

**Table 7.6:** Common warning signs of potential sources of conflict and useful leader tactics to managing the situation effectively (Holpp, L. 1999: 84)

Warning signs	Leader actions
<b>Forming stage</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Little communication</li> <li>▪ Questioning the purpose of the team</li> <li>▪ Low trust or commitment</li> <li>▪ Challenging the leader</li> <li>▪ Unfocused brainstorming</li> <li>▪ Disagreement as to problem(s)</li> <li>▪ Too much talking and wondering</li> <li>▪ No one takes responsibility for action</li> <li>▪ Seeks simple/ easy solutions</li> <li>▪ Underestimating problem difficulty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Select members one by one, with care</li> <li>▪ Explain purpose of the team</li> <li>▪ Present clear problem statement</li> <li>▪ Set goals, timetables, etc.</li> <li>▪ Maintain sense of urgency</li> <li>▪ Agree on ground rules for meetings (such as duration, structure, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Coach problem members outside the meeting</li> <li>▪ Follow up on specific assignments</li> <li>▪ Get senior management support/ involvement (where felt necessary/ beneficial)</li> </ul>
<b>Storming stage</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cliques begin to form</li> <li>▪ Unrealistic expectations arise</li> <li>▪ Members develop at different levels</li> <li>▪ Realisation of problem difficulty (and "panic")</li> <li>▪ Desire to delegate problem upwards</li> <li>▪ Unwilling to challenge or confront</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage differing points of view</li> <li>▪ Keep focused on time and goals</li> <li>▪ Break down larger problems</li> <li>▪ Seek small successes</li> <li>▪ Coach members individually</li> <li>▪ Allow conflict to surface, manage carefully</li> </ul>
<b>Norming stage</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Arguments occur for no reason</li> <li>▪ Anger is directed toward team/ team leader(s)/ management</li> <li>▪ Team sees the organisation as "us and them"</li> <li>▪ Talk is substitute for action</li> <li>▪ Subgroups go in their own direction – loss of focus</li> <li>▪ Unanticipated problems break down momentum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Challenge the group to conduct analysis and resolve disagreement</li> <li>▪ Move from directive coaching to supportive leadership style</li> <li>▪ Share leadership duties</li> <li>▪ Insist members share responsibilities</li> <li>▪ Use selected tools and techniques religiously</li> <li>▪ Stick to your goals and time tables</li> </ul>
<b>Performing stage</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Team takes on too much</li> <li>▪ Members resist leadership</li> <li>▪ Members operate autonomously (with little interaction/ co-operation with other team members)</li> <li>▪ Team communication breaks down</li> <li>▪ Members resist boring/ routine work</li> <li>▪ Team runs out of motivating/ stimulating situations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allow the team to set its own course</li> <li>▪ Enforce regular meeting schedule</li> <li>▪ Make frequent presentations/ check-ups on progress</li> <li>▪ Make clear "the bigger picture", demonstrate contribution to the whole (organisation)</li> <li>▪ Move toward self-managing team approach</li> </ul>

*Team performance* outlines policies and procedures for recognising high achievement and managing poor performance. Means for recognising high achievement include financial rewards, such as bonuses, pay increases and/ or upgrades on car, as well as non-monetary rewards. The non-monetary rewards, such as praise, increased responsibilities leading to promotional opportunities and/ or time off work following a successful early completion of a project, may result in longer-term satisfaction if operated consistently and on an on-going basis.

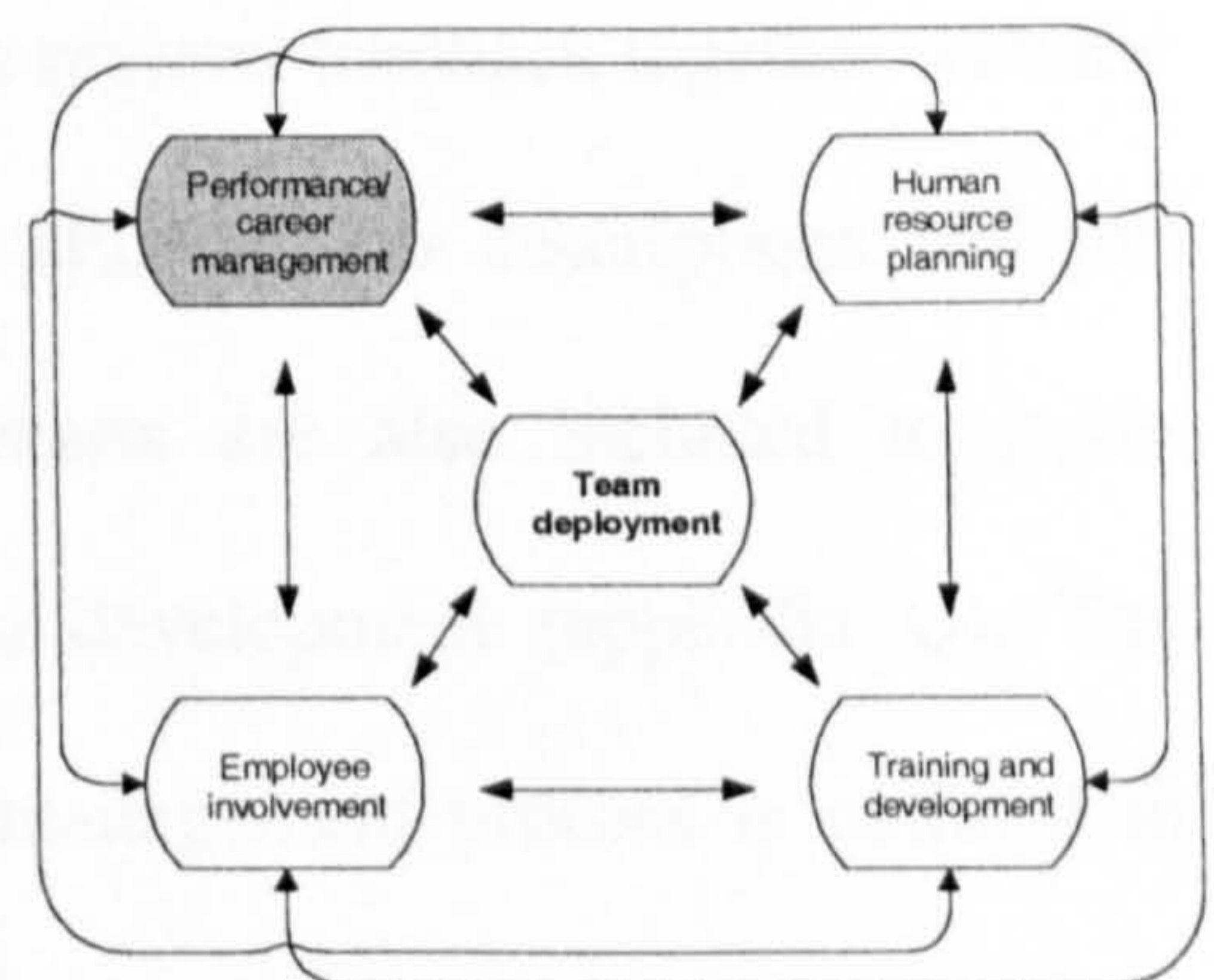
Managing poor performance is a challenging task. An individual often under-performs as a result of peer pressure within the team, resistance to changing work roles, inefficient team communications, differences in working/ management styles, coping [or more importantly not coping] with unrealistic expectations, the individual/ team wanting to do too much too soon, an over-focus on results (ignoring process), or blaming managers for everything (see Holpp, 1999: 85-99 for an outline of the common characteristics of these problems and recommendations for correcting the behaviour and supporting improved performance).

#### ***Project success and team re-deployment***

*Project success* looks at the multiple criteria that are used to determine the success of the team and project and how these can be evaluated throughout the life-cycle of the team/ project. Typical project success criteria in the construction industry include: time, cost, quality, people and relationships (section 3.5.1.4). Their evaluation can be carried out via careful and structured monitoring throughout the project duration, and in completion via project close down meetings and customer project reviews.

The *re-deployment of the project team members* section outlines different strategies for re-deploying the project staff. This includes the re-deployment of the team as a whole to a new project, re-deploying clusters of the team members together to new projects and dismantling the team and re-deploying each individual to a new project. Each have their benefits as well as downsides and suit different situations differing degrees. Accordingly, a method most suitable for achieving the balance between the longer-term organisational strategic objectives, immediate project requirements and individual employees' personal and career needs, should be selected.

#### 7.2.2.9. Performance/ career management

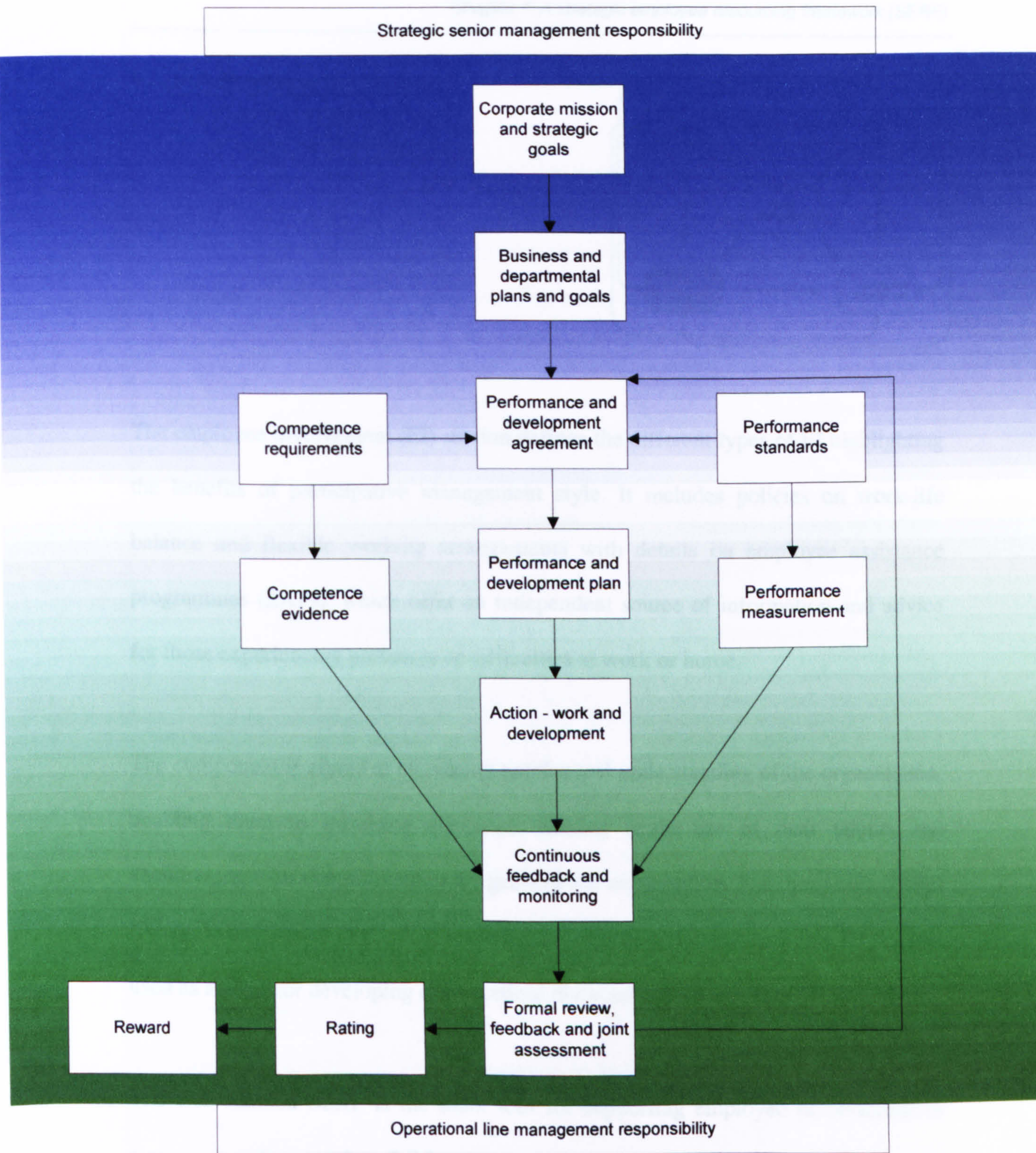


The performance/ career management guidelines provide a rationale for effective two-way process highlighting the importance of a strategic and integrated approach. The *strategic* nature of performance/ career management is highlighted in that it is concerned with the broad issues facing the business by taking into account the environment within which the organisation operates with the intention to achieve long-term goals. It is *integrated* by means of vertical, functional, human resource and individual integration. The vertical integration links align the business, team and individual objectives. The functional integration links the operational strategies of different parts of the business together. Human resource integration aligns the

different aspects of human resource management to achieve a coherent approach to the management and development of people (section 2.3.3.1): the SHRM approach (section 2.1.2.5). Finally, the integration of the individual employees' needs incorporates them with those of the organisation/ team as far as it is possible. The responsibility for the overall management of the process is placed on the senior management team, operational line managers and HR staff, although each individual employee's role and contribution to effective management of the system is highlighted.

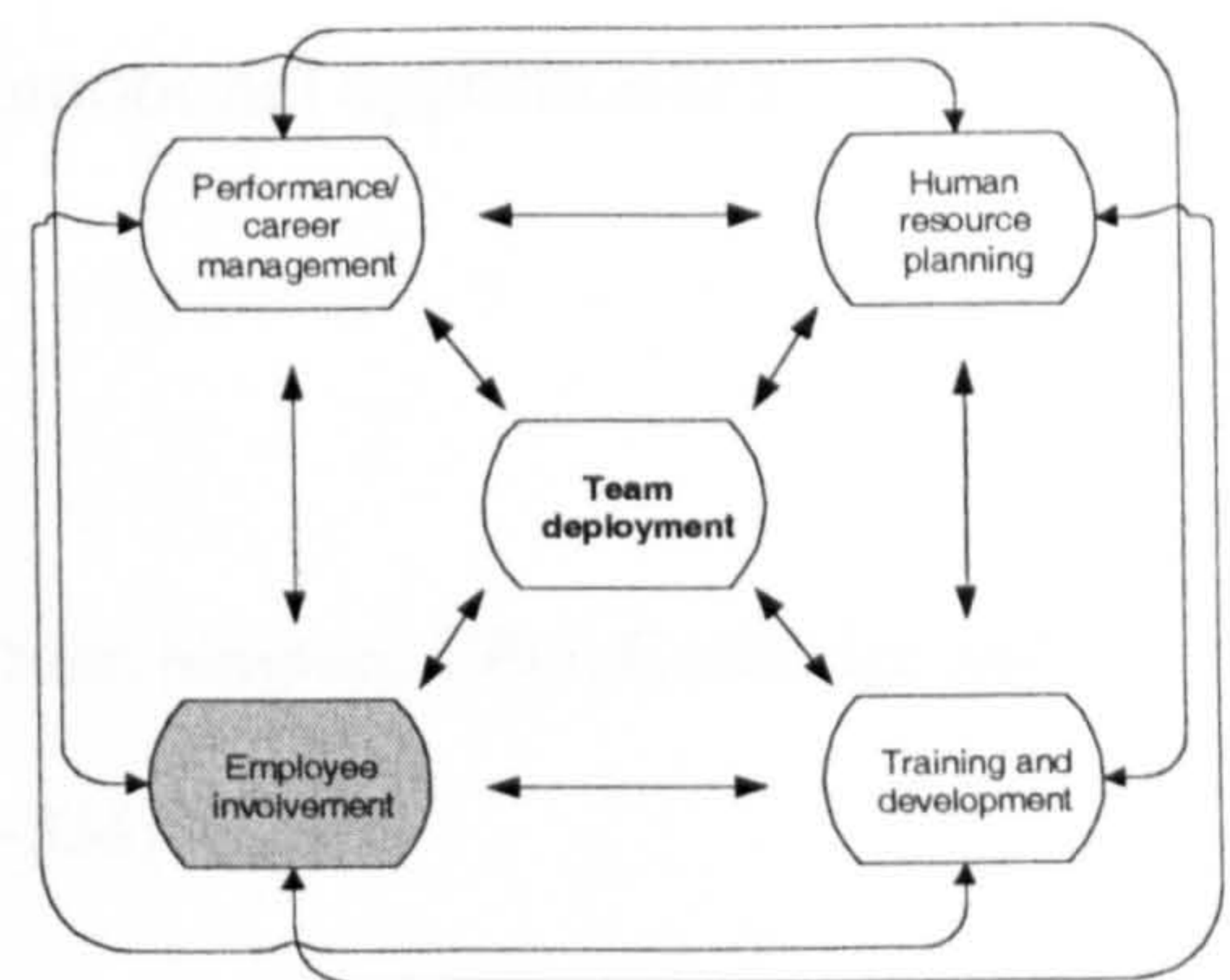
The section includes process charts and tables of factors that are important to be considered in managing performance. Continuous review/ feedback together with the appraisal process, personal development plans (PDPs), job descriptions and job profiles are explained. Career management charts are also included to guide employees in thinking about their longer-term development (appendix Q). The organisation-wide overall performance/ career management process is outlined in Figure 7.13.





**Figure 7.13:** SERF performance/ career management process

## 7.2.2.10. Employee involvement



The employee involvement (EI) section defines the different types of EI highlighting the benefits of participative management style. It includes policies on work-life balance and flexible working arrangements with details on employee assistance programmes (EAPs), which offer an independent source of information and advice for those experiencing pressures or difficulties at work or home.

The component is aimed at increasing employees' understanding of the organisation, enabling them to influence decisions, making better use of their talents and encouraging their commitment to the goals of the organisation. Marchington's (1995) five types of EI table (Table 2.4, section 2.2.4 reproduced below as Table 7.7) can be used as a basis for developing organisation/ division/ department specific initiatives.

The web-enabled SERF is the main tool for supporting employee involvement in many areas (see section 7.2.3 and appendix P for further details). The system includes:

- A facility for employees to input their personal priorities in the team deployment support tool
- Recording and monitoring facilities for training needs

- Career management support and advice on promotional opportunities
- Menu for flexible benefits.

**Table 7.7:** Five types of employee involvement (Marchington, 1995; Corbridge and Pilbeam, 1998: 332-334)

<i>Type of EI</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Techniques</i>
<i>Downward communication</i>	Managers to provide information to employees in order to develop their understanding of organisational plans and objectives	Formal and informal communications: reports, newspapers, videos, presentations, team briefings
<i>Upward problem-solving</i>	Utilise the knowledge and opinions of employees to, for example, increase the stock of ideas within the organisation, encourage co-operative relationships and legitimise change	Suggestion schemes, total quality management (TQM) and quality circles, attitude surveys
<i>Task participation</i>	Encourage employees to expand the range of tasks they undertake	Job rotation, job enrichment, teamworking, empowerment, semi-autonomous work groups
<i>Consultation and representative participation</i>	An indirect form of EI, aiming to support effective decision-making, air grievances, 'sound out' employee views on organisational plans	Joint consultation, discussions between managers and employees/ their representatives
<i>Financial participation</i>	Relate the employees' overall pay to the success of the organisation with the assumption that employees will work harder if they receive a personal financial reward from the organisation's success	Profit-sharing schemes, employee share ownership plans

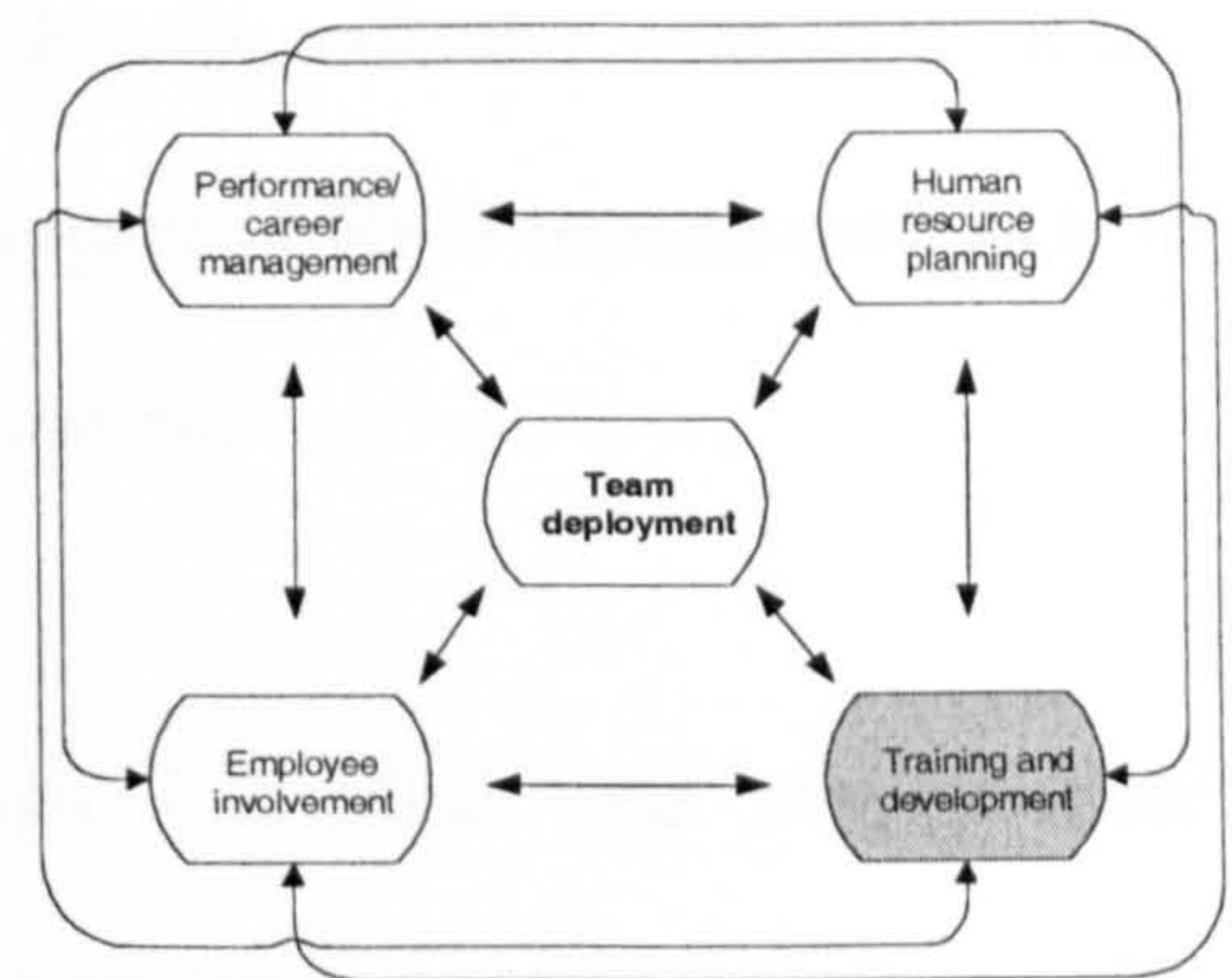
The system also holds a comprehensive range of information on company policy and procedures. Employees are advised to refer to this source of information first and then approach appropriate line manager(s) or HR personnel with any questions/ suggestions.

Work-life balance is integrated as a key element of the EI component, as it has been found to be an area of increasing concern within the organisation (sections 5.2 and 5.3). This is because:

- More people have to juggle responsibilities at home and in the workplace
- Information and communication technologies have helped to increase employees' performance, but also increased their work intensity
- More people belong to dual income families where women return to work after having children
- More men wish to spend time with their families and take on greater responsibility for rearing their children
- More families are taking on caring responsibilities for elderly relatives as the population ages
- Employees with no dependants may have commitments within the community, or they may want time to travel, study or engage in leisure activities.

Flexible benefits menu, where employees can select the benefit(s) best suited to their needs from a choice of benefit options, is aimed at meeting the diverse needs and expectations of employees in support of the business. This includes flexible work patterns, such as part-time working, flexi-time, job-sharing, annualised hours, working from home (part-time) and term-time working. Various leave options support this: extended leave, paid paternity leave, career breaks for carers, sabbaticals, study leave and secondments (within career development programme or community support).

## 7.2.2.11. Training and development



The training and development section includes information on organisational training plans, external development opportunities and continuous professional/ personal development (CPD), graduate development and professional qualifications together with training course directories and learning and development support.

El-Sawad's (1998) 'hard' and 'soft' elements of HRD (Table 2.6, section 2.3.2) are integrated to provide a comprehensive framework for individual and organisational learning and development. The training cycle (section 2.3.2.1) is used to support the planning, delivery and evaluation of the learning and development outcomes. This helps to ensure that the training needs analysis (TNA) is carried out regularly at an organisational, job/ occupational and individual level. As outlined in section 2.3.2.1, comprehensive assessment of the training needs at multiple levels (organisation/ role/ individual) ideally leads to measures of (i) current and future business performance needs and (ii) current performance and capability levels; and by comparing the two (iii) to the identification of the current and potential future capability gaps and (iv) which training and development interventions might effectively address them within the (v) target population (McClelland, 1993). This helps in designing and delivering effective solutions, whether traditional packaged classroom learning experiences are to be offered, computer-based e-learning encouraged or informal, 'organic', on-the-

job learning facilitated via mentoring/ coaching. Finally, effective evaluation of the training and learning activities demonstrate the impact of HRD investment and help modify future planning, design, delivery and evaluation.

Organisational learning is encouraged through individual and departmental/ divisional development. The SERF facilitates the recognition and management of a learning organisation culture, which was previously supported by informal networks. Snowdrop's FOUNTAIN module supports this (see section 7.2.3 and appendix P).

The majority of the employee involvement and training and development information and initiatives are company specific. Hence, no explicit details are included in the SERF procedural/ policy guidelines specification.

#### *7.2.8. Operational HRIS tool*

The operational HRIS tool services the SERF's underlying database functionality. This includes holding employee records and organisational information readily available for use via the web. Snowdrop was selected as a suitable HRIS tool to support the framework (section 7.1.3). However, many other modern HRISs provide similar facilities, as was demonstrated by the HRIS evaluation in section 7.1.3.

Snowdrop's employee resourcing support comprises of five components, which serve different parts of the employee resourcing function/ SERF as summarised in Table 7.8.

**Table 7.8:** Snowdrop's employee resourcing components

<i>Employee resourcing function</i>	<i>Component of Snowdrop</i>
Human resource planning	FOUNTAIN <i>executive</i> & SPRING
Team deployment	FOUNTAIN <i>executive</i>
Performance/ career management	FOUNTAIN <i>executive</i> & EVERGREEN
Employee involvement	U-ACCESS
Training and development	FOUNTAIN

Access to the system is controlled by a strict password protocol, which allows managers and employees to securely view/ edit relevant documentation. The integrated "black box" function ensures confidentiality protecting personal data and details.

The five employee resourcing modules are discussed below. Appendix P outlines the specific capabilities of each module.

FOUNTAIN*executive* supports the human resource planning, team deployment and performance/ career management activities. This is achieved via fields that help administer job profiling, competency analysis, employee appraisals and performance assessment, analysis of key performance indicators, succession and career planning, monitoring and evaluation of business objectives underpinning organisational development, and project planning. It is the most comprehensive of the five employee resourcing related modules of Snowdrop and thus provides a flexible, multi-level framework for analysing the current and future skill and competency requirements vs potential supply, and a structure for HR planning. Table 7.9 summarises the benefits of FOUNTAIN*executive*.

**Table 7.9: Benefits of using FOUNTAIN<sup>Executive</sup> for human resource planning, team deployment and performance/ career management**

<i>Human resource planning</i>	<i>Team deployment</i>	<i>Performance/ career management</i>
Flexible, multi-level framework for analysing current and future skill and competency requirements vs potential supply	Building objectivity into the subjective managerial decision-making	Automating processes across the organisation/ divisions
Structure for succession planning and gap analysis	Increased employee involvement	Creating valuable business intelligence via effective use of employee/ organisational data
Promoting an open, proactive environment	Automating processes across the organisation/ divisions	Promoting an open, proactive environment
	Promoting an open, proactive environment	

SPRING is Snowdrop's recruitment and selection facility. In particular, it helps with vacancy and applicant profiling, applicant search by multiple criteria, monitoring of key vacancy milestones, and interview administration. The benefits of using SPRING to assist in the recruitment and selection of potential candidates can ensure efficient, timely correspondence throughout the entire recruitment process, controlling and managing recruitment budgets, and automating processes across the organisation.

EVERGREEN is the system's record database, which holds all the human resources and related information on the company employees. U-ACCESS provides the employees with 'self-service' functionality. Employees and managers are empowered to access, analyse and interact with live information about themselves and their teams. The module is bound to improve data accuracy: responsibility for correctly entering and up-dating basic details lies with those who have direct interest in the data, the employees themselves. This should improve company-wide communication and generate operational cost savings. The module also provides



access to a wide range of company information, including organisational policy and procedures. This helps in:

- Publishing company wide static information, such as policies and procedures
- Providing the ability to generate 'live' information, such as vacancies and training schedules, directly from the SERF
- Producing on-screen forms to allow employees and managers to edit live data
- Meeting legal requirements on holding employees' personal data.

FOUNTAIN serves the training and development function. It includes facilities for course and event administration and evaluation, resource booking, training history up-dates, appraisals, managing training budgets, and recording CPD (Continuous Professional Development). By effectively managing employee development, FOUNTAIN can help to improve staff retention and ensure maximum benefit is received from training/ development activities by both the organisation and its employees.

Once fully operational, the different components of Snowdrop can be accessed directly through the web-based interface. Buttons next to each of the resourcing functions will direct the user straight to the relevant fields in FOUNTAIN*Executive*, SPRING, EVERGREEN, U-ACCESS and FOUNTAIN (see Figure 7.14, section 7.2.1). Appendix R summarises the drivers and underlying principles for the development of the SERF, specifies the routes via which the model supports effective employee resourcing decision-making and details the potential benefits of using the framework to structure the team deployment and related SHRM activities.

**7.3. IN CONCLUSION, THE CONTRIBUTION OF SERF TO EFFECTIVELY  
MANAGING THE SHRM CHALLENGES IN THE CONSTRUCTION  
INDUSTRY**

In relation to employment relations, the main benefit is derived from effective provision of consistent information within the organisation, coherent management practice throughout the geographical regions, operating divisions and departments, and transparent organisational culture. Human resource development support is provided in the form of clear and transparent information on the varied opportunities available and effective management of the individual and organisational development activities. The model also provides a communication channel, which circumvents the line management structure. This could help to diversify learning activities and promote cross-project and cross-function transfer of knowledge.

In terms of the employee resourcing function, the model facilitates structured and informed decision-making. It ensures that good employee relations are maintained through transparent organisational processes, open communications and extensive employee involvement. The model also supports the employees' career development and management by providing an initial point of contact/ information for exploring the opportunities available. It helps managers in offering advice and demonstrating realistic opportunities in career and developmental discussions with their employees.

Flexibility is inherent aspect of the framework. The HRIS component helps balance the organisational, project and individual requirements for flexibility through the structured decision-support and comprehensive information provision. The HRIS

facility provides the underlying knowledge base for the framework and encourages employee involvement via the “self-service” functionality.

Effective information management is the key contribution of the model beyond the employee resourcing specific functions. The model incorporates a web-enabled user interface and an underlying HRIS mechanism, which correlate with the mechanistic approach to KM. These help in capturing and reusing necessary and useful information. Secondly, the model helps in the transfer of knowledge between projects via efficient allocation of human resources and facilitates effective sharing of company and other information which supports the organic, people-centred approach to KM.

# Chapter Eight

## Conclusions

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This thesis set out to develop a structured and comprehensive understanding of the current employee resourcing practices within large construction organisations and a framework to inform the strategic SHRM decision-making to support the effective recruitment and retention of professional staff in the industry. It explored the current employee resourcing practices within leading large UK-based construction contractors through a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. This included an in-depth primary case study and six additional cases within which 59 exploratory and semi-structured interviews were conducted. A range of questionnaire material and organisational documentation were collected to support the interview data.

The results indicated that although the organisational strategic intention in relation to the case study companies' approach to people management was clearly very positive,

current managerial practices did not translate into effective delivery of the strategy/ policy/ procedures at project level. The transient and highly competitive environment within which the organisations operate and production oriented management style prevalent within the industry resulted in informal, reactive and incoherent employee resourcing decision-making. The organisational/ project priorities and requirements dominated the process. Individual employee needs and preferences were neglected. Multiple systems and processes were found to be in place and a total of 139 variables were identified as needing to be taken into account in the employee resourcing decision-making processes. Ninety-two of these were organisation/ project related and 47 employee-centred. They were grouped under five key themes:

1. Human resource planning (HRP)
2. Team deployment
3. Performance/ career management
4. Employee involvement
5. Human resource development (HRD).

In response, a strategic employee resourcing framework (SERF) was developed. The framework incorporates the five employee resourcing activities central to effective decision-making within a single integrated framework. This was achieved via a HRIS knowledge base and web-based user interface. The web-enabled HRIS technology supports the procedural and process guidelines, decision-making protocols and 'self service' HR administration that were designed to guide effective employee resourcing decision-making within large construction organisations.

The first four chapters of this thesis discussed the background and rationale for this research, established the research aims, objectives and hypothesis and developed the theoretical and methodological basis for the empirical work. Chapter five presented the findings and results of the primary case study research. These were discussed in the context of the literature in Chapter six. Chapter seven examined the development of the SERF. This chapter concludes the thesis by assessing the extent to which the research aims, objectives and hypothesis have been met.

### ***8.1. SUMMARY OF THE RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH***

Project-based environments set a challenging context for effective people management practices. The construction industry presents one of the most dynamic and complex of all project-based environments. The work is characterised by its transience, uniqueness and uncertainty. In addition, the industry features geographically dispersed projects, production oriented management style ingrained in years of rigid practices, poor health and safety records, poor organisational commitment to HRD, long working hours, high staff turnover and reactive employee resourcing practices grounded in the personnel management paradigm. This, in turn, has led to it being perceived as a low-level and unattractive industry to work in, and hence its unpopularity as a career choice.

In response to the current and forecasted future staff shortages, increasing client demands and requirements for greater overall efficiency, productivity and cost effectiveness within the industry, recruitment and retention have been raised to the forefront of the industry's performance improvement agenda. Strategic human

resource management (SHRM) advocates an integrated approach to recruitment and retention, which form aspects of a central employee resourcing function within SHRM. Little research has been done on employee resourcing in the construction industry. Several studies have suggested a need for construction organisations to move toward SHRM-style employee resourcing practices, but few have considered how to achieve this change effectively. Accordingly, this research set out:

- 1: To produce a structured and comprehensive explanation of current employee resourcing practices within large construction contractors*
- 2: To develop a framework and knowledge base to inform strategic employee resourcing decision-making for recruitment and retention of knowledge workers.*

These aims were to be achieved via seven specific objectives set within an integrated research design:

- A. To establish organisational SHRM strategy, policy, practices, organisational priorities and project requirements in relation to employee resourcing
- B. To model the current resourcing decision-making processes
- C. To establish employee personal and career needs and preferences in relation to their deployment
- D. To establish the compatibility and conflicts between managerial and employee deployment objectives
- E. To verify that the findings and results have a general application to other construction firms

F. To develop a more appropriate framework to inform the employee resourcing decision-making than is currently used that reflects leading-edge practice within the industry's larger employers.

Objectives A-E examined the current employee resourcing practices within the industry in line with the research aim one. Objective F developed a more appropriate framework to inform the strategic employee resourcing decision-making. Table 1.1 (section 1.2) correlated the aims and objectives to the research hypothesis. The hypothesis are explore in detail next (section 8.2)

## 8.2. THE FULFILMENT OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Chapter one (section 1.2) established the six research hypothesis. These guided the research process throughout the thesis. SHRM (Chapter 2) and construction (Chapter 3) literature were explored in relation to these hypothesis. Furthermore, the research design and methodology (Chapter 4) were developed in order to investigate the hypothesis and the findings and results discussed (Chapters 5 and 6) in order to determine whether they were supported or not. The following assesses the extent to which the hypothesis were fulfilled.

The first hypothesis (*H1*) was that:

*"SHRM provides a more effective approach to employee resourcing than those grounded in the personnel management paradigm through improved*



*organisational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work”.*

Chapter two investigated the theoretical foundations of SHRM, personnel management and employee resourcing with sections 2.1.2.5 and 2.1.2.6 concluding in support of the hypothesis one (H1). Sections 5.1, 6.1 and 6.2 discussed the primary case study organisation’s approach to people management. It was established that the organisation operated within the traditional personnel management paradigm, rather than SHRM. With the industry challenges (section 1.1) and conflicts between the organisational/ project and employee views (section 6.4) in mind, this was found to be ineffective. The discussion revealed that adopting a more strategic and integrated SHRM approach toward employee resourcing could deliver extensive benefits for HRP, recruitment and selection, team deployment, performance and career management and change management. Accordingly, the empirical data also supported research hypothesis one (H1).

The research hypothesis two (H2) was that:

*“The employee resourcing decision-making is currently determined by project and broader business requirements rather than employee needs and preferences”.*

Section 5.2 presented the research findings and results in relation to the organisational priorities and project requirements, which supported the hypothesis (H2) (section 5.2.1). Ninety-two HRM/ organisational and project/ team focused

factors important to be taken into account in the employee resourcing decision-making were identified. These included variables that affect the organisation as a whole, those that have direct impact on the specific project processes and outcomes, and qualities necessary or advantageous for carrying out the tasks involved in most construction roles. No employee needs or preferences were identified as important to take into account in the resourcing decision-making.

The hypothesis three (*H3*) asserted that:

*“Employee needs and preferences from the deployment process centre around the fulfilment of personal needs and wider career ambitions rather than factors linked to their organisational role”.*

Section 5.3 presented the research findings and results in relation to the employees’ personal and career needs and preferences. This concluded partially in support of the hypothesis (*H3*) (section 5.3.1). The analytic hierarchy method questionnaire clearly established that the employee needs vary between groups of employees as well as between individual employees. The list of factors derived from the interview data added to this by specifying a diverse range of variables, which ranged from ‘hard’ organisational procurement methods to the ‘soft’ issues of team spirit and organisational culture. This included variables concerned with organisational role and division. The factor verification questionnaire data supported this. Thus, the importance of organisational variables in addition to the factors concerned with the fulfilment of personal needs and wider career ambitions must be recognised in the deployment process.

The fourth hypothesis (*H4*) was that:

*“The conflict evident between the competing organisational priorities, project requirements and employee needs and preferences present a challenging context for implementing a SHRM approach to employee resourcing within construction organisations”.*

In-depth discussion on the conflicts and compatibilities between the competing organisational priorities, project requirements and employee needs and preferences led to the conclusion that adopting a SHRM approach to employee resourcing within the construction industry requires a carefully balanced combination of ‘hard’ organisational policies and procedures and ‘soft’ cultural change initiatives (section 6.4.1). Establishing a more structured approach to the current informal decision-making can be achieved via systematic process analysis and implementation coupled with on-going monitoring and evaluation. However, the cultural and attitudinal change is also required in support of the policy and procedural guidance and in response to the ‘soft’ factors outlined in Table 6.7 (section 6.4). This is difficult to achieve in the construction industry. Accordingly, hypothesis four (*H4*) is supported. Extensive effort is required to achieve the suggested SHRM approach to employee resourcing.

The research hypothesis five (H5) was that:

*“The importance of the team deployment and project resourcing activities within construction organisations introduce a need for the provision of a structure and knowledge base to inform the strategic employee resourcing decision-making”.*

Chapter three established the team deployment and project resourcing function as the key concern for management in construction organisations (section 3.5). The empirical data (section 6.2) supported this. The current informal, reactive approach to managing HRP, recruitment and selection, employee involvement, flexibility, performance/ career management and HRD activities indicated a need for a structure and a HRIS knowledge base to be introduced. Accordingly, hypothesis five (H5) was partially supported. Indeed, the central team deployment and project resourcing activities introduce the need for a provision of a structure and knowledge base to inform the strategic employee resourcing decision-making. Team deployment forms the central function, however, it alone cannot achieve optimal solutions. Therefore, it is crucial that the associated elements of HRP, recruitment and selection, performance/ career management, employee involvement and flexibility are placed equal importance if they are to feed into the process up to their desired potential.

Finally, the research hypothesis six (H6) asserted that:

*“Information technology (IT) systems offer potential solutions for managing the employee resourcing function effectively”.*

The literature review (section 2.2.5) discussed HRISs as being capable of automating the very basic data management tasks, enabling managers to integrate their business objectives with the employee resourcing priorities and providing employees with “self-service” functionality. Accordingly, HRISs were said to be revolutionising the SHRM function by providing up-to-date information, services to employees, return on investment, and strategic analysis and partnership. This supports hypothesis six (*H6*). The empirical research (sections 6.2, 6.3, 6.6 and 7.1.1) firmly supported the assertion that HRISs hold the potential to provide structure and longer-term prominence for the currently reactive employee resourcing decision-making. In response to the performance specification (section 6.6.2) the SERF incorporated the five key elements of effective employee resourcing: HRP, team deployment, performance/ career management, employee involvement and HRD (training and development), within a single integrated model. The operational tool of the system utilised HRIS technology to support its procedural and process guidelines and decision-making protocols. Through the development (section 7.1) and design (section 7.2) of the SERF, hypothesis six (*H6*) was supported at practical, as well as theoretical and empirical level.

### **8.3. THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Through the fulfilment of the research hypothesis (section 8.2) all six objectives were achieved. The research objectives A (*to establish organisational SHRM strategy, policy, practices, organisational priorities and project requirements in relation to employee resourcing*) and B (*to model the current resourcing decision-making processes*) were satisfied in sections 5.1 and 5.2. Section 5.1 discussed the primary

case study organisation's strategy, vision and values (section 5.1.1), the role of HR specialists within the organisation (section 5.1.2) and the organisational policy and practices in relation to the three interrelated components of SHRM: employment relations (section 5.1.3), HRD (section 5.1.4) and employee resourcing (section 5.1.5). Section 5.2 presented the organisational priorities and project requirements the managerial respondents stated as important to take into account in the employee resourcing decision-making.

Research objective C (*to establish employee personal and career needs and preferences in relation to their deployment*) was satisfied within section 5.3, which presented the findings and results of the analytic hierarchy method questionnaire and employee interviews. This section explored the nature of the employee respondents personal and career needs and preferences in relation to their deployment to projects and organisational operating divisions.

Section 6.4 discussed the compatibility and conflicts between the organisational/project priorities and requirements (managerial views) and the needs and preferences of the employees. This satisfied research objective D (*to establish the compatibility and conflicts between managerial and employee deployment objectives*).

The best practice/ validation case study material were used to verify the general applicability of the primary case study findings and results to other construction firms in sections 5.7 and 6.3. These data and discussion achieved the research objective E (*to verify that the findings and results have general application to other construction firms*).

Finally, chapter six discussion developed a performance specification requirements for a more appropriate framework to inform the employee resourcing decision-making. Chapter seven built on this reflecting on leading-edge SHRM practice within the industry's large employers and discussed the development of the SERF. Accordingly, objective F (*to develop a more appropriate framework to inform the employee resourcing decision-making than is currently used that reflects leading-edge practice within the industry's larger employers*) was also satisfied.

#### *8.4. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RESEARCH*

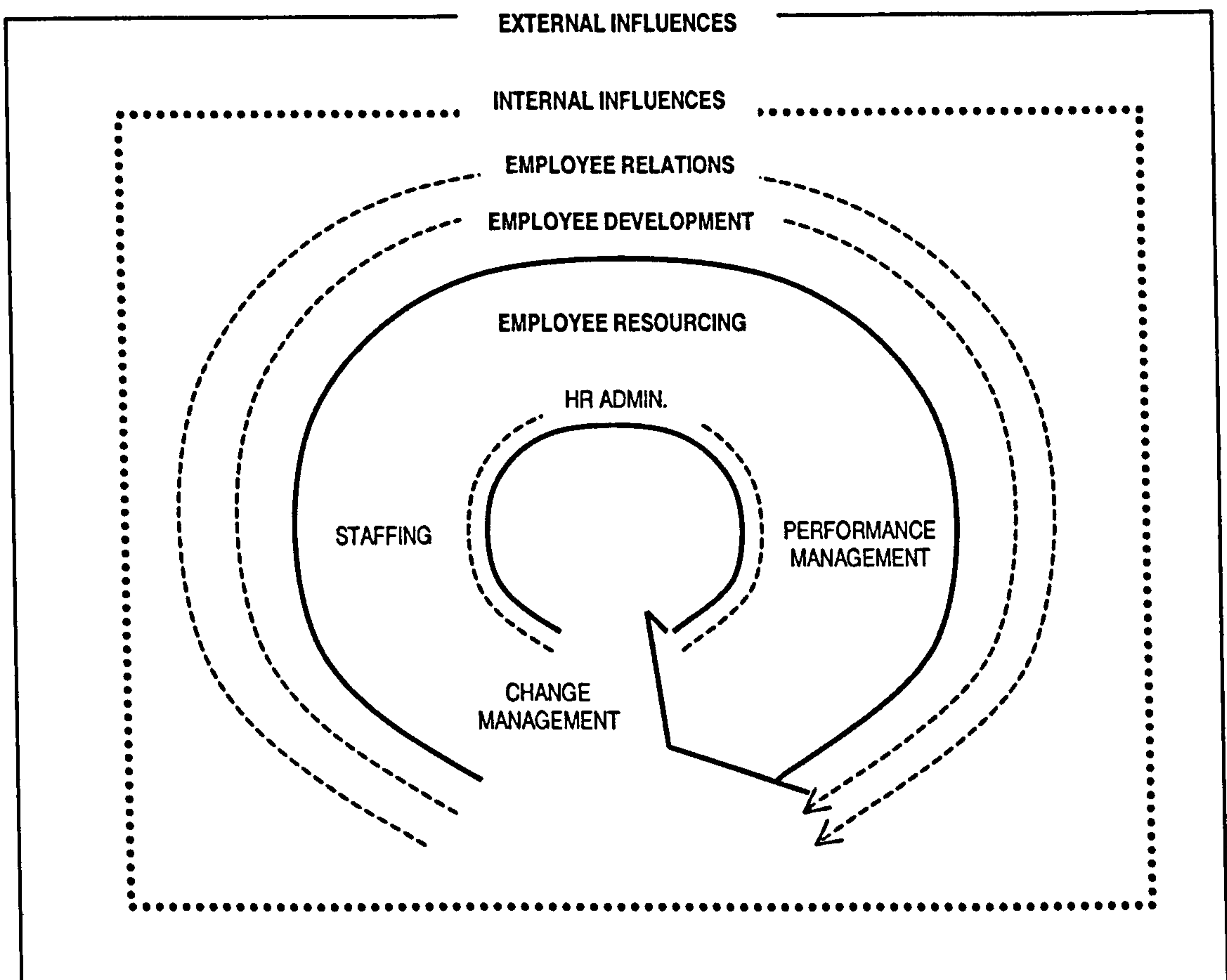
In addressing the shortfall of empirical research into the employee resourcing practices within dynamic and complex project-based industries, this research has made several major contributions to the theory and practice of the function. The main achievements of the work include a contribution to the theoretical understanding of the employee resourcing practices within large construction contractors; insights into the influencing variables on employee resourcing decision-making; methodological advances; the SERF model; practical implementation of the research outputs; and extensive list of theoretical publications.

*A contribution to the theoretical understanding of the employee resourcing practices within large construction contractors*

Chapters 1 – 3 developed the theoretical framework for the study, building the rationale for the research and reflecting on the SHRM and construction industry literatures on the employee resourcing function (sections 2.3.3 and 3.5 – 3.8). This included a critical evaluation of the resourcing related models in the industry (sections 3.6.1 – 3.6.4). Much of the current literature in the field was identified as being piecemeal and focusing on specific aspects of the function. This research represents the first serious attempt at developing a structured and comprehensive explanation of the current employee resourcing practices within large construction contractors at a strategic level.

Firstly, through the development of the conceptual model of the construction employee resourcing cycle (Figure 3.7, section 3.7, reproduced in Figure 8.1), the research has integrated the current literary attention in order to address the disjointed approach to the industry employee resourcing decision-making and HRD and draw it toward the strategic and integrated view proposed by the general SHRM literature.





**Figure 8.1:** The conceptual model of the construction employee resourcing cycle (Figure 3.7, section 3.7, reproduced)

Secondly, the detailed account (sections 5.1 and 5.2) and analysis (sections 6.1 and 6.2) of the primary case study's organisational HRM strategy, policy and practice has provided an in-depth structured and comprehensive explanation of their current employee resourcing practices.

Thirdly, the discussion related to the explanation of the current employee resourcing practices in the industry has also led to the identification of five core issues central to effective construction employee resourcing decision-making: human resource

planning (HRP), performance/ career management, team deployment, employee involvement (EI) and human resource development (HRD). Additionally, the fundamental importance of human resource information systems (HRISs) and two-way flexibility were recognised.

Fourthly, the strategic employee resourcing framework (SERF) developed to structure these core functions incorporates facilities for supporting effective KM. The mechanistic approach is taken into account via the HRIS component of the SERF. The main focus in terms of the people centred approaches is in the delivery of effective team deployment and other SHRM solutions, which aid successful knowledge transfer and learning via networking and communities of practice. This also forms an input to the industry HRD in that it focuses learning and development toward longer-term organisational *and* individual development.

#### ***Insights into the influencing variables on employee resourcing decision-making***

Through the in-depth empirical investigation into the existing resourcing processes and practice within the seven case study companies, the research has provided insights into the perspectives and needs of the managers and professionals whose optimum performance is vital to the industry's future development. Sections 5.3 and 5.4 discussed the indicative rank order of the employee preferences, needs and priorities in relation to their deployment. Section 5.2 outlined the organisational priorities and project requirements, which were compared and contrasted with the views of the employees in section 6.4.

### *Methodological advances*

Several tools and techniques have been systematically combined to analyse the multiple data sets within the research framework. These include NVivo, SPSS and MS Excel together with summary statement matrices and thematic analyses. All of the data sets and the literature review have been managed within a single analytical environment using the NVivo qualitative data analysis package. The extensive use of NVivo to combine the qualitative and quantitative data with literature formed a robust framework for analysis of the multiple data sets which were gathered employing varied methods of data collection.

The three-tier unit of analysis (organisation, project, employees) provided a comprehensive, holistic view of the issues explored. It allowed for detailed analysis of the organisational procedures and practices and use of case study material to illustrate the issues in project specific contexts. It also allowed for an in-depth investigation of the respondents' personal accounts on their individual needs and preferences.

The bespoke interview schedules helped to explore the complexity of multiple variables related to the employee resourcing issues within construction environment. In particular, the unique table format proved a useful feature in facilitating easy administration of potentially very disorderly data collection process.

In developing the strategic employee resourcing framework (SERF) best practice data was collected and used to inform the formulation of the model structure and

procedural guidelines. This data was also integrated within the NVivo. In addition to the data management and analysis facilities, the software also served as a modelling tool in the development of the SERF model.

### *The SERF model*

The SERF model represents an integrated strategic approach to resourcing decision-making which overcomes the current ad hoc and subjective approaches to project allocation. This multi-dimensional model comprises a set of interrelated and mutually reinforcing SHRM activities, which together take account of individual, project and organisational needs and priorities. The framework has generic application within construction firms. It provides “a proof of concept” that an IT-based resourcing framework can make a real contribution to resolving these industry’s people management challenges.

### *Practical implementation of the research outputs*

The primary case study organisation’s commitment and enthusiasm for the work is demonstrated through both their decision to utilise the outputs of the work and to purchase specialist software to facilitate its implementation across the organisation. This has already begun to have a significant impact within the organisation by providing a direction for developing their resourcing and other SHRM practices. As well as being used by senior managers and HR specialists for managing their

resourcing activities, it is being used as the basis for an employment handbook in which the processes behind the deployment activities are transparently explained. As the company has no existing knowledge management systems in place, the SERF structure is also likely to support the development of a culture of knowledge sharing within the organisation.

The six other major construction contractors that participated in the work have also derived benefit from the research outcomes. In particular, one company has begun to use the framework to inform its strategic allocation decisions. The model was seen as having great potential to structure their current SHRM decision-making. The user interface and diagrammatic outline of the function were seen as particularly useful aspects of the model. The separation of the key elements of the function (HRP, team deployment, performance/ career management, EI and HRD) was said to clarify the complex interconnected network of decision-making activities and provide clearer understanding of the interdependent nature of the functions. Managers could focus on specific aspects independently yet be reminded of the relationships between them. Others have expressed interest in further developing the model as a tool for managing the resourcing process.

Finally, as mentioned in section 1.4, the theoretical contributions of the research have been widely disseminated through conference and journal publications (Raiden *et al*, 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b, 2003a, 2003b, 2004).

### **8.5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK**

As with all research, the findings and results discussed in this thesis have limitations. The research set out to address the gap in the construction employee resourcing knowledge identified in the introduction (Chapter 1) and literature review (Chapters 2 and 3) and develop a more appropriate framework to inform the team deployment and project allocation decision-making than that currently used. This was an ambitious task given the limited theoretical discussion and previous empirical research in the area.

The main limitations of this study were time and resource constraints and restrictions in the sample size. The research was conducted within a three-year schedule bounded by the requirements of the funding body (EPSRC). For the assessment of the research outcomes to achieve successful results tight timescales had to be adhered to. This inhibited longitudinal study of the changes in the informants views in relation to changes in their personal/ organisational circumstances. The findings and results suggested that both organisational/ project priorities and employee personal needs are likely to change over time. Thus, any future study should seek to establish the nature and effect of the changes to the way employee resourcing processes are managed.

Although the conclusions of this research were drawn from a total of 146 data sets (Table 4.2, section 4.4.1), the in-depth analysis and discussion on the current approaches to the employee resourcing function was based on the fifty primary case study interviews. The case study material collected external to the primary case and

additional quantitative questionnaire data supported the findings and results. As such the conclusions were argued to be broadly representative of the practices found within large contracting organisations within the industry. However, the study focused solely on professional employees within these organisations. Views of the operative staff and those employed within consulting firms could add interesting insights to this research. Furthermore, as the industry is mainly comprised of small firms, an investigation of the employee resourcing practices within small or medium sized organisations would add value to understanding the state of SHRM within the industry as a whole.

Methodologically this research was based on mainly qualitative data. Exploring the issues via quantitative methods within a much larger sample would provide interesting points of comparison to the conclusions derived from the interpretation of the qualitative data. Thus, it is important that research is continued in the area.

In addition, other areas in need of further research include: an investigation into organisational sub-cultures and their impact on the implementation of the SERF; examination of the nature and impact of the organisational factors and industry characteristics; examination of the nature and impact of the contextual factors; industry-wide assessment of managerial leadership styles and their impact on the resourcing process, and; development of the practical capabilities of the SERF model.

Section 6.2 discussed the informal organisational culture and localised sub-cultures as having a direct impact on the delivery of the strategic intention to effective

managerial practice at divisional/ project level. Section 7.4 suggested the SERF model providing a structure for the implementation of coherent management practice organisation-wide. Nevertheless, this did not address the question how the multiple and diverse sub-cultures potentially influence the implementation of the model or how the SERF would incorporate the current organisational sub-cultures. Thus, an in-depth investigation into the organisational sub-cultures and their impact on the implementation of SERF would provide useful information for future development of the model and its practical operation.

Secondly, the examination of the factors the interview respondents highlighted as important to be taken into account in the resourcing decision-making identified a set of organisational variables and industry characteristics as having a direct impact on the resourcing process (sections 5.2 and 5.3). Due to the time and resource constraints and employee resourcing specific focus of this research, these aspects could not be explored in detail. Accordingly, an investigation into the nature and impact of these variables on the resourcing process would provide useful data for further development and implementation of the SERF. In particular, exploration of possible ways of minimising/ managing the impact of the organisational factors and industry characteristics would support this study.

Thirdly, section 6.4 highlighted a set of contextual factors to the employee resourcing process which have an indirect impact on the resourcing decision-making. An examination of the nature and impact of these factors would again add value to the future development and implementation of the SERF. In addition, an examination of these factors would enhance the comprehensive understanding of SHRM issues



within the industry beyond the immediate employee resourcing framework discussed in this research. Together with the findings and results of this study, such data could help develop a more holistic view of the complex network of SHRM related decision-making activities in the construction sector.

Fourthly, sections 5.2 and 5.3 identified a management style which considers the organisational priorities, project requirements and individual employee needs and preferences as crucial to balanced employee resourcing decision-making. Section 5.1.3.1 however, concluded that only a few of the managerial respondents within the primary case study operated a balanced SHRM-type management/ leadership style. Section 5.7 supported this, highlighting the production-oriented management style as a key characteristic of the way in which the industry operates. Due to the participation arrangements with the case study organisations external to the primary case, no assessment of the true leadership style was carried out beyond the lead collaborator. An industry-wide assessment of the prominent management style would provide interesting comparisons to the findings discussed in this study. Potentially, this could also help identify any differences that exist within and between the industry's leading contractors, consulting firms and smaller companies.

Finally, as alluded to earlier (section 7.3.2), further work to develop the SERF from a "proof of concept" to a fully operational employee resourcing decision-support system should be undertaken. Initially, this will focus on developing the web-based user interface and operational functionality of the framework.

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# Appendices

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- A. List of publications
- B. Theories of organisational behaviour
- C. The hierarchical positions and relationships of the primary case study respondents within the organisational structure
- D. Primary case study interview schedules:
  - D1: Semi-structured interview schedule for managerial interviews
  - D2: Semi-structured interview schedule for employee interviews
- E. Questionnaire forms:
  - E1: Employee resourcing priority analytic hierarchy method questionnaire
  - E2: Blake and Mouton (1985) management style questionnaire
  - E3: Factor verification questionnaire
- F. HRIS evaluation outcome matrix
- G. Primary case study “content breakdown”
- H. An example of a summary statement matrix
- I. Primary case study sample profile
- J. Cause-factor-consequence table by job role
- K. Primary case study organisation’s People Statement
- L. Overview of the primary case study organisation’s employee resourcing processes
  - L1: Primary case study organisation’s human resource planning process
  - L2: Primary case study organisation’s recruitment-to-induction process
  - L3: Primary case study organisation’s team deployment decision-making process
  - L4: Primary case study organisation’s career structures
  - L5: Primary case study organisation’s performance appraisal process
- M. The analytic hierarchy method questionnaire results by age and organisational division
- N. An example of a cause-factor-consequence matrix
- O. The major causes of employee dissatisfaction and the potential (and real) effects in relation to points of conflict listed in Table 6.7, section 6.4
- P. Snowdrop system capabilities
- Q. An example of a SERF career management chart
- R. The drivers and underlying principles for the development of the SERF

## Appendix A

## Publications:

- Raiden, A.B., Dainty, A.R.J. and Neale, R.H. (2001a) Human resource information systems in construction: are their capabilities fully exploited? In Akintoye, A. (ed.), *17<sup>th</sup> Annual ARCOM Conference*, University of Salford, Salford, UK, 5-7 September, Vol. 1, pp. 133-142
- Raiden, A.B., Dainty, A.R.J. and Neale, R.H. (2001b) The development of a strategic employee resourcing framework (SERF) for construction, In Akintoye, A. (ed.), *4<sup>th</sup> ARCOM doctoral research workshop: Simulation and modelling in construction*, Edinburgh University, Edinburgh, UK, 26th October, <http://www.arcom.ac.uk/workshops/04-Edinburgh/04-Raiden.pdf>
- Raiden, A.B., Dainty, A.R.J. and Neale, R.H. (2002a) Employee resourcing: finding the balance, In Sun, M., Ghassan, A., Ormerod, M., Ruddock, L., Green, C., Alexander, K. (eds.), *2<sup>nd</sup> International Postgraduate Research Conference in the Built and Human Environment*, University of Salford, Salford, UK, 11-12 April, pp. 249-258
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- Raiden, A.B., Dainty, A.R.J. and Neale, R.H. (2003a) Using NVivo in applied research: a case study in human resource management, *QSR International and Institute of Education University of London 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference Strategies in Qualitative Research: Methodological Issues and Practices Using QSR NVivo and NUD\*IST*, Institute of Education University of London, London, UK, 8-9 May
- Raiden, A.B., Dainty, A.R.J. and Neale, R.H. (2003b) A Strategic Employee Resourcing Framework (SERF) for construction, In Greenwood, D. (ed.), *19<sup>th</sup> Annual ARCOM Conference*, University of Brighton, Brighton, UK, 3-5 September, Vol. 1, pp. 223-232
- Neale, R.H., Dainty, A.R.J., Bagilhole, B., Duncan, R. and Raiden, A.B. (2003) Speaking the unspoken: tacit knowledge and the management of human resources, *Joint International Symposium of CIB Working Commissions "Knowledge Construction"*, Singapore 22-24 October, pp.186-198
- Dainty, A.R.J., Raiden, A.B. and Neale, R.H. (2003) 'Psychological contract expectations of construction project managers', *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*, in press
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## Appendix B

## Organisational behaviour theories:

	Approach	Theory	Developed/ first identified	Characteristics	
General	Human relations approach	Hawthorne studies (1924-33)	George Elton Mayo (1920s)	Revolutionised social science thinking bringing direct financial benefits to an org. – demonstrated the influence of social factors on workplace behaviour	
		Socio-technical systems	Trist (1940s)	Studies on effects of changing technology – a sub category of the industrial relations systems theory, provides a link between systems theory and technology approach	
		Technology approach	Walker and Guest (1950s), Sayles (50s), Blauner (60s), Woodward (80s)	Emphasises the effects of varying technologies on org. structure, work groups and individual performance and job satisfaction – a sub category of systems theory	
		Decision-making approach	Barnard (1940s), Simon (1970s)	Focus of attention on managerial decision-making and hoe organisations process and use information in decision-making	
	Contingency approach				Attempts to analyse org. structure in terms of relationships among its components and the environment with emphasis on flexibility
				Burns and Stalker (1960s)	Mechanistic/ organic system
				Lawrence and Lorch (1960s)	Differentiation/ integration
			'Peter principle'	Peter and Hull (1970s)	Study of occupational incompetence and org. hierarchy – "in a hierarchy every employee tends to rise to their level of incompetence"
			Shamrock organisation	Handy (1980s)	Study of flexible org. design
			'Parkinson's law'	Parkinson (1980s)	'Rising pyramid' – work expands as to fill the time available for its completion

Individual	Communication and perception	'Proximity' and similarity' principles	Max Wertheimer (1923)	Group together or classify stimulies – in person perception these are applied in assuming people are similar on the basis of certain factors (i.e. nationality)
		Impression management	Erving Coffman (1959)	The process whereby people seek to control the image others have of them
		Halo effect	Edward Thomdyke (1920)	On meeting a stranger people 'size them up'/ make judgements about the kind of person they are
		Stereotyping	Walter Lippmann (1922)	Grouping people together who seem to us to share similar characteristics
		Attribution theory	Fritz Heider and Howard Kelley (1950-60)	Attaching or attributing causes or reasons to the actions and events we see
	Motivation - Goals	Maslow's need hierarchy	Abraham Maslow (1943)	We have 8 (9) needs, which each need satisfying in an order, the goal being self-actualisation and transcendence
		- Cognitive decision process	Expectancy theory	Edward E. Tolman (1930s)
				Victor H. Vroom (1964)
	- Social process/ classical	Scientific management	Frederick Taylor (1870-80)	1. Task fragmentation; 2. Decide one best way; and 3. Train employees to carry out these simple and fragmented tasks
			Henry Ford	Mass production
		Two factor theory	Frederick Hertzberg (1950s)	Characteristics of work influence job satisfaction and dissatisfaction

Individual	Learning - Behaviorism		John B. Watson (1913)	Reward is more effective than punishment in changing behaviour – learning is the development of associations between stimuli and responses through experience	
		Pavlovian (or classical/ respondent) conditioning	Ivan Petrovich Pavlov (1850-60s)	Technique for associating an established response with a new stimulus	
		Skinnerian (or instrumental/ operant) conditioning	Burrhus Frederic Skinner (1920-30s)	Technique for associating a response or a behaviour with its consequence	
		- Cognitive approach	Information-processing theories	Norbert Wiener (1947)	Draws from cybernetics – control of [system] performance through feedback
		- Social learning theory		Albert Bandura (1977)	We learn new behaviours through observation and copying others without any reward/ punishment
	Personality - Nomoethetic approach	Extraversion-intraversion 'E' and neuroticism-stability 'N' dimensions		Hans Jurgen Eysenck (1940s)	Based on genetics, a way of linking type, traits and behaviour
		Types A and B		Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman (1974)	Two extreme personality patterns or behaviour syndromes which help to explain differences in stress levels
	- Idiographic approach	'Looking glass self'		Charles Horton Cooley (1880-90s)	Personality of an individual is the result of a process in which individuals learn to be the person they are
		Generalised other		George Herbert Mead (1930s)	What we understand other people expect of us in terms of attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviour
		Two-sided self and impact of accepting environment		Carl Ransom Rogers (1940s)	The core of human behaviour is a desire to realise one's potential fully, however right social environment (where one is treated with 'unconditional positive regard') is required.
		A thematic apperception test (TAT)		Henry Alexander Murray (1938)	'Projective' assessment in which an individual is invited to project his/ her own interests and preoccupations into accounts of pictures/ stories
				David McClelland	Developed the TAT since Murray

Group	Group formation		Muzater Sherif (1949-53)	Experiments on informal group formation, their status structure	
		Homan's theory of group formation		George Caspar Homans (1950s)	Any social system exists within a three-part environment: physical, cultural, technological. This external system influences behaviour causing an internal system to arise. Changes in either affect the other, they are interdependent.
		Linking pin model		Rensis Likert (1960s)	Structure of an org. should be formed around effective work groups as group forces are important in influencing the behaviour of individual work groups and entire org.s.
				Levitt (1970s)	Management should consider building org.s using small groups.
				Tom Peters (1980s)	'The modest-sized, task-orientated, semi-autonomous, mainly self-managing team should be the basic org. building block.'

Sources:

Buchanan and Huchynski, 1997; Huchynski and Buchanan, 2001; Mullins, 1996, 2002

## Appendix C



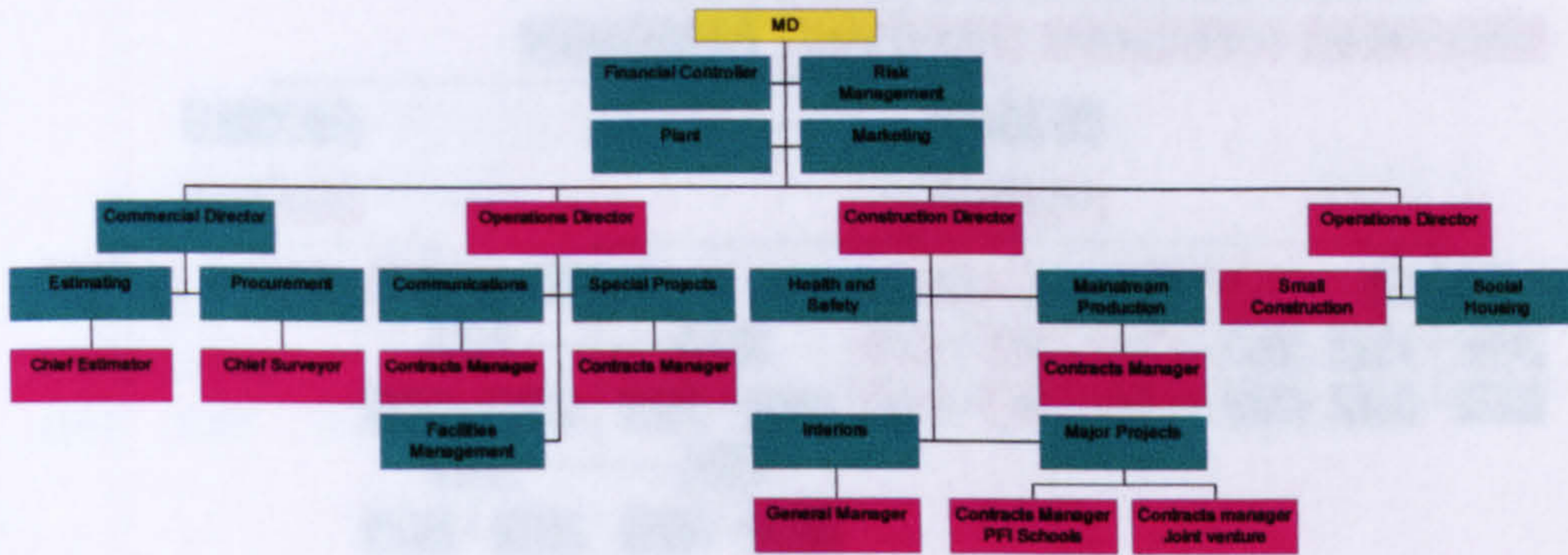
# Respondent structure

## Colour coding

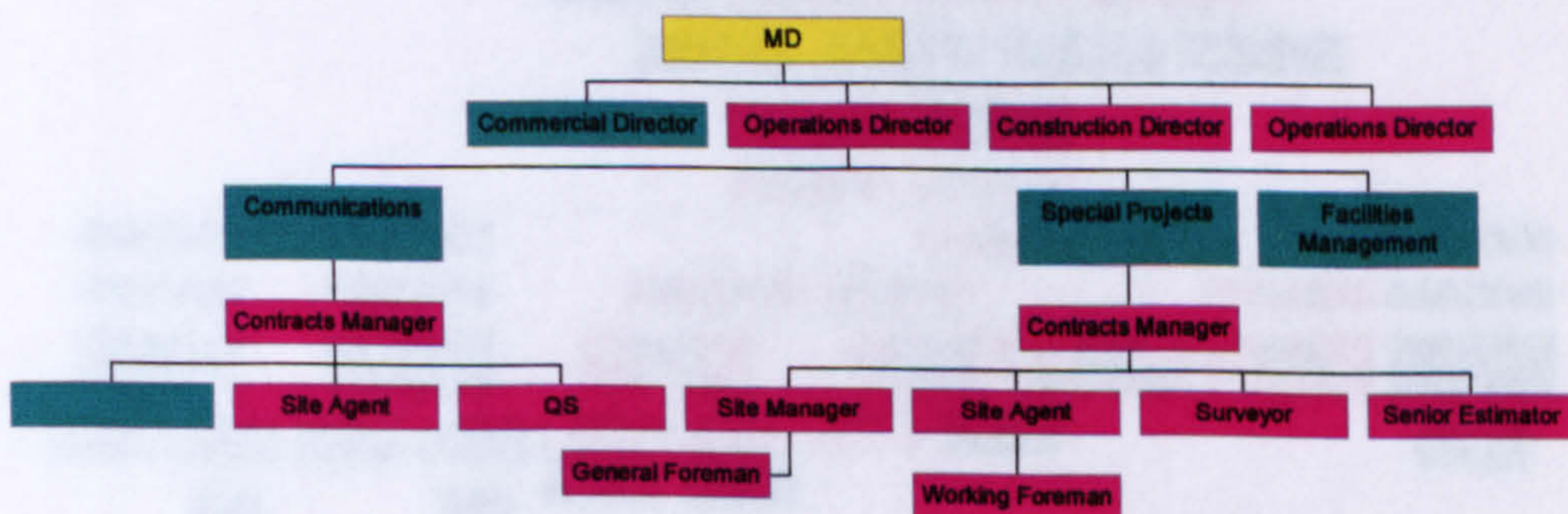
yellow - to be interviewed/ have been recommended to be interviewed,

pink - interviewed

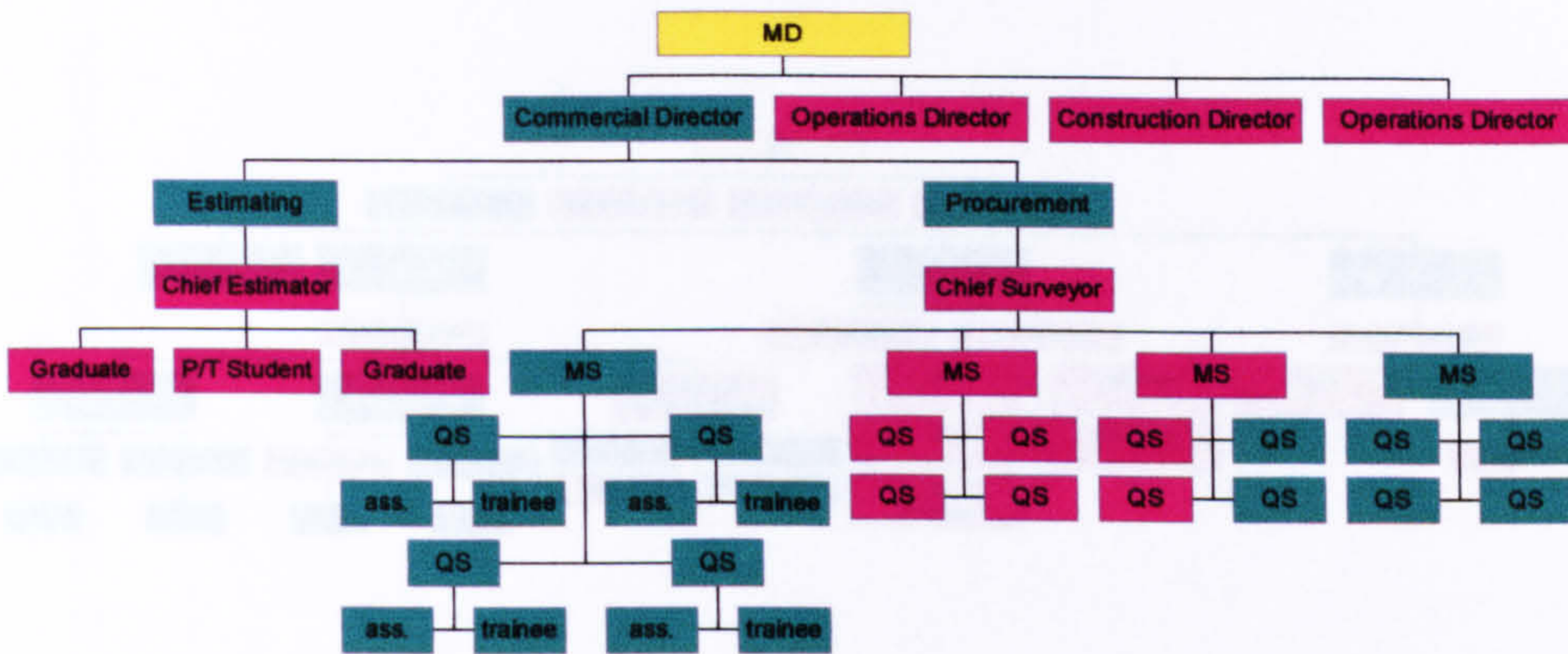
green - other



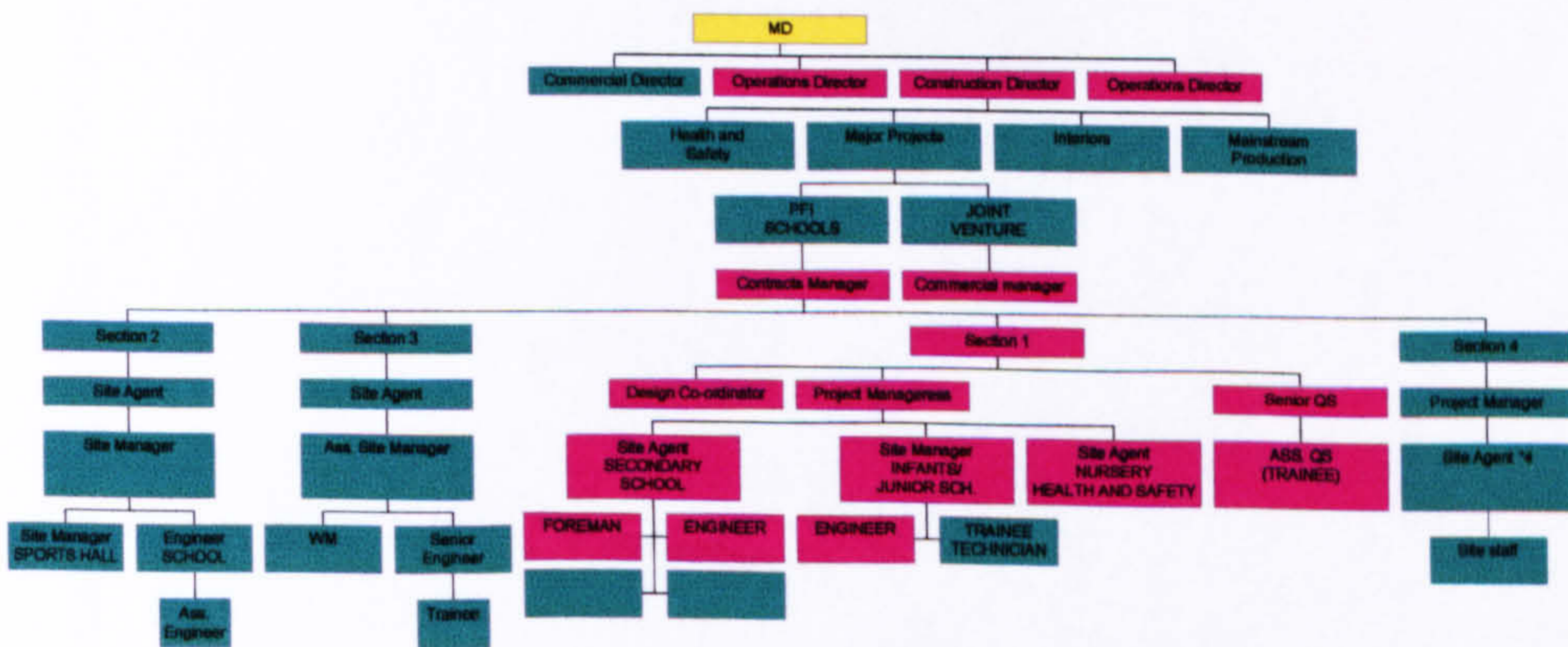
# Communications and Special Projects



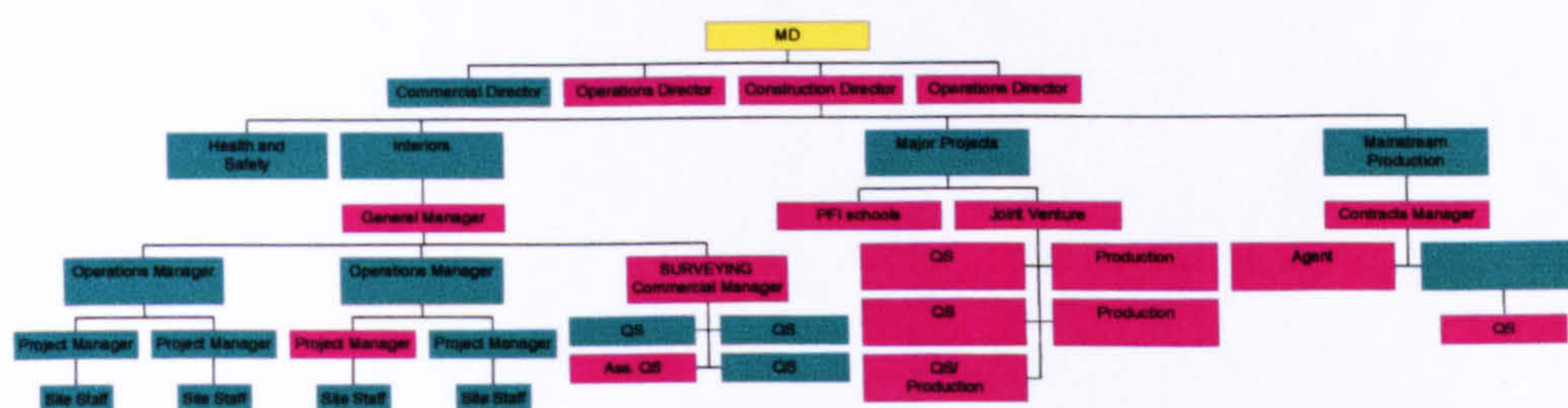
# Interior, Major Estimating and Surveying Production



## Major Projects, PFI Schools



# Interiors, Major Projects and Mainstream Production



Appendix D1

## Appendix D1

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – MANAGERS

1. Research objectives
2. Details of interviewee's current project(s)
3. Questions table
4. Management style questionnaire
5. Personal details
6. Members of staff for me to interview

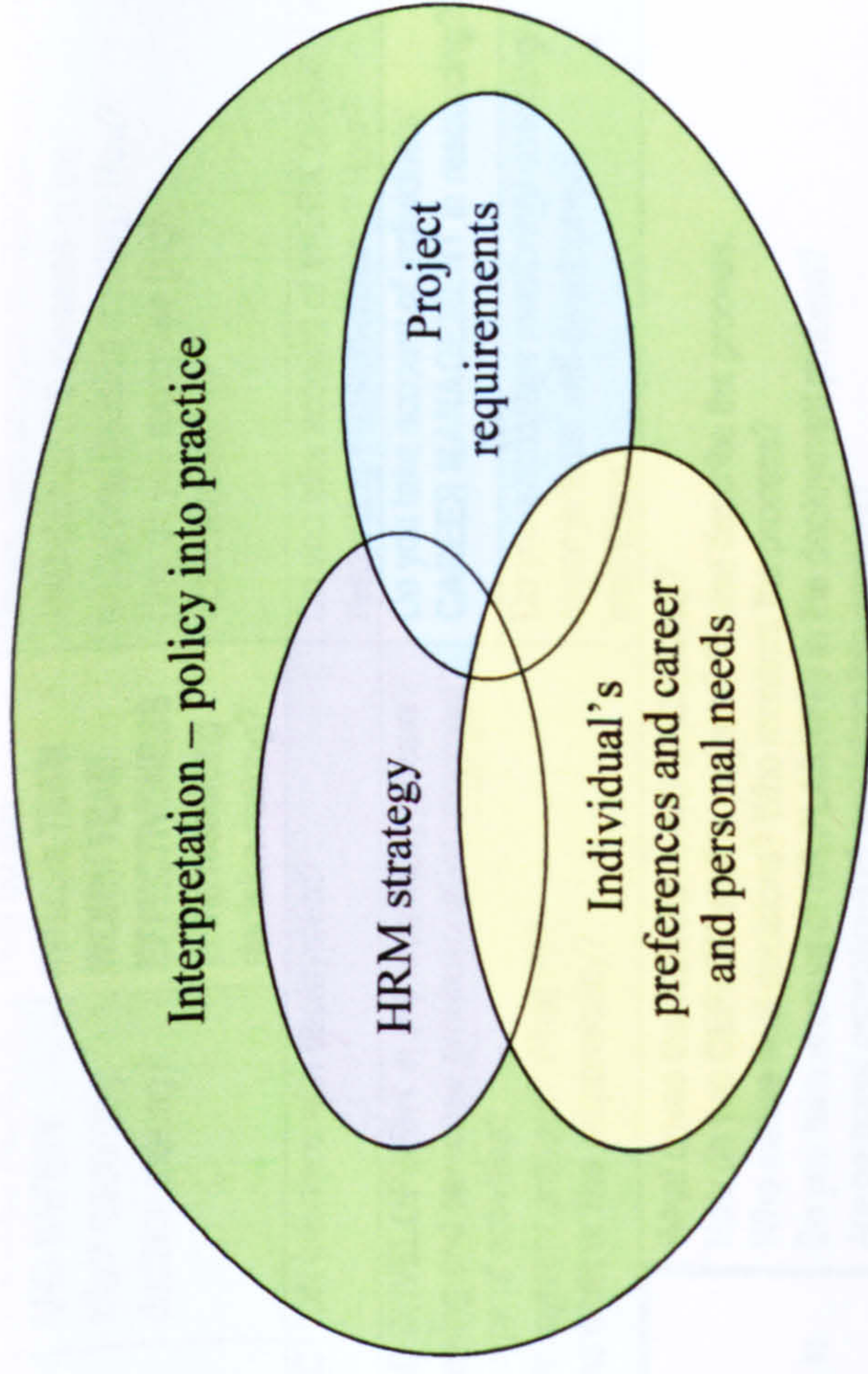
### 1) RESEARCH OBJECTIVES (appendix 1)

#### PHASE 1.

- Interviews with HRM staff and contracts and other managers involved in the resourcing decision-making to establish organisational strategy and policy in terms of resourcing, performance management and employee development;
- In-depth interviews with staff at various levels of the organisation to establish their personal priorities in terms of training, career development, project allocation and organisational support (including work-life balance and family-friendly initiatives);
- These will include a range of case study projects, which explore historical deployment and project allocation decision-making;

#### PHASE 2.

- The development of a more appropriate resourcing framework using data from phase 1;
- The selection/ amendment of a suitable performance management system and software based tool to support the efficient utilisation of the model;
- Testing the model.



### 2) INTERVIEWEE'S CURRENT PROJECT(S)

What type of project(s) are you currently working on?

PROJECT SIZE

FORM OF CONTRACT

TYPE OF CLIENT – PUBLIC/ PRIVATE

TEAM SIZE AND COMPOSITION

3 BIG/ KEY CHALLENGES

What are your main duties and responsibilities?

<p>What do you consider being the key <b>PROJECT SUCCESS CRITERIA</b>? How does this reflect the org. mission/ strategy?</p>	<p>What are the org. goals and standards (growth/ quality)?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>ORG. STRATEGY/ POLICY</b> in the resourcing process? How? Do you take account of <b>ORG. STRUCTURE</b> in resourcing? How?</p>	<p>How does <b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b> affect resourcing decision-making?</p>	<p>How do you measure <b>TEAM WORK/ TEAM EFFECTIVENESS</b> in the resourcing decision-making?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS systems</b> in the resourcing decision-making? How? How do you recognise [high] achievement?</p>
<p>How do you carry out project performance appraisal? What actions do you take if a team is not functioning effectively?</p>	<p>What are the org. skills and <b>competencies required</b> to achieve org. targets/ mission?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-individual project requirements</li> <li>-workload and succession management expectations</li> <li>-workforce size expectations</li> <li>-retention and turnover expectations</li> <li>-client priorities</li> <li>-business development needs</li> </ul>	<p>How does <b>RECRUITMENT and SELECTION</b> interface with deployment?</p>	<p>How does <b>RECRUITMENT and SELECTION</b> interface with deployment?</p>	<p>How do you take account of <b>WORK DESIGN</b> in resourcing decision-making? How?</p>	<p>How do you take account of <b>WORK DESIGN</b> in resourcing decision-making? How?</p>
<p>Do you take into account <b>HRM</b> in defining/ estimating project success? How?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>QUALITY</b> within the HRM frame? How?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</b> in the resourcing process? How? Do you encourage systematic training and personal/ professional development through the resourcing process? What type of activities?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</b> in the resourcing process? How? Do you encourage systematic training and personal/ professional development through the resourcing process? What type of activities?</p>	<p>Do you take account of individuals' <b>CAREER MANAGEMENT</b> in resourcing?</p>	<p>Do you take account of individuals' <b>CAREER MANAGEMENT</b> in resourcing?</p>
<p>Do you take account of <b>EMPLOYEE RELATIONS</b> issues in the resourcing process? How?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT</b> in the resourcing decision-making? How?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>HR PLANNING</b> in the deployment process? Are personal aspirations of 'ees taken into account? <b>HOW COULD THE PROCESS BE IMPROVED?</b> Would my model be useful? Yes/ no – and why so?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>HR PLANNING</b> in the deployment process? Are personal aspirations of 'ees taken into account? <b>HOW COULD THE PROCESS BE IMPROVED?</b> Would my model be useful? Yes/ no – and why so?</p>	<p>Do you encourage mentoring/ coaching/ secondments/ self-development workshops?</p>	<p>Do you encourage mentoring/ coaching/ secondments/ self-development workshops?</p>
<p>Do you take account of <b>EMPOWERMENT</b> in the resourcing process? How?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION</b>? How?</p>	<p><b>Is there a HR strategy in place? What is to be achieved by HRM strategically?</b> How do you see HRM cascading down to project level?</p>	<p><b>What drives the RESOURCING DECISIONS?</b> How do you <b>DEPLOY</b> staff to projects? Please describe the process. Who makes final decisions? Who monitors the process?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>SUCCESSION MANAGEMENT</b> in resourcing decision? How?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>SUCCESSION MANAGEMENT</b> in resourcing decision? How?</p>
<p>Do you take account of the <b>INFORMAL/ UNWRITTEN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT/</b> relationship in resourcing decision-making? How?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>WORK-LIFE BALANCE</b>? How? Key issues?</p>	<p>What are the objectives of the company resourcing strategy? <b>How does this translate into practice?</b> How have these contributed to staff commitment and competence? Benefits achieved?</p>	<p>Do you consider <b>internal moves</b> in the deployment process? How? Do you take account of <b>promotions</b> through the deployment process? How? Do you consider the overall <b>attraction and retention</b> of 'ees in the resourcing decision-making? How?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>DISMISSAL AND REDUNDANCY</b> in the resourcing process? How?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>DISMISSAL AND REDUNDANCY</b> in the resourcing process? How?</p>
<p>Do you drive <b>FLEXIBILITY</b> through the resourcing decision-making? How? Organisational/ individual 'ee side? How do you balance these?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT</b> [systems] in the deployment process? How does the process work? Who determines performance targets? How much influence does 'ee have? How flexible are the targets? What <b>information is held on the skills and abilities</b> of 'ees?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>COMMUNICATIONS systems</b> in the resourcing decision-making? Approach: two-way/ top-down? Are the org. strategies, policies and procedures communicated to all 'ees? HR communicated to all 'ees?</p>	<p>Do you take account of <b>COMMUNICATIONS systems</b> in the resourcing decision-making? Approach: two-way/ top-down? Are the org. strategies, policies and procedures communicated to all 'ees? HR communicated to all 'ees?</p>	<p>What are the [3 key] <b>CURRENT RESOURCING ISSUES</b>? Reasons?</p>	<p>What are the [3 key] <b>CURRENT RESOURCING ISSUES</b>? Reasons?</p>
<p>How/ where is the <b>data held/ recorded</b>? (paper and pen/ HRIS)</p>	<p>What is the data used for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-individual development plans/ -assign 'ees to projects/ -career management/ -identifying potential for promotion/ -exits/ -dismissal procedures/ -motivation</li> </ul> <p>Who has access to this data?</p>	<p>What do you consider being the <b>ROLE OF HR</b> in the company? How important is it?</p>	<p>What do you consider being the <b>ROLE OF HR</b> in the company? How important is it?</p>	<p>Please give examples of two <b>past projects</b> you have been involved in (1 successful + 1 less successful). What kind of resourcing problems did you face? What kinds of solutions were identified?</p>	<p>Please give examples of two <b>past projects</b> you have been involved in (1 successful + 1 less successful). What kind of resourcing problems did you face? What kinds of solutions were identified?</p>

**4) MANAGEMENT STYLE (appendix 03 – Blake and Mouton questionnaire)**

**5) PERSONAL DETAILS**

<b>Length of service with the company:</b>	less than one year/ 21-25 years/	1-5 years/ 26 years or more	6-10 years/	11-15 years/	16-20 years/
<b>Current work location:</b>	office/	site based			
<b>Travel to work:</b>	car/	public transport			
<b>Time:</b>	less than one hour/	2-3 hours/	longer (based away from home)		
<b>Educational background:</b>	University degree – technical or management/ NVQs/	professional qualifications/	Management development		
<b>Length of time in industry:</b>	less than one year/ 21-25 years/	1-5 years/ 26 years or more	6-10 years/	11-15 years/	16-20 years/
<b>Type of work experience/ background:</b>	Your experience in being deployed to your division in the company? How does, or does, the company practices differ from that of other companies?				
<b>Gender:</b>	male/	female			
<b>Age:</b>	25 or under/	26-35/	36-45/	46-55/	55 or over
<b>Family status:</b>	parent or guardian/	no dependants			

**6) HAVE YOU ANY MEMBERS OF STAFF YOU FEEL IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR ME TO INTERVIEW (in order to examine the employees' views)?**

## Appendix D2



## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – EMPLOYEES

1. Research objectives
2. Details of interviewee's current project(s)
3. Questions table
4. Personal details

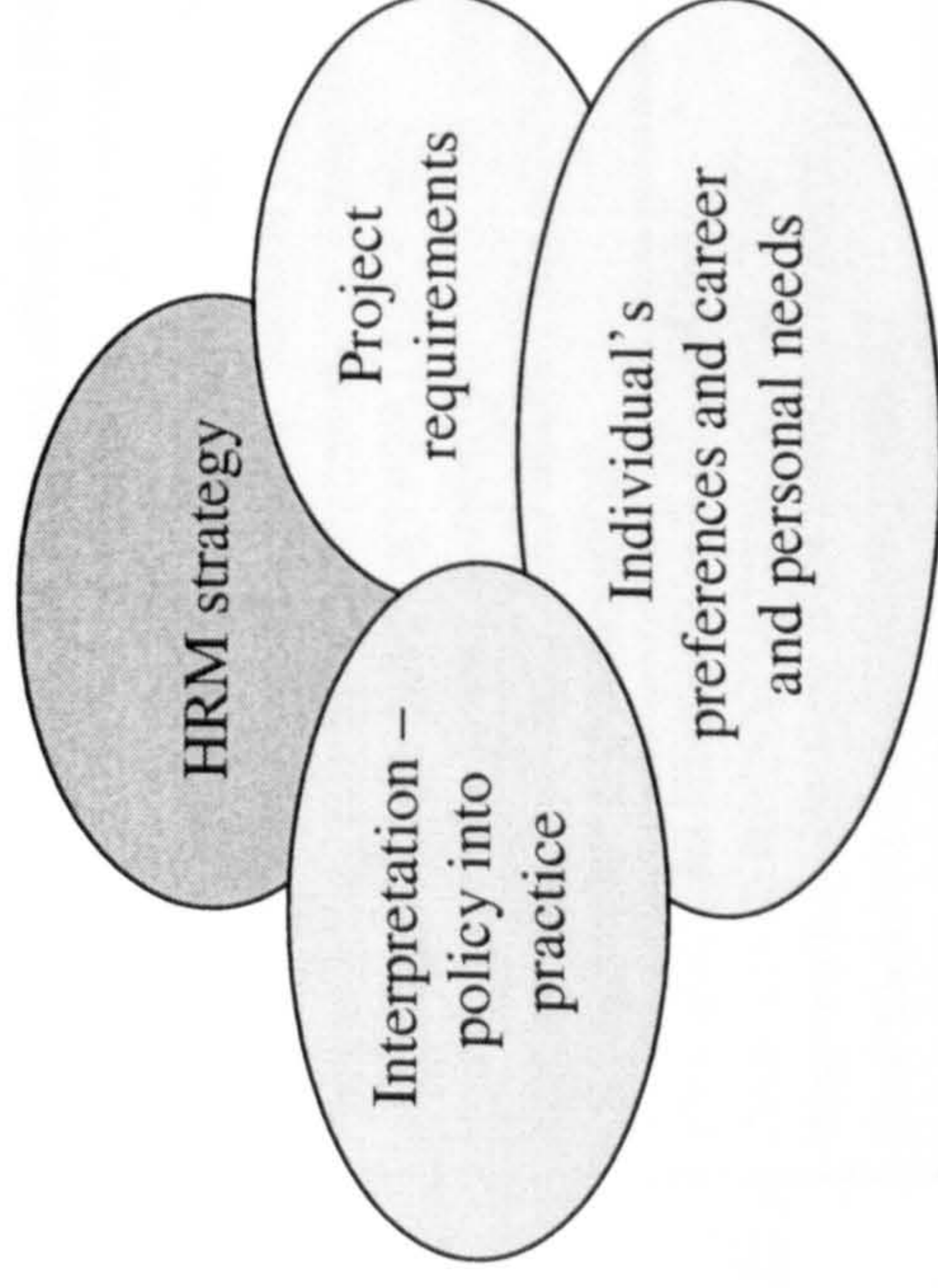
### 1) RESEARCH OBJECTIVES (appendix 1)

#### PHASE 1.

- Interviews with HRM staff and contracts and other managers involved in the resourcing decision-making to establish organisational strategy and policy in terms of resourcing, performance management and employee development;
- In-depth interviews with staff at various levels of the organisation to establish their personal priorities in terms of training, career development, project allocation and organisational support (including work-life balance and family-friendly initiatives);
- These will include a range of case study projects, which explore historical deployment and project allocation decision-making;

#### PHASE 2.

- The development of a more appropriate resourcing framework using data from phase 1;
- The selection/ amendment of a suitable performance management system and software based tool to support the efficient utilisation of the model;
- Testing the model.



### 2) INTERVIEWEE'S CURRENT PROJECT(S)

What type of project(s) are you currently working on?

PROJECT SIZE

TEAM SIZE AND COMPOSITION

3 BIG/ KEY CHALLENGES

What are your main duties and responsibilities?

<p>What do you consider being the key <b>PROJECT SUCCESS CRITERIA</b>? How do you measure project success in your role?</p>	<p>What do you see being the org. goals and standards (growth/ quality)?</p> <p>How do the company <b>COMMUNICATIONS systems</b> support you? Approach: two-way/ top-down? Reflects <i>your expectations</i>? Are the org. + HR strategies, policies and procedures communicated to you?</p>	<p>How do you see HRM overall within the company? Are you aware of a <b>HR STRATEGY</b> in place? <b>Do you see HRM cascading down to project level? How?</b> Has this contributed to your commitment/ competence? How? Benefits you have achieved? Does this reflect <i>your expectations</i>?</p>	<p>What do you consider being the <b>ROLE OF HR</b> in the company? How important is it?</p> <p>How do <b>REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS systems</b> correspond to <i>your expectations</i>? How is [high] achievement recognised?</p>
<p>Do <b>people issues</b> affect project success? How? Does this reflect <i>your expectations</i>?</p>	<p>Does the <b>ORG. STRUCTURE</b> allow you to develop and further your career? How? Reflects <i>your expectations</i>?</p>	<p>Is systematic <b>TRAINING and personal/ professional DEVELOPMENT</b> encouraged? What type of activities? Reflects <i>your expectations</i>? Are mentoring/ coaching/ secondments/ self-development workshops encouraged? <b>ORG. SUPPORT FOR LEARNING</b>? <i>How do you manage your development in line with what the company offers?</i></p>	<p>How are <b>RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION</b> procedures handled? Fair, systematic and professional?</p>
<p>How does <b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b> affect your role?</p>	<p>How are <b>EMPLOYEE RELATIONS</b> issues handled?</p>	<p>Does the company facilitate overall <b>ATTRACTION and RETENTION</b>? How? Does this reflect <i>your expectations</i>? <b>What are your key criteria in selecting an 'er'?</b></p>	<p>What drives the <b>RESOURCING DECISIONS</b>? What is to be achieved by employee resourcing? What are the objectives of the company resourcing strategy? <b>How does this translate into practice?</b> <i>Expectations? HOW COULD RESOURCING BE MANAGED MORE EFFECTIVELY?</i></p>
<p>Is the <b>INFORMAL/ UNWRITTEN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT/</b> relationship taken into account in the resourcing decision-making? How? Does this reflect <i>your expectations</i>?</p>	<p>What are your <b>PERSON. PREFERENCES</b>:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ location;</li> <li>▪ work-type (including the nature, size and scope of projects);</li> <li>▪ division;</li> <li>▪ experience needs (broadening, gaining specialist experience, developing cross-disciplinary experience, international experience, etc.);</li> <li>▪ promotional opportunities;</li> <li>▪ training and developmental needs;</li> <li>▪ work-life balance</li> <li>▪ career management?</li> </ul> </p>	<p>What are the [3 key] <b>CURRENT RESOURCING ISSUES</b>? Reasons? <b>Are your personal aspirations taken into account in decision-making?</b> <i>Does this reflect your expectations?</i></p>	<p>How are staff <b>DEPLOYED</b> to projects? Please describe the process. Who makes final decisions? Who monitors the process? <i>Expectations?</i> <b>Would my model be useful? Yes/ no – why so?</b> Does the company take account of <b>WORK DESIGN</b> in deployment?</p>
<p>Is <b>FLEXIBILITY</b> facilitated? How? On organisational or 'ee side? How are these balanced? Reflects <i>your expectations</i>? Does the company facilitate your <b>WORK-LIFE BALANCE</b>? How? What are the key issues? Hours of work? Location? Reflects <i>your expectations</i>?</p>	<p>Are you <b>INVOLVED</b> in the resourcing/ deployment decision-making? How? Is <b>PARTICIPATION</b> fostered? How? <i>Expectations?</i></p> <p>Are you <b>EMPOWERED</b> in your role to carry out your duties the way best suitable to you? How? Reflects <i>your expectations</i>?</p>	<p>How <b>COULD THE PROCESS BE IMPROVED?</b></p>	<p>Do people move <b>internally</b>? Often? How do you feel <b>PROMOTIONS</b> are handled? <i>Expectations?</i></p> <p>How do you <b>MANAGE YOUR CAREER</b>? How do you balance what the company offers with your expectations? Do managers support/ facilitate this? How? Reflects <i>your expectations</i>?</p>
<p>Are <b>INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS</b> encouraged/ facilitated? Do you hold social gatherings? <i>Expectations?</i></p> <p>How would you describe the <b>ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE</b>? (if necessary appendix 02)</p>	<p>Is <b>TEAM WORK/ TEAM EFFECTIVENESS</b> facilitated/ supported? How? <i>Your expectations?</i></p>	<p>Do you know what <b>information is held on your skills and abilities</b>? Do you know how/ where is the <b>data held/ recorded</b>? (paper and pen/ HRIS) What is the data used for? Who has access to this data? <i>Your expectations?</i></p>	<p>Please give examples of two <b>PAST PROJECTS</b> (1 successful + 1 less successful). What kind of resourcing problems were faced? What kinds of solutions were identified?</p>

#### 4) PERSONAL DETAILS

**Length of service at the company:**      less than one year/      1-5 years/      6-10 years/      11-15 years/      16-20 years/  
 21-25 years/      26 years or more

**Current work location:**      office/      site based  
**Travel to work:**      car/      public transport  
**Time:**      less than one hour/      2-3 hours/      longer      based away from home

**Educational background:**      University degree – technical or management/  
 NVQs/      professional qualifications/      Management development

**Length of time in industry:**      less than one year/      1-5 years/      6-10 years/      11-15 years/      16-20 years/  
 21-25 years/      26 years or more

**Type of work experience/ background:**

Your experience in being deployed to your division in the company?  
 How does, or does, the company practices differ from that of other companies?

**Gender:**      male/      female

**Age:**      25 or under/      26-35/      36-45/      46-55/      55 or over

**Family status:**      parent or guardian/      no dependants

## Appendix E1

**Employee resourcing/ deployment priorities quiz**

Please tick from the following pairs the one of a higher importance to you in terms of your preferences and priorities in being deployed to a project or a team.

<input type="checkbox"/> Personal and/ or professional development <input type="checkbox"/> Work location close to home/ maintaining work-life balance	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaining broad and/ or specialist experience <input type="checkbox"/> Good team relationships
<input type="checkbox"/> Training opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational division	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal and/ or professional development <input type="checkbox"/> Project type (size, complexity, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Experience in working under different procurement systems or contract forms <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational division	<input type="checkbox"/> Experience in working under different procurement systems or contract forms <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/> Gaining broad and/ or specialist experience <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational division	<input type="checkbox"/> Promotional opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational division
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal and/ or professional development <input type="checkbox"/> Training opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> Good team relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational division
<input type="checkbox"/> Work location close to home/ maintaining work-life balance <input type="checkbox"/> Gaining broad and/ or specialist experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Work location close to home/ maintaining work-life balance <input type="checkbox"/> Training opportunities

<input type="checkbox"/> Personal and/ or professional development <input type="checkbox"/> Gaining broad and/ or specialist experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal and/ or professional development <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational division
<input type="checkbox"/> Project type (size, complexity, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> Work location close to home/ maintaining work-life balance <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational division
<input type="checkbox"/> Work location close to home/ maintaining work-life balance <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> Experience in working under different procurement systems or contract forms <input type="checkbox"/> Training opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/> Project type (size, complexity, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Training opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaining broad and/ or specialist experience <input type="checkbox"/> Project type (size, complexity, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Gaining broad and/ or specialist experience <input type="checkbox"/> Experience in working under different procurement systems or contract forms	<input type="checkbox"/> Training opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Good team relationships
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal and/ or professional development <input type="checkbox"/> Good team relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaining broad and/ or specialist experience <input type="checkbox"/> Training opportunities

<input type="checkbox"/> Gaining broad and/ or specialist experience <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> Good team relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/> Work location close to home/ maintaining work-life balance <input type="checkbox"/> Good team relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> Project type (size, complexity, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Experience in working under different procurement systems or contract forms
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal and/ or professional development <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> Project type (size, complexity, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Good team relationships
<input type="checkbox"/> Work location close to home/ maintaining work-life balance <input type="checkbox"/> Project type (size, complexity, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal and/ or professional development <input type="checkbox"/> Experience in working under different procurement systems or contract forms
<input type="checkbox"/> Work location close to home/ maintaining work-life balance <input type="checkbox"/> Experience in working under different procurement systems or contract forms	<input type="checkbox"/> Experience in working under different procurement systems or contract forms <input type="checkbox"/> Good team relationships
<input type="checkbox"/> Project type (size, complexity, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational division	<input type="checkbox"/> Training opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional opportunities

## Appendix E2

Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid questionnaire (1991, 1994)

Please tick one statement that best describes yourself in each of the following sections.

---

- I accept the vision of others.
  - I place high value on maintaining good relationships.
  - I place high value on making decisions that stick.
  - I search workable, even though not perfect, decisions.
  - I place high value on getting sound creative decisions that result in understanding and agreement.
- 

- I go along with opinions, attitude and ideas of others or avoid taking sides.
  - I prefer to accept opinions, attitudes and ideas of others rather than push my own.
  - I stand up for my ideas, opinions and attitudes even though it sometimes results in stepping on toes.
  - When ideas, opinions or attitudes different from my own appear, I initiate middle ground positions.
  - I listen for and seek out ideas, opinions and attitudes different from my own. I have clear convictions but respond to sound ideas by changing my mind.
- 

- When conflict arises I try to remain neutral or stay out of it.
  - I try to avoid generating conflict, but when it appears, I try to soothe feelings and to keep people together.
  - When conflict arises, I try to cut it off or win my position.
  - When conflict arises, I try to be fair but firm and to get an equitable solution.
  - When conflict arises, I try to identify reasons for it and resolve underlying causes.
- 

- By remaining neutral, I rarely get stirred up.
  - Because of the disturbance tensions can produce, I react in a warm and friendly way.
  - When things are not going right, I defend, resist or come back with counter arguments.
  - Under tension, I feel unsure which way to turn or shift to avoid further pressure.
  - When aroused, I contain myself, though my impatience is visible.
- 

- My humour is seen by others as rather pointless.
  - My humour aims at maintaining friendly relationships or when strains do arise, it shifts attention away from the serious side.
  - My humour is hard hitting.
  - My humour sells myself or a position.
  - My humour fits the situation and gives perspective. I retain a sense of humour even under pressure.
- 

- I put out enough effort to get by.
  - I rarely lead but extend help.
  - I drive myself and others.
  - I seek to maintain a good steady pace.
  - I exert vigorous effort and others join in.
-

## Appendix E3



## Company Survey – a follow-up

As a follow-up to the Company Survey the aim of this questionnaire is to allow you to give us more detailed feedback and highlight factors that are important to you. The questionnaire was designed on the basis of this year's Company Survey responses and focuses on the areas that were identified within it as requiring further attention.

The survey is carried out in collaboration with a research team from Loughborough University. The questionnaire responses will contribute to improving team formation and performance, career management and staff development practices within the industry.

This is your chance to have your say!

*Please consider each statement carefully and only 'strongly agree' with statements that you feel are very important. We encourage you to 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with statements that you feel are of little relevance or importance.*

Your completed questionnaire will be absolutely confidential. The results will be analysed by the research team at Loughborough University. Please return your completed form to the team by Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2002 in the prepaid envelope enclosed. Alternatively you can fax it to 01509 223 981.

If you have any questions please contact Ani Raiden (e-mail [A.B.Raiden@Lboro.ac.uk](mailto:A.B.Raiden@Lboro.ac.uk), phone 01509 222 884 ext. 4140 or mobile 07712 584 967).

Thank you for taking part.

Please tick appropriate boxes below so that the research team is able to make comparisons between different groups of employees in carrying out an analysis of the data. No individual responses will be made available to the company.

### Organisational division

Main works	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Special projects	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interiors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please state	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Role

Engineer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Design co-ordinator	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project manager	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site manager/ agent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Estimator	<input type="checkbox"/>
QS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foreman	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please state	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Length of service (with the company)

Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6-10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11-15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16-20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21-25 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
26 years or more	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Age

25 or under	<input type="checkbox"/>
26-35	<input type="checkbox"/>
36-45	<input type="checkbox"/>
46-55	<input type="checkbox"/>
55 or over	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Family status

Parent/ guardian	<input type="checkbox"/>
No dependants	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SECTION 1 – PEOPLE SATISFACTION**

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

**Holiday entitlement**

- |  | Strongly Disagree        | Disagree                 | Neither/ Nor             | Agree                    | Strongly Agree           |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. It is important that I have opportunities to take my holiday entitlement. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

**Travel and working hours**

- |  | Strongly Disagree        | Disagree                 | Neither/ Nor             | Agree                    | Strongly Agree           |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. It is important that my work-life balance is taken into account in project allocation decisions.                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. It is important that the distance I need to travel to the office/ site is taken into account in project allocation decisions. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. It is important that working hours are taken into account in project allocation decisions.                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

**Organisational culture and spirit**

- |  | Strongly Disagree        | Disagree                 | Neither/ Nor             | Agree                    | Strongly Agree           |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. It is important that the company has a friendly organisational culture. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. It is important that the company has a "no blame" culture.              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. It is important that the company values trust and openness.             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. It is important that communal breaks are arranged for lunch/ dinner.    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. It is important that the company has an empowered workforce.            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. It is important that the company has a satisfied workforce.             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## SECTION 2 – PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

### REWARD – RECOGNITION

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

#### Progression and succession planning

- |  | Strongly Disagree        | Disagree                 | Neither/<br>Nor          | Agree                    | Strongly Agree           |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. It is important that the company provides transparent progression and promotional opportunities.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Individual career development (recognition and management of achievable aspirations) is important to the company's succession planning. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Fast track progression through the hierarchical organisational structure is important to the company's succession planning.             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

#### Pay and benefits

- |  | Strongly Disagree        | Disagree                 | Neither/<br>Nor          | Agree                    | Strongly Agree           |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. It is important that the company takes on board employees' pay preferences.     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. It is important that the company takes on board employees' benefit preferences. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

- |   | Strongly Disagree        | Disagree                 | Neither/<br>Nor          | Agree                    | Strongly Agree           |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Opportunities to attend training courses are important to my development.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Opportunities for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) both internally and externally are important to my development.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. It is important that the company promotes cross-project learning and knowledge transfer between teams.                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. It is important that the company encourages job rotation and/ or job enrichment and enlargement.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Opportunities for moving between divisions and departments in my current role are important to my development.                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Graduate development programmes are important for organisational development.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. A commitment to taking on trainees on a regular basis is important to organisational development.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. It is important that the company appraisal process is conducted effectively (incl. the appraisal interview and taking on board suggestions). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. It is important that six-monthly reviews on the achievement of appraisal objectives are carried out.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Receiving continuous feedback on my performance and progression is important to my development.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## COMMUNICATION

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither/ Nor	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. It is important that communication within the company is two-way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. It is important that senior managers and other head office staff show interest to my work and recognise my contribution to the organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. It is important that organisation-wide issues (such as projects won within other departments and developments regarding merger) are communicated effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. It is important that the company has short and direct links though management structure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. It is important that the company operates an "open door" communications policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. It is important that the company's external communication is effective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. It is important that interdepartmental co-operation is encouraged.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. It is important that I have a comprehensive range of information on projects (costs, etc.) available to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. It is important that the company has an effective medium to discuss personal health problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## SECTION 3 – LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

### Project allocation

- |   | Strongly Disagree        | Disagree                 | Neither/<br>Nor          | Agree                    | Strongly Agree           |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. It is important that when allocating staff to projects managers seek to make best use of my skills and abilities by taking into account my specialisation and suitability for a project. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. It is important that the company involves employees in project allocation decision-making.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Opportunities for being deployed to different types of projects are important to me.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. It is important that teams are redeployed together on to new projects.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

### Team selection

- |  | Strongly Disagree        | Disagree                 | Neither/<br>Nor          | Agree                    | Strongly Agree           |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. It is important that my managers consider whether I am currently allocated to a project when selecting members to a new team. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. It is important that my project preferences are taken into account in selecting members for teams.                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. It is important that efforts are made to create balanced teams which have a blend of skills and mix of personalities.         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. It is important to manage the balance between the number of agency and permanent staff when creating teams.                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Selecting the right project manager is very important to the success of a project team.                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

- |   | Strongly Disagree        | Disagree                 | Neither/<br>Nor          | Agree                    | Strongly Agree           |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 6. It is important that project managers in the company personally know their staff and their skills and preferences. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. It is important that staff roles and responsibilities are appropriately allocated to team members.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

**Induction**

- |  | Strongly Disagree        | Disagree                 | Neither/<br>Nor          | Agree                    | Strongly Agree           |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. It is important that the company has an effective new recruit/ team member induction programme. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Good team spirit and integration are important to creating singularity of focus.                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**The following personal characteristics, skills and competencies are important for ensuring successful teams:**

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither/ Nor	Agree	Strongly Agree
Self-drive and personal motivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Determination to succeed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Can do" attitude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creativity/ innovative approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional attitude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flexible attitude and adaptability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Willingness to travel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The ability to take on more than one project level responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision-making ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical capability and competence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trades background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## SECTION 4 – STRATEGY AND TARGETS

### Strategic human resource management (HRM)/ personnel objectives

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

- |  | Strongly Disagree        | Disagree                 | Neither/ Nor             | Agree                    | Strongly Agree           |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. It is important that employee turnover is kept at a manageable level.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. It is important that the company offers equal terms and conditions for its staff.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. It is important that the company has recognised and is acting on the need to shift the organisational emphasis from civil engineering toward building related activities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

### Management style

- |  | Strongly Disagree        | Disagree                 | Neither/ Nor             | Agree                    | Strongly Agree           |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. It is important that the expectations of both the organisation and individual employees are discussed openly. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. It is important that disruptive influences are removed fast from the working environment.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. It is important that most situations are solved effectively at the middle management tiers.                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. It is important that problems are tackled effectively.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Organisational (other than HRM/  
personnel specific) objectives**

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither/ Nor	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. It is important that the company seeks to ensure a continuous workload.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. It is important that the company is committed to continuous improvement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. It is important that the company seeks to broaden its business activities into new market areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. It is important that the company works within legal and regulatory frameworks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. It is important that the company looks for repeat business.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. It is important that the company operates an effective quality assurance policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. It is important that the company actively manages its financial turnover (£) and growth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. It is important that an effective integration within the group is seen as a high priority following the merger.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. It is important that the company operates its marketing and business development effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. It is important that the company manages change effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. It is important that the company manages its preferred procurement methods effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## SECTION 5 – CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND PROJECT SUCCESS

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

- |  | Strongly Disagree        | Disagree                 | Neither/<br>Nor          | Agree                    | Strongly Agree           |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. It is important that the company considers the achievement of out-turn performance targets (such as quality, time, etc.) as crucial to project success.                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. It is important that the company considers people/ relationships (e.g. team relationships within internal and external team: team-client, team-subcontractors) as crucial to project success. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Please write any additional feedback, comments and/ or suggestions you may have below.

**Thank you!**

## Appendix F





## Appendix G

## Content breakdown

TREE NODE	Broad category	1 <sup>st</sup> sub-category	2 <sup>nd</sup> sub-category	3 <sup>rd</sup>	No. of passages	No. of doc.s coded
HR STRATEGY					509	46
	Resourcing				540	46
		Staffing			241	45
				Recruitment-selection	123	36
				HRP	19	12
				Exits	55	29
				Agency	41	24
				Moving people around	56	26
				Induction	27	20
				Grads-trainees	23	12
				Performance		280
			Appraisal		86	42
			Careers		164	45
			Promotion		74	35
			Perf. Evaluation		56	25
			Project perf.		27	18
			PDP		28	12
			Changing perf.		3	2
			Admin.		27	13
				Current HRIS	5	3
				Proposed SERF	12	7
				I know my staff	13	8
				Training records	6	5
				Manual records	5	4
			Strategic issues		39	15
			Teams		259	46
				Team formation	156	42
				Team building	86	35
				Leadership	31	20
				Evaluating team perf.	35	16
				Redeployment	47	28
		Org. structure		88	35	
	Development				207	44
		Training courses, plans, strategy			119	40
				Training needs	77	34
				To improve at org level	7	6
				Amount-courses received	29	19
				Links to appraisal	41	30
				HR role	16	14
				Strategy	19	13
				Training plan	15	11
				Delivery	25	15
				Course evaluation	3	3
				Records	7	7
			CPD		8	8
			Pers developm		44	25
			Coach-mentor		21	16
			Prof Qualif-grads		48	19
			University educ		21	13
			Experience		39	22
			Betw proj learn		12	11
			Trades training		14	7
		On the job		6	6	
	Relations				359	46
			Culture, mngt stl		125	44
			Pay, benefits		56	28
			Equal opps		101	41
				Hours	50	29
				Travel	54	32
				Diversity	26	17



		<i>Staying away</i>	25	17
		Contracts, cond.	10	8
		EI, empowerm	44	26
		Unions	1	1
		HR role	68	39
		Health, safety	28	18
		People in proj su	14	14
		Flexibility	43	30
		Communication	55	26
<b>OPER. REQ.</b>			304	45
<b>IND. PREF.</b>			241	43
<b>PROJECTS</b>			155	37
	<b>PFI schools</b>		77	15
	<b>Joint venture</b>		43	11
	<b>Major 1</b>		10	3
	<b>Comms 1</b>		2	1
	<b>Warehouse</b>		20	5
	<b>Major 2</b>		15	3
	<b>Small work 1</b>		3	2
	<b>Major 3</b>		9	2
	<b>Major 4</b>		2	1
	<b>Interiors 1</b>		2	1
	<b>Interiors 2</b>		6	1
	<b>Interiors 3</b>		5	1
	<b>Interiors 4</b>		4	1
	<b>Major 5</b>		7	1
	<b>Major 6</b>		3	1
	<b>Small work 2</b>		3	2
	<b>Major 7</b>		8	2
	<b>Comms 2</b>		6	2
	<b>Comms 3</b>		3	1
	<b>Small work 3</b>		1	1
	<b>Small work 4</b>		2	1
	<b>Small work 5</b>		2	1
	<b>Small work 6</b>		1	1
	<b>Small work 7</b>		4	1
	<b>Small work 8</b>		1	1
	<b>Small work 9</b>		1	1

## Appendix H

Summary statement matrix – Staffing

	Moving people around	Induction	Grads/ trainees	Agency	Recruitment & selection	HRP	Exits
Manager	(1,1) 1: Don't know if that happens but has a feeling if one wanted to they could.	(2,1) 1: One & 3 month reviews to discuss 1 <sup>st</sup> impressions etc. in Int. brought in by Jamie, idea forwarded to mainstream.	(3,1) 1: "I prefer to bring people up, bring, breed them successful in my part at work." Active grad recruitment depends on the role.	(4,1) 1: "...tended to resource internally and then go externally, generally to a recruitment agency, which is a poor way... expensive way getting people through the door."	(5,1) 1: Interview on a basis of Peter's checklist, but overall process a little informal. Small projects; has to be right as can cause big problems. Criteria: energetic, not afraid of hard work, open to learning, correct wealth of experience, flexible.	(6,1) -	(7,1) 1: Open to legal problems re: disciplinary issues as no policy, maybe too relaxed, would benefit from HR input.
Engineer	(1,2) 1: Wanted to move to London, was automatically transferred to Southern region and placed on a project.	-	1: (long, detailed, although a little 'bitter', account on treatment of grads and some suggestions)	(4,2) 2: Agency staff better paid, with co. you get the benefits & friendship. Almost 50:50 agency- perm. staff.	1: Smoothly recruited from prev. company at Millennium, chose the company because of training & progression prospects.	-	2: Someone had to leave because he didn't want to lodge away – maybe need to use extreme measures to make them listen. Pay a potential reason for exit. Culture reason for grads' exits (long detailed account).
Site manager/ supervisor/ agent	(1,3) 5: 'Ees are, but rarely, loaned between divisions depending on workload. For individuals opportunity exists. It is said to make work interesting. Special projects 'ee prefers to stay at S.P.s.	1: Site based people seem to miss out, not know everyone etc.	1: Not done 'locally', maybe HR's job (?).	(4,3) 3: Some agency employed longer term, try to keep contact. Provides flexibility to cover peaks/ high demand.	4: Whole process dealt within each division. Problem getting trades. SERF may be of help in recruitment in assessing suitability	-	5: Reason for exit may be frequent requests to work away from home, reasons to stay listening and training. Redundancies not communicated openly and well, non-progressing people selected. An example of a sack person making a mistake on a job.
Senior QS	(1,4) 2: Depending on workload 'ees are loaned between departments. 'Ee feels it is not actively encouraged, more informal.	-	1: "I was a trainee surveyor first. I joined after my A-level and did a part-time degree whilst at the company, five year degree."	(4,4) 1: In the past years use increased in S.P.s. Agency staff put with the company members to ensure customer satisfaction & (special) relationship.	2: In S.P.s variety of roles to play is used as attraction factor, SERF could help. Try attraction factors: small close environment with back-up from big group; modern, forward looking, professional.	-	1: a lot of staff left because of move of offices – natural wastage, helped in resourcing for lesser workload.
General foreman	(1,5) 1: S.P.s 'ee loaned to main works, not liking it, prefers smaller jobs. Been asked to go to London once, refused.	1: "Thrown in the deep end really". Induction pack, but not followed through maybe due to many new starters, even those supposed to induct others. Idea of a chart & job descriptions.	-	(4,5) 1: "I started off freelancing, came here. I was looking for a permanent place and had interviews." "Warned the co. I was looking..." "They offered me a position. So I stayed here."	1: "I started off freelancing..." "I warned the co. I was looking..." "They offered me a position..."	-	1: "I think that is the only thing that would put me off a job if I have got to travel too far. Because I am a family man at heart and I like to be close to home." Wouldn't relocate even temporarily to work in London

							etc.
<i>Admin</i>	(1,6) -	-	-	(4,6) -	-	-	-
<i>QS</i>	(1,7) 1: Would not want to move, seen an opening at Comms. Thinks hard to get back to mainstream if moves.	2: In mainstream commitment to 'ee progress shown immediately, but only new 'ees on 1 <sup>st</sup> project. In Int. newcomers paired with existing staff – 2 way help, 2 months to get induction pack from mainstream, 6 months for mainstream head surveyor to find out about him @ 1 <sup>st</sup> appraisal.	-	(4,7) 1: New 'ee put on his 1 <sup>st</sup> job with a (new) agency guy – blind leading blind.	4: Due to fast growth recruitment has been very high; still struggling for people. (Jason, Comms:) joined Comms to get into mainstream due to the company reputation, liked Comms, decided to stay. (Simon, Int:) couldn't join as a Ass. Proj. Manager due to co. policy – instead called QS.	1: Level of resources needed to meet requirements are constantly reviewed. There has never been concerns. Peaks (and drops) are covered by working harder for 2-3 weeks, until something else is being actioned.	2: "the company possibly are the most caring for their employees. But it is not the only fact that, and there is a price on that." Pay a possible reason for exit, training and good opps. for experience can make stay. In Int. "it has been a complete turnover of staff."
<i>Junior</i>	(1,8) 1: Been to Comms., now mainstream, wanted to move to improve training opps. & move set up anyway.	-	1: "When I first started, they said that's what it will be like. And I was a bit will it or won't it, but it is."	(4,8) -	1: "When I was in my interview when I first started, they said that's what it will be like. And I was a bit will it or won't it, but it is."	-	-
<i>Design co-ordinator</i>	(1,9) 1: No opps to move between divisions and get experience unless you know a high level manager to help you.	1: Induction pack	-	(4,9) -	2: Lot of work in the industry – difficult to attract and retain. Bigger co. HR purchasers of human resources. (+ refs to Millenium)	1: Doesn't think human resources take account of supply and demand effectively. Before people happy to have jobs, now lot of work/ choice.	2: "People in their late 20s, late 30s, they have just left for more money to other jobs, there is no progression for them." Progression definitely a potential reason for exit.
<i>Director</i>	(1,10) 2: Strategy to move people (e.g. from civils to building) to gain experience and on-the-job training – need for broad people. Occasionally (necessary ad hoc) moves prove interesting/difficult. Transfers part of team formation/int. recruitment. Provides flexibility. For Try a good opportunity to work within a larger group.	4: Aim bringing people into the company way of working and doing things. In Int. 1 & 3 month review to find out if expectations met, allows for problems to be dealt with quickly. aim to integrate new 'ees quickly, get them settled, give opportunity to perform.	1: Grads/ trainees a 'solution' to lack of skilled resource in the industry. (detailed, longish account and ideas as to how to improve the situation, e.g. placing trainees with subcontractors, taking apprentices, etc.)	(4,10) 3: Two purposes – recruitment agencies and temps used to generate flexibility to release 'ees from larger projects/ cover peaks. Recruitment through agencies more effective than direct advertising as most people (even senior) register with agencies.	4: Heavy recruitment past 3 years, impacts on culture – requires careful selection. Stabilising now. Linked to business plan. Involvement at recruiting for senior posts, guiding lower managers to select right. Strategy to recruit more building skills rather than civils. Sudden projects required immediate recruitment – always faced with unknown. Mostly by agencies as people register, few contact direct. Trying to look for longer-term back-up. Criteria: seniors' attitude, lower technical capability and competencies, pers. skills & recommendations, comm skills, teamwork, pers	3: Trying to look ahead (6 years), right levels and types of resources needed. Also 18 month planning in conjunction to business plan formulation. Comes in "planned and slightly unplanned" forms, easier if time and can define job descriptions. Problem with uncertainty, do 'what ifs'. Intentional HRP only on volume, but might result in wrong types of 'ees. In the next year looking to stabilise. In Int. business plan determines no. of estimators needed, then that gives approx. no. of projects won, etc. Challenging to estimate what turnover is going to be. Try has succession	3: Pay a reason for many exits, difficult to manage, culture for the company but pay against at some point, can't single someone out because of offer from somewhere else, market place overheated. In Int. an individual had to be let go because of unfit to culture and mngt style; disruptive influences have to be removed/ acted upon quickly. Not complying to H&S a potential reason for dismissal and immediate exit. if turnover high it is an indication of something wrong in the mngt style/ processes/ the way business is run. Currently a lot of exits/ unrest due to merger and resulting

					circumstances & prefs, geographic location, character, personality, motivation, drive. Determined by 2-3 unstructured informal scenario interviews, use job descriptions. (refs to Millenium & B'ham caretakers, Int. & Try specifics)	planning, linked to org. structure and career mngt, transparent procedure and open mngt style & culture. Business plan determines recruitment needs & succession planning. Keen to fast track as part of succession planning, part of appraisal.	changes. Aim to consolidate staff and make sure they are happy and comfortable with the arrangement of the merger.
<i>Prof</i>	(1,11) -	-	-	(4,11) -	-	-	-
<i>Working foreman</i>	(1,12) 1: Doesn't want to move from S.P.s, prefers small jobs. Thinks Richard doesn't want them to move either even if scarce of work as they wouldn't be given back. Knows people that have moved to Comms.	-	-	(4,12) -	1: Lot of new faces, don't know many due to no dealings with them.	-	1: Re holiday: "If it really got stroppy and the co said no you are only aloud two weeks I might turn around and say well that's it and I'll have to jack it because I am gonna go and that's it. You don't know what is around the corner. I mean I have just lost a very good friend who was only 26."
<i>Senior/ contracts manager</i>	(1,13) 5: Facilitates retention and provides diverse career opps, part of training. Links between divisions. Started & developing. Provides flexibility. 'Ees loaned from S.P.s to mainstream, but Richard fears they won't be let back. But he also thinks int. recruitment not effective enough. In, out and within Comms moves/ rotation encouraged.	4: Aim to satisfy aspirations and make 'ees feel part of the team, integrating long-term agency staff incl. invitation to in-house training. Need to reassess how new, especially managers, inducted/ introduced to the co.	4: "This company is very keen to make sure that a) we recruit the right people and train them properly and ultimately they become professionally qualified. The ethos of the company is that we have as many members of our staff professionally qualified in the various disciplines as possible." Work with Unis, attraction & retention problem. (see node for more details)	(4,13) 6: Two purpose – recruitment and temps. Currently 50:50 agency-perm. 'ees ratio, but perm. preferred in the long term – commitment. But some agency long-term/ regular. Provides flexibility. Agency to supplement/ cover high demand for staff, directors control, appropriate managers interview. Engineers specially in demand – most freelance. Richard questions co. policy/ practice. One divisional manager doesn't like agency at all. Comms rely heavily due to peaks and expansion.	7: Need for qualified people, difficult to recruit – extens. use freelance. Determined by workload. Process: agencies, job descriptions, interview, references, recomb to top, HR check(?) – timeconsuming, frustrating. Do themselves. Not trained, comes from experience. Techn. Competence easy to assess, personality & teamw hard. Strategy linked to business plan & procurement strategy (excellent quote from Dave). Criteria: assertive, technically competent, teamwork, fit in culture, safety, QA, motivation, prof. attitude. In S.P.s mature, trades background. Comms: willing to travel, comm skills, self-motivation, responsible. (details re:	5: "Key driver is the business plan." (excellent quote from dave.) Chris, MD, has overall view, managed centrally long-term, managers identify need & approve above, forecasting etc. dealt @ team briefings with constr. Director. Peter seeks to actively bring trainees; extensive forecasting. Richard notes a move toward proj. mngt roles. In Comms. not necessarily part of business plan, no numbers, more overall strategy, i.e. less freelance, etc. Workload difficult to forecast, fluid objective, workload determines need for people.	5: Problem with retention of grads/ trainees. On occasions voluntary exits provide flexibility, i.e. create room where needed. Pay a potential exit factor. Peter example of 'ee who left but wanted to come back, "We have had quite a few incidences of people coming back a second time around and it normally works, people come back and that is it. They want to make their career with the company then." In good times you employ not so good people, in worse times you make them redundant/ let go through disciplinary procedure. Some realise the situation and voluntarily leave. Redundancies: "I had to do it and that is the worst job in the world a man can do." (refs to Millenium) In

					B'ham sch, P. Barr & El)		S.P.s 'ees getting old; 60s. From Comms people go back to mainstream.
<i>Project manager</i>	(1,14) 3: Happens occasionally. Provides career opps. 'Ee been on short loan to Int., doesn't mind but prefers Try. A bit of 'war' to get back.	5: Very little, been 'dumped' on site, lads not used to manager's style – difficulties. Proper inducting role needs filling: before informal, now co. too big. In Int. existing members guide newcomers. In Try newcomers watched on projects.	1: "I have been with the company 20 years, from apprenticeship right the way through."	(4,14) 4: Supplement and cover for peaks, do weekend work. Proj. managers interview/ deal with themselves. Can be good in recruitment if you spend time with them. Currently 50:50 agency-perm. ratio. Commitment/ loyalty/ forming relationships can be problematic/ harder.	5: Difficult to recruit trades and other quality people – industry does not sell itself well externally. Do their own. (details on B'ham sch & Millen.)	1: Highlights the importance of succession planning for individuals and co: 'ees need PDPs and co needs to know where the stocks are gonna come from/ become available. Need to have people available to push up the ladder.	4: Alison: "the last thing I want is him walking out that door because he is gonna go. So got to be able to sit back and recognise when your staff is stressed and when they are happy." Finishing the project & resulting satisfaction keeps her in B'ham sch. To get ill & stressed, travel very far, long stays away without prior arrangement definite reasons for exit. (refs to Millennium)
<i>Senior estimator</i>	(1,15) 2: Opportunity to move between divisions. S.P.s 'ee doesn't want, prefers S.P.s. feels opps to move and loan 'ees within GallTry depending on workload.	1: Induction/ information pack, had to be changed slightly due to merger (e.g. pension).	-	(4,15) 1: Used for recruitment, get CVs, interview themselves.	2: In S.P.s process informal, bring people they know in. do their own mainly through agencies. Small team – need careful selection. Criteria: to fit in, teamwork, initiative, trustworthy, reliable, personality, humour,	-	1: people have left because offices moved – travel. Also lack of progression potential reason for exit, merger with the company may help. If his 'ee wants to leave, he would assists in all possible ways, provide contacts, references, etc.

## Appendix I

Primary case sample profile

Role	Approach		Sex		Age					Family Status		Base		Total
	Semi-strt.	Exploratory	Male	Female	Under 25	25 - 35	36 - 45	46 - 55	55 or over	Parent	No depend.s	Office	Site	
Director	2	2	4	-			1	1	2	4	-	4	-	4
Contr. Mngr	7	-	7	-			4	3		7	-	7	-	7
Chief Surveyor	1	-	1	-					1	1	-	1	-	1
Chief Estimator	1	-	1	-				1		1	-	1	-	1
HRM Staff	-	4	1	3		2	1	1		3	1	4	-	4
Comm. Mngr	1	-	1	-		1				-	1	1	-	1
Project Mngr	6	-	5	1		1	3	1	1	4	2	1	5	6
Site Manager	1	-	1	-					1	1	-	-	1	1
Site Agent	7	-	7	-		4	1		2	5	2	1	6	7
Design Co-ord.	2	-	1	1		2				-	2	-	2	2
Sen. Estimator	2	-	2	-			2			2	-	2	-	2
Senior QS	3	-	3	-		2		1		1	2	1	2	3
QS	2	-	2	-		2				1	1	1	1	2
Ass. QS	2	-	2	-	1	1				1	1	-	2	2
Engineer	4	-	4	-	2	2				-	4	-	4	4
Gen. Foreman	2	-	2	-			1	1		1	1	-	2	2
Work. Foreman	1	-	1	-				1		1	-	-	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>50</b>



## Appendix J

## Residual factors by role

<b>'Ee group (by role)</b>	<b>Cause</b>	<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
<b>(Commercial) Manager</b>	Org. structure do not encourage/ support.	Progression/ promotion	Will get "bogged down" if thinks about it.
	Informal, rules/ procedures rare.	Org. culture	Not aware of many org. procedures/ correct way of dealing with an issue; could end up in trouble if eg. disciplinary issues not handled correctly.
	Workload, fast track projects.	Long hours	Need to take work home regularly.
<b>Senior estimator</b>	Small dept. – limited opportunities.	Progression	Potential reason for exit.
	As a result of merger org. structure changing. Small(ish) departments/ divisions Self-driven; Need to show ability to do job before.	Promotion	Uncertainty;  Limited opportunities.  If no opportunities to demonstrate abilities limited chances.
	Points raised/ courses selected at appraisal not acted upon/ arranged; IT integration following merger prioritised but (even still) slow: points raised at appraisal not acted upon fast enough.	Training	Disappointment (and lack of development?)  Hinders personal and professional development; frustration re: not being able to develop at a desired schedule.
	Monitored via individual/ departmental tender success rate reports.	Feedback on performance	Can produce misleading information, ie. if one focuses on an area more difficult to secure work in or top mngt changes figures on their views success rates lower.
	Merger and resulting intergration, would like division to operate as separate unit; No communication from top, down to guesswork what will happen.	Org. structure	Fears that division name will become redundant, close involvement in past (- fears of 'ees becoming numbers?)
	Informal, office communication, few formal means.	EV communication	Roomers (reliable source?, also: linked to recognition of contribution to org.).
	Massive company, only involvement within own division.	Recognition of contribution to org.	
	Within larger organisation depts/ divisions don't talk to each other much/ well (linked to recognition of contribution to org.)	Interdepartmental co-operation	Strong/ positive culture can get diluted; create infighting between departments/ divisions
	Following merger changed.	Office location	Few people left due to longer travel.
	Expected as and when needed according to workload	Long hours (& working weekends)	
		Travel	Affects (neg.) personal life, desire to work from home on P/T basis
<b>Senior QS</b>	Mngt not aware of ambitions (lack of procedure/ mechanism to find out and record?), no guidance; Solely self-driven; No opportunities for progression within org. structure; Can't see possible next step;  Short-term outlook (org.);  Dependent on project opportunities.	Career development/ progression	Need for required experience not highlighted and training courses not offered.  Can only concentrate on current projects, impossible to plan ahead.  Uncertainty, difficult to stay motivated and plan future, can't see what aiming for;  Hindered progression due to reduced workload.
	Dept. moving toward focus on housing/ social housing, only sector of work many 'ees would not like to do.	Work type	(Many 'ees pushed to 1. a sector of work they do not wish to get into, 2. leave, or 3. move within larger group if possible?)
	Opportunities not clearly advertised; Solely self-driven;	Promotion	

Not many promotions in the past due to size of group;  
No clear procedure (although weak link to appraisal).

Rhetoric: managed via appraisal, reality: system used to reassure staff;	Feedback (appraisal), EI/ communication	Current mechanisms (appraisal) not effective in addressing issues;
No formal means; Info on merger and its effects for the future not open.		All informal office conversation; Uncertainty (linking to team spirit).
Merger.	Team spirit	Reduced motivation and eroded team spirit (due to reduced workload) within merged dept.
Limited head office involvement, projects set up as separate remote self-sufficient units.	Recognition of contribution to org.	
Merger – reduced workload;	Project (deployment) opportunities	Limited opportunities (in size/ type/ location/ etc. of jobs) available.
Allocation mainly on availability; No guidelines, personal thing (to each manager).		Little 'ee involvement in the process.
Not encouraged, happens occasionally on an informal basis depends on workload.	Moving between divisions/ departments	
Change in procedure to operate outside original 50 mile radius area;	Project (work) location	Can become a problem: affects life outside work, especially in main works which operate all over country: could be deployed to anywhere and need to lodge away.
No rules/ guidelines to manage process.		
Merger.	Move of offices	Reason for many 'ees' exit.
Workload, job requirements.	Long hours & working weekends	'Ees do not take part in org. social side as not as much time to spend at home as many would like.
Pay approx. industry average.	Pay	Issue in getting new people interested and in.

*Project manager*

Site set up as separate company with full remit of staff; Division operated as a separate unit; No involvement from top mngt; In coming to the company taken two steps down in role status.	Recognition of contribution to org.	Strong subcultures (can create potential problems in redeploying people to new jobs?) Feeling of "them and us".  Difficult not to get involved.
Merger;	EI/ communication	Info (on future & merger) not forthcoming, "them and us", (if/ when interested enough) need to make own business to find out; Informal interaction/ keeping in touch with people more difficult & therefore disappearing, people possibly becoming [payroll] numbers; Not aware of HR policies/ strategy. Reliance on direct links and communication with contracts managers making them even busier dealing with all issues.
Org. growth;		
No org. procedure.		
No guidance (linking to consequences of org. growth) or "map";	Careers	Lack of info on possible routes/ opportunities; individuals who rely on mngt recognising performance and ability (are not "pushy") may not get appropriate opportunities; Taking longer than hoped, limited support and guidance, the appraisal system not actually facilitating career mngt/ development; Not necessarily realistic according to opportunities available within org. (or indeed abilities of 'ee) – continuity of fulfilling ambitions not guaranteed.
Reliance on (already otherwise busy) contracts managers to manage via appraisals; Very high ambitions;		Individuals who rely on mngt recognising performance and ability (are not "pushy") may not get appropriate opportunities.
Self-driven, need to draw your own future.		
No guidance on roles, thrown in at the deep end;	Promotion	Difficulties in transition from agent to projects manager, don't know specific role and

		responsibilities – doing sometimes too much/ too little, not effective time mgmt.
Always self-driven; Need to prove you can do the job/ have required abilities before considered; Small division/ dept.		If not right opportunities to show ability etc. limited opportunities for promotion. No opportunities unless moves within larger group.
Merger, reduced workload;	<b>Project (deployment) opportunities</b>	Team spirit changed, people unsettled.
Personal preference to do bigger/ higher profile developments but located within smaller division.		Mismatch between division specialism/ typical work and 'ee preference.
Deployment very much on the basis of availability & occasionally also location;	<b>'Ee suitability to a project and specialisation in project allocation</b>	Dissatisfaction in specialisation etc. not taken into account – best skills not used/ developed.
No structure to the process		Criteria used centres around availability, and occasionally expertise (Note: conflicts the whole point here and above really!)
Project priorities (eg. new jobs requiring staff) and changing staff requirements over life cycle of projects require separation.	<b>Team redeployment (kept together)</b>	Would like to keep a hub of people they know together but can cause too tight teams/ too much reliance of key members.
Industry characteristics: bad weather, safety, long hours, etc.	<b>Recognition of 'ee needs in decision-making</b>	Poor working conditions;  Can cause stress; Potential reason for exit. 'Ee needs come 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
Project no 1 priority.		
Project priorities (joint venture busy and taking longer than expected).	<b>Personal (and org.) development</b>	Had to stop doing training for HR department – hinders org./ 'ee learning & internal expertise not utilised to full potential.
Project requirements prioritised.	<b>Training</b>	Miss out on courses, qualifications (eg. first aid licence) go out of date and need to be started from beginning.
Regional (national) org. Project location;  Location of home;  Required to be on site F/T; Characteristic of industry.	<b>Travel</b>	No EU/ overseas travel opportunities; Not much time at home (especially when combined with long hours); Considerable disruptions to home life, possible reason for exit; Can not work from home (even occasionally); Accepted; Potential reason for exit (1 left previously because of travel but has now come back).
	<b>Staying (lodging) away</b>	Potential reason for exit if (especially longer stays) not arranged in advance.
Project requirements;	<b>Work-life balance</b>	Lose faith in (more/ better) balanced life, (in the long-term may result in exit?) Would think long and hard before approaching them; no idea what reaction would be.
Not sure of higher mgmt (directors') attitudes ( indication of org. message/ culture intentions not delivering down effectively?).		
Not paid for overtime – required to do extensive amounts to keep project to programme; Not paid enough according to role/ responsibility; Pay below market rate.	<b>Pay/ overtime</b>	Potential reason for exit.
No procedure/ system, managed informally.	<b>Moves between divisions/ departments</b>	Problems in pay and expenses (especially when moving between merging divisions); "war" to get 'ees' back.
(Usually at the start and) near project completion & hand over – busy period (project size multiplied problem & extended busy period at joint venture); Often work Sat & Sun when workload so requires.	<b>Long hours</b>	Not enough time at home (linking with long distance travel);  Puts pressure on family life, poor image on industry as a result of poor conditions.
Not facilitated, "dumped" on site;	<b>(New recruit/ team</b>	Difficulties in getting used to different working/

	member) Induction	mngt styles; problems at start of project; takes considerable time (eg. PFI schools 3 months) to get team cohesion and members to work well together.
Previous informal interaction disappeared.		
Merger; Observations of lack of co-operation in the company within departments.	Team spirit	Feelings of "them and us" Resentment toward greater integration.
No appropriate medium to discuss, relies on individual managers ability to deal; Can be stress (from work) related	Health problems	'Ees hiding and not airing problems (can be very harmful in the long term?) Potential reason for exit.
Appraisal (not carried out correctly/ managed to full potential?);  No systematic evaluation: subjective process.	Feedback on performance and progression	Points raised not always acted upon, system seen as paper exercise; does not facilitate career management.  Project performance a key indicator, but external and other factors affect project performance to a significant extent. (Is this fair evaluation method?)
<i>Site manager/ supervisor/ agent</i>		
Small department, workload	Progression	Limited/ rare opportunities;
No discussion with mngt (Lack of guidance/ procedure?)		Not aware of possible opportunities, willingness to move to another org. – potential reason for exit
Self-driven		Direction not clear
Age ("too old")	Promotion	Limited opportunities
Been on most courses;	Training (and development)	Limited learning from courses, feels repetitive, highlighted importance on on-the-job learning
Personal priority at early stages of career; Courses identified at appraisal not arranged due to project priorities/ org. workload		
Expected when project/ workload requires;	Long hours	If long-term tiring, disruptions to work-life balance
Joint venture requirements especially demanding (~12-14hrs/ day); Average 10-11 hrs/ day; Typical to industry; Highlighted when project approaching hand over; Mngt agree to unrealistic programme time scales.		Effects felt on the people doing the job, not the ones planning/ agreeing to it.
Prefers to get home every night, project location may require;	Travel	On occasions driven 70 miles each way;  Affect life (neg.);
Part of the industry Difficult to get used to longer distances as initially regional operation		Over time get used to it or forced to get used to it as otherwise fears would be moved to another division due reduced dept. workload where could be even worse.
Org. culture of empowerment	Interest from top mngt/ head office	Feels not enough pressure/ interest from org.
Site based		Miss out, not know everyone
Nature of industry requires (sometimes) harsh decisions Allocation to only one particular type of projects (chemical plants) over longer period Limited workload (within division) Based on availability	Project deployment	No variety, frustration, complaints to mngt but with no result/ change/ action  No choice of projects/ variety No appropriate skills or mngt style – poor performance or even demotion from post
Heavy admin. load	Role and responsibilities	Not using best (building) skills
Head office looks after buying materials etc.		Uncertainty as don't always know progress of requisitions; less comprehensive role

	<b>Long hours</b>	Disrupts family life
No clear mechanism/ guidance	<b>Feedback on performance/ progression</b>	Uncertainty, difficult to realise whether (mngt thinks) capable for next move; don't know how performance measured.
System not appropriate at higher/ more developed levels		
No structure or guidance, managed via appraisal (unsuccessfully?)	<b>Career (development)</b>	
Preference not to	<b>Staying (lodging) away</b>	Affects life if continuous;  Potentially a reason for exit (if continuous requests).
Average to industry	<b>Pay</b>	Expectations not met (however vitally important for both attraction and retention!)
Low paid profession		Don't know how system works
Divisions operated as separate units	<b>Communication on wider org. Issues</b>	No knowledge of wider org.
Site based		Isolated
Uncertainty not discussed openly		ie. if redundancies necessary staff kept on their toes, only those going aware.
Does not happen unless specific problem	<b>Discussion on (both org. &amp; 'ee) expectations – psychological contract</b>	Thinking: just know (- could be 'knowing' or thinking of knowing totally wrong?)
Informal	<b>Team integration and co-ordination</b>	Difficulties at start of project
Pressure to get on with programmes		No effective planning: disorganisation, no clear follow on progress

<b>QS</b>	Little below industry average/ market rate	<b>Pay</b>	Risk to lose 'ees seeking to maximise their income potential and willing to compromise on the caring culture; Main reason for 'ee turnover.
	Paid less than what one thinks he/ she is worth		
	Minimum acceptable		Disappointment – looking for promotion
	Org. procedure	<b>Progression</b>	Rules (ie. need a specific Univ. degree to qualify for certain posts) hinder progression
	Need to show ability to do job before	<b>Promotion</b>	If no opportunity given chances limited
	Aspirations not clearly defined (on 'ee part)	<b>Career</b>	
	Org. procedure	<b>Role</b>	Could not join Int. as Ass. project manager – named QS
	Intended 6 month checks on progress against appraisal targets not carried out	<b>Review (feedback) on progress</b>	
		<b>Team member selection</b>	High numbers of new 'ees on a team – hinders performance and progress as no knowledge of org. systems  Blind leading blind
	New company 'ee on project with new agency 'ee	<b>Project deployment</b>	Uncertainty: don't know on which site placed until on site and had first tea
	No clear and quick lines, poor due to project size and amount of people	<b>Communication</b>	Problems due to people not being aware as early as should be of what is going on and what should be done;  What intended to filter down from mngt doesn't happen clearly or frequently enough
	Historical way of doing things; "the company way"	<b>Org. culture</b>	New ideas not encouraged (but are listened to) and not taken on
	Trust on older members		Rely and put a lot (maybe too much?) work on them
	Fast track projects, heavy workload	<b>Nature of work</b>	Stressful work
		<b>Move between divisions</b>	Thinking that if moves eg. to Comms hard to get back to main stream – don't want to move

	Need to work harder/ longer until solutions found if short of staff; Expected; Requirement depends on workload; Reasonable amount(?) of overtime required by contract	Long hours	Never done (only) contracted hours Affects work-life balance, partner doesn't like
	Split between divisions	Recognition of contribution to org.	
	Working on project away	Training	Full advantage of opportunities not taken
<i>Design co-ordinator</i>	Project location;  (Nature of industry, "goes with the job") taken for granted; Co provides a fully expensed car – expects 'ees' to travel.	Travel	Not safe to drive longer distances especially after long hours (specially in winter); Not going to attract people/ grads into the industry; Takes 'ees' time (away from home/ family/ leisure/ rest).
	May be required if project location far away (ie. not within safe driving distance – linked to travel consequences); (Nature of industry) taken for granted.	Staying away	Disrupts family/ home life.
	If you start doing them, become an expectation (from mngt/ org.); Nature of industry;  Site based; Toward end of projects, hand over times (as a result of poor planning/ not keeping to programme timescales?).	Long hours	Only get paid approx. 2/3 hrs worked;  Not going to attract people/ grads into the industry as they can find better working conditions elsewhere.
	Expected at no extra pay.	Overtime	No reward (ie. time off lieu/ extra holiday) – dissatisfaction.
	Pay lower than industry average; Only paid for approx. 2/3 hrs worked; No opportunities for progression (promotion).	Pay	Potential reason for exit.
	No structured system – no opportunities unless know mngt in higher positions (ie. heads of certain divisions etc.).	Opportunity to move between divisions	No experience of work within different divisions, lesser knowledge of org. operations as a whole.
	No opportunities due to flat structure;  If you are good you stay where you are.	Promotion (upward)	Potential reason for exit (linked to pay).
	HR/ mngt doesn't take account of supply and demand effectively, poor longer term planning.	Progression (eg. job enrichment/ enlargement, horizontal moves)	Potential reason for exit due to many opportunities existing outside the org. in the industry – boom: lot of choice.
	No structure/ guidance, all what you make of it, mngt do not encourage progress;  (Appraisal) career mngt tool only paper exercise; Experience from lower construction chain (subcontractor & now contractor), wishing to experience upper chain (clients, banks, etc.).	Career progression	"Dead end role" (also linked to progression and promotion), ambitions not met or even discussed – potential reason for exit. Need to seek guidance outside org. (eg. from CIOB & colleagues from other orgs).  Need to leave and seek employment with client org. (secondment an option?)
	Paper exercise, formality.	Feedback (appraisal)	Lack of feedback/ guidance on performance and/ or opportunities.
	Shadowing/ frequent shorter sessions preferred over longer formal courses which form current org. standard;  No structure.	Training and development	On the job learning and application of new skills to practice hindered, use more informal means/ seek developmental opportunities outside org.  Random training courses – PDPs not fulfilling their purpose.
	"Stuck" @ joint venture for long time due to project priorities, would like to move to new developments.	Project deployment (process)	(Reduced performance, frustration?)

<i>Junior QS</i>	(Below industry average) found out, spoke to mngt, no immediate action/ communication	Pay	Confusion and disappointment for a while, at the end brought back in line with expectations
		Travel	Less productive (takes time from work & home)
	Performance and training appraisals divorced, operated separately	Feedback	Two (almost identical) systems run parallel (paperwork doubled?)
<i>Engineer</i>	HFV line mngt/ org. structure do not support achievement/ progress;	Career preferences/ development	
	Process solely self-driven;		
	Placed on projects (joint venture) for too long especially at early stage;		2 yrs long time without variety – got a bit stale, tired of driving from Leicester to B'ham daily, would have been further advanced and learnt more on eg. 3 8-month projects. Also problems with car tax (after 2 yrs permanent place of work).
	No diverse opportunities to develop/ gain experience.		
	Established practice (by 'ees?) to leave and come back;	Promotion	
	If good kept at current post (only at 4 year mark opportunity for promotion).		
	Established practice (by 'ees?) to leave and come back;	Pay (rise)	
	(linking to above) Agency staff better paid;		Neg: no advantage of 'ee benefits and friendship one gets with co.
	If good kept at current post and within certain salary band – can't be a good engineer & stay an engineer but get pay rises;		Even good engineers who would like to/ be willing to stay out on the field need to move to office & mngt posts to gain pay rise.
	Pay not high/ satisfactory (company known to pay below industry average).		Potential reason for exit.
Rigid development/ experience structures especially at early stages.	Best use of skills/ talents		
Culture of some high achievers/ performers & some poor – tends to change fast if not working according to plan;	Recognition of individual qualities		
Confrontational industry;		Need strong personality to get through	
Org. culture "old school", "old boys network", aggressive macho environment, undercurrent of sarcasm, bullyish, old fashioned, male dominated.		Fresh ideas, methods, people are resented by the older team members.	
Culture of rigid development structure, no recognition for individual qualities;	Graduate development (linked to recognition of individual qualities)	Potentially and in the past a real reason for exit.	
Rhetoric: co thinks it treats grads well, reality: "hit and miss" depending on team.			
Process not carried out due to project priorities or move from a project to another with new mngt;	Feedback on performance and progress (appraisal)	No opportunity to voice opinions and no records on performance/ progress – senior mngt can not follow is points acted upon.	
Where process carried out no action on points raised;			
Process largely subjective, no consistency.			
"Them and us" @ joint venture;	Team integration/ building		
Some teams kept tightly together – new members "tested", strong peer power/ pressure with little or no mngt interference.			
Head office leadership/ recognition poor, almost non-existent;	Recognition of contribution to org.		



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Isolated on site.

In the main mngt decides team formation;	Project (deployment process) preferences	
Need to have friends in higher places to voice opinions.		
@ joint venture over 2 yrs – considered permanent place of work by tax regulations, brought to the attention of personnel, initially no response, later agreed to deal with the problem.	(Problems with) car tax	Personnel bad & not helpful image; 'ee dissatisfaction with org. policy/ procedures.
Move toward subcontracting practice where whole package (incl. labour, plant & materials) contracted out.	Procurement (of labour and materials) method	Less risk for the org. but 'ees also have less control and therefore involvement and experience.
Nature of industry, accepted, seasons affect production but also lot of paperwork involved; "Look busy" culture: need to get in early & stay late, can be drinking tea (hours never talked about). Lot of responsibility early on, take ownership, but not fast/ experienced enough.	Long hours (culture)	Get used to it, immune.  Affects personal life, but a way of earning respect from peers.  Getting tasks done takes longer but provides experience.
Required to work extensive amount of overtime with no extra pay.	Overtime	Dissatisfaction, annoyance.
Location of project.	Travel	Takes valuable study/ working/ life time. Tires 'ees down.  No overseas travel opportunities.
Regional (national) org.		
Requested to stay away due to project priorities.	Staying (lodging) away	Had to leave the co. as didn't want to/ wouldn't agree to stay away. An impression created amongst other 'ees that need to result in extreme measures to make mngt listen.
Industry characteristic. Division a regional company.		Regional work should be a perk – rhetoric; in reality projects all over country.

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*General foreman*

Mngt forced (and wife pressurised) promotion following knee injury at work	Promotion	Strong resistance
Given car with package	Benefits	Unsuitable reward: not bothered about cars
Required to do 15hrs overtime/ month with no extra pay	Pay	Unwilling to do overtime
Paid unreasonably little for overtime in the past		Complaints but with no result/ change
Used to more responsibility Org. system	Role	Would like to be empowered more Not much value put on site people
Managed via appraisal	EI	Hopes that points raised actioned upon but uncertainty
	Travel	Potential reason to reject a project/ leave org.
Expected as and when project priorities require Usually worse at start & end of jobs	Long hours	Affects personal life a lot (eg. divorced once due to working too much)
Org./ project busy Not allowed to carry entitlement over	Holiday	No time to take time off Lose entitlement – anger and determination to take holidays in future on whatever the cost to project/ org. performance
Asked previously	Staying (lodging) away	Refused as family/ home priority; potential reason for exit.
Loan between divisions due to reduced and increased workload	Inter-divisional moves	Dissatisfaction; difficulties in integrating within the team as only short-term
Thrown at deep end on projects; Induction pack for new starters not followed through	Induction	Problems at beginning
Org. growth, use of subcontractors and agency staff Stuck to the system/ procedures	Org. culture	Ground level 'ees thinning down  Waste money, not much value on site people.

Lack of trust

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<i>Working foreman</i>	Due to org. growth lot of new faces, no dealings with them	Induction	Don't know many people around
	Restrictions on time taken off	Holiday	Potential reason to leave
	Qs do not give out profit info because 'ees might start asking for more money if on successful job	Comprehensive range of info on project	
	Increased use of subcontractors	Role and responsibilities	Physical side reduced
		Long hours	
		Travel	Drag

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## Appendix K

Primary case study organisation's People Statement (Annual Report and Accounts, 2002):

*"[...] recognises the very significant contribution made by its workforce to the success of its activities. Our human resources strategy is designed to support the relationship we enjoy with our employees and follows best practice. The company currently employs around 2,100 people and operates a learning environment. We undertake to provide each employee with relevant and structured training to provide motivation, job satisfaction and to maximise their contribution to the business..."*

*...We are an equal opportunities employer. We have introduced a broad policy and procedures which operate across all business units on equal opportunities in respect of recruitment, benefits, training and advancement. [...] recognises and respects cultural differences and diversity, and is committed to give full and fair consideration to applications for employment from ethnic minorities and the disabled. It is important to us to respect our employees' work-home life balance and privacy..."*

*It is our aim to have sufficient people with the mix of competencies needed to meet the current and future needs of our business plan. [...] competency-based annual appraisal system, which includes a personal development plan, for all employees across the group.*

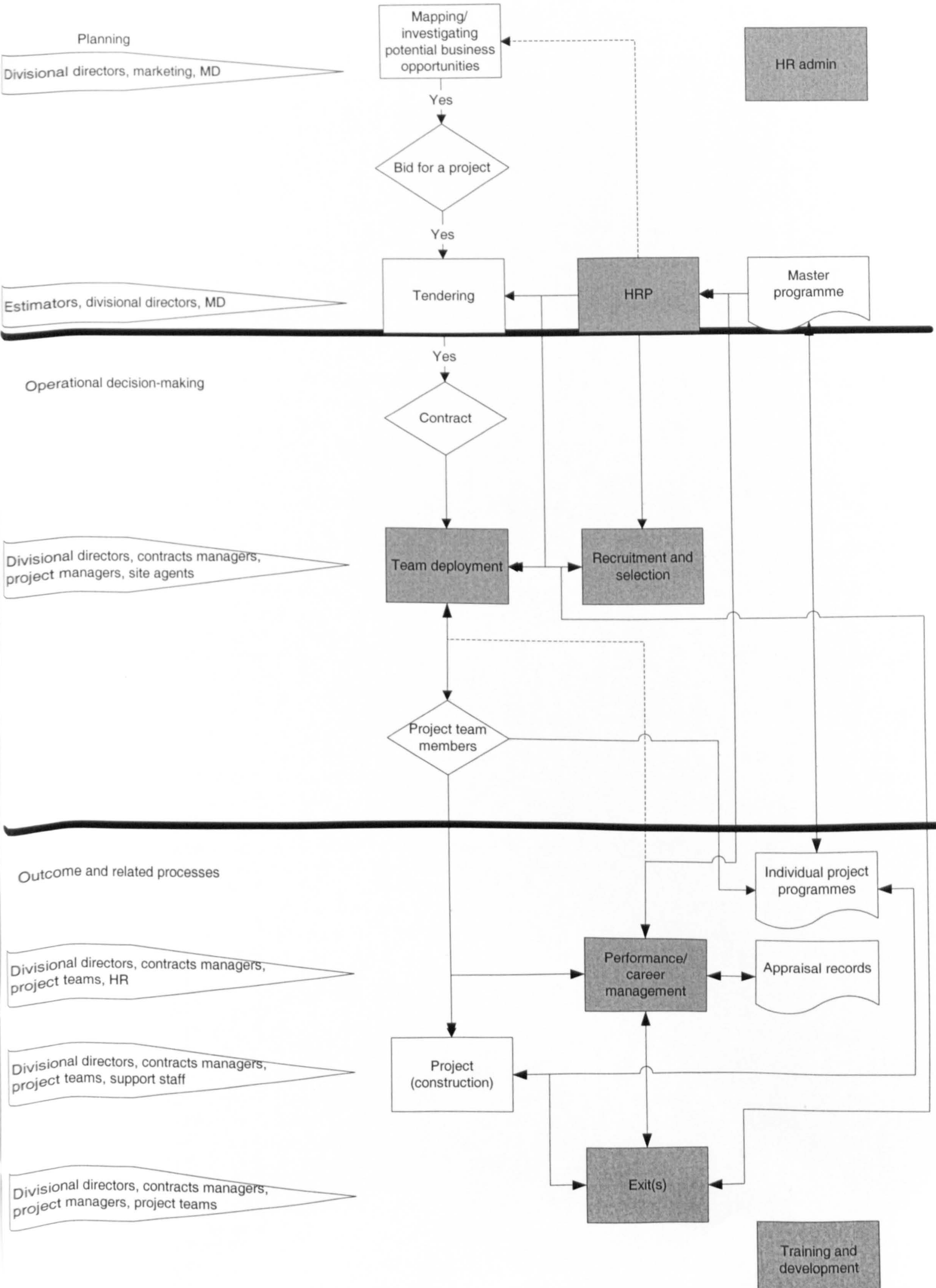
*[...] In 2001 we achieved group-wide accreditation under the Investors in People standard, which underpins our corporate training and development*

*strategy. During the past year we have made further progress and have succeeded in embedding new training schemes into the business. We are currently reviewing our long term training strategy to achieve 'fully qualified' workforce through linking existing and new training programmes to NVQs and to ensure that we continue to provide 'lifelong' learning opportunities for all employees.*

*Employee communication continues to be improved. We value open, honest and constructive communication throughout the company and consult with staff at all levels about matters that affect the progress of the company and are of interest and concern to them as employees. We do this through quarterly employee briefings, half-yearly results updates by the group and its operating companies, an annual employee survey and twice-yearly publication of our magazine[...] and the employee newsletter[...] Production of a new employee handbook, which will contain all group policies and procedures and reflect the new 'family friendly' legislation being introduced by the government, is well advanced and it will be published shortly."*

## Appendix L

# The current employee resourcing decision-making processes



## Appendix L1



# Human resource planning (HRP)

## Background

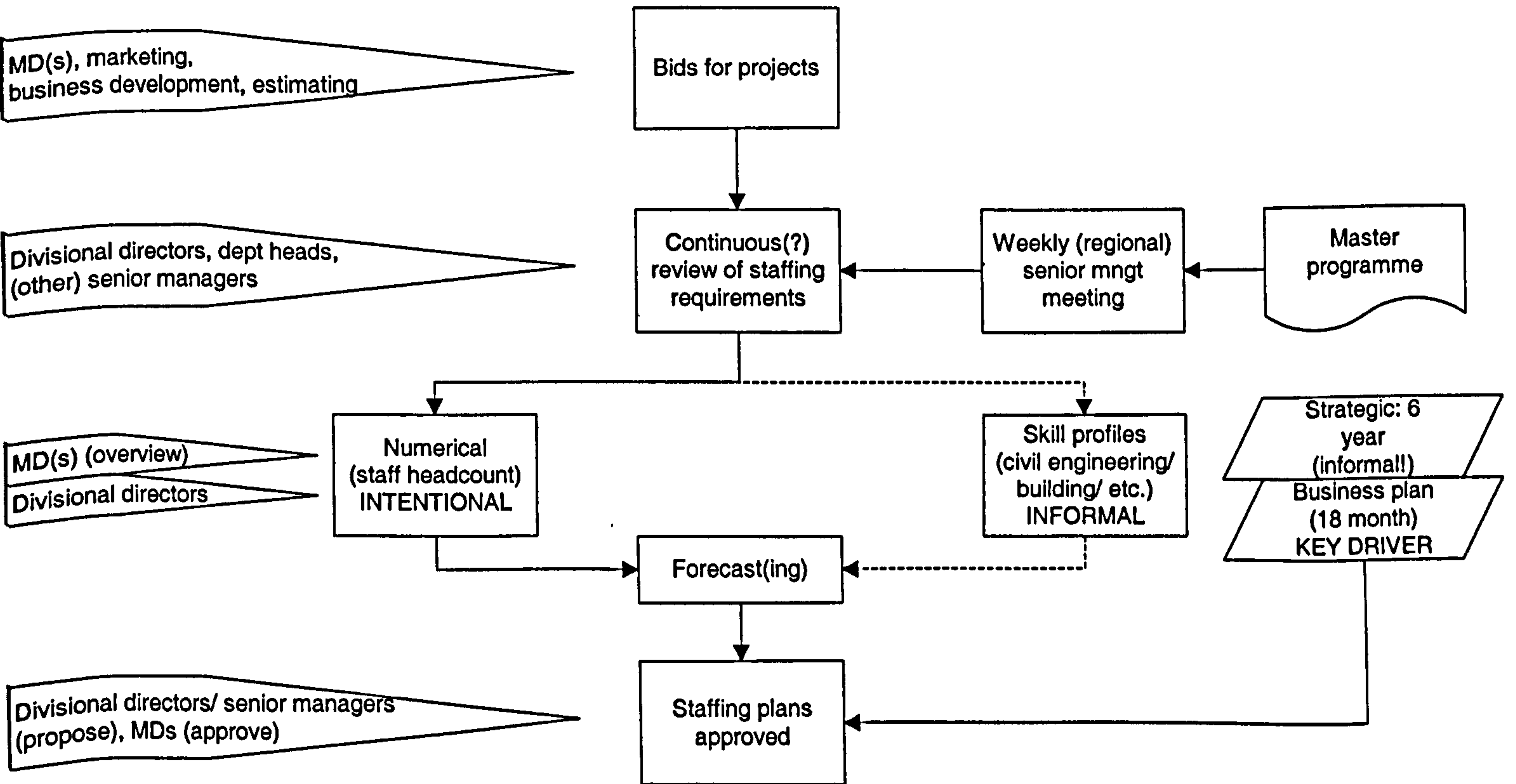
'Ee dissatisfaction re: HR/ directors not taking into account labour market supply and demand  
- booming markets: various opportunities (externally)

'Ees highlight the importance of planning re: career mngt, PDP, succession mngt, ensuring workload managed smoothly - 'ee satisfaction, project performance, company performance

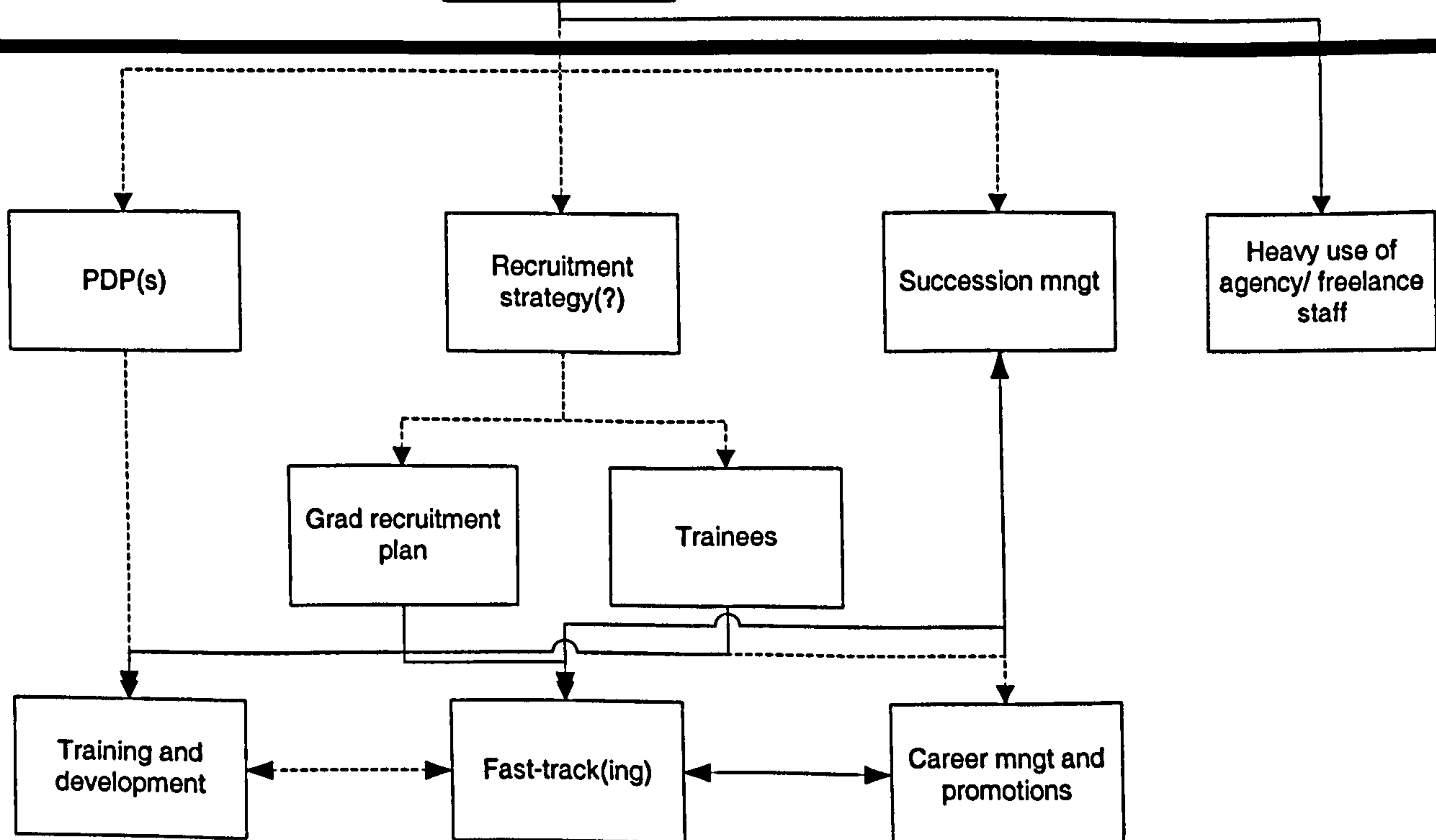
Senior managers recognise the importance of planning in order to secure a right number and type of resources available as/ when required

BUT, major challenge: uncertainty, steep fluctuations in the number and type of projects successful bid for

## Planning

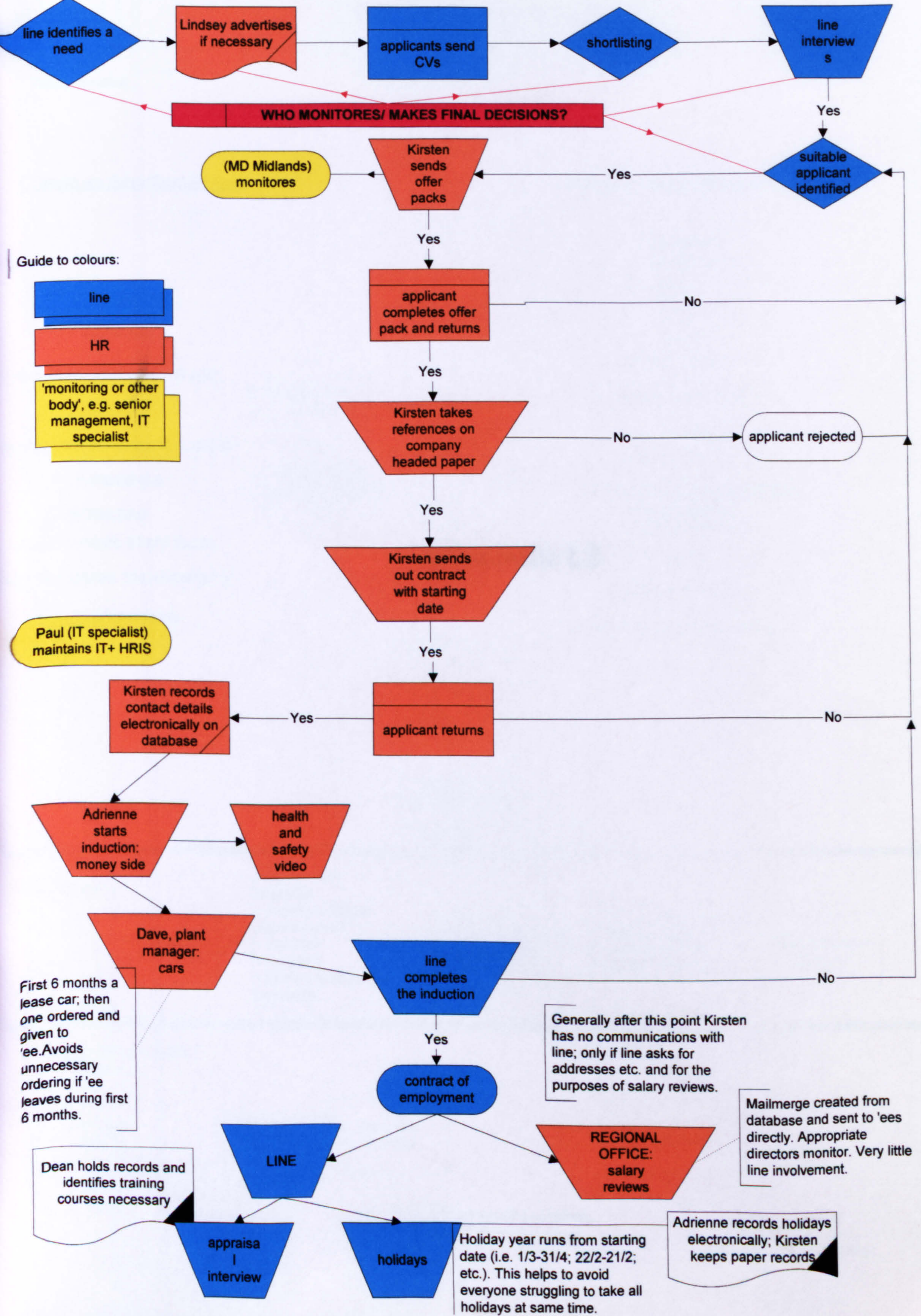


## Outcome and related processes



## Appendix L2

**Recruitment process**



**Guide to colours:**

- line
- HR
- 'monitoring or other body', e.g. senior management, IT specialist

**Paul (IT specialist) maintains IT+ HRIS**

First 6 months a lease car; then one ordered and given to 'ee. Avoids unnecessary ordering if 'ee leaves during first 6 months.

Generally after this point Kirsten has no communications with line; only if line asks for addresses etc. and for the purposes of salary reviews.

Mailmerge created from database and sent to 'ees directly. Appropriate directors monitor. Very little line involvement.

Dean holds records and identifies training courses necessary

Adrienne records holidays electronically; Kirsten keeps paper records

Holiday year runs from starting date (i.e. 1/3-31/4; 22/2-21/2; etc.). This helps to avoid everyone struggling to take all holidays at same time.

## Appendix L3

# Team deployment

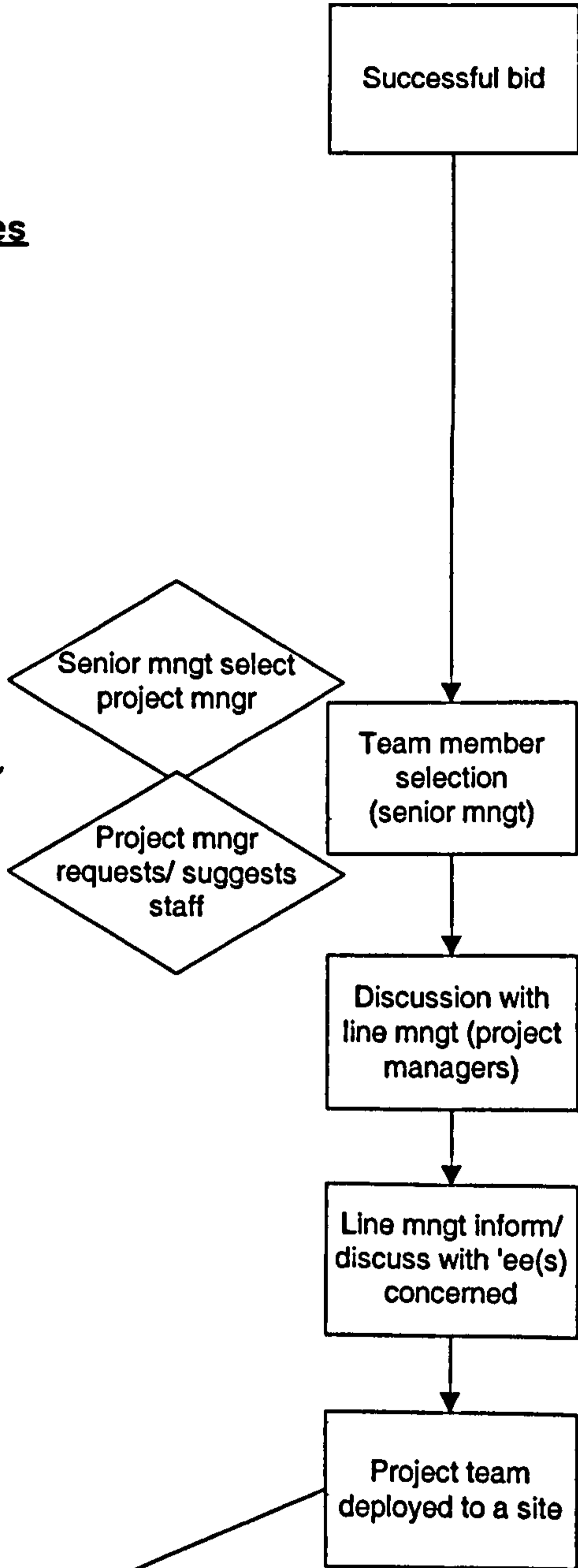
## Team formation

### Criteria as described by 'ees

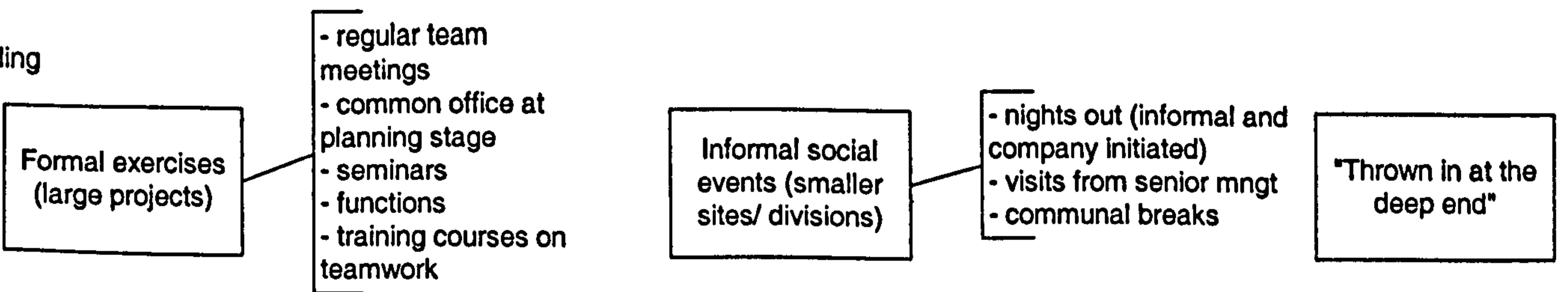
### Criteria as described by managers

- AVAILABILITY
- LOCATION
- SIZE & COMPLEXITY OF THE JOB
- CLIENT
- INDIVIDUAL'S STRENGTHS & ABILITY
- EXPERIENCE
- WORKLOAD
- AGENCY/ PERM. STAFF RATIO
- INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS
- QUALIFICATION(S)

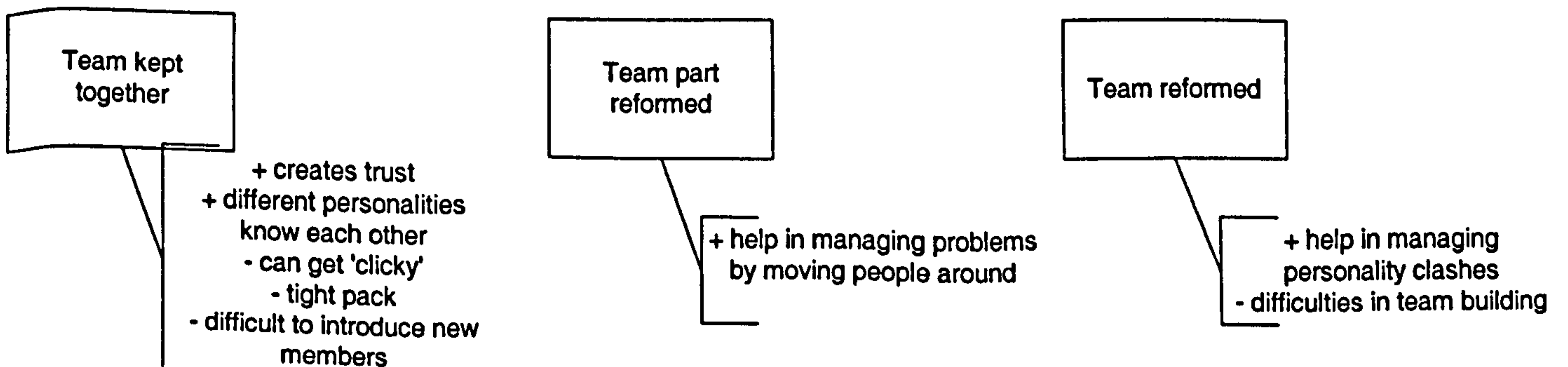
- AVAILABILITY
- EXPERIENCE
- "GUT FEEL"
- ABILITY
- CLIENT
- TRAINING NEEDS
- 'EE CAREER ASPIRATIONS
- LOCATION
- PROJECT TYPE
- 'EE STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES
- INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS
- 'EE ATTITUDE
- PEOPLE SKILLS
- AGENCY/ PERM. STAFF RATIO



## Team building



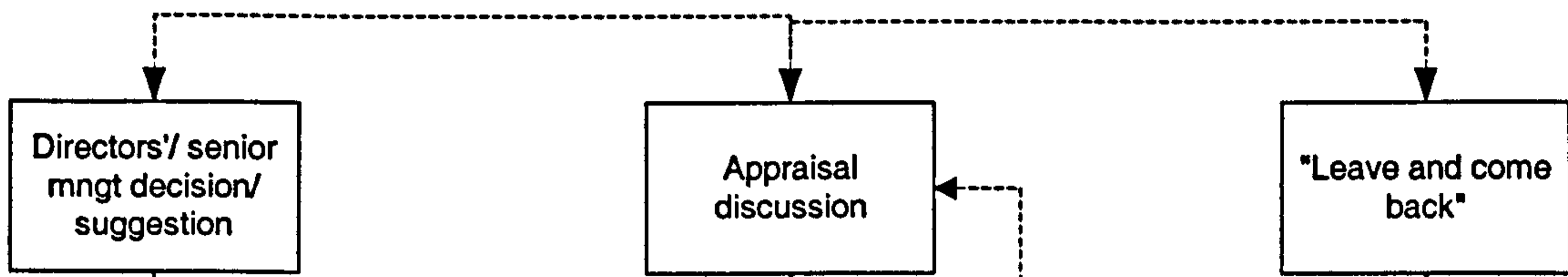
## Redeployment and related outcomes



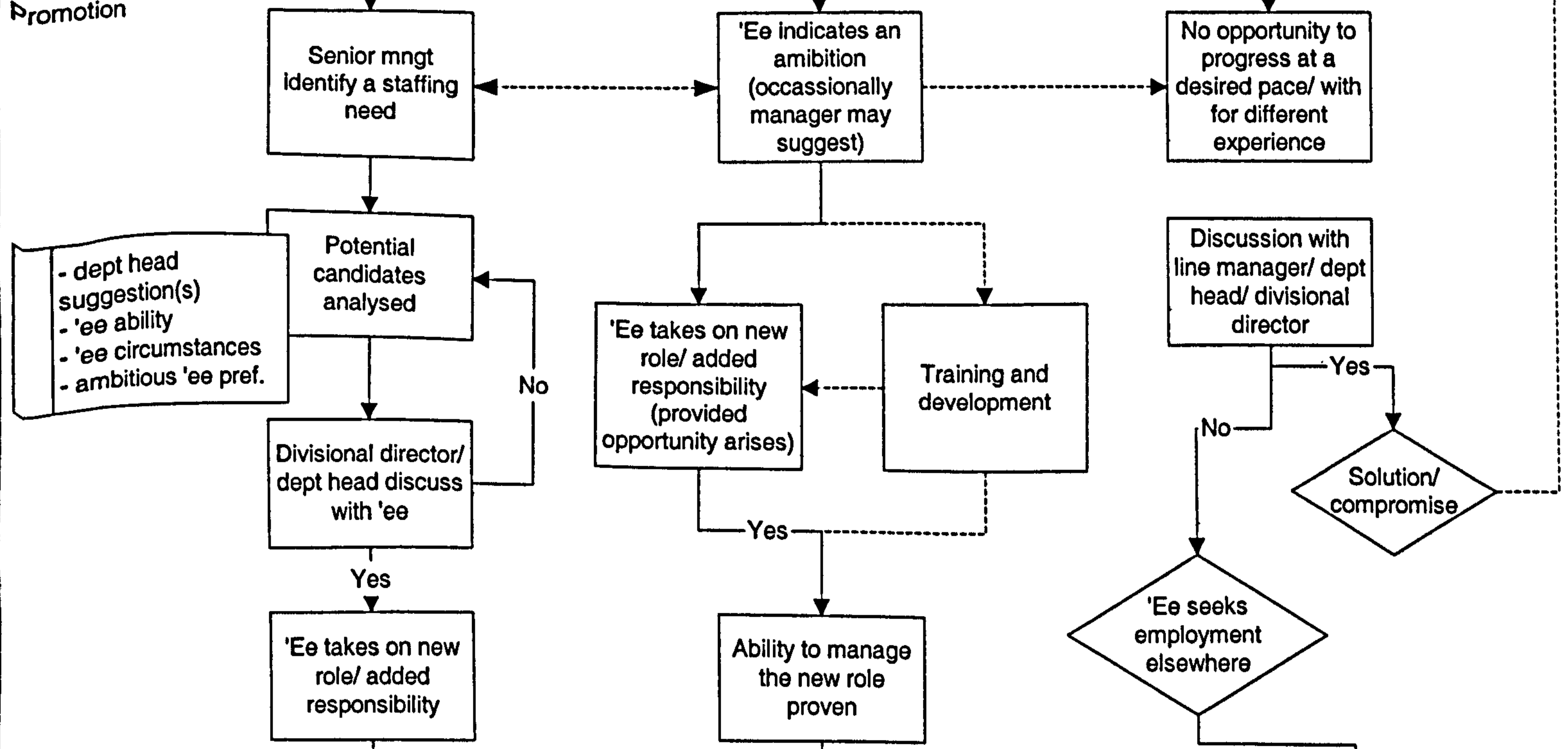
## Appendix L4

# Career management/ promotion

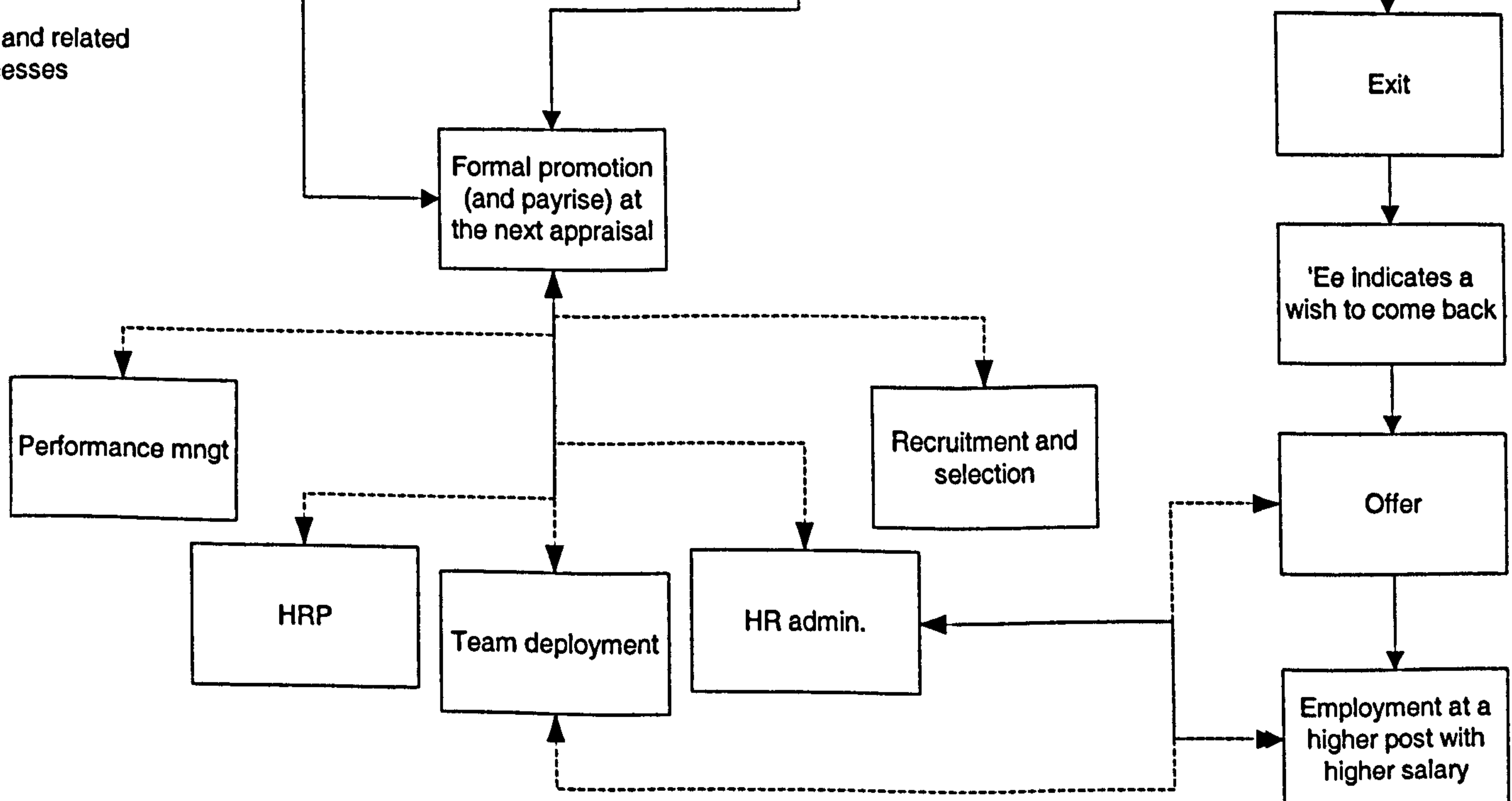
## Approaches



## Promotion



## Outcome and related processes



## Appendix L5



# Performance management process

Background

Employee survey indicate dissatisfaction on effectiveness of the appraisal system

Need for improvement

Training on conducting successful appraisal interview

HR (delivery), managers (recipients)

Appraisal

Divisional directors to senior managers, contracts managers to project managers, project managers to project teams, etc.

Line managers

Divisional manager(s)

On-going monitoring/evaluation

Project performance (customer project review)

(Annual?) appraisal interview

'Ee completes BEKA form

Previous year's record:  
- objectives achieved?  
- satisfaction?

This year's performance

Satisfaction and aspirations:  
- with opportunities  
- with line manager

BEKA discussed

Training and development needs assessed and discussed

Promotional opportunities discussed

Appraisal record, PDP

Outcome and related processes

Divisional managers

'Ee aiming for promotion, informal mentor

Individuals, divisional managers (monitor)

Divisional managers

Dept. training and development plan

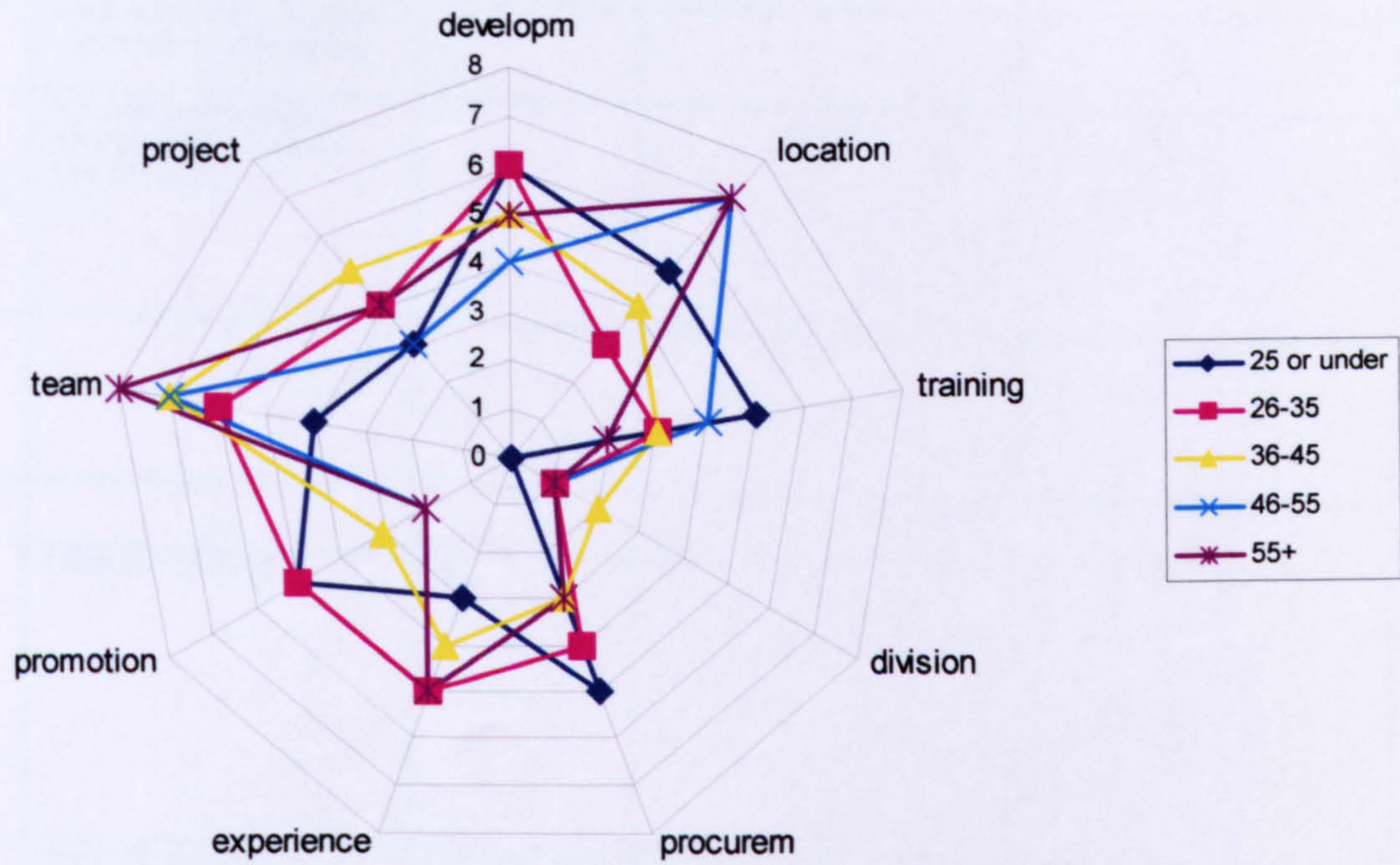
Training courses, developmental activities (provided opportunity arises)

'Ee takes on new role informally to show ability (provided opportunity arises)

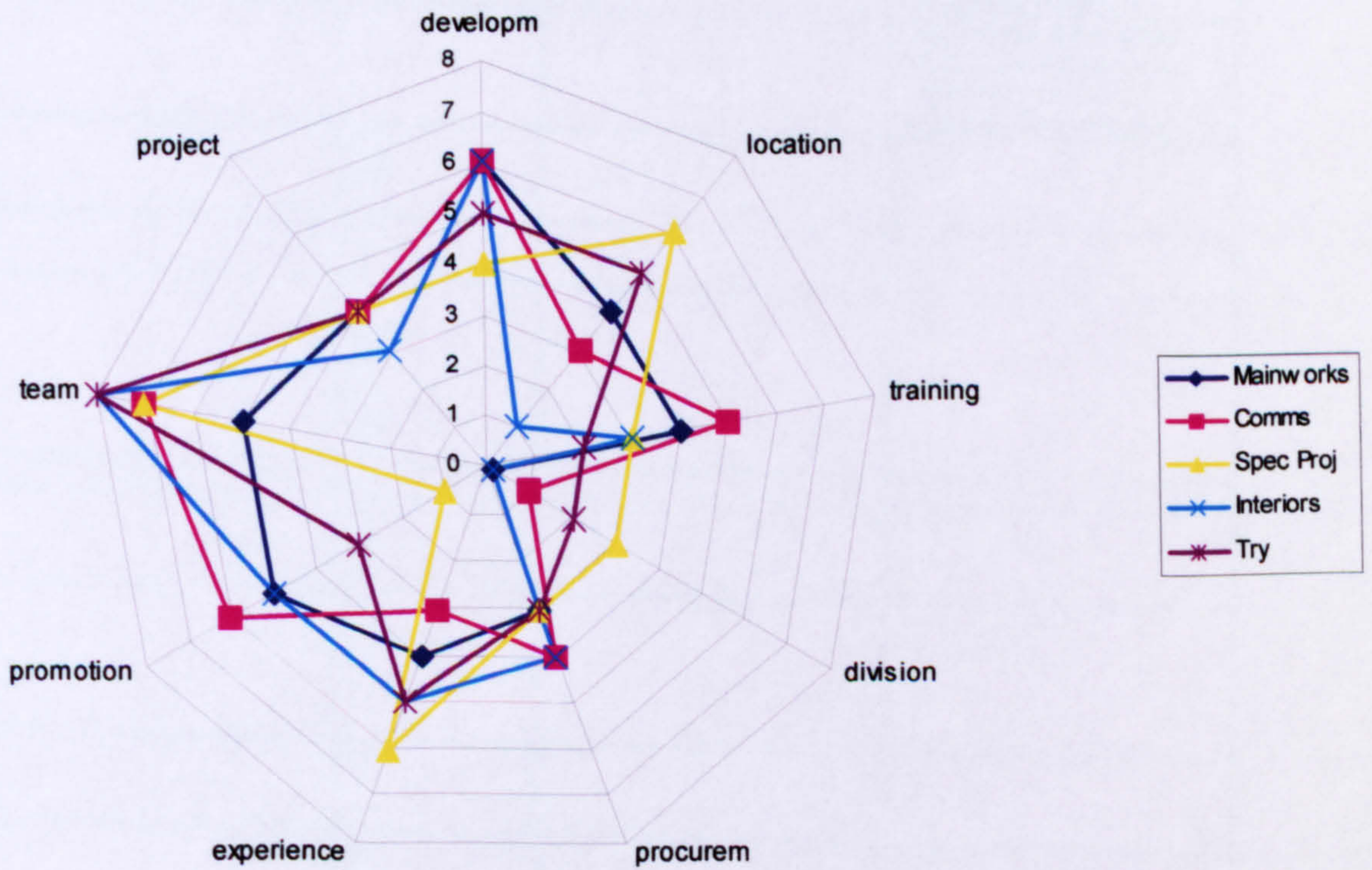
Team deployment (eg. varied project experiences)

## Appendix M

The analytic hierarchy method questionnaire results by age and organisational division



Age



Organisational division

## Appendix N



## Appendix O

## The causes and potential (and real) consequences of employee dissatisfaction

<b>THEME</b>	<b>CAUSE</b>	<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>POTENTIAL EFFECT</b>
<b>Team/ project</b>	No organisational procedure/ system Each manager manages with his/ her own individual style Staff shortages Project staffed with new employees (and agency) throughout	<b>Team member selection</b>	High numbers of new employees on a team No knowledge of organisational systems "Blind leading blind" Hindered performance and progress
	Project requirements (e.g. busy periods at start & toward end) Informal management style – no structure	<b>Team integration and co-ordination</b>	No effective planning/ follow up on programme progress Disorganisation Difficulties at start of a project
	Induction not facilitated – "dumped on site"/ "thrown in at the deep end" Due to organisational growth informal interaction disappearing Induction pack not followed through Organisational growth	<b>New recruit/ team member induction</b>	Difficulties in getting used to different working/ management styles Takes considerable time to achieve team cohesion Problems at start of a project Poorer performance at early stages Don't know colleagues
	Heavy administrative load – the organisation and co-ordination of roles and responsibilities Rigid development/ experience need structure (especially at early stages of career)	<b>Best use of skills and talents</b>	Building skills not used effectively
	Reduced divisional workload Merger Lack of co-operation between departments/ divisions	<b>Team spirit</b>	Reduced motivation Eroded divisional/ project team spirit Feeling of "them and us"
<b>EV communications</b>	Mainly informal Few formal means Merger Organisational growth Lack of organisational procedure Poor lines of communication	<b>Communication (overall)</b>	Roomers/ informal office conversation source of main body of info – reliability? Problems due to people not being aware of what is going on/ should be done Intended info not filtered down Heavy reliance on direct links with busy contracts managers making them even busier Uncertainty – reduced team spirit Informal interaction disappearing
	Qs/ project managers not providing team with full details Uncertainty not discussed openly Site based	<b>Comprehensive range of info on projects (and org.)</b>	No knowledge of wider organisational issues Uncertainty Feeling of isolation

	<p>Intended 6-month reviews of targets not carried out</p> <p>Workload</p> <p>Project priorities</p> <p>Appraisal no more than "a paper exercise"/ formality</p> <p>Appraisal targets not actioned</p> <p>Trainees' performance and training appraisals divorced</p> <p>Appraisal heavily subjective process</p>	<p><b>Feedback on performance/ progress</b></p>	<p>No feedback/ guidance</p> <p>No opportunity to voice opinions</p> <p>No records of performance – impossible for senior management to follow whether points raised at appraisal actioned</p> <p>Current mechanism (appraisal) not effective in addressing issues: a tap on the shoulder</p> <p>Two almost identical systems run in parallel – paperwork doubled</p>
<b>Careers</b>	<p>Organisational structure do not support/ encourage (e.g. flat)</p> <p>Size of organisational division/ department</p> <p>Organisational practice</p> <p>Lack of guidance/ procedure</p> <p>Self-driven</p> <p>Dependent of project opportunities</p> <p>Workload</p> <p>Poor HRP</p>	<p><b>Progression</b></p>	<p>Limited opportunities</p> <p>Hindered progression</p> <p>Potential reason for exit</p> <p>Not aware of opportunities/ direction not clear</p> <p>Organisational 'rules' hinder progression</p> <p>Can not plan longer-term</p> <p>The wide variety of external opportunities available tempting</p>
	<p>Organisational structure do not support/ encourage (e.g. flat)</p> <p>Size of organisational division/ department</p> <p>Self-driven</p> <p>Organisational practice</p> <p>Lack of guidance/ procedure</p> <p>Age</p> <p>Personal circumstances</p>	<p><b>Promotion</b></p>	<p>Limited/ no opportunities unless moving within wider group</p> <p>Not aware of organisational procedure despite knowledge of the weak link to appraisal</p> <p>Difficulties in transition between roles</p> <p>Potential reason for exit</p>
	<p>Poor HRP</p>	<p><b>Horizontal moves</b></p>	<p>Potential reason for exit</p>
	<p>Organisational practice and systems</p> <p>Heavy administrative load</p> <p>Centralised procurement</p> <p>Lack of responsibility within role</p> <p>Increased use of subcontractors</p>	<p><b>Role and responsibilities</b></p>	<p>Geared toward undesired career path</p> <p>Feeling of not much value being out on site people</p> <p>Not using best skills (building)</p> <p>Less comprehensive role</p> <p>Uncertainty</p> <p>Preference for more extensive empowerment</p> <p>Physical side of work reduced</p>
	<p>Organisational structure do not support/ encourage (e.g. flat)</p> <p>Lack of guidance/ procedure – reliance on busy key managers</p> <p>Appraisal "paper exercise"/ formality</p> <p>Self-driven</p> <p>Short-term organisational outlook</p> <p>Dependent on project opportunities</p> <p>Workload</p> <p>High personal ambitions</p> <p>Personal aspirations not clear</p> <p>Project deployment decisions – Lack of diverse project opportunities</p>	<p><b>Career development</b></p>	<p>Need for required experience/ development not highlighted</p> <p>Lack of info on possible routes</p> <p>Limited opportunities unless "pushy type";</p> <p>"Dead end" role – ambitions not met or even discussed</p> <p>Potential reason for exit</p> <p>Need to seek guidance outside organisation (e.g. CIOB/ colleagues)</p> <p>Can not plan longer-term</p> <p>Uncertainty</p> <p>Demotivation</p> <p>Hindered progression</p> <p>Ambitions not realistic</p>



<b>HRD</b>	PDP not actioned due to project priorities Working on a project away; No structure to PDP Shadowing/ frequent shorter courses preferred over formal courses (current org. standard)	<b>Training</b>	Disappointment Lack of/ hindered development Hindered progression Frustration Full advantage of opportunities not taken Transfer of skills hindered Seek developmental activities outside organisation Random courses PDPs not fulfilling their purpose
	Organisational culture of rigid development structure No recognition of individual qualities Rhetoric/ management intention not transferring into reality	<b>Graduate development</b>	Potential (and also actual) reason for exit
	PDP not actioned due to project priorities	<b>Personal (and org.) development</b>	Hindered organisational & individual learning Internal expertise not utilised in full – hindered knowledge transfer
<b>Organisation</b>	Informal management style - rules/ procedures rare Historical company way of doing things Much of trust solely on longer serving members	<b>Organisational culture</b>	Not aware of correct ways of dealing with issues New ideas not encouraged (although are listened to) Feeling that not much value is put on site people Heavy reliance on few key members resulting in overworking and newer member feeling lack of trust on them
<b>Remuneration</b>	Level approx. industry average/ below Not enough in relation to role & responsibilities Low paid profession No knowledge of system No separate overtime pay – expected work do long hours No opportunities for progression (with higher pay) Poor communication on development from management after issues raised Established practice to leave and come back in order to gain rise	<b>Pay</b>	Issues in getting people interested in the industry/ organisation – pay vitally important for attraction & retention Potential reason for exit Disappointment Seeking promotion Unwilling to work overtime Confusion and resentment toward org/ management Pressure to progress up the management hierarchy despite personal preference to stay at site level Best skills not in use – competent site personnel moving to office work
<b>Individual</b>	No appropriate medium to discuss Reliance on individual managers ability to deal with informally Can be work [stress] related	<b>Employee health problems</b>	Employees hiding and not airing problems/ potential issues Affects team spirit and potentially also performance Potential (and also actual) reason for exit
	Project priorities Not aware of senior management attitudes – organisational intentions not delivered down effectively	<b>Work-life balance</b>	Lose faith in balance life If long-term potential reason for exit Not comfortable approaching management re: work-life balance issues
<b>Industry characteristics</b>	Reduced divisional workload Project location Location of home Preference to get home every night Job requirement Industry characteristics	<b>Travel</b>	Fears of being moved to another organisational division and need to travel extensively Considerable disruptions to personal life – not much time at home Potential reason for exit

	<p>(accepted fact/ taken for granted by management)</p> <p>Site based</p> <p>Change in organisational/ divisional operating strategy</p> <p>Organisation provides fully expensed car – expected</p> <p>Regional (national) organisation</p>		<p>Potential reason for rejecting a project</p> <p>Less productive – tiring if/ when longer-term</p> <p>Takes valuable study/ working time</p> <p>Difficulties in attracting people into the industry/ organisation</p> <p>No overseas travel opportunities</p>
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## Appendix P

Snowdrop system capabilities:

### **FOUNTAIN***executive*

FOUNTAIN*executive* is Snowdrop's *performance management and succession planning* component. It is the most comprehensive of the five modules, including facilities for

- Job profiling and history; competency analysis and employee assessment (incl. 360°)
- Analysis of key performance indicators and key result areas; workflow
- Succession and career planning; organisational charting
- Graphical development needs analysis and competence displays; mentor analysis
- Flexible user defined skills and competency frameworks; training records
- Employee appraisals and performance assessment; monitoring and evaluating business objectives underpinning organisational development
- Project planning.

FOUNTAIN*executive* supports the human resource planning, team deployment and performance/ career management functions of the SERF.

### **SPRING**

SPRING is Snowdrop's *recruitment and selection* support facility. It includes:

- Vacancy and applicant profiling
- Applicant search by multiple criteria (including applications held over from previous campaigns); facilities for filling one type of post by multiple candidates and managing one candidate applying for multiple vacancies
- Monitoring of key vacancy milestones; agency effectiveness reviews and publication and advertisement analysis
- Interview administration
- Automated address recognition to enable accurate and faster processing of applicants' details.

The benefits of using SPRING to assist in the recruitment and selection of potential candidates include:

- Efficient, timely correspondence throughout the entire recruitment process
- Capitalising on reserves of recruitment information
- Controlling and managing recruitment budgets
- Automating processes across the organisation/ divisions
- Promoting an open, proactive environment
- Creating valuable business intelligence via effective use of applicant data
- Easy access to management reports e.g. on equal opportunities, interview schedules, high-calibre candidates
- Integrated graduate recruitment campaigns.

### **EVERGREEN**

EVERGREEN is Snowdrop's *personnel records database*. It holds information on:

- Employees' current position and job history; complete salary history
- Absence management and SSP monitoring
- Maternity, paternity and parental leave details
- Health and safety management (including risk assessment and accident recording)
- Holiday entitlement calculations; work patterns and working hours, incl. flexible working arrangements

- Benefit entitlement (including flexible benefits menu); SAYE, share options, pensions
- Appraisals, personal development plans, and training and development records
- Dependant and next-of-kin details; company car management.

Benefits of recording employee/ company data on EVERGREEN include:

- Salary modelling; change tracking and audit trail; organisational charting; absence monitoring
- Monitoring of compliance with regulations (including on-line HR advice and alerting)
- Efficient bulk correspondence and data entry
- Automating processes across the organisation/ divisions
- Improved accuracy with less bureaucracy through 'self-service' (see U-ACCESS)
- Creating reserves of organisational knowledge via effective use of employee/ organisational data.

## **FOUNTAIN**

FOUNTAIN is Snowdrop's *training and development* support tool. It includes facilities for

- Course and event administration and evaluation; trainer and venue details
- Waiting lists and resource booking (incl. bulk bookings); bulk training history up-dates
- Appraisals, personal development plans (PDPs) and performance assessments
- Job profiling; flexible skills framework
- Managing training budgets and controlling costs; mandatory training monitoring
- Recording CPD (Continuous Professional/ Personal Development) hours
- Achieving business objectives underpinning organisational development.

The benefits of using FOUNTAIN to assist in managing employee and organisational development include:

- Effective management of employees' development to improve retention rates
- Support for running successful training programmes
- Administrative support to ensure maximum benefit is received from training/ development activities (by both the organisation and its employees)
- Automating processes across the organisation/ divisions; promoting an open, proactive environment.

## **U-ACCESS**

U-ACCESS is Snowdrop's employee "self-service" module. Employees and managers are empowered to access, analyse and interact with live information about themselves and their teams and access a wide range of company information, including organisational policy and procedures. The module helps in:

- Publishing company wide static information, such as policies and procedures
- Providing the ability to generate 'live' information, such as vacancies and training schedules, directly from the SERF
- Producing on-screen forms to allow employees and managers to edit live data
- Meeting legal requirements on holding employees' personal data
- Improving data accuracy: responsibility for correctly entering and up-dating basic details, such as address changes, dependant details and extension numbers, lies with those who have direct interest in the data: the employees themselves.

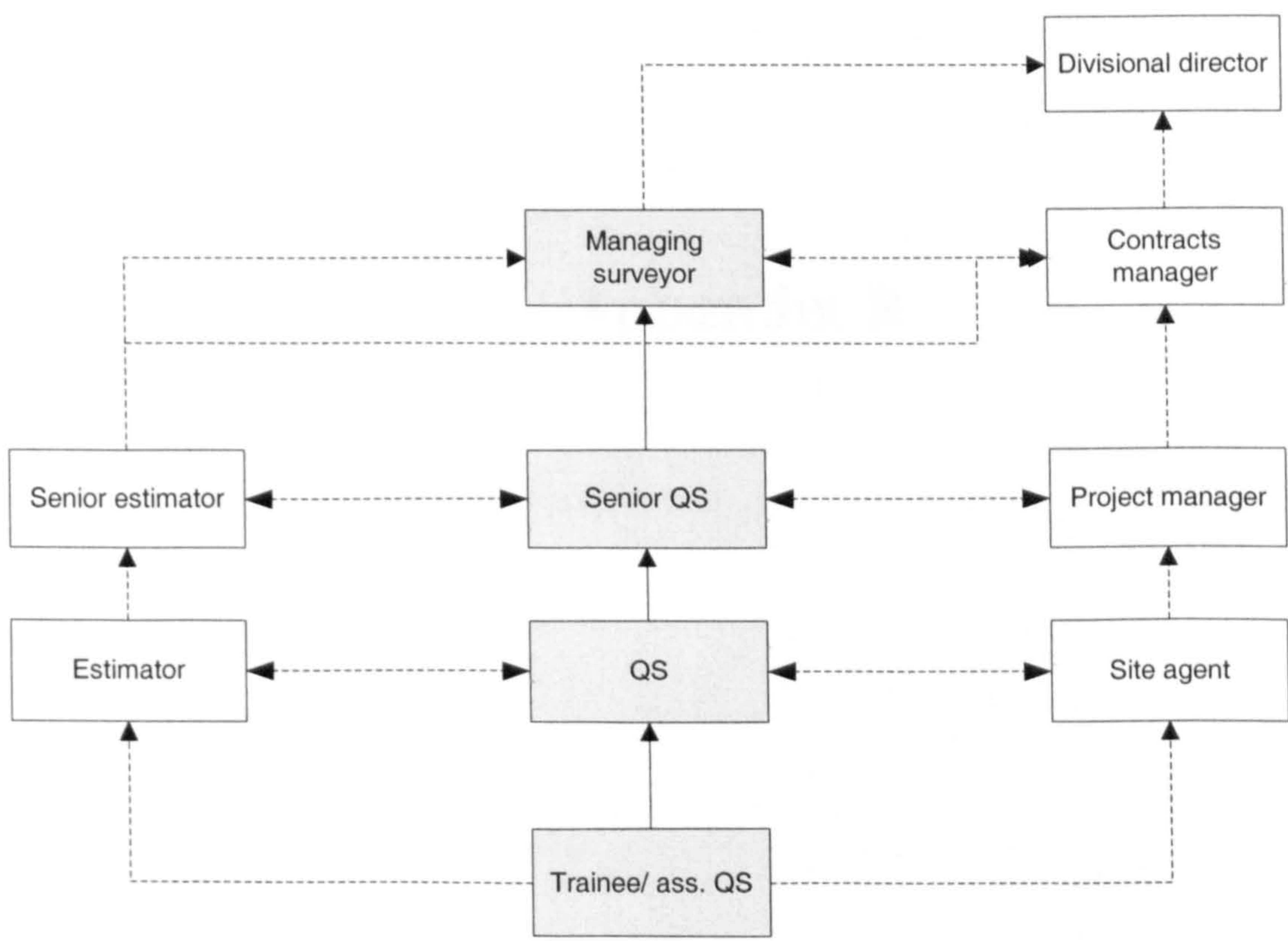
The benefits of empowering employees and managers via U-ACCESS include:

- Improved company-wide communication; live data up-to-date and accurate
- Operational cost savings for improved profitability.

## Appendix Q

Natural,  
hierarchical  
progression

Alternative/  
horizontal,  
career move  
options



## Appendix R



## Drivers/ underlying principles for the development of the model (SERF):

- Taking into account individual employees' needs and preferences – encouraging greater employee involvement
- Integration (of organisational policies and procedures, and management practice)
- Transparency of policy, procedure and communication
- Structured, consistent and coherent processes and management practice
- Planning – proactive forecasting and decision-making
- Knowledge management
- Effective management and use of organisational information and employee data

## SERF addresses these by:

<b>Function/ facility (in SERF)</b>	<b>Problems</b>	<b>Route/ action (SERF)</b>	<b>Benefit(s)</b>
Team deployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No structured procedure – great variations in managerial practice, criteria centres around availability and location (and occasionally expertise)</li> <li>▪ Employee preferences not incorporated into decision-making: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Personnel “stuck” on longer-term projects for extended periods of time although indicated interest of being moved to new developments – reduced performance, frustration</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Project allocation reactive (based mainly on availability), little EI in the process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deployment of personnel to project(s) whom have no appropriate skills or required management style – poor performance, uncertainty</li> <li>▪ Heavy reliance on individual managers for providing staff appropriate opportunities for diverse projects/ opportunities for progression</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Management enforced specialisation: employee(s) allocated to only one particular type of projects over longer periods of time – no variety, frustration, complaints to management (but with no result/ change/ action)</li> <li>▪ Deployment mainly on availability and occasionally also location – dissatisfaction as specialisation etc. are not taken into account – best skills not used/ developed</li> <li>▪ Mismatch between division specialisation/ typical work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Procedural/ policy guidelines as appropriate management practice</li> <li>▪ Employee access to procedural/ policy guidelines</li> <li>▪ Direct link to Snowdrop's team selection tool – able to incorporate wide range of criteria into decision-making</li> <li>▪ Individual employees input their preferences/ priorities into Snowdrop via a secure “black box” facility and rate their importance, e.g. ranking 10 most important factors on a scale 1-10 or assign percentage values to a selected few factors</li> <li>▪ Planning – preliminary assignment of staff to potential/ future projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Easy access to information on correct policy/ procedures – consistent and coherent management practice, employees aware of basis for managerial decisions</li> <li>▪ Employee confidence in managerial decision-making via transparent policy, procedure and communication</li> <li>▪ Easier for managers to demonstrate and justify their decisions by referring to information on the system, e.g. looking up current project deployment opportunities vs those on the HRP/ project planning function can ‘delay’ promotion or allocation onto a certain type of project</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive range of criteria (incl. experience, skills, qualifications, personal preferences, etc. as well as current priorities such as availability and location) taken into account in decision-making</li> <li>▪ Employee preferences (objectively) incorporated into managerial decision-making and taken into account in the managers' final (subjective) decisions</li> <li>▪ Proactive/ more organised communication</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and employee preference</li> <li>High numbers of new employees/ agency staff on project(s) – hindered performance, great reliance on few existing members of staff for organisational knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as to team deployment – reduced uncertainty</li> <li>Easy access to organisational information – helps new employees adapt to company practices more quickly and thus become efficient and reduce costs of recruitment</li> </ul>
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HRP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short-term outlook – uncertainty, difficulties in keeping motivated, cannot see next step/ project/ career move</li> <li>Lack of effective planning (overall): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disorganisation</li> <li>No clear follow up on progress</li> <li>Individual(s) not seeing their future as making the best use of their skills/ abilities and developing forward</li> </ul> </li> <li>Rapid changes and variations in different divisions/ departments' workloads: in one area limited opportunities as to availability of different projects by size/ type/ location/ etc. where simultaneously in another staff shortages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced workload – weakened team spirit, people unsettled</li> <li>Staff shortages – delays, few key people overloaded/ working long hours</li> </ul> </li> <li>Lack of information/ communication on organisational wide issues and future project opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Snowdrop succession planning</li> <li>Direct link(s) to departmental/ divisional/ organisational master programmes</li> <li>Communication on organisational wide information by posting up-dates on the system to all or relevant parts</li> <li>Facility to map individual preferences into longer-term plans (via team deployment and 'what if' scenarios)</li> <li>Preliminary assignment of staff to potential/ future projects</li> <li>Assessment of recruitment needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective, structured succession planning</li> <li>Individual employees' able to explore future project/ deployment opportunities and indicate their interests</li> <li>Easy to explore 'what-if' scenarios and plan for a variety of possible project opportunities</li> <li>Can create preliminary staffing plans according to individual preferences/ project and/or organisational requirements</li> <li>Allows for monitoring (leavers, entrants, staff turnover, etc.) which helps in adjusting staffing requirements</li> <li>Creates feeling of security, sense of direction</li> </ul>

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Performance/ career management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of structured, continuous (two-way) feedback mechanism</li> <li>Rigid organisational structure hinders "flexible experimenting" within different departments/ divisions (no opportunities for job rotation/ learning the wider business by transferring between divisions), lack of diverse opportunities</li> <li>Small department/ division: limited opportunities for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidance notes on organisational policy/ procedure</li> <li>Appropriate forms downloadable/ electronically active</li> <li>Alerts to remind of appraisal interview(s)/ other key milestones</li> <li>Access to summary records</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employees have more active role in the management of their performance and careers and thus are able to make better informed suggestions/ discussions in the annual appraisal interviews</li> <li>Data collected via appraisal system utilised fully and thus data collection made more meaningful</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ varied work/ opportunities for progression</li> <li>▪ New managers not aware of organisational procedures/ policy</li> <li>▪ Heavy reliance on (busy) contracts managers for information and advice: lack of guidance as to possible routes to career development, opportunities not clearly advertised (organisation wide)</li> <li>▪ Heavy reliance on individual managers for providing staff appropriate opportunities for diverse projects</li> <li>▪ Career progression largely dependant on project opportunities, which uncertain, thus feeling of uncertainty/hindered progression</li> <li>▪ Intended process(es) not carried out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Six-monthly reviews missed</li> <li>▪ Annual appraisals delayed</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Appraisal system seen as “a tap on a shoulder” (expression of thank you for good work)/ formality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need(s) for required experience/ training not highlighted effectively</li> <li>▪ Data collected via appraisal not used effectively/ followed up</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ No guidance as to role(s) and responsibilities – difficulties in transition to new role(s), unclear boundaries</li> <li>▪ Initial induction, team building/ integration not facilitated – hinders operational performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Difficulties in getting used to different working/ managements styles;</li> <li>▪ Problems at start of project;</li> <li>▪ Takes considerable time to get team cohesion and members to work well together</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Individual(s) ambitions too high/ not well defined – unrealistic expectations/ lack of direction</li> <li>▪ Change(s) in business strategy – management forced specialisation toward undesirable working sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On-line employee “self-assessment”/ check-up on progress toward agreed targets</li> <li>▪ Continuous up-date/ record facility for note taking in between formal interviews (e.g. on achievements, areas for discussion, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive, flexible skills, abilities and competencies recording</li> <li>▪ Seamless flow from performance review to personal development plans (PDPs)</li> <li>▪ Data used in team deployment, HRP, training and development, etc.</li> <li>▪ Career maps: a facility for individual employees to explore career move options independently</li> <li>▪ Information on and possible routes to secondments</li> <li>▪ Bank of interrelated job descriptions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The process as a whole more effective and meaningful – everyone aware of data being used effectively and points raised followed up</li> <li>▪ Incorporates employee involvement (by effective recording and follow-up of personal preferences and ambitions)</li> <li>▪ Structured secondments help transfer knowledge between divisions/ departments – improved performance</li> <li>▪ On-going “alert mechanism” for key milestones ensure effective follow up on progress</li> <li>▪ On-going discussion forum helps air out issues as they emerge and reduce unnecessary build up</li> <li>▪ Easy access to records – employees and managers alike can remind themselves of agreed targets/ objectives</li> <li>▪ New employees/ existing employees moving to new roles more comfortable with tasks and duties due to check up point provided by job descriptions – clear boundaries as to responsibilities</li> <li>▪ Opportunity to explore options within organisation if, for example, division/ department not suitable – improved retention</li> <li>▪ Improved team building and inclusion of employee preferences in the managerial decision-making via use of comprehensive range of data in team deployment function</li> </ul>
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Employee involvement (EI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No structure to the process</li> <li>▪ No medium for constructive discussion on work-life balance/ personal problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would think long and hard before approaching</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employee self-service functionality (Snowdrop u-ACCESS)</li> <li>▪ “Black box” team deployment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourages a culture of employee involvement and participation, mutual trust and openness, balanced psychological contract and thus</li> </ul>

	<p>management on potential/ current issues as no idea of what the reaction might be - employees hiding/ not airing problems, affects team spirit (can be very harmful in the long term, affects team/ individual performance, potential reason for exit)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lose faith in balanced life – reduced commitment</li> <li>▪ Feeling of isolation and management control, not aware of wider organisational issues</li> <li>▪ Previous informal interaction disappeared (much due to organisational growth) – a need for structured and timely induction process</li> <li>▪ Preference for more effective empowerment (best skills not in use)</li> </ul>	<p>tool (see team deployment, p. 1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access to a wide range of information on organisational policy/ procedures, opportunities and organisational developments</li> <li>▪ Automated induction/ training/ appraisal alerts (for example by e-mail to inform managers and employees of a process/ activity due to be undertaken)</li> </ul>	<p>commitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employees aware of organisational policy as to, for example, work-life issues and thus are encouraged toward open communications and thus discussing any problems with a view of finding a solution – retention, reduced stress, better work-life balance</li> <li>▪ Up-to-date employee data via employee self-service (U-access) – a mechanism to incorporate employee voice (preferences) into managerial decision-making, self-service up-date and viewing on personal details, benefits, etc.</li> <li>▪ Staff can explore future project opportunities and thus more realistically develop career options/ development plans/ expectations, and indicate interests toward a specific career route/ project/ secondment opportunity</li> <li>▪ Employee needs and preferences incorporated into managerial decision-making</li> <li>▪ Effective induction training tool (provides easy access to organisational data/ material, alerts individuals/ managers of required action)</li> </ul>
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<b>Function/ facility (in SERF)</b>	<b>Problems</b>	<b>Route/ action (SERF)</b>	<b>Benefit(s)</b>
Training and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No structure: random training courses – Personal Development Plans (PDPs) not fulfilling their purpose</li> <li>▪ Rigid development structure, no recognition of individual qualities/ strengths (NOTE: highly conflicting material clear evidence of lack of knowledge of organisational policy/ procedure/ intention)</li> <li>▪ Employee training and development (and appraisal) data not utilised effectively</li> <li>▪ Project/ organisational concerns prioritised over points raised/ courses discussed at individual employee appraisal – suggestion(s) not acted upon/ courses not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Log of activities undertaken (held in Snowdrop FOUNTAIN)</li> <li>▪ Log of indicated interests – system (automatically) brings training/ development needs into employee's/ manager's attention via flash up reminders</li> <li>▪ Builds up up-to-date skills and competencies log/ CV of achievements</li> <li>▪ Structured PDPs incorporated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Up-to-date records</li> <li>▪ Individual preferences incorporated in managerial decision-making</li> <li>▪ By taking a holistic view of skills and competencies together with employee needs and thereby forming balanced teams cross-project learning is maximised</li> <li>▪ Effective knowledge acquisition/ management and utilisation/ sharing/ transfer</li> <li>▪ Easy access to data – supports marketing</li> </ul>

	<p>arranged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Disappointment and frustration</li> <li>▪ Hinders/ slows down development</li> <li>▪ Employee not able to progress at desired pace</li> <li>▪ Miss out on courses/ qualifications, e.g. first aid licence up-date go out of date and need to be started from the beginning again</li> <li>▪ Had to stop doing internal training for HR dept. – hinders organisational/ employee learning, internal expertise not utilised to full potential, hinders transfer of knowledge</li> <li>▪ Working on project away – full advantage of available opportunities not taken</li> <li>▪ Induction pack for new recruits, which contains important organisational and job related information, not followed through</li> <li>▪ Shadowing/ frequent shorter sessions preferred over longer formal courses (current organisational standard): On-the-job learning and transfer of new skills to practice hindered, employee(s) use more informal means/ seek developmental opportunities outside the organisation – wasted investment</li> </ul>	<p>within performance appraisal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comprehensive range of information on organisational policy and procedure</li> <li>▪ Training course directories</li> <li>▪ Links to other possibly relevant opportunities</li> <li>▪ Evaluation/ monitoring facility to measure course success rates</li> </ul>	<p>and business development, client relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data used effectively in managerial decision-making</li> <li>▪ Employee confidence in company practices via transparent procedure and communications</li> <li>▪ Effective use of in-house knowledge for training and organisational learning</li> <li>▪ Effective induction tool – easy access to a wide range of organisational information, such as company policy and procedures: helps in settling down quickly</li> <li>▪ Better customised development programmes – improved return on investment</li> <li>▪ Powerful learning and development tool as ALL functions include general topic related information together with company specific procedures and management tools</li> </ul>
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<b>Function/ facility (in SERF)</b>	<b>Problems</b>	<b>Route/ action (SERF)</b>	<b>Benefit(s)</b>
Snowdrop (HRIS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Manually administered documents make access to valuable data difficult</li> <li>▪ Each process separate entity of its own right</li> <li>▪ Local variations in management practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clear outline of the relationships between different processes</li> <li>▪ A bank of employee data (electronic, with paper-base back-up), information and links</li> <li>▪ Employee self-service (U-access)</li> <li>▪ One point data entry</li> <li>▪ Easy access to organisational policy and procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clear outline of the relationships between processes helps managers (and employees) see the bigger picture/ take a holistic view of the resourcing function</li> <li>▪ System incorporates information from different parts together using this to inform decision-making in all areas</li> <li>▪ Easy access to wide range of information, such as company policy and procedures, and appropriate documentation (provides a useful starting point in anyone searching information)</li> <li>▪ Reduces HR/ line management basic advisory workload by providing guidelines</li> <li>▪ All managers (incl. new and those operating in remote locations) have easy</li> </ul>

access to procedural guidelines and are thus able to adhere to company practice – variations in local practices minimised – employee confidence increased

- Easy to tap into (organisational/ internal) knowledge/ sources of knowledge

**Operational functions of the model (SERF):**

- Holistic view
- Key resourcing activities linked to training and development
- Direct links to appropriate fields in Snowdrop
- Learning and development tool (information bank)
- Future potential (extended to incl. other areas of HRM and project planning/ management)