

**Czech University of Life Sciences Prague**

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Diploma Thesis

**A Novel Approach to Personnel Selection Process in  
Timpson Ltd**

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**Declaration**

I declare that I have worked on my diploma thesis titled ‘A Novel Approach to Personnel Selection Process in Timpson Ltd’ by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis.

In Prague on date .....

Signature .....

### **Acknowledgement**

First and foremost I would like to thank my sister for ever-ready advice and my family for untiring support. Also, I would like to thank my supervisor Richard Selby, Ph.D. from the Department of Management, for expert counsel and ideas. Last but not least I would like to thank people from Timpson Ltd for providing me the useful information for writing my thesis.

## **A Novel Approach to Personnel Selection Process in Timpson Ltd**

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Inovativní přístup k procesu výběru personálu ve firmě Timpson Ltd

## **Souhrn**

Cílem této práce je analyzovat výhody a nevýhody nového přístupu k procesu výběru personálu používaném ve společnosti Timpson Ltd a projednat otázku zaměstnávání bývalých delikventů v této společnosti. Dalším cílem je projednat vhodnost využití tohoto inovativního přístupu k procesu výběru personálu v českém prostředí. Timpson Ltd je společnost, která působí po celém Spojeném království především v oblasti opravy obuvi a výroby klíčů a tento nový přístup vůči svým vlastním členům je velmi nekonvenční a pozoruhodný. Mezi metody, které byly použity v této práci patří SWOT analýza, empirický výzkum ve formě pohovoru v Londýně ve Velké Británii s manažery a zaměstnanci ve společnosti Timpson Ltd a analýza výhod a nevýhod celého procesu prostřednictvím srovnání s konvenčně používanými personálními systémy ve firmě. Na základě výsledků těchto vybraných metod bude vyvozen závěr a diskuse.

## **Klíčová slova:**

Timpson, Upside Down Management, nábor, propouštění, SWOT analýza, personál, zaměstnanci, školení, delikventi

## **Summary**

The aim of this thesis is to analyze advantages and disadvantages of the novel approach to personnel selection process employed in Timpson Ltd and discuss the question of employing ex-offenders in this company. The next objective is to discuss the applicability of this innovative approach to personnel selection process in Czech environment. Timpson Ltd is a company operating throughout the United Kingdom mainly in shoe repairs and key cutting and this novel approach towards its own members is very unconventional and remarkable. Among the methods which were used in this thesis belong SWOT analysis, empirical research in form of interview performed in London, UK with managers and employees behind the counter in Timpson Ltd and analysis of advantages and disadvantages of the whole process through comparison with conventionally used systems of personnel selection processes. On the basis of the results of these selected methods the conclusion will be derived and discussed.

## **Keywords:**

Timpson, Upside Down Management, Hiring, Firing, SWOT analysis, Personnel, Staff, Employees, Training, Ex-offenders

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# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Introduction to the topic

Selection of personnel in a business is not only the process of hiring individuals but also a process of finding them, incorporating them into the culture of the company, maintaining them and also the process of proper and legal contract-termination strategy. Companies try to win over as many superstar performers as possible and it is not surprising that HR departments are one of the most important ones in creating the success of the company. At the present time, due to the immense number of companies competing in the market and trying to operate at a profit, managers have to try to create an advantage over competitors by means of delivering the customers the best services possible. The company's policy regarding personnel selection will vary according to the type of market in which it operates. The type of personnel selection process depends on the individual industry. In the service industry in particular, the recruitment of the right people is the key element in creating success because of the daily contact of employees with customers. The Timpson Ltd is an excellent example of a company which employs effective personnel selection strategy.

My enthusiasm for this topic started two years ago during one of the Management seminars at Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague. We were given a task to read and comment some Internet-based article about unconventional style of management called 'Upside Down Management.' On the web page there was also a video supplementing the article with short speech made by a pleasant looking older gentleman. At that time I knew neither who the person was nor what that unconventional management style was about. I read the article and it was so much interesting for me that I looked at the company website and bought a book; John Timpson – Upside Down Management. After I read the book I ordered a packet of guides which Mr Timpson referred to in his book. I became very much interested in this company and its style of managing people that I decided to share my passion and write a Master's Thesis.

## **1.2 History of Timpson company**

Timpson Ltd has a very long tradition. William Timpson opened his first shoe shop in Butler Street, Manchester in 1865. William soon realised that it took him a week to make a pair of shoes but only a few minutes to sell them. Four years later he started trading at 97 Oldham Street. This was the foundation of his first multiple shoe business. William Timpson set up a tradition of striking window displays. He founded his first Timpson Boot factory in Liverpool. By the WW2 the business had 189 shops and 11 shoe repair factories. When Anthony Timpson was a new chairman after a tragical death of Noel Timpson, shoe business was going through dramatic changes. New competitors entered the market, such as Charles Clore. The biggest impact on Timpson business was the introduction of cheaper shoes by Marks & Spencer. This was the cause for closing some Timpson factories.

Timpson company was later taken over by a retail conglomerate UDS. A few years after this acquisition, John Timpson was appointed by UDS to run their Timpson subsidiary. John tried to follow his great grandfather's footsteps. He introduces a Code of Practice which ensured that customers got a fair deal. This novel customer care approach was a great success and the business thrived. In 1983, UDS was acquired by Hanson Trust and John Timpson acquired by a buyout the Timpson business. At that time, increased competition and cheap imports were all bad news for his business. In 1987, John Timpson had to make his toughest decision. He sold the shoe shops to Oliver of Leicester and retained only the shoe repair business. The number of shoe repair shops grew and so did the turnover.

In 2000, John Timpson introduced his famous Upside Down Management and three years later he bought The Minit Group. Later, Timpson plunged into watch repairs and locksmith areas. Both businesses continue to grow at present. Timpson also added the engraving business by buying the House Nameplate Company. In 2003 Timpson Ltd purchase Persil Supermarket Services who provided dry cleaning, key cutting and photo processing. At present, Timpson Ltd has over 1200 stores throughout the United Kingdom. John Timpson, common sense and management structure turned upside down are three key components of success for this thriving business. (22)

## **2 Objectives and hypotheses**

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### **2.1 Main objective**

1. Analyze advantages and disadvantages of the novel approach to personnel selection process in Timpson Ltd

### **2.2 Secondary objectives**

1. Find out what advantages and disadvantages are brought in by employing ex-offenders in Timpson Ltd
2. Discuss the question whether this novel approach to personnel selection process in Timpson Ltd could be applied in Czech environment

### **2.3 Hypotheses**

1. Timpson is less concerned with academic qualifications and more concerned with personal attributes when hiring personnel
2. Employing ex-offenders represents the chance of getting many great people to work for Timpson Ltd
3. Application of the novel approach of Timpson Ltd towards personnel selection process depends heavily upon the kind of environment and culture in which the company operates

## **3 Methodology**

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### **3.1 SWOT analysis**

Swot analysis is a method through which it is possible to identify strong points, weak points, opportunities and threats of a particular company, service, product etc. The key principle of this method is to classify and assess individual aspects which are divided into four basic groups:

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats

With mutual interaction of individual aspects regarding Strengths and Weaknesses on the one hand and Opportunities and Threats on the other hand, it is possible to obtain new and useful information which describe and evaluate the level of their mutual interaction.

### **3.2 Interview - empirical research**

Confining people to a fixed list of questions can seem monotonous and the way that people in Timpson Ltd run the business is definitely not a monotonous way. Therefore the aim of the interview was to make a list of questions, however, not follow it systematically or strictly. The objective was to create a relaxed situation where the logic of the remarks would reflect the views of the employees in Timpson Ltd more accurately. The interview questions were designed to be as specific as possible, avoiding misleading and ambiguous questions. Abstractions were minimized to avoid speculations that may reflect only passing thoughts. Sometimes, compromising the interviewer position as an outside observer may give the informant the reason to manipulate what you know so the objective was to create a friendly chat and learn more about the way that people in Timpson Ltd run the business and especially about the personnel selection process that is unconventional and creative.

The interview took place in London, UK. There are more than 100 branches of Timpson Ltd stores in London and for the purpose of this thesis I created a map and marked possible places where the interview would take place. I have also

communicated via email with Timpson Ltd and I was told that the people behind the counters and managers in branches would welcome me warmly and give me any information I need for my thesis. The respondents were then chosen randomly in each branch. Generally there were about 2 employees and a manager, the locations were chosen predominantly in the parts of London such as City, Westminster and Camden and the interview was made on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. I visited 6 branches and talked to 7 employees behind the counter and 3 Area Managers. All of them were very friendly. The questions were different for both employees and managers. Questions were also brief and simple to avoid lengthy discussions as my time in London was limited only to four days. The list of questions is attached at the end of this thesis in chapter 'Supplements.'

The answers which were written down on a paper in short notes were incorporated into the analytical part and to chapter results and discussion. A good part of them were just a kind of confirmation of the information I have already known from studying the books, articles and videos; however, the interview was crucial for learning about the Timpson culture in person and it was never-to-be-forgotten experience for me. All of the interviewees were very friendly and tried to provide me with as much information as possible.

### **3.3 Analysis of advantages and disadvantages through comparison with conventionally used systems of personnel selection processes**

After the literature review and analysis of Timpson Ltd personnel selection process by means of interview, literature review, newspaper articles and videos regarding Timpson company, the objective was to analyze advantages and disadvantages of personnel selection process in Timpson Ltd over conventional processes and perform SWOT analysis to draw near and describe the novel approach of Timpson Ltd.

In an individual chapter is analyzed the information about ex-offender programme in Timpson Ltd and the result is provided at the end in form of contemplating the question of whether application of the novel approach of Timpson Ltd towards personnel selection process and towards ex-offenders depends heavily upon the kind of environment and culture in which the company operates or not.

## 4 Literature Review

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### 4.1 Finding new recruits in a company

First and foremost thing to consider carefully regarding hiring a new employee is to decide whether it is necessary to hire new recruits at all. Bringing on a new employee has certainly some advantages. First one is that an employer has the right to control its employees, which means that it is the very right of control that often differentiates employees from other workers which are independent on the control from the side of employers. The second advantage is the fact that if a company has a staff composed of full-time and long-term employees; it surely improves and promotes stability at workplace.

People working in the company tend to identify with it, build longevity, they improve their skills, become familiar with the company culture and they can, depending on the way the employer treats them, put their efforts and loyalty into their work and duties. In the end they can fall in love with the company and make their work their hobby. The third advantage may be tax alleviation in hiring certain employees. On the one hand there are deductions for most wages and benefits, on the other there are codes giving incentives for employing the disadvantaged and handicapped people. Another advantage regarding taxes is variety of tax credits. Bringing on new recruits has certain drawbacks as well. The employer has to pay wages, payroll taxes and other expenses such as workers' compensation premiums, unemployment insurance contributions, and also benefits regarding disability and retirement plans. Another disadvantage is certainly the need for extra space for new employees and for their equipment. New recruits also need to be supervised properly and they place extra burden on HR and IT personnel. And the hiring process also takes a lot of time and it poses a risk that claims of discrimination could arise. (2)

#### 4.1.1 Alternatives to hiring

Alternatives to hiring are often very attractive ways to replace the long and tiring process of recruiting. The alternatives include:

- **Overtimes**

One of the ways how to avoid recruiting process is to require existing staff to work overtime. It is obvious that some employees like working overtime and the others do not, or they may have family matters or other commitments that prevent them from working additional hours. The overtime rules should be set clear and simple in order not to discriminate against employees. (3)

- **Independent contractors**

Independent contractors are another alternative to hiring new employees. Contractors are paid fees for their services and employers do not have some of the obligations towards them as in employer-employee relationship. E.g. employers do not have to face workers' compensation premiums, or do not have to include them into company benefit plans, and even some discrimination laws are not applicable to individual contractors. The biggest disadvantage of classifying an independent contractor is the fact that the very classification could be wrong. Thus, the employer would be liable to particular authorities and state office departments with retroactive effect. (3)

- **Outsourcing Employees**

Another alternative to hiring can be the way of leasing the employees from a specialized agency. This is an ideal solution when the company needs some workers for short-term projects or when there occurred an unexpected increase in workload in the company. The advantage is that the agency which provides these services will have screened the people, who it offers, will have done background checks on the workers and if the agency is really good, it will have done testing of skills. Another advantage is certainly the relative risk-free opportunity for the company to make its own picture of the worker and find a potential candidate for regular employment. On the other hand, this kind of service is not good in long-term because the leased workers do not have desired job commitment and loyalty. Leased employees are not considered part of the company workforce, they do not take part in benefit or retirement plans and thus they do not increase payroll expenses. (5)

- **Outsourcing Work**

If a company decides to outsource some of its work to a contractor, it can be a great disburdening of the existing staff. They have more space to operate and it is

a very useful tool how to facilitate the work for your employees. But it has some disadvantages. First of all, the company which outsources the work almost completely loses control over the quality with which the work will be done and also loses conception about time schedule. Another disadvantage is the fact that the contractor to whom the work has been put in trust can misuse the opportunity and take over the customers which are loyal to the domestic company. (5)

#### **4.1.2 Finding potential employees**

There are many ways how and where the company can look for the potential employees or where it can advertise for the job positions. The most common methods are listed below:

- **Relatives**

On the one hand, there is a type of business that is run mainly by family members, employees are very close relatives and there are often over several generations in present. This so called 'Nepotism' approach to employment legislation has its advantages as well as its drawbacks. It is important to establish a policy in advance and follow it strictly; otherwise things might get out of control very quickly. On the other hand, many companies are directed by the rules that are against hiring relatives into the existing company workforce, especially when the relatives are going to work very closely together or in a supervisor-subordinate kind of relationship. These companies have the feeling of unnecessary complication to the working environment if there are relatives working closely together. (3)

- **Former Employees**

There can occur a situation when the candidate has previously worked for the company where he or she applies for the job for the second time. In most cases, if the candidate left the company on voluntary basis, e.g. to complete some study programme, then the candidate is eligible to be rehired since he or she will bring to the company experience from previous job or jobs and this creates competitive advantage over other applicants whose skills and personality is not known yet. On the other hand, when the candidate was e.g. fired or left the company under unpleasant circumstances, then he or she will probably be rejected at once. (3)



- **Headhunting**

An employer who takes part in this executive search by means of targeting employees of other competitors can be at a possible risk of antitrust law violation. There has to be proven the genuine business need for the employees and the company has to prove that it has used a wide range of sources when looking for potential recruits in order to avoid the tribunal.

The advantages of head-hunting method are getting the employee who disposes of know-how and also that it is not necessary to lengthily train the employee. There is a great disadvantage to this method and that being the financial demand factor. (21)

- **Advertising in Newspapers**

Most of current prints offer a section appropriate to job advertisement. The big advantage is that it addresses a wide range of potential candidates, the time demand factor is relatively low, possibility of quick submission, promotion of the company image or the simplicity of submitting the advertisement according to given formula. On the other hand, there are also many disadvantages to this method, e.g. price, availability of the advertisement only on the issued date, impossibility to adjust or alter the text, quite obsolete option, or impossibility to filter the offer according to criteria. (21)

- **Part-time Jobs**

Part-time employees are better for small business owners than for big companies. They will put a smaller burden on the overhead costs and at the same time ensure that customers get sufficient attention during peak hours. Part-time employees are available to handle extra workloads, they can bring in some specialized skills, or they help the business save extra money. One of the drawbacks can be the fact that they may need time to get accustomed to the company culture and style of working. Another disadvantage is the issue with confused loyalty because part-time employees can be working for multiple companies and can juggle between two or more different jobs; they may not be as enthusiastic about the company as the fulltime employees are. (5)

- **Advertising on the Internet**

The trend to advertise jobs through the Internet is used more and more by companies all over the world as it provides many advantages. Among the most conspicuous is e.g. availability of the job advertisements 24 hours a day, possibility to alter or adjust the job description easily, pre-selection of candidates, possibility to directly address the candidates from the database, or the option to easily sort the advertised jobs into sections according to the fields. (21)

- **Labour Offices**

Generally, according to the law, it is necessary for every employer to report all vacant work positions to particular Labour Office. However, the experience showed that these offices exist more or less only to provide consultancy, subsidies and support directly to the employers. The advantages of Labour Offices are low financial demand factor, possibility of getting a subsidy or complex services that ensure the promotion of the vacancy. The big disadvantage is usually a high time demand factor. (21)

- **Personnel Agencies**

Personnel agencies are used not only by big companies which need to get more human resources, but also by smaller companies that look for candidates who would suit to less easily occupied jobs. Advantages of this method are e.g. the fact that the agency will ensure the whole selection process, there is a variety of services provided, or in case of need, and the agency is able to ensure long-term inflow of human resources. As a disadvantage can be mentioned the fact that the invested financial means are capitalized in long-term period. (5)

#### **4.2 Hiring new recruits in a company**

Almost no company wants to spend a lot of time on recruiting because it is time-consuming process, managers are busy and the team is shorthanded during the process of personnel selection. Companies all around the world hire the wrong kind of people all the time. If the company is not clear about what it wants and what the perfect candidate should look like, it is destined to make mistakes which will be very expensive and energy-consuming. E. Herrenkohl suggests the following steps to consider when there is a need to hire an 'A-Player.'

- Interview as many as possible of these applicants and hire the best ones.

- Only the fact that the candidates worked for big companies or studied at prestigious universities do not make them automatically A-players.
- Managers must think outside the box, use their experience and define the profile which works in the environment in which the company operates.
- Knowing the profile helps the company to attract applicants whom the competitors are very often overlooking.
- The personnel selection process is a numbers game. The more people with qualification the company interviews, the better the chances of finding the right people for the right job.
- After a company discerns the talented candidates from other applicants, there is a space for starting to focus on recruiting efforts.
- Qualities like talent, drive and determination are always of more value than the period of time when the employee worked for one of your competitors.
- It is also important to set and know the 'Knockout Factors' which help to eliminate candidates not suitable for the job at the very beginning of the interview process. People without these key skills are immediately out of the game. (4)

#### **4.2.1 External and internal sources of employees**

Long-term success of a business depends into some extent on the part of its capital which represents skills, knowledge, abilities, willingness to work and energy of employees who work in the company. Therefore, there comes into foreground the level of these personnel activities which are connected with the effort to wake up the interest in suitable candidates and to pick up the best ones who correspond to the needs of the particular company. The aim of the personnel selection process is to obtain professionals in required period of time for particular workplace in the relevant business organization. The process of personnel selection also comes from identification of the needs of employees which is reflected in the business personnel plans. Employees can be hired from external sources as well as from internal sources. (6)

- **Hiring Employees from External Sources**

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much broader possibility of choice</li> <li>• New impulses for the business</li> <li>• Newcomers are recognized faster</li> <li>• Accurate coverage of needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher costs on recruiting</li> <li>• Increase in fluctuation</li> <li>• Negative impact on company culture</li> <li>• Little knowledge about the company</li> <li>• It takes time to occupy a vacancy</li> <li>• Image of higher salary</li> <li>• Blocking career development</li> <li>• Stress from moving to a new job</li> </ul>

- **Hiring Employees from Internal Sources**

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open career development</li> <li>• Low costs for recruitment</li> <li>• Knowledge about the business</li> <li>• Knowledge about the co-workers</li> <li>• Sense of own abilities</li> <li>• Transparent personnel policy</li> <li>• Faster occupation of vacancies</li> <li>• Blocking fluctuation</li> <li>• Unblocking place for young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited choice</li> <li>• Education costs</li> <li>• Disappointment of co-workers</li> <li>• Company blindness</li> <li>• Less recognition</li> <li>• Automatical promotions (1)</li> </ul>

#### 4.2.2 Methods of recruitment

- **Interview**

Almost every company in the world uses this kind of selection method to select the best employees. However, interviews are time-consuming and it has been estimated that an interview can take up almost two personnel days per one vacancy. The costs are

relatively high and this phenomenon has been studied for almost 90 years throughout the world. The company which wants to employ the interviewing process for personnel selection should follow these steps in order to come out as successful and effective:

- Understand the overall part that the interview takes in selection process.
- Secure the structured interview training for managers.
- Work out the budgetary requirements.
- Know exactly who the company is looking for.
- Create a person specification.
- Decide which interview tools will be used.
- Plan the questions beforehand.
- Design answer-rating charts or scorecards.
- Review the whole process.

There are really many mistakes that the company can make during the selecting of employees. The most common are e.g. that the interviewer gives poor first impression of the company, managers are inconsistent or biased in the way they treat the applicants or the interviewing premises are intimidating, uncomfortable.

At the end of the interviewing process, it is necessary to make a good selection decision. Information about every candidate is available and the managers have to pick the right candidate. In order to successfully hire the probably best employee, it is good for managers to follow these steps:

- Understand the selection decision.
- Use the charts and scorecards.
- Create one preferred and one back-up list of candidates.
- Get in touch with the candidate who were not successful

After a successful decision is made and the company knows which candidate to hire for each vacancy, there are many ways how to notify the candidates which were successful at an interview:

- Written job offer is the most common way how to let know the successful candidate that they were chosen for the job. It is not as time consuming as the second option – offer via phone, however, there can be some delay and it is often a slow move. Great candidates are sought and spotted by other companies as well

so if there is not a quick response to the result of an interview, candidate might find the job not attractive and decide to take another opportunity elsewhere.

- Making a job offer via phone is one of the best ways how to let the candidates know they succeeded in an interview. The candidates are given really positive feedback about why the company has chosen them in particular. (2)

- **Questionnaires**

Questionnaires are used by almost every organization, however, the trend used to be that it had not distinguish the character and content of work in the particular job. At present, a questionnaire is suitable in most cases of recruitment and it is often added to personal files of employees. It is also a source of information in keeping employee records. There are many other methods which are used in recruitment process; however, the extent of this thesis is limited so here are mentioned only the two most relevant to this paper. Other methods are e.g. CVs, Psychometric tests, Group selection methods, Skill tests, Graphology, Assessment centres etc. (5)

- **Application form**

Application forms differ from company to company, from industry to industry. Forms should contain all important information as personal details, position, education, employment history, attached CV, references, criminal records, vehicle licenses, health state, right to work in the given country and declaration.

### **4.3 Maintaining recruits in a company**

After the company figures out who it wants to look for, where to search for potential candidates and after a successful recruitment, the process is not finished and there is a space for thinking about the way how to retain employees for as long as possible. Without a successful and well-elaborated employee retention programme, the company both brings new employees through the front door and at the same time lets its experienced workers walk out the back door.

Each well-elaborated program for maintaining employees begins on the day one when the worker entered the company. It is essential to make the new employee's workspace ready beforehand and make sure that everything is working properly. Day one is always very crucial to the newcomers. Then, there starts a period of building a sense for community. An effective approach to employee retention gets employees headed in the right direction. It is advised to show a sense of community by celebrating

birthdays, anniversaries, create a company sports team, hold picnics, create a mission etc. These things strengthen the relationships inside the team and people start to feel they belong to the company culture. The desired outcome is eventually the fact that the employees will stay with the company for as long as possible because they identify with the company culture. (10)

#### **4.3.1 Training**

No one wants to be part of a company which is a stagnant one, where there is no place for development, either work or personal. The organization must challenge the change and be part of it, otherwise it will perish. Training programs and development programs are transferring the message that the company looks ahead and continues to fight in the competitive market. Training is definitely one of the best investments into employee retention. Types of training programs include presentations, workshops, interactive models, hands-on activities, seminars, field trips, computer models, or industry placements etc.

It is necessary to tie performance appraisals or rewards to objectives that were stated at the very beginning of the period. It is not fair to change or skip previously unstated objectives on employees during the time when the company managers hand them their appraisals. Avoiding such surprises is essential to keep the business sound. It is also very important to tie evaluation of employees to some measurable performance. Performance appraisals are very often not well designed. It is much easier to make out between excellent and poor performance than to measure the in between shades of gray. It should be used as a development tool and always reviewed the fairness and effectiveness.

To find out why people are thinking about leaving the company or why they actually have left it, the HR managers are there to solve this issue. The best way is to ask the particular employee straight and with no partiality – questions like ‘what factors influenced you to leave’ or ‘what did you like least/most about the position’ or ‘how might the company improve as not to lose people like you in the future’ are the key success for obtaining the desired feedback and the company can learn from it and get better. It is also good for the business to pick the most suitable way how to say good-bye to the leaving employees, e.g. by a face-to-face chat, hard copy, online, or via

phone. All information has to be treated as confidential and used for company's improvement without putting the employee at risk of personal intrusion. (11)

Developing a training strategy requires very focused set of initiatives among which are e.g. understanding the short-term and long-term strategies of the business or figuring out exactly what type of training is necessary for the company. The following steps describe the way how to develop a training strategy which suits the company best, which meets the needs of the employees and which retains the personnel for as long as possible.

- Assessing skills and considering pre-employment screening tests.
- Developing a customized training which is based on the results from the assessment.
- Using various methods of delivering the training programme, such as social etiquette training, customer service training, media relations etc.
- Matching the training with the corporate culture

Small scale companies have one big advantage over big ones – superior customer service. However, these extraordinary customer service skills can be gained and developed only through proper training. To provide such a service, a manager has to be trained how to be a good leader as well. (10)

#### **4.3.2 Rewards and recognition**

Also, the concepts of rewards and recognition are closely interlinked; recognition can be considered as a form of psychological reward. Pritchard talks about encouraging managers to be generous with recognition and rewards toward employees in order to support and strengthen the desired behaviour. Common examples of recognition and award are cash bonuses, promotion, time off, pay raise, preferred parking place, extra vacation days, gift certificate etc.

An employee can also give referrals about another person and can get a bonus reward if the person is successfully hired and stays with the company for e.g. one year.

At the end of this chapter, it is appropriate to mention the suggestion that Taylor makes about the four steps how to make the employees fall in love with the particular company: reward people fairly, treat staff well, train employees and improve their skills on the current job, develop the most talented employees with leadership potential. (12)



#### **4.4 Firing recruits in a company**

First thing to realize when the company decides to terminate the contract with the employee is if there are good business related grounds for the termination. However, there exist many countries in which there are doctrines of at-will employment and under these circumstances the employer can fire an at-will employee for any, except for an illegal, reason available. There is always a lot of paperwork going on with the terminating of the contract. Employer must document the problem which was the reason for ending the relation. The instances of poor performance or misconduct which were the reasons for termination have to be noted in the file as well.

For less serious offenses and wrong-doings, there exist many types of so called 'progressive discipline policies' which commonly include the following steps:

- Oral warnings and written warnings,
- suspension without the possibility to claim the pay,
- demotion of an employee,
- termination of the contract.

When a company decides to fire an employee, the decision must be consistent with provisions of the particular contract between both the employer and the employee (or Employee's Union). A contract usually requires parties to give notice in advance such as 2 weeks, 30 days, or 6 months. There can arise a situation when an employee has a contract that permits him or her to be terminated only for a 'good cause.' It is very important to define the terms properly and this can bring a lot of difficulties in the future. (3)

##### **4.4.1 Termination procedure**

Formalized procedure is the key part in termination an employee's contract. Therefore, it is necessary to identify elements such as identification of people who are authorized to make the final decision, review employee's contract by someone not involved in the decision, circumstances under which the final decision has to be reviewed by a council, or a requirement that any risks are objectively evaluated. Following strictly these procedure steps provides very strong evidence that the employer did not act inconsiderately or rashly. There are certainly some situations which need a lot of investigation e.g. complaints of sexual harassment or equipment

thefts. The investigation into the matter should be prompt, adequate, fair and well documented.

It is not easy to tell if the member of a company was fired or quit. The difference between these two is of great importance as it affects a wide range of rights and benefits e.g. cash out, accrued leave, unemployment insurance, severance pay, or eligibility for rehiring the employee. The whole procedure of contract termination should begin with a written notice which contains e.g. name of an employee, job, effective date of termination, reason for separation, eligibility for possible future rehiring, signatures and names of people involved in the process.

There is also an important point regarding the fact of giving or not giving references about an employee. On the one hand, if the company decides to include some negatives about the former employee, he or she can sue for defamation. On the other hand, omitting the negative information can lead to situation when the employer is sued for any losses that were caused by the former employee's subsequent misconduct. The best solution is to give no reference at all or to give neutral reference. However, this approach can lead to great social costs. Employees who are performing poorly can get hired because of former employer did not provide honest evaluation and cause a lot of problems. (3)

#### **4.4.2 Layoffs**

Employees are fired not only because of the misconduct they committed. They can also be fired purely because of economic reasons such as saving costs, closing of a factory, job restructuring, reorganization, or merger with another company. However, employers should first consider other options before they employ this methods of contract termination, e.g. consider lengthy other cost-saving alternatives, focus on position and not on people to be eliminated, or hire an outside expert for help. (7)

A carefully planned hiring process allows the exchange of information which is relevant both to employees and employers. Employers develop a clear picture of the job and skills needed to do this job and employees must estimate their abilities and the extent to which the job offers an opportunity for success. Fair assessment is essential for working relationship. The need for terminating the contract has the basis in bad communication and misunderstanding. A decision to terminate a failing relationship must be not delayed and must be by all means direct and fair.

## **5 Analytical Part**

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### **5.1 Finding new recruits in Timpson Ltd**

It goes without doubt that managers cannot create success on their own. They rely on their employees for help. Therefore, a successful business is created through team effort. Timpson Ltd operates in the service industry and people are the building stone of the success of this company. In the service sector, the most important fact is not the product itself, but the service provided to create this particular product. Without skilled people who provide those services, a company which wants to run a business in this industry cannot, simply said, exist. The first step which any company on the market has to do is to realise who it wants to find and also where to advertise for the job positions, in other words, where to look for the possible candidates.

Statistics in Timpson Ltd show that 45% of the money which comes through the tills is spent on employment costs including advertising, training, wages, bonuses etc. It means that almost half of the money in Timpson Ltd is invested into people and therefore it is not surprising that people play the crucial role in creating success and welfare.

In one of the many leaflets regarding job advertisement it reads that: "We don't just ask you to work for us, we invite you to perform miracles!" It is important to realize that people deliver the results and that the company success is created by the members of each team. (24)

#### **5.1.1 Searching personalities**

However, what differentiates Timpson Ltd most from other companies throughout the United Kingdom is the fact that they look for 'Personalities.' It is certainly easily said than done but Timpson have taken this to the utmost level of perfection. Business does not acquire the best performers by luck; it gets them by making a choice, by picking the right people at the right time for the right job. At the beginning, let us ask a simple question: what is a personality? John Timpson, the Chairman of Timpson Ltd, worked very long and hard to finally come up with explaining what a personality is. The solution seems almost fundamentally simple and some may call it even childish, however, appearances are deceptive. John Timpson and his team invented something

what lasts for decades and is the basis for creating success in Timpson Ltd At the event called "Make It Happen" which took place in Manchester in 2010, John Timpson explained in detail the concept of "Upside Down Management" and its connection to the concept of picking up the right personalities. By turning the management structure upside down and giving the people behind the counter freedom in making decisions, his team created a very extraordinary kind of relationship between managers and their employees. Managers are no longer in the branches to dictate what has to be done, they just give advice and support their team of people and let them decide what is to be done here and there. However, to achieve such conditions, many years of hard work needed to be undergone. And what is the most significant thing about this Upside Down Management structure are the people with personalities which the company has to recruit, or in other words, how and where to spot these personalities. (8)

John Timpson introduced a very comprehensive line of guidebooks regarding personnel selection process and in one of them very simply illustrated what a personality is and who his company looks for. This 'Mr Man' scheme, as John Timpson calls it, is based on cartoons of good people like Mrs Happy, Mr Helpful, Mr Keen, Mrs Skilful etc. and also of bad people for the business like Mr Scruffy, Ms Late, Mr Dishonest and Mrs Can't Do It. Under each 'Mr Man' is a box to tick. Managers who are in charge of the interview use these characters to compare them with applicants and tick those boxes which most resemble the person being interviewed. Timpson Ltd are not interested about CVs. Also, they do not put much significance to what candidates say at an interview; rather, the managers in this company assess the character of the applicants by using the 'Mr Man' system and it works ever since it was introduced many years ago. The aim is to hire on personality. In the following picture is shown how these 'Mr Man' characters look like. There are 12 positive personalities:

## Picture 1: Positive Personality Types

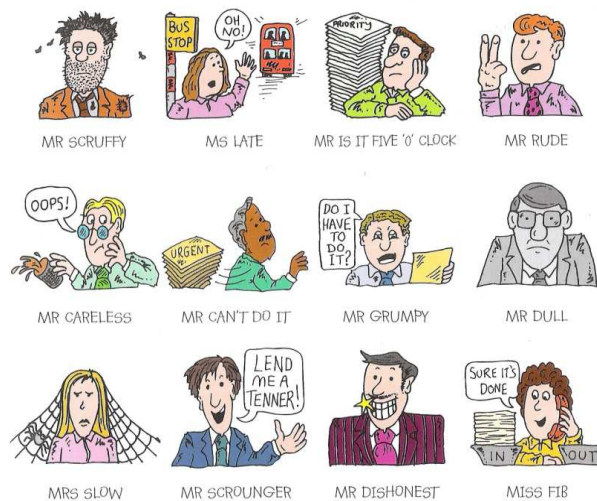


Great people are easy to train...

Source: How to Pick Great People

And, on the other hand, there is a range of characters which are not sought for in Timpson Ltd These 12 characters have no place in this company.

## Picture 2: Negative Personality Types



...but these people are a nightmare

Source: How to Pick Great People

In order to recruit on personality, one must be able to spot the personality first. Therefore, personnel clerks or managers have to be taught how to correctly and justly pick on personalities. There are many training centres around the united Kingdom where managers can improve their personality picking skills. The aim of these sessions is to underline the importance of personality for Timpson Ltd, teach the managers how to spot it and how to judge it. It is a long and difficult process and not every manager is able to be in the interview committee, however, many people passed these courses and are now superstars in picking the right people with the right character. (18)

### **5.1.2 Methods of obtaining new recruits**

The second objective of a successful selection process is to realize where to find the right recruits. There are many places where to look for possible employees and companies use different ways how to advertise the job positions. The methods which are employed in Timpson Ltd are:

- **Introduce a Friend Scheme**

The best recruiters are not difficult to identify – they are among the current employees in Timpson Ltd Approximately 45% of new employees come through this scheme and that is the reason why Timpson Ltd have so many friends and relatives in individual shops. The system is a very simple one – it gives £150 reward to anyone who introduces a recruit who remains with the company for at least 16 weeks and, what is more, it gives another £250 to when the candidate remains with the company for one year. The idea behind the success of this scheme is that existing colleagues introduce friends with a similar personality as theirs. Once a person is hired in Timpson, it is because of his or her bright personality and it is more probable that he or she will bring friends who are personalities as well. It is unlikely that the existing employees will introduce a bad performer because they know how the system of recruitment in Timpson Ltd works. It is much more probable that they will introduce a person with a personality because they know what kind of people this company looks for. This scheme brings most of Timpson's best apprentices who tend to stay with the company much longer than other new starters. At present time, Timpson team is thinking about the fact that there is time to increase the reward they give to their group of 'employment agents.' (13)

Future Timpson employees can also be recommended by a scheme very similar to 'Introduce a Friend Scheme.' This is done by the very customers through word of mouth or via leaflets in the shops. The advantage of these schemes is a reward which can be claimed after a successful recommendation. (28)

- **Part-time Job**

The second way where to find future best performers is through the part-time job or working experience. This means that some people who work only e.g. during Christmas time for Timpson can become employees for life and change their situation from temporary to permanent employment.

- **Business Card**

The next possibility where to spot a talent is through business card. According to John Timpson, one can never know when there will be a chance to find a great potential employee, so it is useful for managers to carry business cards with them all the time. This is a good way to spot talents and invite them to work for Timpson.

- **Waiting List**

Future employees are also given chance through waiting list. This means that Timpson Ltd put a number of names on the list and in case that there is a vacant place the job can be offered to someone from this waiting list and this saves a good deal of time finding another recruit outside the company.

A strong waiting list can save Area Managers from a huge disaster because even when the company is fully staffed, recruitment should be discussed at every meeting. It creates reserve strength for the company.

- **Ex-employees**

Many companies around the world treat ex-employees not in a good way. This is an opportunity for Timpson Ltd Over half the employees who leave this company want to come back and be a part of the team again. Most of them are welcome. The idea behind this attitude is that Timpson Ltd do not condemn people who took their opportunity elsewhere. It showed up that the employees who want to come back are often much better than when they left.

- **Job Centre**

Some of the Timpson's star performers came through the Job Centre. However, this is not the easiest way to recruit. It costs lot of time and money and the employees are chosen by the particular agency. It is often a long process and the result does not have to be pleasing. Timpson Ltd recruit on personality and the experience with Job Centres is rather negative because the company must be prepared to wade through a lot of time wasters and drongos before it finds the desired employee. It is likely that it will be the hard way.

- **Advertisement**

The last but not least resort where to find potential employees is through advertising in news paper. For Timpson Ltd it is the last throw of the dice because it is so expensive, it takes so much time, and it often brings disappointment. It is a very impersonal way of recruiting and the company tries to limit this to minimum level. (15)

- **Ex-offenders**

Last to mention, however, by no means the least appealing or least favoured, is the belief of Timpson Ltd that people of all races and nationalities deserve a second chance. Looking for new recruits in prison is not only a great way how to help people but it is also a very useful way of getting people to work for the company. There are about 80 prisons throughout the United Kingdom where this company interviews prisoners with a view to employ them on release. The possibility to gain work experience and to get back to normal life in society is for these ex-offenders a priceless offer.

The interesting fact is that out of almost 300 men and women who have joined the company over the last five years, only eight ex-prisoners have re-offended and ended up in prison again. However, it is not about the statistics, as Mr John Timpson says in one of his interviews, it is about the evidence that he is collecting during his regular visits to the shops all around the United Kingdom, when he talks to recruits from prison and they share with him their unforgettable life-changing experience.

According to latest statistics, Timpson Ltd have pledged to recruit about 10 per cent of their workforce from prison. The focus is to pick people with personalities and it is much easier to teach people who you know almost everything about from



their criminal record. Among the bad and the tricky ex-offenders which are in prisons are on the other hand plenty that are fantastic and have the right personality for Timpson. What is worth mentioning is the fact that the process of interviewing inside prison is exactly within the same standards that managers in Timpson Ltd use when they recruit anywhere else.

There is a good example on how recruiting from prison can be a success story. When this programme was about to start about eight years ago, Managing Director James Timpson, during a visit to HMYOI Thorn Cross, came across a very young man who impressed him so much with his personality and attitude to work that James Timpson promised him that he will do with him an interview after he is released out of the prison. This young man impressed the interview board so much and remained in Timpson Ltd in paid full-time employment ever since.

The idea behind a successful story in Timpson Ltd lies in the fact that one can teach e.g. key cutting or shoe repairing to a bright and positive personality, however, one cannot put personality into a grumpy and adverse key cutter or shoe repairer. For years, Mr John Timpson has told in a recent interview in TV, his company had been recruiting shoe repairers and key cutters when they should simply have looked for people with the right personality. All this is closely connected with the idea of 'Upside Down Management' and is creates the key success in Timpson company. The most difficult thing to do was to teach this skill of talent spotting to area managers and people involved in personnel selection process. Managers had to be taught to stop just looking for craftsmanship and to start looking for people with the right personalities. Timpson Ltd use at present time one scheme called 'Mr Men' interview form and it has become a very successful tool to help managers spot the extraordinary personalities. It is based on the idea that the interviewer is asked to tick the boxes under those cartoons which are most like the applicant, which characterize him or her the best. This scheme was introduced almost 16 years ago and it has been working ever since. The main objective, as has been said before, was to recruit on personality and 'Mr Men' interview form has played a very significant role in picking up the right recruits in Timpson company.

## **5.2 Hiring new recruits in Timpson Ltd**

Once the managers figured out who they want to hire and where they are going to look for the potential future candidates, there are a few recommendations which has been proven over time to be very effective in Timpson Ltd regarding the next steps before the very interview takes place.

First and foremost, managers who are involved in personnel selection process should not recruit the best people out of a bad bunch. If a manager cannot find a candidate who matches his or her standards and requirements, the best solution is to avoid hiring anyone and look for candidates somewhere else. According to John Timpson, the worst thing to happen is the situation where the recruitment is performed in desperation.

Another recommendation is related to proper preparation. It is not reasonable to make instant appointments because the company and the potential employee are going to make a long-term commitment and this step in personnel selection process should not be rushed, it is good to consider things and dedicate sufficient time to such an important decision.

The third advice which comes from James Timpson, the Managing Director, is also the fact that the candidate should be provided with a lot of information about the company. The point is that Timpson Ltd want the candidates to understand the business and the culture before they fill in the application form. It is good both for candidates and for the company if the applicant is provided with an application pack and can make his or her own picture of the company.

One of the most efficient techniques how to put the candidate as near as possible to the company culture is through 'Real Life Experience.' This involves the situation when managers suggest candidates visit the nearest local shop to get first/hand experience of Timpson environment. Staff in each shop should be only too happy to show the candidates around and share with them experiences and all kinds of issues they have to deal with on the daily basis.

Last but not least, managers who are in the responsibility of recruiting are supposed to fix the time and place for interview as quick as possible, in terms of one week on two weeks at maximum, after they received the application form from the particular candidate. The idea behind this is to not keep the potentially talented

candidates hanging around; let the managers settle the matters quickly and with no necessary delay.

The last recommendation is regarding the reality of proper judgment just from the application form. It is never sufficient to look at the paper only. Even a best recruitment manager cannot make a proper judgment looking at the form only, the best way is to meet the candidate and talk face to face. Timpson Ltd hold the view that every applicant should be interviewed; or at least the managers should do their best to make it happen. The application form is attached at the end of this thesis in section 'Supplements.'

In one the many interviews called 'Ask John' posted on the Internet at online version of the Telegraph magazine, one question, regarding the possibility of missing really good applicant because of the immense volume of application forms and not much time to go through them all, caught my attention and it is worth mentioning here the answer of John Timpson, who said: "Why not ring them up? People can often reveal their personality at the end of a phone. A quick call could save you from a boring interview with someone who is only good at writing CVs. Try a bit of delegation. You don't have to do all the screening yourself as there will be plenty of other people in your business who are good at picking personalities. Let them reduce the candidates down to a shortlist. Create a waiting list. Keep interviewing even when you have no vacancies and put any likely candidates on a waiting list (If a superstar turns up take them on straight away). If you don't already do it, launch an 'introduce a friend' scheme and reward your colleagues to do most of the recruiting work on your behalf. It works so well that 45pc of our new recruits are introduced by current colleagues. Whatever you do don't be tempted to base your decision on the application form. At Timpson we are not bothered about A-levels and GCSEs, we are looking for personality. The only way we can find out if the form has been filled in by a grumpy cobbler is to meet him face to face." (40)

### **5.2.1 Interview techniques**

Timpson Ltd strategy almost always follows the 'Keep it short and simple' pattern. When it comes to the very interview, there are a few tips that should be observed according to John Timpson in order to make the interview itself comfortable. It is up to managers who are responsible for personnel selection which place they choose. However, it should be a location that is quiet, convenient and safe for any

interruption. It tells a lot about the company if the interview is performed in some smoky pub or other unpleasant, noisy and disturbing place. Choosing the right place gives you definitely a good head-start. Once there is a pleasant place to perform the interview, the next step is to realize whether is better to interview on one's own, or to ask one of the area managers (or even a shop employee) to join and help to provide a second opinion. If there is a possibility to lead the interview with a colleague, recruiting managers should do so. Not only that it provides more professional approach to candidates, but it also helps to spot the talent providing one of the interviewers is out of his gourd or is not in his or her mood.

Before the interviewers meet the candidate, they are supposed to study the application form carefully and find out what does it tell them and indeed what does it not tell them about the candidates. Studying the form properly gives the interviewing managers plenty of hints what kind of questions they should ask the candidates and on the other hand what is explicitly obvious without further interrogating. This includes e.g. the situation when the applicant has visited one of the branches of Timpson Ltd This is worth discussing both with the candidate and with the branch team since it brings invaluable and authentic impressions which will probably be very accurate and useful. (26)

One of the key rules in Timpson Ltd is the fact that the manager who is in charge of the interview is being interviewed as well. His or her behaviour and appearance form the candidate's first impressions of the whole company, not only about the manager himself or herself. John Timpson uses the term 'Look the part.' This can be easily translated as being smart and on time. Part of this term is also the fact that during the interview, managers must not let anything interrupt it. Therefore it is best to divert all calls and put a 'Don Not Disturb' sign on the door in which the interview is taking place. (29)

One of the most important things concerning the very interview is the first impression, John Timpson always claims. Within one minute, the manager will have formed his or her opinion about the candidate and obviously it is the simple things that are noticed first – Was the candidate on time, does he or she look smart, do they have the right attitude to important things, do they really know something about the job they are applying for or just simply, if he or she has got the features of the right personality for the particular job. It is very important for the manager to write everything down on

the paper and make notes whenever possible and necessary. It helps to get back to the information quickly when needed. John Timpson and his team provided a simple list in which managers can tick off boxes regarding all sort of information about the candidate and record short notes about appearance, manner, experience etc. Mr Timpson provides a list of questions to get the candidates talking: (20)

- What did you do in your last job?
- What did you want to do when you left school?
- What interests you about Timpson?
- How much money are you looking for?
- Why should we employ you?
- When can you start?
- What are your favourite hobbies?
- Who is the best person you have worked for? (29)

These are really the right questions to ask the applicants, they follow the standard interview form and are short, simple and easy to understand. It is important to ask such questions as the one concerning hobbies of the candidate. On the one hand, a manager can thus reveal something which was the candidate hiding because of fear or so, get him or her talking and finally find out that there was a talent but the situation was such that the candidate did not reveal the talent from the beginning. Therefore it is necessary to make sure that the manager gathers all the basic information. James Timpson, the Managing Director, advises to do the check list to cover everything that the managers need in order to tell them what they need to tell the candidate. A good preparation plays a key role in the interviewing process. (Telegraph, 2014)

Another good way for a manager how to prepare for the very interview is to do some searching questions, e.g.

- Would you pay his or her wages with your own money?
- Would you lend him or her 50 pounds?
- Would he or she win some TV competition?
- Would I go with him or her to the cinema/walk/sports match?

These questions give the managers the opportunity to face up to reality and think carefully. The answer should always be honest and true. It is another good tool for revealing the personality and true nature of the candidate.

When it comes to the end of the interview, it is appropriate to say what happens next and what steps are to be taken. Managers do not make up their minds about the candidates right after the interview but it takes some time to make the decision. It is necessary to tell the applicants when and how they will be contacted and clarify the next steps in order to not confuse the candidates. Before the manager who is responsible for the personnel selection in Timpson Ltd ends the interview, he or she should give the applicant a chance to raise topics of their choice and interest. It gives space for questions like 'Is there anything you want to add about yourself' or 'have you got any questions for me.' John Timpson describes it as 'Turning the tables' and adds that the questions from candidates will tell the team more about them, particularly their personality.

Last but not least step after the interview is over is to decide with every candidate, if he or she will be put into box 'Yes,' 'No' or 'Maybe.' Experience in Timpson Ltd showed that it is not the best solution to make a snap judgment; it is better to leave the decision overnight and if the managers feel the same in the morning as they felt the day before, it is very unlikely that they will change their minds. Turning an instinct into an action is one of the most important skills that managers in Timpson company are taught during the training and it is the key step along the long way of picking up the right personality, at the right time for the right job.

The very last step of the interview part is favoured by some and not favoured by others. It regards the results and responding to successful and unsuccessful candidates. James Timpson, Managing Director, advises the area managers to speak to successful applicants first and if they turn down the offer, it is necessary to recruit from the reserve list or from the waiting list. It is both not professional and not reasonable to keep the candidates waiting. Things might go wrong even though the whole interview has been a great success.

John Timpson was asked in one of his interviews in 'Ask John' section in the online journal Telegraph a question regarding a situation where one of the candidates in nominate company is having a difficulty getting a good job because his face is the one with an authority look, but the fact is that he is a very good guy and a really hard

worker. The question in place was concerning the advice which John could give the manager to turn this authority look into one of the candidate's strengths. John Timpson's answer was as simple as that: "If you feel your friend is failing to turn on the charm the best way you can help is to run a rehearsal. Offer to be his coach and organise a mock interview. You won't be able to turn his severe looking face into a great asset but if possible try to put some bubbly character into his conversation. By putting a bit of fun into his voice, he may be well on the way to finding that job." (19) Flexibility and creativity are the most valuable skills that can be found in excellent managers and even in difficult situations like this it is possible to look at the problem from another perspective and solve the issue as simply as possible. This genuine approach of managers in Timpson Ltd towards precarious situations is the key of the company success and it is closely connected with the idea of 'Upside Down Management,' where the managers are given freedom to use their creativity and unconventional ideas to handle awkward situations. (19)

### **5.3 Maintaining recruits in Timpson**

#### **5.3.1 Training**

In 2014 Timpson Ltd plan to take on over 700 apprentices. These new recruits will all undergo an initial 2 days Residential Course which takes place in Wythenshawe, Manchester, as an introduction to the business itself. There, the new recruits will meet, great many of them for the very first time, John and James Timpson themselves and understand more about the company they have recently joined. Later, apprentices are expected to participate in so called 'In-house training' programme which had been developed by Timpson team almost 18 years ago. It is designed to last 6 months at a maximum; it depends on the particular recruit and his ability to learn. It is also very important for managers to place the new employee with the right apprentice trainer. Significant is also the social fit, it can make a big difference to the learning process. (28)

First day at work is for Timpson Ltd of immense importance. The manager who carried out the interview is supposed to be among the first to welcome the newcomer. It is recommended to Area Managers to speak to the new employee on his or her first day and if it is possible, go to the shop and encounter him or her in person to make their day easier. John Timpson writes in his book 'Upside Down Management' that a warm

welcome is always appreciated. Managers who were responsible for recruiting and interviewing should also, within the first month, take their apprentices and talk with them over a coffee or tea about their progress. This kind of informal questioning is much more comfortable than formal meetings.

Communication is very important in Timpson Ltd and managers responsible for recruiting new people should always give them a telephone number to use if they have any kind of issues, encourage them to use it whenever needed and call at any time. Most of the employees will not use this option, but all will appreciate the fact that help is at hand every time they might need it. During the apprenticeship, it is also worthwhile to look for signs of success and whenever there is a chance, say comforting words of praise and acknowledgement. It motivates the employees and it gives them energy to continue doing their best. John Timpson has developed over time very interesting approach to young starters – with these young superstars, as he calls them, who live at home, it is good to try to get in touch with their mothers or fathers and give a progress report. The time showed that they appreciate an honest opinion and the extraordinary approach of Timpson team towards their employees. (28)

- **Training the Timpson way**

Managers who are in charge of the training course must be very professional and talented because they are the ones that will give the future employees their education. John Timpson with his team has developed over time a list of useful tips for trainers. Here are some handy tips and hints which every manager should take into consideration and follow them:

- Training session is a part of an overall plan. Managers should think ahead and make sure that individual trainings are performed with sequence to one another.
- Tell the apprentice what does the schedule of the training look like. Managers set the objectives and tell the apprentices what they hope that the recruits will achieve.
- Finding time for training is a necessity in Timpson Ltd. Never find excuses for putting things off.
- Managers should be prepared for any kind of surprise, taking things for granted and making assumptions about others is not a good approach.



- Timpson team encourages its training managers to be creative and not just follow any strict guidelines. The best of them follow their instinct and put across their own personality.
- Using words that are confusing or just too long does not impress anybody. Managers should use words and form ideas that everyone can understand. John Timpson calls this language ‘Gobbledegook.’ The term itself explains everything – it is a kind of English language that is just complicated. People who use gobbledegook find it difficult to understand the common sense. Here is an example given by Mr Timpson: “We are a leading global provider of business process optimisation and outsourcing solutions. Our business changing delivery is achieved by removing the information overload and providing intuitive, searchable information architecture which delivers project visibility and control through integrated multi-user project services.” (13, p. 92). People in Timpson Ltd are taught during their training programme to avoid such communication and they are led to use simple English that everybody can understand and which facilitates the business.
- Using methods which are different from Timpson standards is always welcomed provided the apprentice produces a good job. Managers should adapt training to make it easier for apprentices.
- People with disabilities need sometimes more time to learn. Managers must not let special needs prevent the apprentices from becoming a proficient craftsman and they have to make allowances for these people with learning difficulties whenever possible.
- Managers are given strict guidelines how to treat different age/gender/religious groups of people. People are different and there has to be different approach to each individual. The same goes for learning pace.
- Managers in Timpson Ltd are taught to tell their trainees how they are doing several times a day. It is a good way how to motivate the apprentices and how to energize them as well. Even if the trainee falls short of perfection, it is significant to praise the effort that has been exerted.
- Taking regular time off is a necessary part of the training. Signs of fatigue are different in every individual and there is always a limit to how much people can

tackle in one training session. Managers are there to look out for these signs of learning fatigue and order a break if needed.

- The relation between the trainer and trainee is essential for the whole process. Training managers are advised to ask the apprentices how they think they have done. This information will provide them with another insight into the true personality of the particular employee. Personal behaviour is a key part of any training course.
- Rewarding even a small success is always a good way how to shape the relationship towards a positive end. It is up to the training manager to decide what to give and when, there is no strict guideline.
- The worst thing is to walk past a problem. Whenever there is any kind of issue that needs to be solved, managers are the people who are in charge of this. When they let someone get away with any sort of bad behaviour, they make matters worse for everybody. The good way is to have a formal consultation with the problematic apprentice. Nobody is perfect and people make mistakes. Trainees must understand when it is serious that they cannot simply walk out of the problem and play truant. The last option is to ring up the Area Manager if things go worse. John Timpson calls this step as ‘Blowing the whistle’ situation. (17)

Timpson Ltd include also Health and Safety skills in their apprenticeship training programmes. Recruits can pick up some additional points for passing the Health and Safety test. Managers rewrote all the official tips regarding safety in their own words and they also used a lot of pictures and examples. It was done because John Timpson believes that people understand the official guidelines easily when they are written in fewer words and in more pictures. However, despite all the pictures and examples, the new Health and Safety Timpson guideline did not satisfy the safety inspectors and additional 53 pages of small print regarding the same information as was shown in the pictures had to be added to produce an official version for print. John Timpson said during one interview in the radio recently: “I am amazed how many people think administration will prevent an accident. It is common sense that does so.” (13)

- **Running a Course**

With regard to the very Training course in the centres around the United Kingdom, Timpson Ltd developed over years a system which is working and what is

more – sustainable. There is a list of hints and advice for managers who are in charge of the courses which take place in a class or a meeting room and want to be successful in teaching the apprentices some theoretical as well as practical knowledge:

- First thing to realize is the fact that the place where the course will take place has to be big enough, quiet and comfortable in order to make the best of it.
- Managers also have to take into consideration that not everyone is good at orientation. Therefore, it is essential to make sure that everyone has plenty of notice where and when to go. If there is any kind of doubt, it is best to ring up the trainees in order to make sure they understand where to go and how to get there. Confusion goes along with stress and these things are not welcomed during the training.
- Arriving early and preparing for the course will give the manager both confidence and peace. One never knows what can happen so it is necessary for the person who is in charge of the training to arrive first and have loads of time to get ready. If there is e.g. problem with PC or projection technology, it is not a question of a few minutes to solve. Managers have to check that everything is ready and working properly.
- One of the good ice-breakers is to ask everyone who they are and where they come from. Probably it will not be comfortable for everybody; however, it will get the trainer started. Later in the course, it is good to grab the trainee's attention with a bit of fun e.g. a quiz or some kind of game as well. It adds to the enjoyment and people might like the prizes that are distributed at the end. A little competition never hurt anybody.
- According to John Timpson, rule setting is very boring, but necessary. Therefore, it is the best solution for trainers to do so at the beginning, when everybody is paying attention. Rules may be boring, but e.g. rules regarding safety must not be forgotten in case of any accident that could happen. Everyone needs to be told about the guidelines and standards. (26)
- Maybe one of the most important things to say at the beginning is the course schedule and the purpose why the trainees attend the course. Managers are there to make sure that everyone knows and understands what he or she is going to achieve and that everybody has the information concerning breaks. Letting the

timetable stay in the room all day is a good step to avoid unnecessary questions about the timetable. Training with no schedule and reason is a useless one.

- Providing food and drink during the day in the training room is necessary to keep the apprentices fresh and satisfied. There is not a worse thing than a bunch of hungry and thirsty people not paying attention to what they are being taught.
- One of the many mistakes that trainers make is that they stand and talk for hours and hours. In Timpson Ltd, the training managers have a special course regarding presentation skills. Then, they are able to keep everyone in the room on their toes by means of finding various ways how to grab the attention and get the message across the training room.
- A necessary tool for the presenter is also something to show the examples on. Flipcharts can help to lead a group discussion and keep everyone awake by showing the examples in practice and in colours.
- It is not always convenient to use techniques like role playing at the beginning of the course. Many people are embarrassed by role play. Trainers are taught how to spot when there is the right time for this activity, to know when the group of trainees is ready for it. Mostly, they are waiting until fairly late in the day or week to ask for volunteers. The aim is to persuade everyone to have a go and participate in the game.
- If there is e.g. a video projection on the screen, it is a huge mistake if training managers do not focus on the same thing as the trainees; this will surely distract most of them and create a bit tension and loss of attention. It is necessary for the manager to focus on the same thing as the attendees and even if the trainer has seen the video for ten times, still, he or she is supposed to watch it for the eleventh time. It gives the apprentices confidence in the video and mainly the content of the projection material and ideas.
- There are also many recommendations for trainers concerning behaviour during the presentation e.g. avoiding doing nervous habits such as playing with coins in the pocket, using too many fillers or speaking in a low and not audible voice. There is a section in the training course for managers in Timpson Ltd where these skills are taught and it is done with the most stress and focus because if the trainers will not master these skills, they cannot effectively teach the apprentices during the course.

- Timpson Ltd also provides lots of training videos to borrow. It is only up to the managers which they use and whether they use them at all. The best trainers can put the message across using only their experience and eloquence skills, however, people usually appreciate if they can relax for a minute or two and listen to and watch a nice video on TV or projector.
- During the session, most stress is put at the fact that trainers must talk ‘with’ people, not ‘at’ them. Tailoring the course to the participants is essential for the company’s culture. Managers are supposed to involve the audience and invite them to discuss the issues.
- The worst thing happens when the timetable is not kept and the manager runs late. People start to look at their watches to check whether their timepieces are not wrong. It creates murmur and buzz in the room and the only person to blame is at that moment the trainer himself or herself. Good timekeeping is as essential as creating a good timetable. It is much better to take a break before the fixed time for breaks than to run over and create tension.
- One of the situations that can also turn up is that there is a person at the course who disrupts the other participants. The best way how to tackle this problem is to talk to him or her during a break and point out what is wrong. If necessary, trainers are allowed to use their authority to send the problematic participant back to the branch instantly.
- At the end of each session, it is necessary to do the recapitulation. Trainers must pick out the main points from the course in order to make everything clear for the participants of the course and remind them of the purpose of the training. John Timpson likes to call this part ‘Memories of the day.’
- There is also a space for opinion poll at the end of each session. Asking for the feedback of all participants gives the manager priceless information about the way he or she is running the course. In the opinion poll, there should be about three or four questions like:
  - Did you enjoy the course?
  - What did you learn?
  - How would you rank this day on 1-5 scale (1 for best)?
  - Do you have any advice for me?

- Connected to the opinion poll is naturally the fact that managers in charge of the course should take a realistic look at the comments made by the participants and learn how they could improve and perfect the next presentation. Even the best trainers sometimes receive a few comments on their presenting skills; not every participant likes when there is an excess of this and that and it good to know that there is always a space for improvement even among the elite training managers.

(14)

Not every attendee is ever perfect. However, training managers in Timpson Ltd are professionals and they are taught how to treat those participants of the course who are tricky. Here are some examples of these tricky characters that the trainers could come across in their class:

- **‘Monopolising Mary’**

This kind of person is the one that likes to have everything under control and who speaks all the time without wanting the interruption. Manager is there to control the course, not let the participants do it for him or her. The best way is to wait until the Monopolising Mary draws out of breath before slowing her down with a pair of tougher questions. Then there is a time when the manager jumps in and asks the group to comment. This will put an end to endless issue with letting also the other participant to say anything.

- **‘Whispering Willy’**

This person always mutters behind the back of others. The training manager is there to stop him or her disrupting the training session with a direct challenge. It is best to wait until the ‘Whispering Willy’ looks at the manager, then let him or her to share the comment that has been made and ask him or her for permission if the person in charge of this course can continue. Sarcasm is there in place and it usually works with this kind of people who bother both the trainer and the trainees.

- **‘Silent Sarah’**

There are sometimes present people during the session who are a bit timid. The best solution is to refer her or him by name and ask some easy questions to break the ice. If the person is bored or so, asking a tougher question should stop her from being complacency. The manager’s job is to get everyone involved. This

can later create a serious problem if the 'Silent Sarah' person is behind the counter and has to deal with all kinds of customer behaviour. Prevention of this leads to better customer care.

- **'Angry Andrew'**

Angry people are bad for the business. Still, a good manager can direct the person to the right path. It is no use trying to argue with 'Angry Andrew,' he or she will not let you win, it is their game. The best way how to solve this issue is for manager to get the other delegates to give their views; they will be pleased to shout the angry disturber down and is it probable that 'Andrew' will finally withdraw and change his or her attitude.

- **'Careful Charlie'**

It happens a lot in Timpson Ltd that this type of people will appear. It is a perfectionist kind of apprentice who gets disheartened by any mistake he or she makes. Training managers have to be very patient with 'Careful Charlies' and give a lot of encouragement and warm words. It showed over time that these employees eventually turn into the best performers in Timpson Ltd and it is thanks to the diligent work of training managers and their tireless attitude to help make the best out of their recruits. (16)

- **Skill testing**

After the course there is a place for testing the skills that the recruits have learnt through the course. Every trainee should have a goal and he or she should be awarded with a qualification. Timpson Ltd developed a list of standards which are suitable as recommendations for training managers and which have proven over years of experimenting to be useful and effective:

- Very important thing is to realize that this qualification certificate must be truly deserved. Managers must make sure that the qualification is not easy to obtain; there are a lot of people who know the system and it is then a piece of cake for them to obtain the certificate without even knowing how to do the job. Avoiding tests that let the apprentices gain in for free is one of the basic rules that the manager must take into consideration when he or she creates the particular test.

- What also matters is the fact that the test must measure the ability to do the job and not just the ability to take tests and tick the boxes; training managers are taught to use common sense when creating the testing papers.
- Favouritism is not tolerated in Timpson Ltd Managers must not be tempted by favouring this apprentice or that one. The only testing system that is going to work is the one that is fair and just.
- Timpson managers are given the authority to challenge the rules regarding skill testing methods. If the apprentice is e.g. slow at writing or has problems with dyslexia, managers are supposed to use their creativity and adjust the test for the particular apprentice. Flexibility of skill testing is good both for the company and the trainees because it shows that Timpson Ltd promote broadminded approach to employees with any kind of disability. A verbal test is just as good as a written one. (26)
- In case of some participants of the training do not pass the test for the first time; it is neither a failure nor a disaster. No one is perfect; however, the test might indicate that there is more work to be done. It is the manager's job to help the unsuccessful apprentices pass the next time. Retesting is nothing new at Timpson Ltd and it is definitely anything to be ashamed of. Making some extra sessions for trainees who did not pass the first test is a necessary part of training process and it must be said at the beginning of the training course that retesting happens all the time. Maybe demonstrating the numbers of previous years' successful and unsuccessful participants would help to mitigate the stress. People in Timpson Ltd believe in straight approach with emphasis on honesty and fair play.
- On the other hand, if the candidates successfully passed the skill test, it is a managers' job to congratulate them with a handshake, upgrade their certificate, take a picture and put it into the 'Area Newsletter' and encourage them to go for the next level of training.

Training is definitely the most important investment into future employees that Timpson Ltd make. John Timpson adds that "Today's training is setting the quality of our business in ten years time!" (13) As the recruits progress through their career, they will have the possibility to attend various management and other training courses which are held in Wythenshawe, Manchester. The range of courses which the apprentices can



attend is large, at present it is 15 courses and James Timpson plans to extend it by another two. In picture 5 is shown a selection of courses provided by Timpson Ltd.

**Picture 3 Management and Training Courses in Timpson Ltd**

MANAGEMENT TRAINING & OTHER COURSES		
A.D.M Induction	Time Management	Recruitment & Interviewing
Managing Discipline & Improving Attendance	Introduction To Locksmith	Practical Interviewing
MVP Pro	Manual Handling	Leadership
Tribunal Induction	Supporting Employees In Distress	Health & Safety
Supervisor	People & Personalities	Managing Your Own Well Being

Source: <http://www.timpson.co.uk/about/85/training>

Most of the training is done ‘on the job.’ In other words it means that it does not matter whether the apprentice is in his or her own branch or another, all apprentices are supposed to pay attention and take part in various activities and tasks regardless the situation. The branch can be sometimes a bit overcrowded or there is a lot of disturbing noise; still, it is the best way how to incorporate apprentices into the real business situations. Some skills are best taught and practiced away from the hasty and rush parts of the day, though. There has to be no interruption at all. Therefore, Timpson Ltd developed training courses around the United Kingdom which are used whenever appropriate for concentrated training of skills. It is appropriate mainly for courses such as Customer Care or tutorials to Watch Repairs.

John Timpson in one of his many interviews at Telegraph magazine (online magazine) said: “By recruiting pleasant and positive personalities who are keen to learn, we can, within four months, teach the basics of all our skills including shoe repairs, key-cutting and watch repairs. After a year, they are ready to run a shop on their own. There is no other UK training school for cobblers and key-cutters, so without our apprentice scheme we wouldn’t have the skills to provide a proper service.” (28)

In the Timpson’s Academy, there is a training centre for both male and female ex-offenders. From those who turn up for the interview every month the majority is

composed of male participants. At the training centre, both ex-prisoners and non prisoners are being taught together, there is no division between them. And according to James Timpson, Managing Director, it works wonderfully. Some candidates which came right out from prison were accepted even despite their lack of work history. Timpson Ltd look for personality and if the candidate shows he or she 'get it,' it does not matter if they have worked before in some company or not.

In 2010, the person who was in charge of the UK Training Agency talked with people from Timpson about giving them over £1m per year of state funding. Two years of meetings eventually finished up with nothing for Timpson Ltd The conditions were that in order to get the money, the training programme was supposed to change to comply with government guidelines. Also, managers were expected to work with an approved training provider who unfortunately knew nothing at all about services that Timpson company provides, however, he was a master at filling in forms and he would pick up about 50% of the grant. John Timpson eventually decided to do things the Timpson way and ignore the handout. The result for Timpson is that the company still plans to take on those 750 apprentices, however, John Timpson would welcome a scheme which would hand out the money to people who are interested in creating more jobs and in training apprentices rather than the option of giving grants to people who are have only mastered the box-ticking. (28)

- **The leadership course for managers**

The last point to mention in this chapter is the fact that training applies also to managers, not only to employees. This course series is always a 24-hour lunch-time to lunch-time session. The content is usually a detailed discussion about the concept which this company is famous for, the 'Upside Down Management' and also the connection to personnel selection process as well as other fields of the business. The first courses were for directors, later in time this training course was spread also to Area Managers and from 2009 on the sessions are made also for branch managers. The way the course is led is fairly informal and friendly and Mr Timpson and his son, who are in charge of the sessions, try to ensure that every attendee enjoys the experience. It was designed to keep the Timpson culture up to date and to ensure that communication is done in face to face manner, not in face to screen manner.

There are many training centres for improving managerial skills around the United Kingdom and John Timpson also developed a scheme called ‘The People Test’ which is about asking managers 20 key questions about a colleague in their branch. The questions are e.g.

- What are the names of your colleague Bob family members?
- Which football team does Bob support?
- What are Bob’s favourite hobbies?
- What pet does Bob have?

The aim of this test is to underline the importance of knowing the personality behind the people Timpson Ltd employ. Managers who take a real interest in their work know about their teammates and their daily issues almost everything, because they communicate with them on daily basis. (35)

### **5.3.2 Rewards and recognition**

Training is not for young apprentices only; even superstar performers want to learn new skills that will make them better at what they do. Everyone working in Timpson Ltd must have the opportunity to learn new things and attend skill and other courses. Time and technology are changing fast and so must employees. Training managers are here to help each individual employee reach their potential. No one can be forced to attain courses, however, most employees in Timpson Ltd like learning new skills and improve themselves. Another positive thing is that training helps everyone develop their career and maximise their wage. In Timpson Ltd, every field management role is filled by promoting from within the company; there are only a small percentage of people who came to this company as externalists. Therefore it is also a positive motivation for all employees in Timpson Ltd to try their best to achieve promotion and the limits are only those which people set themselves. (28)

- **Career development**

It is important for each employee to do this or her plan. The individual plans can vary in size and shape, but they will all be of the same purpose – to see what has been achieved and to see what needs to be achieved. At the beginning of each plan, it is helpful to set personal objectives which the person in question wants to achieve, e.g.

buying a new car, buying a house, visiting a country, going to the Olympic Games, living in Victoria Street etc.

The next good step is to draw a table with skill levels and a continuum, where an employee can see his or her progress at each individual skill. Managers in Timpson Ltd are there for employees to provide a regular progress reports. Majority of employees like to know where they stand at the moment, compare it with where they stood one year ago and make some objectives where they would like to stand in one year, or two. Letting people know how they are doing regarding their career is a necessary part of maintaining them in positive state of mind.

Very helpful tool over the years has shown to be a 'Your Say' scheme. It gives everyone the opportunity and, what is more, the right to talk to his or her boss who will listen to them with pleasure. Timpson Ltd encourage and support the idea of regular conversations and if any employees feel that they do not have much opportunity to talk about their progress, this scheme will definitely help them to have a chat with the Area Manager or any other qualified person.

There exist a wide range of helping materials in need that anyone feels he or she should improve but do not want to use the 'Your Say' opportunity to talk. Some people like to just learn on their own – and managers in Timpson Ltd are hundred-per-cent positive about this. Many best performers are self-trainers and it is this very specific way of learning that got them where they are at present. There are many guides, manuals, in-branch trainers, skill assessments or special training days to use when needed. Help is always at hand in this company.

Picking people for promotion is always one of the toughest decisions that managers deal with through their career. There is some promotion standard in Timpson Ltd to follow, but this company operates in 'Upside Down Management' and it means that employees as well as managers have much more free hands in decision making. The idea is that Timpson Ltd promotes from within and this can sometimes lead to a kind of favouritism. Also, every job must be widely advertised and with a proper interview process. There is no space for any kind of backstairs influence. Area Managers are there to prevent this behaviour and make sure that every candidate for promotion is fairly assessed. Area Managers are also responsible for crystal clear job description in order to prevent employees from misunderstanding the position which they want to achieve. There has to be advertised both positive the aspects and also the

negative aspects of the job. It is usually much easier to see the benefits of the work than the pitfalls. Area Managers in Timpson Ltd are taught to ask themselves these three questions and if the answer for all of them is yes, they have a perfect candidate equipped for the job:

- Can they do the job?
- Will they do the job with enthusiasm?
- Will colleagues approve of our choice?

These three vital questions help the Area Manager decide if they have got the right candidate for the right position at the right time. Promoting is a chapter for itself as it is often underestimated by many companies. It brings along many hindrances and the result can be a disaster. Not even that in case the person is not fitting the position the manager has to demote him or her back but this also causes that people might see the manager as someone who is not the right person in the right place. Employees will start asking questions about the competency of such a person. There are a lot of training courses for managers in Timpson Ltd regarding the issue of promoting people.

Last to mention is the fact that not only wages are paid weekly but also feedback is provided weekly. Manager must keep close contact with anyone in a new job and a bit looser contact with experienced employees. It is necessary to have a detailed discussion every week and to write down all important things on a paper in order to easily get back to them when it is needed.

- **Bonus Scheme**

The bonus scheme has not changed in Timpson Ltd for over 20 years and John Timpson knows exactly why – it works and people like it. According to him, “All wages paid to anyone working at the shop that week are added up and multiplied by 4.5 to produce a sales target. We use 4.5 because it works; it is kind of my secret how I figured it out. All sales over the target earn a 15% bonus, which is paid out the following Thursday. The bonus is only given to colleagues there during the week; people on holiday or off sick don’t qualify. The payout is shared according to experience. Our training is linked to skill tests, with every pass earning an extra point. Colleagues with the most points earn the biggest bonus.” (32) This very simple system of bonus scheme provides the much needed adrenalin for the whole business and it makes sure that most of the employees are keen to look after their customers every

single day and to give their customers the best service possible. A good elaborated bonus scheme is as important as every step in personnel selection process. People like to be rewarded for a good job and what they like even more is the fact that they are rewarded fairly and honestly by the company. Working for Timpson Ltd and trying to do one's best is not a thing that is written somewhere nor set by any standards; it goes hand in hand with the company culture and unconventional approach to its members. (32)

A well-elaborated bonus scheme must give recognition for what the employees have achieved through their career and must in first case fair and just. If e.g. a superb performing employee asks for a pay raise and threatens to walk out when the conditions of the proposal will not be met, the Area Managers are there to assess the request and decide what should be the best solution. It is necessary for them to realize whether the bonus scheme is sufficient enough and is paying the employee in question what he or she is worth and also whether the manager wants the employee to stay or not. (31)

The best way how to solve this precarious situation is to have a long and friendly heart-to-heart conversation in order to settle matters down. This tricky situation might give the manager a much-needed wake up call and get him or her thinking about it more deeply. However, the key question which the Area Managers have to ask themselves is: 'Whatever you do, will your selling star still be with you five years from now?' The answer is definitely not an easy one but managers who are professionals in their field must make up their minds and make the final step. No one is indispensable and if there is not a perfect decision soon, the manager may be the one that leaves the company, not the employee. (15)

- **Performance measures**

Despite the unconventional approach to management structure and standards, even Timpson Ltd need numbers to measure the performance of the employees. These figures tell the company where it stands in the corporate order and it also provides information about the way Timpson Ltd do the business; it means good or bad. John Timpson adds in one of his many contributions given to online journal Telegraph in section 'Ask John': "We get guilty satisfaction whenever a competitor produces a poor set of figures. Bad news for one business is often good news for another." (36) With his straight approach to every simple thing, it is not surprising that he used the connection

'guilty satisfaction' because he always tries to help other companies be better and improve their management and position on the market. On the other hand, most executive managers scan the business pages and hope that they will find statistics which will prove they are beating the market. (36)

All figures and statistics should be viewed with a bit of suspicion. It has happened many times to Timpson Ltd before that this company pinned its faith upon trust in other competitors to tell them the truth when they asked them about the business the competitors do. It is just nonsense to believe only in official statistics. Common sense will tell the manager more than a piece of paper and a set of numbers. Communication skills play a key role in these situations. Every set of data needs an interpretation and it depends on the people how they interpret it, not a machine. However, in today's world of business, statistics about performance, even if they are inaccurate, have a huge influence on future thinking and decision making. One good example can be e.g. when the recent benefit change in the United Kingdom came into force, reporters interviewed only a small number of companies which were worse off. It did not show the representative sample, only some partial research.

In service industry, it is a bad thing if process-driven managers become obsessed with targets and fulfilling them strictly. There can arise a situation where all performance targets are being beaten, however, customers are still dissatisfied with the service provided by the company. The real challenge for the managers is to get the management team to understand that people are not just a statistic, that they are thinking beings that cannot be treated as numbers, put into a box and ticked off. What is the most important thing in Timpson Ltd strategy regarding maintaining their people for a long time is the fact that visiting the branches in person and talking to them is priceless for the effective running of the company and for the effective relationship with the employees. Communication creates the success in Timpson Ltd, not statistics. (14)

- **Salary reviews**

Timpson Ltd do not employ any strategy concerning salary scales. Every employee is treated on individual basis. There are reviews of salary of every employee on the day he or she started to work in this company. This strategy is employed from several reasons:

- It is the best solution for Timpson managers to deal with colleagues one at a time because the idea is that everyone is paid what he or she is worth. Good performers get more money than poor ones. Timpson Ltd strategy is to discriminate against the ‘drongos,’ as John Timpson calls the poor performers in general. Therefore, people who do the same job are very often not paid the same amount of money.
- Salary scales which are often used in many other companies make the poor performers feel as good as the rest of the team members. Scales are communicated without even meeting each individual and talking to him or her about it. This is not a case in Timpson Ltd There, people are treated individually and what matters is not any scale at all; it is the personality which matters.

Line managers in Timpson Ltd are given a company guideline which includes the basic information about inflation. This guideline is distributed one month before each individual’s anniversary in this company and managers recommend any changes in salary to Timpson’s People Support department. Mr John Timpson writes in one of his books: “We encourage managers to be tough with weaker performers and generous to the superstars. I am happy to pay great people much more; they deserve the extra money and I want to encourage them to stay with the company.” (13, p. 185)

- **Holidays**

When it comes to a situation where multiple people in one branch want to have their days off at the very same time, the company puts through the strategy that even if no manager should have favourites, it is perfectly proper to let parents with children have their holiday dates first. Timpson Ltd look after their long serving colleagues and star performers by giving them the slots they want. It is not the real case of favouritism, it is just another way how to say ‘Thank You’ for the work the employees have done in the branch for the company. John Timpson personally is not in favour of a kind of verbalism and believes that with straight approach to things and using common sense, people in Timpson Ltd understand the way that things work. The strategy of ‘first come, first served’ is not exploited there and it is the very common sense that points at the fact that poor performers and new employees have to give way to experienced employees and star performers. There will be a plenty of time for new employees to deserve their position and even much more time for poor performers to improve and show that they deserve to be designated star performers with preferences over the poor ones.



In Timpson Ltd, each employee is entitled to 20 days off plus 'Bank Holidays.' Good employers are those who are capable of flexibility and common sense. Timpson Ltd allowed the rules to be bent and the result was amazing. Employees started to send letters with many thanks for allowing them to stay here and there for extra 10 days etc. because one of the allowances regarding holidays was the fact that employees can carry holidays over from one year to another and are able to enjoy their holidays for a longer time if they e.g. travel to long distant countries to visit relatives or just switch off for one month in Hawaii. Managers are given the full authority to challenge the rules and this is the very heart of 'Upside Down Management' style which gives the company its position on the market. It is therefore not surprising that every year, Timpson Ltd is among the 100 Best Companies To Work For in the world according to Sunday Times journal and among the 50 Best Workplaces in the United Kingdom according to Financial Times journal. (14)

The next advantage in Timpson Ltd is that employees are given an extra paid day off on their birthday. People can spend their time with families and celebrate the birthday in family circle. Area Managers in each branch are pleased to send personal congratulations on the employee's birthday. This cannot be found in any book or standard; this approach was developed in the company many years ago and it survives with even more enthusiasm than before. It only confirms the fact that communication is the essential building stone in Timpson Ltd. (37)

- **Share options**

Another possibility of bonus scheme can be e.g. to offer of share options in a business. However, Timpson Ltd think that it is unlikely that this will persuade unsettled people to stay in the company. Before thinking about the share scheme, it is important have a profound look at salaries. If the company is making a loss and the employees agreed to wage freeze, it is an option that may not be of any importance for employees who are hesitating whether to stay with the company or leave. In case of the company needs to save on salaries, it is best to say goodbye to the poorest performers in order to be able to pay the key people who create the business and are worth the money bonus. It is not wise to take advantage of the employees who are able to return the company to profitability again. A good bonus scheme has a lot advantages over the possibility with share options. Everyone in the business can understand a good scheme

which is based on a percentage of profit. On the other hand, offering shares is bound to be more complicated and tricky. People working for the company prefer to have their reward paid sooner rather than later. And the second option is connected of course to the offering shares scheme which will not provide the desired change that the company seeks. The simple advice from John Timpson is, instead of spending time drafting a complicated scheme, to review the level of the staff, to put through a pay increase option and at the time when things improve, to send everyone a surprise bonus in form of cheque or so. (29)

Timpson Ltd are a private business; John Timpson and his wife Alex Timpson are the only shareholders. There are many reasons for this decision; among them e.g. the fact that the company keeps its figures away from financial journalists or that Mr Timpson is keen to avoid the rich list.

Mr Timpson talked about an experience with this bonus scheme regarding shares in an interview for the journal *The Telegraph* in 2010: “When I did a management buyout in 1983 I quickly set up an employee share scheme. In many ways it worked well. I was happy to give colleagues a chance to share in the equity and when I sold the business four years later their capital gain was a partial compensation for the change in ownership. But that experience taught me about some of the difficulties.” (38). These difficulties included:

- Most employees were confused by the statutory statements produced by Timpson Ltd lawyers. Mr Timpson prefers to use his own words to tell the message and provide a true story and with all that statements it was very difficult for employees to not be confused about the true message.
- The scheme with shares is not used now in Timpson Ltd because the potential benefits were too long term to give rise to better performance of employees.
- What is more beneficial are annual, monthly and weekly bonuses which definitely keep the Timpson team more conscious about turnover and profit improvement.
- As soon as any company establishes the bonus scheme with shares, there come out a lot of difficulties. Among them are e.g. the fact that the company must fulfil legal obligations to the new shareholders or that the employees not only have a share in the business but they also have a say in how the business should be run or what can be very dangerous they have a right to lots of information about the company as a whole.

- At present, special reward for long service employees in Timpson Ltd is a so called 'Final-salary Pension Scheme.' (38)

- **'Hardship Fund'**

People can get into a trouble with money for all sorts of reasons like credit cards, divorce, drugs, gambling, they lend money to a suspicious friend etc. All these problems can lead to a situation when the employee steals money from the till to compensate for his or her own loss. Therefore, Timpson Ltd invented the idea of a fund which will help people who are in any kind of troubles; the hardship fund. The idea behind this is to persuade people to talk to Timpson team before things get out of hand. There is about £250,000 out on loan to employees who have any kind of worries with money. What is an amazing fact is that over 97% of these loans are repaid in full. The policy of Timpson Ltd is to trust people and it has shown over years that this kind of policy pays off. (13)

- **'Dreams come true' scheme**

This idea is not a copy from someone else; John Timpson himself is a pioneer of 'Dreams come true' scheme. It was on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of becoming and independent shoe repair company in 1983. John Timpson wrote a booklet and sent a copy to all employees together with a copy of a letter in which he explained that the success in Timpson Ltd was like a dream come true. Since then, every month Timpson Ltd would turn one colleague's dream into reality. The game is as simple as this – every employee has the possibility to write down on a paper a dream that he or she has, put it into an envelope and send it to Timpson House. There, every month, team of managers pick one of the letters (the choice depends on many aspects which are not available to public) and allow the dream come true. So far Timpson Ltd has spent over £300,000 on a wide range of projects, from trips to Australia to the purchase of a particularly expensive dog breed. When John Timpson was asked by a journalist a few years ago whether 'Dreams come true' scheme was driven by business sense or philanthropy, he replied that it can be observed as an unnecessary cost, however, he considers it a good business. Timpson Ltd are looking after their best performers and, at the same time, they add to the character of the business they do. The Timpson culture has been created over years by bizarre and unpredictable ideas and it is also very closely connected to the concept of 'Upside Down Management' structure.

- **Timpson Newsletter**

The realization of the newsletter is rather expensive and time consuming; however, it has shown over years that it pays off even though the costs are quite high. It is an excellent way to communicate the message across the branches. The scope of the newsletter is about 16 pages and it is issued every week, sometimes even two editions per one week. The content is usually full of stories about people who work in Timpson Ltd and in Max Spielmann, the second business which John Timpson owns. The recent research in Timpson Ltd showed that not only that people like it, but the fact that they really read it, bring it home to share their success with families and discuss the matters with colleagues from other branches throughout the United Kingdom.

- **Behaviour in the workplace**

John Timpson addresses a question regarding the issue when a manager is given a bad nickname by employees by answering that: “People are sometimes a bit cruel, even if we concentrate on picking up personalities, it happens from time to time that we recruit somebody who starts the nickname –calling. The reasons could be many, e.g. the manager can be lazy, sexually over-active, having a foul body odour etc. My advice is to tackle the problem directly, talk face to face with the particular employee and let him or her know that you know about the insults. Ask him or her why you were given such an infamous nickname. Be straightforward and assertive.” (25). If a company wants to maintain its employees and create a fruitful relationship between them and Area Managers, it is necessary to have a set of rules regarding the behaviour in the workplace.

- **Fair play in the workplace**

There can also arise a situation when an employee is not playing fair and is misusing others in order to do less work and leave the work earlier than others. If the Area Managers feel that their any employee who they have in their branch is underperforming and not playing fair, the best solution is to tell him or her straight away and deal with the problem face to face. Good people management in Timpson Ltd is much more about the reality of having a conversation with people face to face than of issuing some kind of warning letters or so. The result will be either that the problematic employee will immediately understand the rules and standards of the company or there will be an agreement to part as friends. John Timpson adds in the interview given to the

online journal Telegraph that: “It is best to tackle poor performers face to face as soon as you detect a problem.” (29)

- **Growing in size**

Growing in size is another issue that has to be treated with caution. John Timpson said in one of his interviews provided to the online journal The Telegraph that: “Timpson Ltd have grown to six times the size in 20 years but following each major acquisition we have been keen to keep our family business culture. When we had 150 shops, the area managers' conference was held round our dining room table. Today we have more than 1000 shops and we struggle to fit into a conference centre.” (30). Still, with the growing business, it is possible to keep the personal approach whatever the size is. When there occurs a situation where the manager cannot fit all employees into the biggest room available, the best solution is to have two meetings or to finish work earlier and visit a local hotel with a much bigger conference room than the one which the company has available. Mr Timpson also advises to keep things informal and help it to happen with a little bribe to the hotel's person in charge. It is important for the company to do this all in person and try to keep the atmosphere as informal as possible with no need for legal proceedings. Regarding the very presentation for a lot of employees, it is a tradition in Timpson Ltd to deliver the message in PowerPoint presentation, with very few figures, at best with no words and only in pictures and simple examples. Words are not suitable for presentations; the manager is here to explain things and to keep the attention of all employees alive.

- **Giving control to employees**

The referendum in Scotland which will take place in 2014 and will regard the independence on Great Britain is also touches the Timpson culture. With more than 80 shops in Scotland, this country plays very important part in the Timpson business. The strategy is the same as in all parts of the UK – the ‘Upside Down Management.’ Giving control to the people who are in daily contact with customers is the secret of this unconventional style of management. Provided that Scotland votes yes for independence, the pressure from voters could increase government spending, this would have the effect of increased minimum wage and the final effect would be higher taxes to fund the investments, which were previously paid for by Westminster. The result would be that Timpson Ltd would make less money in Scotland. John Timpson also adds that

the success of Timpson Ltd will always depend on how well they look after their customers, not on the type of Government in the country. However, Mr Timpson is rather sure that the result of the referendum regarding the independence of Scotland will be from 70% the 'No' answer. (25)

- **Praise and recognition**

At the end of this chapter, it is appropriate to mention that in order to support the idea that Timpson Ltd give people a life-time opportunity, there is a necessity to know how to appreciate the work of good employees and how to say 'thank you.' There are some examples to indicate how praise can be a brilliant motivator and how managers in Timpson Ltd express their thanks to employees:

- **Friday phone call**

This is the best way how to frankly say 'well done.' Trading week in Timpson Ltd ends on Thursdays and on Friday there is a lot opportunity for Area Managers to call up the branches and discuss the business as well as other things with employees. It has shown over years that this is a great possibility for both managers and employees to share their experiences and to talk e.g. about holidays, family situation, children etc. These conversations are much more valuable than just a business talk. Some years ago there was a proposal from It department to write a computer program which would electronically contact the branches overnight and collect information on the Area Manager's behalf. It was refused by John Timpson on the spot. The reason is as simple as this – when managers themselves call up the branches, there is an incomparable approach to customers than when a machine does the same work. Human communication is the key success in Timpson Ltd

- **Surprise envelope**

An occasional surprise envelope with a small amount of money is always welcome. When people know that they can be rewarded for their hard work, they appreciate it and it motivates them a lot.

- **Scratch card**

Another brilliant way how to say thank you. Timpson Ltd borrowed this idea from Asda company. Every week the managers find some people who have done a great job and they give them a company-created scratch card. Employees scratch

the card and can reveal their own prize e.g. ten pounds note, a meal out, two days off or a bottle of wine.

- **Public praise**

It is a good tool to let everyone see how well the employee has done by putting his or her deeds in the next newsletter with a picture.

- **Special rewards**

Major success deserves in Timpson Ltd special recognition. If the manager is amazed by the colleague's performance he or she can give the employee an extra week off and pay for the transport to the favourite destination.

- **Holiday homes**

The most popular benefits that are provided by Timpson Ltd to employees are in the form of holiday homes. There are now about 10 holiday homes around the world e.g. in Spain, Blackpool. There was a long waiting list when this idea began with only two holiday homes about 5 years ago. Therefore the Timpson team decided to extend the number to four in 2010, to eight in 2012 and at present there are more than ten destinations where employees can enjoy holidays with totally free accommodation. The only expenses which employees have to pay are for food and travel. The biggest advantage of this way how to thank the loyal employees is the fact that it involves the possibility to take the whole family and enjoy the trip together.

- **Handwritten notes**

John Timpson's most favourite form of praise is a handwritten note. It is enhanced especially when the manager encloses a significant cheque inside the envelope. This rather obsolete way of praising extraordinary performers is very rare at present time; however, it turned out in Timpson Ltd to be a very unique gentleman's gesture which put tears into one's eyes. (13)

#### **5.4 Firing recruits in Timpson**

Mr Timpson remembers in his book 'Upside Down Management' how the legislation was different in the old days; personnel were responsible for the process of recruiting new employees and training them, they kept records about them and dealt with any kind of difficulty that came into their way. However, personnel are at present

called Human Resources and this department makes sure that the business stays 100% legal. This HR department pays big fees to employment lawyers who are strictly following the legislation. Employment law seems to look after Mr Slow and Mrs Sickie rather than after Mr Skilful and Mrs Helpful.

#### **5.4.1 Employment legislation**

It sometimes gets wrong in Timpson Ltd and people fool the company at the interview. However, before long they reveal themselves. Some warning signs of a person who is not playing fair can be:

- People who are slow to learn but quick to slip out for a cigarette.
- People who turn up late or throw up sickies.
- ‘Always on the phone’ kind of people
- Newspaper-readers behind the counter
- People who play the fool at training sessions

To recognize such poor performers, it is necessary to know how such people behave. These people have always someone else to blame and whatever they do badly, it is never their fault and others are there to blame. The best thing that the ‘drongos’ are good at is making excuses. Sentences like ‘My family member was ill and I had to ...’ or ‘The traffic was bad again’ or ‘Someone had done this and that and I could not...’ All this indicates that the person is short of personality and plays a silly game.

HR expect the managers to live a lie. The only way how to get rid of unwelcome employees is through oral or written warnings and through performance improvement programmes. This is the usual way to turn drongos into useful members of the company. However, Timpson people do not employ such a strategy. In this company, there is no place for poor performers. These people can certainly improve their skills but they will not change their personality. The only strategy that Timpson Ltd employ is the fact that it is better to pay the poor performers to leave the company and not waste the precious management time on those lost causes. Telling the bad performers face to face that things are not working this way in Timpson Ltd is known as ‘Part As Friends’ scheme. This means that managers help the poor performer to find another job and pay him or her an extra few weeks’ pay as compensation. The Timpson culture is based on this kind of off-the-record talk and the idea behind is that straight face-to-face chat is



the most honest way to deal with people. Mr Timpson adds in his book 'Upside Down Management' that this off-the-record chat "cuts across Human Resources guidelines but, quite rightly, has never taken us Timpson company to an Employment Tribunal. There are a few tricky colleagues who are clearly up for a fight. Some love the idea of confrontation and relish going to a tribunal. I regard costs awarded by a tribunal as a small price to pay for ignoring stupid rules and treating colleagues with honesty and common sense." (13, p. 188)

Timpson culture also does not want to allow long-service employees to be misused in any kind of company strategy to satisfy the tribunal rules. It is better to lose the case at a tribunal and rather win the moral and workforce of the workforce. Loyalty and common sense are the key points in Timpson Ltd success.

- **Making people redundant**

There is sometimes a period when a company has to make its employees redundant because of savings. Line managers, who should be responsible for this personnel cuts tend to hand everything over to Human Resources department. HR usually stick to the strict guidelines, produce a proper paper trail and their duty is to prove that all matters are ahead of a possible employment tribunal. The usual procedure is that everyone in the company is put on notice that they are at risk from the possibility of being made redundant. (34)

The next step is to make all employees reapply for their own jobs. According to John Timpson, this is rather appropriate when management really does not know who is going to stay and who is going to be fired. However, what happens is the fact that employees are being deceived. Management already knows the answer to who is going to stay and who is going to be fired. However, by this process they are giving their superstars a rough time and at the same time they are giving the weakest employees false hope. Human Resources department wants to tick everyone in a box and also all proper decision making must obey the guidelines.

This kind of dishonesty is not favoured in Timpson Ltd. There, good managers already know their people and their decisions are based on instinct, talent and judgment. These qualities cannot just be replaced by any formal process. John Timpson and his team prefer to ignore these guidelines, and instead

trust their management people who treat all employees with honesty and respect. The company tries to avoid appearing at an employment tribunal as well and uses methods which do not need the perfect paperwork to be done. Mr John Timpson added in an interview given to the online journal Te Telegraph that he would rather “do the right thing by 99% of our colleagues than put in a deceitful process to deal with the 1% that play the system.” (34)

The reality speaks everything. In the past years, only three of more than 3000 employees in Timpson Ltd have taken the company to a tribunal and the employees were always the ones that walked out as losers. (34)

- **Stealing money from the till**

There is no excuse for dishonesty in Timpson Ltd This company has the scheme called the ‘Hardship Fund,’ which is available to help colleagues who have found themselves in financial difficulty.

Employees can borrow money to solve e.g. the household debt that could otherwise tempt them to steal money from the till. This is one of many employee benefits at Timpson Ltd However, being nice to people who work for the company does not always prevent them from stealing money. According to John Timpson, it is not effective to spend a fortune to protect the business from such situations. On the other hand, what really is effective are sensible steps regarding the security but only if then these steps do not get in the way of doing business. People are clever and they will always find ways round the rules. (39)

In Timpson Ltd, the strategy is to spot the particular culprit by common-sense observation. This can include signs as:

- Conspicuously unusual sales performance.
- Excess use of raw materials in the branch.
- Change in behaviour.
- Failure to look the manager straight in the eye.

If the Area Managers perceive any of these suspicious signs, they are allowed to install a covert camera in the branch and when there is the evidence; managers let the offenders see the film. The next steps are according to the law - dismissing the employee for gross misconduct. This can seem as an unpleasant situation to

deal with; however, it is an essential part of managing a successful and thriving business. (39)

- **Discrimination**

A good example speaks for everything. There has been a research lately in the United Kingdom and the statistics showed that overweight employees have twelve times more the level of sick-absenteeism than employees who maintain a healthy weight and lifestyle. Some companies might be tempted to view these statistics as vital and start making legal steps in this field, issue lots of standards and regulations in order to prevent the company from a loss connected with sick-absenteeism of obese people.

People in Timpson Ltd assume quite different attitude toward this question. It does not matter whether the employees are thin, fat, short or small as long as they do a great job. However, if the manager perceives that an employee is much sicker than others and that he or she visibly has some health problems, the solution really is not to tell him or her to lose weight and deal with the health-problems, or leave. The Timpson culture adopted an attitude that is honest, fair and straight. The best solution in this kind of situation is to talk to the colleague privately and offer help. Free health checks, moral support or even an idea to start a company slimming club can improve the situation of both the employee and the company. It is the genuine common sense that drives the energy through the Timpson Ltd and managers are there to find a solution to maintain the employees which perform well but have any kind of problems, rather than to find ways how to fire them and replace with someone more suitable.

The idea behind all this is to avoid the tribunals not only because it costs money and it can bring a bad name on the company, but mainly because the Timpson culture is the one that employs in the first case common sense and believes that fair and honest approach to every issue that falls in way can be treated inside the company using simple and reasonable solutions.

John Timpson is very sceptic if it comes to researches and surveys. In an interview given to the online journal The Telegraph said at the end of 2013 that: “The UK sickness level averages 4.5 days a year although it is 9.5 in the NHS and 14.7 days a year for ambulance drivers. If I also believe the survey you quote

which suggests that overweight people take twelve times as many sickies, I can expect a fat ambulance driver to be off sick for 176 days. With 28 days holiday and 52 weekends he would only be at work 57 days a year. Some may consider this worrying, I just think it shows the danger of believing statistics in somewhat suspect surveys that the media sometimes publish as front page news.” (30)

## **5.5 Ex-offenders in Timpson Ltd**

Many of the companies traditionally protect themselves against risk by means of expressly designed standards and rules which exclude such people as ex-offenders. However, Timpson Ltd believe in giving all people a second chance. The impulse was prompted by John Timpson in 2005 and there is not much to be wondered about. Mr Timpson and his family are very famous and successful philanthropists; they have fostered over 100 children and raised an immense amount of money for charity. People from prison give the Timpson team not only the great possibility of helping people but also the chance of getting people to work for the company.

The programme for ex-offenders effectively started in 2005 and the first ever employee who came to work for Timpson Ltd from prison was a young man named Matt, whom James Timpson, Managing Director, met during a visit to Her Majesty's Young Offender Institution. Matt was showing James Timpson round Thorn Cross, a prison near Warrington and James Timpson was so impressed with Matt's personality that he gave him a guarantee of an interview after he is released from prison. This very young lad impressed the interviewing committee and stayed with the company in paid full-time employment ever since. Matt manages at present a highly successful Timpson shop and is married with two children. (41)

James Timpson had the courage to make the idea of employing ex-prisoners a priority but it was Dennis Phillips who turned the policy into reality by helping new colleagues from prison with wide range of issues they encounter when they are released. People leaving prison find it very tough to get back on the track. Dennis Phillips, who is occupying a position of Timpson Foundation Ambassador and is in charge of dealing with the prison authorities, actively interviews prisoners from a pool of more than 80 prisons and his view is to employ them on release. Mr Phillips offers the ex-offenders a work experience, placement in one of the many Timpson Foundation Academies or Release on Temporary License which means that prisoners work in a shop every day

returning to prison at night. There are about 88,000 people in prison throughout the United Kingdom and employers are likely to reject most people who come from prison and have a criminal record.

For colleagues who come to Timpson Ltd through the Timpson Foundation i.e. ex-offenders, the company relies on the prison's risk assessment and conviction disclosure record. This is explained in length on Timpson web pages by Guy Hamilton-Fisher, the head of people support. The disclosure record is a complete record which contains all the individual's convictions. It enables the company to raise any kind of concerns which are verified by the prison management team. Timpson Ltd do not recruit arsonists, terrorists or paedophiles. Almost all other offender-types are legitimate potential employees and are welcomed to join the company. All convictions will be clearly visible on an application form; however, these pre-employment checks are necessary.

What matters most are the interviews. Application forms, CVs and references are often too short to tell anything important about the candidate. Timpson Ltd have a strict criterion of employing 'on personality' and it is the very one-to-one, face-to-face interview which shows whether the person has the talent and true personality. Past offences are not a barrier to be a part of the Timpson team. Even if people lie or hide any facts, it is acceptable. Many ex-offenders committed multiple crimes, a lot of them repeatedly, and might not have experienced the pressure that is present at one-on-one interview. Area Managers are there to encourage them to be honest and fair, not only to the company, but also to themselves. The culture is such that Timpson Ltd would employ ex-offenders if they tried to lie. However, not if they insisted upon and based their opinion upon an obvious lie. (27)

### **5.5.1 Academies**

Timpson Ltd is at present working with around 80 prisons, mainly category C or D which are more relaxed prisons. Alongside the common training centres for 'non-offenders', Timpson Ltd is running six Academies and many more workshops for ex-offenders. The very first prison-based Academy was established in Liverpool in 2008 and at present it has about 13 prisoners being trained at any one time. The range of skills which the prisoners are taught is wide, from shoe repairs, engraving to watch repairs. There is an exception to key cutting; the reason is certainly obvious. The next

Academies worth mentioning are workshop at Blantyre House with capacity of 12 prisoners being taught at a time and a prison workshop at Forrest Bank with the largest capacity of 20 people. There, prisoners get the benefit of learning skills which they can at once apply upon release in case of seeking position in Timpson Ltd There is surely no guarantee of a job, however, there is a guarantee of a job interview for employment or a trial period. There is a mandatory 16-week trial period given by the law. With more than 1000 branches across the whole United Kingdom, all the ex-offenders have to do is to show the personality, impress the Area Managers and start to work. (33)

### **5.5.2 Statistics and Data**

Mr Timpson and his team also elaborated a plan regarding the pre-release situation of ex-offenders. This plan includes considerations for housing necessities and searching about family support outside because the three areas that most prisoners struggle after release are housing, family and friends, and the job. It has shown over years that without these three key areas covered and considerate, prisoners re-offend within a short while after they are released. Therefore, the re-offending rate of the Foundation colleagues is very low. (27)

Almost 80% of colleagues from prison are still with the company six months after they joined it. The estimation is that about 20% of ex-offenders leave Timpson Ltd for another job. There is not any system of tracking the people who leave Timpson Ltd and it is estimated that around 20% re-offend. According to the statistics in the United Kingdom in recent years, 61% of people leaving prison re-offend within two years but if they get a job, this percentage drops to only 19%. Mr Phillips works hard every day with housing associations and financial institutions to make sure that ex-prisoners will have the best support possible on the day they are released. Some recruits from other prisons started to work in Timpson Academies and workshops even while serving their sentence in prison. This is called a 'day release' scheme and it has been a great success from the beginning. Over 90% of these ex-offenders have stayed with Timpson Ltd for more than one year. The latest statistics from February 2014 show that:

- 10% of workforce recruited direct from prisons
- Recruits from a third of the prison population which is according to Timpson Ltd suitable for employment
- 13 shops run by those released on temporary licence

- Retention rate of 80% after 12 months for those recruited from prison (same as retention rate for employees recruited from general population)
- Retention rate of 92% after 12 months for those on the Release On Temporary Licence (ROTL) scheme
- Retention rate highest among female ex-prisoners

However, it is not just the statistics that tell the Timpson team that they are really making a difference. John Timpson receives evidence during his shop visits around the United Kingdom whenever some of the recruits from prison talk about the life-changing experience that this company provided for them.

There is also one particularly interesting area concerning hiring ex-offenders and that is the chance that Timpson Ltd gives to female ex-offenders. These seem to be attracted to the Max Spielmann part of Timpson Group. The Academy in Wakefield offers a range of training courses for female prisoners (as well as male prisoners) and graduates are offered a work trial on release. (41)

### **5.5.3 Current Situation**

At the end of 2013, Timpson Ltd had about 250 Foundation colleagues. 142 of them were in full-time paid employment. The aim is to have another 200 in 2014 and create new Academy training centres. The success is immense and it has advantages for other retailers as well – Timpson Academies offer training programmes and ex-offenders can acquire lots of skills and know-how, but nobody can force them to go to job interview to Timpson Ltd. Minority of them take advantage of this training programme as it is the only one of its kind, however, later apply for jobs in other companies. Some people are just better suited to a different type of employer e.g. hotels, warehouses, restaurants.

Currently, Timpson Ltd a participant company in the first phase of the Employer Ownership of Skills pilot, which is a competitive fund, open to employers who want to invest in both their current and future workforce in the United Kingdom. There are also guidelines for managers about the basic law regarding employment legislation and ex-offenders, and about the Disclosure and Barring Service as well.

Hiring ex-offenders is arguably less risky than traditional routes because the company has full access to the disclosure record of any individual candidate. The managers know lots of things about their past and the risk is therefore not as high as it

seemed to be if one looks at the collocation 'ex-prisoner.' This is certainly not possible when hiring people who do not have any criminal records. They can hide a lot of things and it is impossible to start finding out the truth about everything and about every candidate. The success of this policy rests in four key things:

- Satisfaction about the disclosure record of candidates.
- Setting up atmosphere of trust and acceptance.
- Open-talk about issues which are identified or anticipated
- Confirmation that the company has, in the ex-offender's words, seen it all before

At the end of this chapter, it is appropriate to mention some examples which prove that the Timpson Ex-offenders Programme is really worth the time and effort:

- ex-offender from Liverpool who never worked in his life and had serious problems with drugs and alcohol. "He was 47 years old and was in prison for 28 years in total. He has been with Timpson Ltd for five years since 2009 and he keeps his monthly pay slips on a board to show the months he has been out of prison. He is great." (23)
- Ex-offender Sarah is another bright example showing that employment and work can help rehabilitate ex-offenders. "She served a five year sentence before joining us, then became runner up in our Apprentice of the Year 2009 competition. She is about to start managing a shop and everyone thinks she is absolutely wonderful." (23)

And with successes stories like these, the Timpson team believe that their business contemporaries will do well in the future to join Timpson Ltd and let their personality shine all over the United Kingdom. (27)



## 6 Results and Discussion

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### 6.1 SWOT analysis

#### Strengths

- Flexible and individual approach to employees
- Good communication inside the company
- Career development
- Own training programs and centres
- ‘Mr Man scheme’
- Image of the company
- Company culture
- Interview design
- Professional behaviour of employees
- Financial strength
- Variety of provided services
- Level of service provided
- Large-scale bonus scheme
- Working conditions
- Ex-offender programme
- Upside Down Management
- Long tradition
- John Timpson
- Well-arranged Internet web pages
- Significant position on the market in the United Kingdom
- Loyalty of employees
- Made-to-measure service
- Individual salary reviews
- Positive references given by customers
- Operating exclusively in the UK, knowledge of the territory
- No advertising
- No marketing, no PR

- No head office
- No appraisals

### **Weaknesses**

- Costly training
- Costly bonus schemes
- No advertising
- No marketing, no PR
- Some shops may seem small
- Not strictly observing the laws
- The price list only as a guide
- No general salary scales
- Discrimination

### **Opportunities**

- Another service to provide
- New market – mobile phones repairs
- Expansion to another country
- Legislation changes
- Bad weather

### **Threats**

- Expansion to another country
- Competition entering the market
- Legislation changes
- Referendum in Scotland

With regard to internal factors influencing the company's strengths and weaknesses, there are many positive aspects that create the company culture such as individual approach, variety of services provided, long tradition, knowledge of the environment, or financial strength. The biggest advantage is definitely the system of turning the management structure upside down and giving the employees much more freedom in serving the customers. Managers are thus given more space for taking care about their employees and treating each of their colleagues individually and fairly. As one of the weaknesses is seemingly the money demand factor on training and buying

properties. However, if one looks at the financial strength he or she realizes that to have the best performers, the company has to spent loads of money on people. No PR or advertising is generally a weakness but public relations are made by the very customers who make use of the Timpson services and the feedback is unbelievable. The same goes for marketing activities and marketing department; all these activities are done by the Area Managers and there is no need to have even the head office to give orders. People in Timpson Ltd know what to do by using the common sense which they are taught to use effectively. Discrimination against poor performers is surely good for Timpson team but not so good for poor performers who like to sue and go to employment tribunals to gain some extra money for their suffering.

Among the most important external factors which create the opportunities as well as threats to Timpson Ltd are definitely introducing another service – mobile phones repairs, bad weather which shows up holes in soles and people need to have their shoes repaired, legislation changes which can bring alone both opportunities and threats, or expansion to another country or continent which is definitely a difficult and very controversial issue to discuss because plunging into completely different culture may harm the company and it could be a really big failure. Referendum in Scotland about the independence also creates space for threats as well as opportunities for Timpson Ltd as no one knows how people would behave if they are no longer dependent on another country and have to manage everything on their own.

## **6.2 Finding new recruits**

With many different sectors of economy the type of personnel selection process is therefore not the same in all of them. Service industry requires highly different approach than e.g. manufacturing industry. Service industry is predominantly about the ‘service provided’ than about the particular product. Having considered this fact, HR managers have to find the right people at the right time for the right position to provide the best service possible and cannot treat employees just as monotonous machines that learn a few phrases to provide the service. The complexity of this issue makes it even more difficult when it comes to retaining the employees in the company for a longer time. Every person has his or her special needs and views and it is very difficult to meet these needs and perceptions. Creating a style of management that is tailored and at the same time objective and fair is the aim of Timpson team for many years. The system

has both advantages and disadvantages and it took a very long time for John Timpson and his team to shift from difficulties which were present during the 1980s to one of the most innovative and successful companies in the United Kingdom. The idea behind the success resides in what Mr Timpson calls 'Common Sense.'

Looking at the whole process of personnel selection, it is necessary to start with two basic facts as 'what kind of people to hire' and 'where to find them.' Timpson Ltd aim is to find personalities and people who 'get it.' During the interview, managers require neither CVs nor any lengthy reference lists. The strategy resides in picking the people who fit the company culture notwithstanding their current skills and abilities. John Timpson said it many times and I will repeat it again because it describes the company accurately - people can be trained, personalities cannot. With this in mind, managers are trained to learn to recognize personalities who can become superstar performers one day and poor performers who are best to be disposed of at once. The advantage is therefore in form of a family business even when the company has more than 1100 branches all over the United Kingdom. Growing in size does not prevent Timpson to be a family run business with satisfied employees who do their best every single day. It is not surprising that over 45% of new employees come through the 'Introduce a Friend' scheme. However, the drawback can dwell in financial aspect of this system. Managers have to be trained perfectly to spot the personality, there are abundant bonuses for employees who introduce a friend and he or she stays in the company more than one year etc. This activities cost a lot of money, almost 50% of Timpson Ltd money coming through the till are spent on wages and bonuses. Clearly, the company continues in this manner because it brings success and despite the costs, Timpson Ltd still can reach the £100 million turnover border every year.

Lots of great people came to the company through the part-time job experience. It is much easier to hire people who the managers had the possibility to get know during their part-time jobs. The disadvantages that are often present in other companies such as confused loyalty or extra time to get accustomed to the company culture were turned into advantages in Timpson Ltd through positive approach to the matter.

Timpson Ltd has also a strong waiting list which is a big advantage for two simple reasons – it creates the reserve strength for the company and the managers do not have to perform the lengthy interviews again because they have their 'Mr Man' sheet saved and ready to re-use when there is a need for recruitment. It is a long-term strategy in

Timpson company to keep a strong waiting list and it often pays off. It is not necessary to find recruits outside the company and even if the branches are fully staffed, managers advertise for new job positions. The idea behind this is that one never knows when he or she may come across an excellent person with a shining personality.

A different approach is also conducted towards ex-employees who left the company. As many companies treat their employees who left for another opportunity elsewhere not in a good way and condemn them, Timpson Ltd took a different approach to this issue. Most of ex-employees who want to join the company again are welcomed as they are now much better and experienced than when they left. The drawback can be if the employee claims that he or she has changed his personality and it at first sight can seem so; however, it later shows that he or she changed only part and the rest is the same. This is an infinite problem with 'drongos' as Mr Timpson calls the poor performers and deceivers. It is up to managers to judge it and derive the conclusion. The costly training of managers in Timpson company is therefore much needed and it has to have positive results.

With regard to job centres and advertising in newspapers, the advantages of these methods prevail. The almost absolute impossibility to filter the drongos and evident poor performers is for Timpson Ltd very crucial and therefore these methods are the last resort. Advantages like ensuring the whole recruitment by the agency, inflow of long-term human resources, or to address a lot of potential candidates are irrelevant to the style that Timpson team runs its business. Moreover, it is very costly and therefore inefficient.

### **6.3 Hiring new recruits**

A novel approach to personnel selection process in Timpson Ltd is mainly thanks to the system of management which is turned upside down. In the conventional top-down management, the higher the position, the higher the power and influence. Upside down management structure employs very inverse approach. People behind the counter are the ones who decide what should be done, who run the branch. Managers are there to help, advice and to make the paperwork. Therefore, Timpson Ltd does not have neither HR department nor PR department nor head office etc. Everything is performed by the people who serve the customers and by the managers who oversee the process. It is important to hire people who have the right personality to do the job and to create

values. It is always very difficult to find them and Timpson Ltd give a lot of effort and money into it. The most significant part regarding the very hiring process is the interview. (9)

There is certainly one inconsiderable advantage. When a candidate comes to an interview, he or she is not required to bring any CV or reference paper. Everything depends on himself or herself, how they will present their personality. Managers have to be perfectly prepared for it and it is given extra importance that the interview process is fair and professional. The strategy also involves promotion from within so it is of great value to later train own employees rather than employee external people.

It is not sufficient to look at the application form only. Even a best recruitment manager cannot make a proper judgment when looking at the form only. The best way is to meet the candidate face-to-face and have a friendly chat. Advantage against the conventional systems is definitely the idea that everything should be done not in a strictly formal way. Timpson Ltd believe that people should be treated with common sense in as much friendly way as possible. Keeping the interview simple and informal is the key of the company success. Managers also have a free hand at interviewing candidates and it is up to them whether they follow the list of proposed questions or they are creative and ask also other questions. To spot the personality, one must sometimes dig deeper to find it. Some drawbacks can arise when the manager is not experienced enough and is not sure about whether the candidate 'gets it.' In this case, there should always be present another manager, e.g. line or area manager to help if it is needed. Multiple opinions are always better and it is good to avoid negative first-impression subjectivity or discrimination. An advantage is surely the approach of interviewing manager to the process and their 'searching questions.' Asking himself or herself after the interview whether he or she would pay the candidate wage with own money or lend 50 pounds can bring another point of view.

Giving applicants freedom to express their minds is useful when the manager is not sure and hesitates which Mr Man box to tick. The application form is very simple and well-arranged to fill in as opposed to many other forms in other companies sometimes. After a successful interview, managers do not waste time, pick up the phone and ring up the candidates who passed and will be recruited. Candidates who were not successful are treated in the same way but they are told that they were not accepted. However, this is not the end of the call. Managers tell them that they are put on the

waiting list and will be called when there is the right time. This positive approach is of great advantage as even unsuccessful applicants can feel much better that when they receive a copy which was sent to other hundred candidates. Personnel selection is about direct communication.

#### **6.4 Maintaining employees**

Shortly after the candidates are successfully hired, they are introduced to their colleagues in branches. This real life experience is a great advantage because it shows the positive individual approach to every member. First day at work is given big importance.

The training process is elaborated into every detail possible starting with an overall plan to make sure every apprentice understands it and ending with an assessment and feedback. Managers are also trained to be able to run these courses. With many training centres all around the United Kingdom, it is not a problem for employees to attend the one that is the closest to home. As a disadvantage could be seen the fact that the whole process of training is very costly and that it takes loads of time. Timpson spends almost 50% of its money coming through the tills onto people. Training takes definitely the biggest portion. However, without a professional training programme it is not possible to employ the superstar performers who need time to learn and get experience. The money invested is paid off in the long-term.

One of the many advantages is also the way that managers treat the problematic and tricky people that they come across during the courses. Employment legislation is one thing, challenging the rules and being straight and decisive another. Managers in Timpson Ltd are taught to be fair, but uncompromising. This can be seen as a disadvantage because it can lead to employment tribunals; however, John Timpson has the opinion about this that it is better to let people know about the way the company deals with misconduct and pay additional costs at tribunal than to let people think that they are protected even if they perform poorly or deceive others. Managers in Timpson Ltd are given a training how to deal with misconduct through real life situations to recognize these tricky people. Another big advantage that upside down management brings is that training managers are given free hand at skill testing and always take individual approach to everyone. Large variety of training guides and books which are

written in simple language with a lot of useful pictures and examples provide employees necessary material for their study during the sessions as well.

With regard to rewards, bonus system and recognition, there is a large variety of incentives that are waiting for employees who perform well. Indeed, large scale bonus system is definitely money demanding and time consuming; however, as Timpson culture is based on management which upside down, managers can rely on their branch colleagues who run the business and therefore they have more time to care about every individual as regards the bonuses and recognition. Every company has its own system of bonuses and it is very difficult sometimes to fairly recognize the effort. The wide range of possibilities how to earn extra money can help in this matter. As a disadvantage could be on the first sight the fact that there are no appraisals in Timpson Ltd. They abandoned those 30 years ago. Appraisals are according to Mr Timpson “part of world driven by targets and measurement against best practice, where success is determined more by what you do than by what you achieve; we let our managers review progress with each colleague in whatever way they wish.”(13, p. 189)

This method is also upside down – if an employee wants, he or she can talk about the future with the boss. It is the employee talking and the boss who is listening. Although it is sometimes a costly method, it saves time by not writing a lengthy appraisals and it improves the business as a whole. Very similar approach is used towards salary reviews; every salary review is done individually. Advantage over usual salary scales is that it does not let the poor performers feel as good as the rest of the team. Discrimination against the ‘drongos’ is part of Timpson culture even if it sometimes takes along some difficulties as regards to employee tribunals.

Holiday homes are definitely expensive matter to deal with. However, investment into property and providing employees with a possibility to have free accommodation beat the money-demand factor.

Usually there is an option for employees to buy shares and become co-owners of the company. It brings additional money to the business so generally it is seen as an advantage factor. However, in Timpson Ltd, there is no such an option. The only shareholders are the Timpson family and the idea behind this is the fact that it does not persuade unsettled people to stay, it confuses people about the true message, this long-term kind of benefit does not ensure better performance and that employees would have



a say in how the business should be run. For these matters, there are experienced managers to set the pace.

Another costly and time consuming bonus scheme is definitely 'Dreams come true.' On the other hand, it has shown over time that it both improves the performance and makes the business more fun. Advantage is also the Timpson Newsletter and although it is a 16 pages long piece issued every week, people read it. Hardship fund showed to be an excellent way how to avoid people stealing money from the company. And what is more, people return almost 98% of the money which they borrowed.

It is the small things that make the business successful as well as the big ones. Important is the approach which the company chooses. Friday phone calls, handwritten notes, public praise, day off when an employee has birthday etc. make the Timpson business coherent. Another aspect is certainly the financial sources; without them, it would be difficult to run such a well-elaborated bonus scheme. Even Timpson Ltd was once a small scale business with a few branches. It is the determination that counts, the energy, the positive approach, the personality. John Timpson definitely 'gets it' and without him and his family, the business would not be like today.

## **6.5 Firing legislation**

Human resources departments make sure that the business stays one hundred percent legal and pays fees to lawyers who strictly follow the employment legislation. However, this very employment legislation seems to take care about poor performers rather than about best performers. HR expects managers to be in the world of lies and the only way how to fire unwelcome people is via written warnings or programmes. Timpson Ltd have neither HR nor PR department. PR is done by the customers and HR is done by the Area Managers. This can be considered as a drawback in terms of not having integrated system at all. Things work differently in Timpson culture. People can improve skills, but they cannot change their personality. The strategy is simple – to pay poor performers in order to leave and save the precious management time. This is done through 'Part As Friends' scheme which is basically a help scheme for bad performing employees to find them another job and pay compensation. It is informal way how to say goodbye and it works; definitely it would not work in every company as it is the part of the specific approach to every single piece of the business. Timpson Ltd do not use schemes such as reapplying for jobs as it makes people unnecessarily insecure and it

creates tension. Good managers should already know their people and base the decision on their own judgement, not on any formal legislation. With honest and fair approach, it is possible to deal with these things inside the company and do not take it to the costly tribunals.

## **6.6 Ex-offenders**

When Timpson Ltd started to take a differently new approach to ex-offenders about 9 years ago, it was a path that could expose the company to a great risk in form of public and employee disapproval. Giving people the second chance is one thing, working with somebody who you know that committed crime is another. It was definitely not easy in the beginning. However, it has shown over time that if the company pursues its goal and do not get discouraged, it brings success. The key fact in this whole process was definitely the personalities of both John and James Timpson and passionate philanthropists. Without it, it would be much more difficult, even if not possible at all. Another key factor is certainly the financial source which was needed to start this pioneer idea. On the other hand, what is easy is the fact that people who are employed from prison cannot hide anything regarding their criminal history and Timpson managers know what to anticipate from them.

It is surprising that Timpson Ltd currently employs almost 10% of its staff directly from prison and that some ex-offenders even became branch managers. There exist at present Academies and workshops where the ex-offenders are taught the needed skills. Timpson team helps both itself and the society – according to the statistics, 61% of people leaving prison re-offend within two years. However, if the ex-offenders are given a job, the re-offend rate is only about 19%. And the second advantage is that Timpson Ltd get great possibility to find and hire people with personality from almost 90,000 prisoners throughout the United Kingdom. Mr Timpson calls it a useful ‘database.’ In fact, Timpson team hires only from a third of the prison population - the population suitable for employment; other prisoners are not suitable because of the severity of their offenses which they committed.

The disadvantage for other companies to join this idea is definitely money demand factor. It costs a lot of financial resources to start this programme and Timpson Ltd admits that is definitely not easy to do it when a business is a small-scale or even middle-scale. It is surely a great possibility how to save state-budget money and also a

great chance how to help in the process of returning ex-offenders on the right track and making it easier for them to fit together with the society and live a decent life. Timpson Ltd have also recently started a pre-retention programme to help ex-offenders in order not to commit crimes again. Not every ex-prisoner who undergoes the Timpson training programme is employed in one of the branches. About 20% of them take it as a possibility to acquire some skills and start working elsewhere. Timpson Ltd thus help other competitors as well and John Timpson and his team are proud of this achievement.

### **6.7 Application of Timpson process in Czech environment**

With regard to the question of possible application of this novel approach to personnel selection process in Timpson Ltd in Czech environment, it is particularly difficult topic to discuss. To apply this novel approach towards personnel selection in the completely different environment, the company has to consider many aspects. To break the conventional top-down management structure and introduce a management which is turned upside down, people working in such a company must believe in this scheme and adopt it as their own. The current Czech Republic underwent great changes first during the Second World War and second during the Communist era. It is therefore understandable that people here think differently than e.g. people in the United Kingdom and to introduce such a scheme that gives people freedom to make decisions would not have to be accepted positively. People are used to some ways of working and not everybody welcomes the freedom to make decisions. Also, this system is definitely not applicable in every industry. It requires people to make up new ideas, be proactive, creative, use intuition. The last point to mention, if there was a company which would want to run their management structure upside down, it would require loads of money to do it successfully. Professionally trained managers as well as employees, individual approach to every colleague and generous bonus scheme to reward good performance cannot be done without stable and solid financial background.

## 7 Conclusion

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The objective of each company should not be to eradicate all drawbacks which are present. No company will ever be one hundred percent perfect and it is a mistake to try as hard as possible. There will always be some parts in the personnel selection process that will not be perfect and the key is to minimize these disadvantages and concentrate on the strengths that the particular company has. People in Timpson Ltd. know that there exist some situations when the solution was not the best one or that something is not done strictly according the rules and standards. Breaking the rules is not good for the business. However, John Timpson does not employ only shining personalities; he also employs common sense which taught him over years to challenge the rules. Making mistakes is good for the business as it brings along the opportunity to learn from them and get better and better.

Timpson Ltd introduces an overall system of management which is not top-down but is turned upside down. Employees are given freedom to serve the customers and create values. This style of management naturally needs to have perfectly trained and educated employees and managers to be up to the desired goals. It brings along the drawback in terms of big financial demand factor and big time demand factor. The 14-year experience with Upside Down Management gives us the proof that in terms of the personnel selection process and as a matter of fact everything connected with education and training, the saying that 'a penny saved is a penny earned' does not apply properly; rather, a penny spent on good education and professional training now is worth hundred times more pennies in the future in form of loyal and long-term employees.

By means of selected methods the advantages and disadvantages of the novel approach to personnel selection process in Timpson Ltd were analyzed and discussed as well as advantages and disadvantages brought in by employing ex-offenders in Timpson Ltd. The last objective, to find out whether this novel approach to personnel selection process in Timpson Ltd could be applied in Czech environment was discussed with an expert on business matters.

The first hypothesis was proved by means of analyzing the personnel selection process in Timpson Ltd and predominantly by the fact that this company does not require candidates to bring CVs to the interview and employs its 'Mr Men' scheme

instead. Timpson Ltd look for personalities in order to be able to manage things upside down and serve the customers in best possible way.

The second hypothesis was proved by means of analysis and interview. About 10% of employees represent ex-offenders and more than 10 run individual branches. Over 90% of them stayed with Timpson over one year. It gives Timpson team chance both to get good workforce and to help the society.

The third hypothesis was partly proved by means analyzing the whole personnel selection process in Timpson Ltd and discussion in terms of application in the Czech environment with and expert on business matters.

The system of personnel selection in Timpson Ltd is unconventional and very creative. It offers the possibility for all employees to identify with the company culture, build a long-lasting relationship and find great friends. With turning the management upside down and giving employees more freedom in decision making, John Timpson created a new approach to business which is based upon trust and common sense.

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## **10 Supplements**

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Supplement no. 1 – Application Form

Supplement no. 2 - Interview questions list

Supplement no. 1 - Application Form



TIMPSON HOUSE, CLAVERTON ROAD, WYTHENSHAW, MANCHESTER, M23 9TT.  
 TEL: 0161 946 6200 WWW.TIMPSON.COM WWW.MAXSPIELMANN.COM

# Timpson Group Application Form

*Welcome to Timpson - our family business started by my Great Great Grandfather in 1865. Here we pride ourselves on recruiting great personalities who give great service. I hope to welcome you to the team.*

JAMES TIMPSON



## Your Personal Details

(As shown on your birth certificate or current passport)

Title:	Surname:	Forename(s):	Known as:
Address:			
			Postcode:
Email Address:			
Contact Telephone Number:			
Mobile Telephone Number:			
National Insurance Number:			
Passport Number:			

## Position Applied For:

	Location:
--	-----------

## How did you hear of this vacancy?

Introduced by a friend: Yes <input type="radio"/>	Name of friend:	
Jobcentre: Yes <input type="radio"/>	Re-joining us: Yes <input type="radio"/>	Timpson Foundation: Yes <input type="radio"/>
In-branch advert: Yes <input type="radio"/>	Other, please state:	

## Getting To Know You

Tell us all about yourself on this page. Don't worry if your answers won't fit in the spaces - just use additional paper.

**What interests you about working at Timpson?**

**What achievements (work or personal) are you most proud of?**

**If you earned £100 in bonus, what would you spend it on?**

**When have you delivered/received great service? What happened?**

## Your Pastimes

**What do you like to do outside of work?**

### Education / Employment History

Name of Education Facility / Employer	Dates From/To (Optional)	Qualification / Job Title	Reason For Leaving

### References

Please provide two references - one of whom should preferably be your present/most recent employer or if you have just left education then a teacher or Head teacher. References will only be sought once an offer of employment has been made and accepted.

Name	Address and Telephone Number	Occupation
1.		
2.		

### Vehicle Licences

I have a full driving licence (or EU equivalent):	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Have you ever been disqualified from driving?:	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>

### Criminal Convictions (Offender Act 1974)

Have you been convicted of any criminal offence, which are not yet spent under rehabilitation? Yes  No

If your answer is Yes this will be discussed at the interview. Convictions don't mean a closed door at Timpson Group.

### Next of Kin

Next of kin (contact in emergency) - Name:	Relationship to you:
Address:	Postcode:
Daytime Contact Tel Number:	Evening Contact Tel Number:

### Your Health

Any adjustments required to attend the interview or workplace.

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## Equal Opportunities

At Timpson we are committed to attracting and recruiting talent. We work hard to ensure that we attract and recruit a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve. To enable us to monitor this policy please complete the following:

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Yes  No

If yes please provide us with further information:

## Nationality & Ethnic Monitoring

Which of those best describes your ethnic origin?

WHITE: All white ethnic groups

ASIAN/ASIAN BRITISH: Indian  Pakistani  Other Asian  Bangladeshi  Chinese

AFRICAN/CARIBBEAN/BLACK BRITISH: African  Caribbean  Other Black

MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS:

White & Black Caribbean  White & Asian  Other Mixed  White & Black African

OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS: Arab  Any other ethnic group: \_\_\_\_\_

## Right To Work In The UK (Asylum & Immigration Act 1998)

Are you legally entitled to work in the UK? Yes  No

If yes, are there any restrictions on the work you are permitted to do?

If you have a work permit, when does it expire?

NB: In the event that you are offered employment, you will be required to produce satisfactory evidence of your entitlement to work in the UK, in accordance with the Asylum and Immigration Act (1998) and/or Criminal Justice and Immigration Act (2008).

## Declaration

I confirm that the information given in this form is to the best of my knowledge true and complete. Any false information may be sufficient cause for rejection or if employed, then dismissal. I will advise Timpson Limited of any changes in details as appropriate. I consent to the data on this form being used solely within Timpson Group for purposes related to my employment in compliance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### FOR COMPANY USE ONLY

Branch Name:	Branch Number:	Date of Commencement:
Colleague Number:	Job Title:	Rate of Pay:
Hour per week & Number of Days:		
Date Of Birth:	Age:	Additional Info:
Area Manager - Print Name:	Signature _____	
Foundation colleague <input type="radio"/>	Ex-service person <input type="radio"/>	Temp/seasonal contract <input type="radio"/>

## Supplement no. 2 - Interview questions list

### Questions for managers

- What kind of people do Timpson Ltd look for?
- How do you advertise vacant positions?
- How many applicants do you have in a month?
- Do you keep a database of all of your candidates?
- Do you perform one-on-one interview or group interview?
- What does the interview look like in Timpson Ltd?
- Is it true that you do not require candidates to bring their CVs to job interview?
- How many apprentices do Timpson Ltd hire in a month?
- How many training programmes do you offer?
- Do you have any special benefit schemes?
- Are there special trainings for managers?
- How do you treat any kind of misconduct?
- Hiring ex-offenders became part of Timpson culture.
  - What did it all start? What were the first impulses?
  - Do current employees react positively or negatively?
  - Do you have any special training centres for ex-offenders?
  - How many of them are employed in Timpson Ltd at present?
  - What are the prospects into the future?

### Questions for employees behind the counter

- How did you learn about Timpson Ltd?
- What was the interview like?
- How long did the training take?
- Have the company kept to terms with regard to incentives for good work done?
- Do you like the way Timpson run the business? (UDM management)
- If you compare Timpson Ltd with your last employer, what is the first thing that springs to your mind?

