

Education is Important for Promotion, but... Experience also Counts, HR Says



By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 28) Interested in that new job posting? Want a promotion? Human Resources is reviewing the minimum education and job experience you'll need to qualify for entry-level positions in a number of departments.

Early results of the review seem to show that the minimum education required for certain entry-level administrative positions has been too stringent, according to Naomi Nightingale, HR director. HR will seek a balance of education and relevant experience in future postings for those positions.

HR also is studying whether relevant experience can be substituted for education in some entry-level positions that typically require college degrees.

Employees who want to advance their careers at the MTA, however, will find that at certain levels college degrees and other formal education will be key requirements – just as college graduates must acquire work experience in order to advance.

Supplement work experience

"We will look at their years of experience and the relevance to the job requirements," said Nightingale. "But, employees in any job classification must know that at some point they're going to have to supplement their work experience with formal education or professional development."

This is important, she emphasized, not only for the individual, but also for the MTA. "How can the agency stay competitive if employees aren't going to take classes or increase their skills and knowledge?"

The need to re-evaluate the MTA's education vs. experience job requirements became apparent recently when job openings for administrative analyst had to be reposted.

Managers were requesting candidates who were capable of handling broader tasks rather than performing support functions as before, Nightingale said. It became apparent, however, that raising the job qualifications without taking an employee's experience into account not only was unfair to the individual, but also could deprive the department of a valuable employee.

At the same time, HR realized that modifying the minimum qualifications of entry-level positions, as well as substituting relevant experience for education, could give employees an opportunity to gain experience while they attend college or seek other professional development opportunities.

"We want employees to understand that, if they're interested in promotional opportunities, they'll have to contribute to their career development," said Nightingale.

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