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People are our business

the H&S Personnel
Department in Action

It goes almost without saying that the business of any personnel department is people. The responsibilities of the personnel department of Haskins & Sells are to devise the most effective means of attracting and retaining good people for H&S.

The task is not easy, because we live in a time when the profession is undertaking ever greater responsibilities for the public welfare and protection, and accountants are in very short supply. Everyone is trying to get the best college graduates—those young accountants who show the greatest capacity for all-around professional growth. The competition for talent is intense.

An organization chart of the H&S personnel department in action might resemble an intricate spider web. At the center in the Executive Office is a small staff headed by Edwin R. Lang, partner in charge of personnel. This group in the EO devotes full time to personnel work. But in the majority of the practice offices the functions of the department are carried out by partners or principals active on client engagements who have been given this assignment in addition to their other duties. In a number of our larger offices, however, there are personnel specialists who are not accountants. All these people responsible for personnel functions keep in close touch with the department at the EO, and they frequently confer with one another. Thus the strands of the spider web, or lines in the diagram, run in several directions. To put it in practical terms: H&S personnel people check with colleagues who are performing similar work in other parts of the country, find out what they are doing, and so learn from each other.

In the EO, Ed Lang is the partner with general responsibility for the Firm's personnel administration in the

domestic practice offices. Working with him is one of his partners, Irwin C. Rust, known throughout the Firm as "Rusty," who directs our national college recruiting program. Although recruiting is Rusty's primary task and occupies what he estimates is about two-thirds of his working time, he and Ed Lang work very closely as a team in all H&S personnel work. In fact, people who have seen them operate consider each man as an extension of the other. Not that anyone who has met either would ever confuse the two. Ed Lang is a big man who looks as if he might hold his own in a pro football scrimmage, whereas Rusty is slightly built, and has the manner of the accomplished speaker, actor and m.c. that he is. Both Ed and Rusty are unusually genial, outgoing men with the capacity to laugh, and to listen, that marks them as people-oriented types. In carrying out the Firm's personnel functions, Ed and Rusty work very closely with Malcolm M. Devore, Executive Office partner responsible for the overall administration of the domestic practice offices.

For many years the Firm has followed the policy of bringing a partner to the Executive Office to direct the personnel department for a period of five or six years, after which he would return to a practice office. It has been thought that a partner should not be taken away from active practice for such a period of time that he would lose a significant degree of technical competence. Mr. Lang, who came from the Cleveland Office, has been in the EO for four years. Working with him in addition to Mr. Rust are five others. Pete Costigan, Executive Placement Director, and Hugh Scanlon concentrate largely on assisting clients in finding the right people to fill executive positions requiring financial and account-



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ing skill. They also recruit specialists in Management Advisory Services for H&S. Howard M. Grominger, recently returned to the U.S. from service in Caracas, Venezuela, assists in special projects for Mr. Devore and the personnel department. Mrs. Dorothy Wendel maintains the individual personnel files that the Firm keeps on every member of the staff. And Mrs. June Malus, administrative assistant in personnel, helps Mr. Lang in work connected with the Haskins & Sells Foundation and Mr. Rust in college recruitment administration.

The ever-present and obvious duty of recruiting aside, the task of nurturing and retaining the best accountants requires the personnel department to organize frequent meetings. While the program of training sessions is often the responsibility of other departments, such as the professional education and development department or the research department, selecting the people to attend is to a great extent a personnel function. This involves choosing not only those who come to meetings to learn, but also the instructors who come to teach. The personnel department is therefore concerned with find-



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Sharing a laugh with new H&S accountants at the College Graduates Orientation Seminar banquet, Ed Lang meets many of the men behind the names recently added to his personnel roster.

Nancy L. Gordon, Los Angeles Office, is among the 34 women accountants who joined the H&S staff in 1968 after graduating from college.



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At a light moment in an uninhibited question-and-answer period, Irwin C. Rust, EO partner in charge of recruiting, tells it the way it is when newly hired staff members ask about life inside H&S.

ing the H&S people accomplished at explaining what they know to others, who can prepare and deliver an informative lecture, or conduct a class discussion with excellence. The annual meeting of new senior accountants, held in the spring, and the College Graduate Orientation Seminars are two gatherings that Messrs. Lang and Rust are responsible for organizing, and from which they learn much about H&S people—those who were recently recruited and those who have been with the Firm for a time.

One of the most important functions of the personnel department and one which directly affects all H&S employees is the administration of the Firm's salary and promotion policies. Mr. Lang spends a great deal of time with Mr. Rust going over every staff salary adjustment and promotion that the practice offices submit to the EO each year early in the spring. Their purpose is to assist the various offices in adhering to the Firm's established salary policies, which are the product of a great deal of time and thought. These policies are flexible, and take into account the effect of rising starting salaries on the Firm's salary structure,

as well as the special merit of those staff accountants who deserve higher increases than the average. The personnel department feels a special responsibility for insuring that the salary policies described to students in H&S recruiting literature and in interviews are being carried out on a Firm-wide basis. Another result of the salary review is that it permits the department to determine exactly what the present salary situation in the practice offices is, in order to determine whether policies need revision to keep them realistic. Although H&S is a very large organization, the EO makes every effort to know the staff people individually and to follow their progress. The personnel files maintained by Dorothy Wendel are particularly useful for this purpose.

H&S has become increasingly aware of the need for professional personnel people in the larger practice offices. Two examples, among several, are Jerry Tucker in the New York office, and Don LaBoskey in Los Angeles. But in most of the more than 60 H&S domestic offices personnel functions are taken care of by partners or principals appointed by the partner in charge in



Photo by Roy Stevens

Students Mike Storlazzi (l.) and Chuck Thomas (r.) confer with Gerald F. O'Neil, Boston Office principal, on their decision to join Haskins & Sells at the end of the academic year.

consultation with the Executive Office. Recruiting is the most important part of the job. In fact, the recruiting partner or principal from a practice office is often the first person from H&S whom a student meets when he or she is prospecting for employment. Ed Lang and Rusty undertake recruiting trips in certain special situations where the presence of an Executive Office partner is desirable. But the bulk of the recruiting for H&S is the responsibility of practice office partners and principals chosen for this important assignment. The EO supports their efforts by constantly carrying on recruiting research, that is, trying to find out from placement offices and faculties what students want, what they are thinking, and how H&S may best appeal to them. The department also brings the recruiters together annually for training and discussion.

The kind of person who Ed Lang and Rusty believe makes the best representative of H&S as an attractor of new talent is one who knows the Firm well, who is an informed professional, who makes a good personal appearance, who can identify with the students, and who is warm and friendly. ("Wafs" the department calls them—

Warm and Friendlys.) His age does not matter; he can win friends for H&S whether he is under 30 or past 50, if he gives the impression of being "with it."

Training sessions are not the only kind of away-from-home assignment for which the personnel department takes responsibility. It also helps in choosing people for the Firm's inter-office Working Paper Review Program and when additional people are needed to come to the Executive Office to review reports, the personnel department assists in finding them. Every once in a while, in addition, a practice office calls on Mr. Lang or Mr. Rust with a request for a few people of a certain classification to fill a need lasting a certain time. The department either finds the people for that office or suggests that it make direct contact with a given office which those in the EO believe can furnish the needed people. Although it is often convenient to send a bachelor accountant out of town temporarily on one of these loan missions, there is no rule that the unmarried men go first. The operating rule is to send the right man for the job. Mr. Rust recalls that recently he enlisted the help of our DPH&S office in Montreal in supplying a French-

speaking accountant for work on an engagement in Haiti for the Miami office.

In a quiet, behind-the-scenes way the personnel department plays a part in professional advancement in H&S. It is not an easy matter to spot a "comer," or, in football terms, to find a man who can go all the way. Some new accountants join the Firm with splendid academic records, start off their work like a house afire, then fizzle out. Others are slower starters, then move ahead faster as they gain maturity and self-confidence from sources which still baffle students of human behavior. H&S personnel policy is to offer encouragement and opportunity to everyone willing to take on responsibilities beyond the routine, and hopefully to find the most likely future leadership of the Firm through the manner in which they perform on the job. Normally a young person who appears to have considerably more potential than the average will be spotted in his own practice office; frequently that office will recommend that the man be chosen for one of the special assignments that will permit the personnel department and others in H&S to see him at work, for



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Recent college graduates discuss their first weeks at H&S with Michael N. Chetkovich, Executive Office partner, at a pre-banquet reception during their orientation week in New York.

instance, as an instructor or a reviewer.

On one personnel policy at H&S both Ed Lang and Rusty bear down hard—the employment door is wide open to women accountants and to racial and ethnic minorities. Both men believe that it is important to stress this policy, because the discriminatory legacy of the past in most professions in America has caused many of these young people to turn away from them on the assumption that these professions offered no opportunities. Haskins & Sells welcomes every qualified person without exception. Beyond that, the Haskins & Sells Foundation and the Firm are developing programs to help bring to the accounting profession more young people who may not yet be qualified, but who are qualifiable and who need help in certain areas in order to become qualified.

When asked for their advice to younger staff members at H&S, the two personnel department partners at the EO spoke almost as one in emphasizing the two complementary aspects of the truly professional man, at work and in his leisure hours. In paraphrase Mr. Lang and Mr. Rust said:

If a man wants to get ahead and

realize his ambitions, he should strive for excellence in his professional work, for the sake of excellence itself.

On the job he should adjust his thinking, if it requires adjusting, so that he does not think, "I want to do a good job so that I can get a raise and a promotion." He should instead develop an attitude that will make him say to himself: "This is my Firm, and I want to do a good job so that I can say to myself that I have done my work well." If he does this, then all these other things, such as his ambitions for raises and promotions, will fall into place.

As to his spare time, anything that he can do to broaden himself as an individual adds to his potential as a professional. He can involve himself in civic and social activities completely unrelated to the public accounting profession. Certainly he should take part in professional society activities. But there is also great value in working in community activities, in the Jaycees, the United Fund Drive, political work, civic associations, the arts, and so on. In general, the man of broader interests and views tends to be the man who rises to the top professionally. □